

4th Sunday after Pentecost, at Immanuel, Mercedes

INTRO: (read text later) When we are in charge and things are going our way, it is a good feeling. We may even give God some credit for a blessing us who love Him. It usually takes a really rough set-back to bring out what is really inside of us. The book of Job tells of such a test.

I. GOD'S CHALLENGE TO JOB...

A... Started with Satan

1. who dared God to remove riches from Job (1:11)
2. bad day (1:3) livestock and servants stolen; lightning burned crops; seven sons and three daughters at birthday party killed by tornado
3. Job did not curse God; Satan asks for Job's health (2:5)
4. sores; scraped with potshard, ashes; cursed day of birth (3:11)
5. in chs. 4-31, friends Eliphaz, Bildad, & Sophar argue w/Job re: God and troubles as punishment for specific sins; call on Job to repent

B... Was triggered by Job's defiance

1. 31:35 "...let the Almighty answer me..."
2. young Elihu dismayed, waited for three elders to finish (32:4)
 - a. "you say, 'I am clean, w/o transgression, pure, no iniquity' ... you are not righteous (33:9-12)
 - b. "Far be it from God that He should do wickedness" (34:10)
 - c. 'man is chastened with pain, then man prays to God and He accepts him. He will redeem his soul' (33:19,26,28)
 - d. true, but maybe God has yet another reason/cause of evil, Elihu
3. Before Job can speak, God has His say, beginning ch. 38 (read text)
 - a. darkens counsel by words without knowledge (v.2)
 - b. prepare yourself like a man (vs. God) put up your dukes (v.3)

C... Leaves Job without an answer or an excuse

1. Where were you when I... (Creator speaks to His creature! v.4)
2. v.5 'measurements, surely you know' (irony, sarcasm)
3. are seas bounded y land, or vice versa?
4. re: clouds as garment; cp. view form space shuttle, weather satellite
5. God reviews nature with Job through chapters 38-39

D... Is intended to put Job in his proper place

1. Job 40:4 "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer Thee"
2. still not good enough for God (chapters 40-41)
3. 42:3 "I have uttered what I did not understand"
4. 42:5 "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now me eye sees Thee"
5. 42:6 "Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes"

II. GOD'S MESSAGE TO US

A. Our belligerence angers Him

1. acting as if we are in charge; as individuals, or nation, or 'scientists'
2. speaking our opinions as if they obligate God (My God wouldn't...)
3. offering unbiblical ideas of creation, extra-marital relations, death penalty, homosexuality)
4. expressing dissatisfaction with His dealings with us
 - a. as to rainfall or sunshine or temperature, e.g.
 - b. or state of our health or wealth
 - c. or at the death of a loved one, "Why, God?"
5. just unwilling to let God be in charge

B. We have no right to question or challenge God (even believers!)

1. we, like Job, are the creatures, not the Creator
2. we cannot understand all aspects of world events, or God's will
3. start with Elihu's wisdom (I.B.2.a.b.c)
4. but we, better than Elihu, now **how** God redeems His creatures

C. God will accept only the humble, penitent believers

1. all are redeemed, but not all admit their **need** for redemption
2. how difficult for the human ego to admit a specific sin (sins, yes)
3. also (42:5) hearing with ears, but not seeing
4. what does it take to get us to say (42:6) "I repent in dust and ashes"
5. yet, such are the humble penitents whom God blesses (publican)
6. we **spoke** words of penitence today "I a poor miserable... confess"

D. Such a penitent believer's life is pleasant under God's forgiveness

1. it eliminates worry; Someone **else** is in charge
2. in guarantees assurance of...
 - a. all that I need to support this body and life
 - b. whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life
3. Somebody has (all the) answers, even when we don't
4. Somebody **is** in charge, Who is...
 - a. Almighty, and capable of handling everything
 - b. Merciful, proven by holy innocent death, resurrection

CONCLUSION: We have no dust and ashes here today to illustrate to God and to each other our repentance. But we do have an altar before which we beg the mercy of our Redeemer. To such who let God be God, He gives His forgiveness on account of the Redeemer, Jesus; plus a whole lot more! To God be all praise and glory. Amen.