

St Annes Ryde
ANGLICAN CHURCH



CGS 28
Term 1
2012

Job

faith on trial



Bible based Discussion Material

prepared by Greg Burke and linked to sermons
preached at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church

Discussion 1 Have you considered my servant Job?

Job 1 (Sermon February 5th)

Read the description of Job in 1v1-5.

1. What features of this indicate that Job is portrayed as the “iconic” righteous person?
2. What do you think it means to “fear God” (v1)
3. How is it possible to be blameless and upright?

Read 1v6-12

4. What features of this encounter between God and Satan indicate that God’s sovereign control extends ever over Satan?
5. What exactly is the charge that Satan brings against Job?
6. How is this also an attack on God’s character?

Read 1v13-19

7. What types of disaster befall Job’s household?

Read v20-21

8. How does Job respond? Could you say the same thing if your wealth or family were taken away?
9. What **TYPES** of causes are there for the disasters that come to Job? How does this make Job’s response even more remarkable?

Job 1:22 Summarizes Job’s response

10. Why would Job be sinning if he charged God with wrongdoing?
11. Compare Job’s response with the charge of the teachers of the law against Jesus in ***Mark 3:20-30***

Discussion 2 Skin for skin: the gloves are off

Job 2 (Sermon February 12th)

1. Read Job 2:1-6 noting carefully the similarities and the differences between this encounter and that of Ch1v6-12

2. What is the extra element added to Job's testing?

3. Can you think of friends or family members you know who have suffered in some way. How did they react? What impact did their suffering have on their relationship with God?

Read Job 2:7-10

4. Temptation often comes through those closest to us. How would you assess Job's wife's advice? How does Job respond?

Read Job 2 v11-13

5. How does the reaction of Job's friends compared with the opening description of Job (1:1-5) indicate the depths of his suffering?

6. Some say that Job's friends' silence is the best thing they do for Job. Do you think a friend's silent presence is helpful in suffering? Why/why not?

7. How do we know when it is right to speak in this context?

8. How much does Job understand about why he is suffering?

9. How much do we know/understand about why we suffer?

10. To what extent is our faith put to the test by suffering?

11. What are the positives and negatives of knowing that God is sovereign when we suffer?

**Discussion 3 Eliphaz: the danger of simplistic orthodoxy
Job 4:7-9, 5:17-27 (Sermon February 19th)**

Read Job 4:7-9

1. How would you sum up Eliphaz's view of the world?

Could you write this in an "equation"? To what extent is this true?
How does it account for the realities of Job's situation – bearing in mind the description of Job in the opening verses of the book?

Read 5:17-27

2. Summarise Eliphaz's teaching in a simple "bumper sticker" – discuss your ideas as a group
3. If you were Job – how would you respond?
Read Job 6:1-4 to see how he does respond

Read John 9:1-5

4. How does Eliphaz's simplistic orthodoxy reveal itself in the question of the disciples (verse 2)?
5. How does Jesus' reply help us to see that things are not so simplistic?
6. Discuss and critique the following popular "orthodox" theology:
God want the best for his faithful people
If we trust God he blesses us
God blesses his people with wealth
If I trust God he will make me rich QED!!!

If you believed this "theology" what would you think if you lost your job and your house?

Make up your own "theology" using health and sickness instead of wealth.

**Discussion 4 Bildad: the corruption of works religion
Job 8:1-7, Job 25 (Sermon February 26th)**

Read Bildad's opening in Job 8:1-7

1. List the truths in this opening of Bildad's speech.
2. Job has just been informed of the death of his children (Ch 1:18-19) as a result of an "act of God".
What evidence does Bildad have for his claim to know the cause of this tragedy (8:4)
How would Job have felt when he heard this?

3. Bildad's prediction of future blessing (8:5-7) ironically turned out to be true (see Job 42:12-17). What is wrong with his advice on how to achieve this blessing (8:16)?

Read Job 25.

4. List what is true in what Bildad says here.
5. How would you assess Bildad's view of men and women in vv. 4-6?
6. How would you answer his question in Job 25:4a?
What difference does Jesus make to your answer?

Discussion 5 Zophar: the discouragement of shallow theology. Job 11 (Sermon March 4th)

Read Job 11:1-6

Zophar seems to be filled with righteous anger and concerned for God's reputation.

1. What is wrong with presuming to speak for God as he does?
2. How is his confidence in speaking for God undermined by his statements in verse 5 and verses 7-9?
3. How would you respond to the statement of a prominent Christian leader that "AIDS is God's judgment against homosexuals"?

Read Job 11:13-20

4. This is familiar advice. What simplistic view of God underlies it?
5. Why is it of no help to Job?
6. Someone has said that Job's friends' advice actually adds to his suffering. Do you agree? If so, list the ways it does this.
7. Can you think of a time when advice you either received or gave actually made things worse?
8. As a group, list a set of principles as a check list to help us to support a friend who is suffering.

Discussion 6 Job: the arrogance of putting God in the dock. Job 9 & 10, Job 31:35-40 (Sermon March 11th)

1. List all possible “reasons” for suffering that you can think of.
2. How many of these are taken into account in the advice of Job’s three friends? (Check out Genesis 3:17-19, Luke 13:1-5, John 9:1-3, Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 and Hebrews 12:7-11)

3. C.S. Lewis writes:

“The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defense for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock”.

Does this assessment ring true from your experience of people’s attitude to God?

Read Job 9:1-13

4. How would you summarize Job’s argument here?

Read Job 9:14-20 and 32 - 35

5. How would you describe Job’s **attitude** to God (i.e. his view of God’s character)?
6. How does this attitude express itself in Job 31:35-37?

Discussion 7 Elihu: the folly of defending God. Job 32:1-5, Job 34:1-37 (Sermon March 18th)

Read Job 32:1-5

1. What is Elihu’s motive in speaking?
2. What distinguishes him from Job’s three “friends”?

Read Job 34:5-9

3. To what extent has Elihu **understood** Job's situation
4. To what extent has he **empathised** with Job?
5. What is the difference between empathy and sympathy? When times are hard for you which do you prefer?

Read Job 34:10-37

6. In what ways does Elihu simply repeat the arguments of Job's three "friends"?
7. Elihu claims to be "wise". How would you assess his wisdom?
8. As a group graph the speeches in Job. On the horizontal axis note the name of the speaker (treat multiple concurrent speeches separately and chapter 28 as a separate "speech" by the author of the book) and on the vertical axis record the length of the speech (number of verses).
 - What trends do you notice?
 - What part does silence play in the structure of the book?
 - Who silences who?
 - Who has the last word?
 - What do these things teach us?

Discussion 8 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

Job 38:1-11, Job 39:26 - 40:14 (Sermon March 25th)

1. How does God's response to Job in Job 38:1-3 answer Job's demands in Ch 31:35. How does it turn the tables on these demands?
2. How would you summarize God's response in Job 38:4-11?
3. Job seems to repent in Ch 40:1-5. What indicates that his repentance is incomplete?

Read Job 40:7-14

4. What sin does God charge Job with?
5. What challenge does God issue Job with?

- 6.** Are there times when you have been tempted to think that you could run the world better than God? What makes you think like that?
How does God's answer and challenge to Job here apply to your temptation?

**Discussion 9 Repentance, intercession and restoration.
Job 42 (Sermon April 1st)**

- 1.** Compare Job's responses to the Lord in Ch40:4-5 and 42:1-3 with that in Ch 31:35-37. What significant difference in attitude and approach to you see here?
How does God's response to Job in Job 38:1-3 answer Job's demands?
- 2.** What differences are there between Job's situation in Chapter 3 and his situation when he repents in 42:1-6? What has he learnt in these 39 Chapters?
- 3.** Divide this chapter into three sections under the headings Repentance, Intercession and Restoration. How does the **order** of these sections answer the question "Does Job fear God for nothing?"
- 4.** How much does Job know about the **cause** of his suffering? Do you think his questions about why this has happened have been answered?
- 5.** One big question of this book is "Where is true wisdom to be found, especially when we are suffering?" How do you think the book answers this question?
- 6.** Jesus, like Job is a righteous man who suffers. What are the differences between Jesus' suffering and Job's?

Read Romans 8:28-30

- 7.** How would you respond to someone who used this verse as a promise of a trouble free life? – How does the context help us here?
- 8.** You are called to the hospital bedside of a young father severely injured in a motor accident. His wife and parents are there. They ask you "How could God let this happen?" How would you respond. What passage/s could you read from the Bible to help them.