

Sunday, June 20, 2021 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Job 38:1-11 - Creator of heaven and earth

For Job's three friends there was only one possible explanation for his suffering. He had done something terribly bad.

It would never occur to them that there could be another explanation – that God had allowed Satan to attack Job in order to demonstrate his faithfulness to God.

There is more than one answer to the question as to why bad things happen.

Sometimes it is because of my own sinfulness or mistakes.

Sometimes it is because of someone else's sinfulness or mistakes.

Sometimes it is because we live in a world where – ever since the fall – bad things happen.

Sometimes it is because I am being attacked by Satan. Such was the case with Job.

There is no indication that Job ever learned who and/or what was behind all of his suffering.

Just like we might never learn the real reason(s) for our suffering.

But Job did learn that he could trust God.

For four chapters (38-41) God challenges all who might think that they could run the world better than He does.

Job responds in 42: 3 – “I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”

4 - Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

8-11 - Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb? – when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped’?

Psalms 107:1-3, 23-32 - God can still storms

23 - Some went down to the sea in ships, plying their trade in deep waters.

25 - Then God spoke, and a stormy wind arose, which tossed high the waves of the sea.

26 - They mounted up to the heavens and descended to the depths;

their souls melted away in their peril.

27 - They staggered and reeled like drunkards, and all their skill was of no avail.

28 - Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD, and you delivered them from their distress.

29 - You stilled the storm to a whisper and silenced the waves of the sea.

30 - Then were they glad when it grew calm, when you guided them to the harbor they desired.

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 – Paul continues to defend his ministry

3-4 - We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way.

Paul worked as a tentmaker (Acts 18: 3) and accepted support from other churches (2 Corinthians 11: 8-9) while he was in Corinth so that he was not a financial burden to the Corinthians.

4-5 - Through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger.

Paul makes a similar point in 2 Corinthians 11: 21-30 where he says that all the disasters that have happened to him do not discredit him, but instead are among his credentials. Satan will oppose the one whom he sees as a threat to his kingdom.

6-7 - By purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God.

8-10 - We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11-13 - We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return—I speak as to children—open wide your hearts also.

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm

35 - When evening had come, [Jesus said to the disciples,] “Let us go across to the other side.”

The storm did not happen to the disciples because they were outside the will of God (cf. Jonah).

Rather it happened when they were doing exactly what Jesus was telling them to do.

“Let us cross over to the other side” – for the first time they were going into predominantly Gentile territory.

Satan will react when he feels that his kingdom is being threatened.

37 - A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.

Every one of us will go through storms at various times in our lives. Some of those storms are like tornadoes. They come up suddenly and unexpectedly. Other storms are like hurricanes. You can see them coming for a long time before they arrive. They are the result of a long series of circumstances.

38 - But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

Sometimes it seems that Jesus is asleep in the boat. We want to wake Him up and ask, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” We ask, Where is God in the storms of my life? Why did He not prevent, or why does He not intervene and stop the storm? Does He care? Is He asleep?

39-41 - He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

The main question is not, How many storms will I have to go through? Or, how can I avoid the storms? Rather the main question is, Do I have a faith for the storms? And if I do not, how can I develop a faith for the storms?

Do you believe in a God who loves you and has promised never to forsake you? Do you believe that beyond the cross is an empty tomb? If you do, then you can weather even the severest of storms.

Do you have a faith for even the worst of storms?

Do you have a storm-enduring faith that you have been nurturing for years?