

"Ashes Seeking Help"
(Job 1:1-22)
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Introduction: We Can and Should Be Able to Relate to Job

- A. His name means either "one exposed to hostility" and we should be able to relate OR "one who returns and repents" and we should be able to relate!
- B. But even more fundamentally, he is "a man": Just human like you and me. And we all know about Job's story and it makes us a little anxious. "I too am just flesh and blood...it could happen to me." Our vulnerability and our weakness (reminders of sin's entry into the world) is always cause for anxiety.
- C. He was blameless and upright = does not mean that he was sinless. Job admits his sin in 6:24, 7:21, & 42:6.
- D. In fact this is his confession in 42:6:
"therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."
- E. This evening we have imitated Job through ashes upon ourselves, but can we relate to "despising" ourselves?
- F. We should be able to relate to that as well when we contemplate our sin.

Part I: He Feared God and Turned Away From Evil (v 1):

- A. What we should relate to the most is the fear of God.
- B. As clear as the words are, they often remains enigmatic to people.
- C. The word has different shades of meaning and is not always the negative sense of being afraid of something.
- D. To fear the Lord is to cling to Him, to know that you need Him, to view Him in such a way that if not for Him in your life holding you and protecting you, then your life would be destroyed.
- E. In this context, we revere Him, we trust in Him, we are in awe of Him, and He is most important to us. This is the fear of the Lord that is praiseworthy.
- F. Because of Job's great trust in the Lord, He feared the Lord to the extent – and this should always be the practical result of the fear of God among other practical expressions – that he also "turned away from evil." Evil is a way of describing sin certainly, but it means twisting, perverting, or simply going against what is of God. If sin is lawlessness, then evil is the living out of and pursuit of lawlessness. It is openly against God's way. Christians are sinners, but should strive to avoid that which is evil. Indeed, we are commanded to "hate" that which is evil (Amos 5:15).

Part II: And Yet Job Was Still A Sinner Who Lived In A Sinful World.

- A. Why do bad and terrible things happen?
- B. Because sin has come into the world.
- C. Satan is part of that fall. Here in Job, Satan whose very name means "adversary" and "accuser" (devil = "slanderer").
- D. On account of the saving work of Jesus, the devil fell like lightening from heaven (Luke 10:18).

- E. However, Satan is still the accuser who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to devour (1st Peter 5:8).
- F. He accuses us when we are confronted by the guilt, the shame and the fear caused by our sin and the sin in the world.
- G. Job is given horrible news.
- H. When he lost his health (2:7) after losing his property and children (1:13-19), Job sat in ashes in great misery (2:8).

"And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes."

- I. Job's suffering reminded him that he was only ashes. And he contemplated his misery, his pain, his sin...he sat bereaved in ashes that reminded him of his mortality.
- J. We pray that we would not lose our health, we pray that we would not lose our property and children, but we can still relate to Job...we live in world fallen to sin where terrible things happen; but even closer to home, we are sinners...and this sin is already devastating. It leads to the death that we will all experience; it has led to our deepest struggles in life; it has led to every painful tear we have cried...yes, we should be able to relate to Job.

Conclusion:

- A. But Job worshipped (1:20) we worship. Because Christ comes to us in our ashes. He comes not as simply as God above us, but as God among us: our Saving Brother who joined us in our ashes.
- B. No one in the history of humanity sat in a deeper heap of ashes than Christ, quite simply because He bore the cause of all ashes: He bore all sins. Not just mine, and not just yours, but the sins of the world.
- C. In an ash heap so high, He was lifted up on a cross to suffer for our sin; and to die as One condemned in our stead. He took our ashes, He took our sin, He took our death.
- D. So Job worshipped, because with this Lord who gives and takes, we are blessed (1:21) which means the Lord will continue to work through everything – even, and if I may be so bold, *especially* through our ashes and pain – to bless us, to bring good to us even when the ashes are piled high. After-all He is the Lord!
- E. That name, that title is not random. It is the Lord who gives life from death. His Name means more than the fact that He is our Creator, but it means He is our God of love and mercy Who cares for us. He will continue to work through our ashes, keep us united to Himself, and lead us to worship Him knowing we are blessed, knowing we are forgiven, knowing we are saved no matter what we face. May our ashes bring us constantly before the Lord, calling on His Name and may our faith be activated every time knowing He will bless us, every, single time. May we always say with Job, "blessed be the name of the Lord."