

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
 Sermon: "Learning to ride out the storm (Part 2)."
 Scripture: Job 3:1-10, 4:1-9, 7:11-21
 Rev. Steve Flyk
 June 7, 2026
 Opener: or I sing the almighty power of God 333
 Choruses: Lord From Sorrows Deep I Call (Psalm 42) (Getty), How great is our God (Tomlin)
 Hymn sermon: He will hold me fast (Getty)
 Closer: I need thee every hour

A friend loses a spouse.
 A coworker receives a cancer diagnosis.
 A neighbour is laid off.
 We know we should do something, but what?

Do you come near
 Or do you keep your distance?
 Maybe suggest that they take some time off,
 Or talk to a counsellor or pastor?

Do you let them vent and listen
 Or do you try to correct their attitude and their reasoning,
 Telling them that the world doesn't always work
 The way they expect it,
 And that they should learn to count their blessings?

How do you respond when you are confronted
 By another person's sorrow and loss?
 Would it be helpful if someone responded
 That very same way to you?

Today, we are in week 2
 of our sermon series on the Book of Job.
 Last week we talked about how to read Job.

I told you that Job is biblical wisdom literature,
 A genre explores how to live well,
 and what we can expect from God's world.
 I argued that we should view Job
 in dialogue and tension
 with those other biblical books of wisdom
 and that Job, in particular, addresses how we can live faithfully
 When life doesn't work out.

Life doesn't work out for Job.

Despite being a righteous person
 Job is hit by a swift series of disasters
 That rob him of everything.
 Job loses his wealth, his health, and his family,
 And he doesn't know why.

At first, Job seems to take these losses in stride.
 He seems rather stoic.
 At the end of the first chapter, Job declares:
 "Naked I came from my mother's womb,
 and naked I will depart.
 The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
 may the name of the Lord be praised." [Job 1:21]

But today we encounter a Job
 who can no longer keep his grief
 suppressed and his emotions contained.
 We also hear the first response
 of the friends who have come to console him.

At first, Job's friends do remarkably well.
 They sit with him in silence for seven days.
 Which is probably the best thing they do in the entire book.
 Once they start talking, things go downhill rather quickly.

This is not just my opinion.
 At the end of the story, we are given God's perspective
 On the way that Job has made his way through his suffering
 As well as the way his friends have supported him.

The Lord says to Eliphaz,
 "I am angry with you and your two friends,
 because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." [Job
 42:7-9]
 This is something to remember
 As we listen to all the speeches of Job and his friends.

In the end, God judges Job to have remained faithful in his suffering,
While Job's friends have roused God's fury.

Let's review what Job and Eliphaz have said today.

In our first section, Job chapter three,
Job offers a poetic lament in which he curses his birthday.

While he had earlier refused to curse God,
(as encouraged by his wife)
He now openly despises the fact that he was born
Wishing that if his birthday were June 14,
June 14 would be torn out of the calendar
never to be seen again.

Most of us have had days we wished had never happened.
Job wishes HE had never happened.
He isn't wishing for a different life.
He isn't wishing for a second chance.
He wishes he had never been born at all.

Job's present experience is so incredibly painful
That he would trade in all his wonderful life experiences
(his first kiss, holding his first child,
watching his children mature into competent adults)
just to escape his present pain.

Job wants to be uncreated.
He wishes that the Bible's creation story in Genesis 1
Could run in reverse.

Remember the opening of that story?
"In the beginning... God said, "Let there be light,"
and there was light. [And] God saw that the light was good... [Genesis 1:1-4 NIV]
Here Job says of his birthday,
"That day—may it turn to darkness;
may God above not care about it;

may no light shine on it." (Job 3:4).

This Job is no longer carrying
The stiff upper lip
we encountered at the end of the first chapter.

This Job is broken.
This Job is honest with his grief.
And to this broken Job
We have the first response of his friends.

At first glance those words of Eliphaz
Seem to be encouraging.
Eliphaz reminds Job of the many times
That Job has encouraged and lifted up others,
Strengthening feeble hands and weak knees.

Eliphaz tells Job to trust in his piety and righteousness,
As if to suggest that Job's vindication may be just around the corner.
As if to say that Job just needs to hang on a little longer.

Eliphaz goes on to state the religious philosophy of the people of Israel,
What is now spoken of as the retribution principle:
That God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked,
often in this life and in ways that can be observed.

Eliphaz declares confidently:
"Who, being innocent, has ever perished?
Where were the upright ever destroyed?
As I have observed, those who plow evil
and those who sow trouble reap it." [Job 4:7-8]

This, however, is salt to Job's wounds.
It is not simply that Job has lost some wealth
That could be regained in a rise in the stock market.
In one fell swoop Job, lost all his children.
Then he lost his health.

Eliphaz fails to understand the comprehensive
And total loss experience by Job.
What Eliphaz may be offering as a comfort
Fails to account for Job's situation.

And that philosophy he trusts in
Doesn't account for Job's situation.
Job is *innocent*.
yet Job has been *destroyed*.

Eliphaz fail to offer a good explanation.
Eliphaz fails to be a good companion and friend.

This leads us to the third section
Where Job gives full expression to his complaint.
As one of our study participants noted
You can tell Job is talking to God (not Eliphaz)
Because it is God who is the source of dreams and visions.

Job asks:
"Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep,
that you put me under guard?
When I think my bed will comfort me
and my couch will ease my complaint,
even then you frighten me with dreams
and terrify me with visions..." [Job 7:12-13]

Then in, what you might see as a surprising and unexpected riff
On Psalm 8, Job takes a different view
Of the attention that God gives to humanity
That King David sang as praiseworthy.

I despise my life; I would not live forever.
Let me alone; my days have no meaning.
"What is mankind that you make so much of them,
that you give them so much attention..." [Job 7:16-17]

In Job's view, the very attention of God that David praises
is the source of his personal disaster.
Job asks God to leave him alone and let him be.
"Will you never look away from me,
Or let me along for an instant?" Job goes on to declare.
These are shocking words.
And yet they are here in Holy Scripture.
These are startling remarks,
And yet as I reminded you at the beginning,
God is not upset with Job's complaint,
But views Job's friends as the ones who have failed
To speak truthfully about God.

So what is praiseworthy about the way Job is facing his suffering?
I think at least two things can be said.

First of all Job is being honest
About his experience of pain and loss.
Job doesn't hide his thoughts or bury his feelings
About the injustice he feels.
He brings them out in the open for all to see.

This is uncomfortable for those of us
Who has been taught that self-composure,
That pretending all is well
And avoid sharing our burdens
is the highest virtue.

Job is not hiding his anger and loss
from his friends, himself, or his God.
Job is honest that he is not content
With the way things have happened.

Secondly, Job brings this complaint directly to God.
Pay attention to the cycles of speeches
And you will notice that while Job's friends

Spend their talking about God,
Job is actually speaking to God.

The friends talk about how God rules the world with justice.
And how we need to accommodate ourselves to this role.
Job disagrees with them.
He feels that his life proves that God's rule is broken.
But while the friends talk about God's rule, and Job's place in it,
Job talks to God and questions God's actions.

Job will eventually learn that there are errors in his accusation,
And gaps in his understanding,
But Job's approach is judged to be superior.
God is interested in people talking to him,
Rather than talking about him.

So how about you?
How do you respond when you are confronted
By other people's anger and sorry?
How do you respond to your own?

Do you lament those losses that feel cruel and unjust?
Or do you think it is better for yourself
and your friends and family
To pretend that you are doing okay?

Do you bring your sadness and fury
To the God we say rules the universe.
Or do you keep it to yourself
Worried that God would rather not hear your complaint?

Job teaches us that faith is not pretending everything is fine.
Faith is bringing our broken hearts to God.
Sometimes faith sings.
Sometimes faith praises.
And sometimes faith sits in ashes and asks hard questions.
The remarkable thing about Job

is that even when he wants God to leave him alone,
he is still talking to God.

The remarkable thing about God,
Is that God wants to hear from us too.

Maybe it is time to start an honest conversation with God.
Amen.

For those who are taking the challenge to read
(All that dialogue between the prologue and epilogue)
I would encourage you take a look at the outline
I've posted online,
and will send out through our weekly email.

I find it helpful to know where I am in a story,
And an outline will situate you well.

That being said please keep in mind that when it comes
To all that talking of Job and his friends
that their speeches are (and I'm quoting a commentator),
"too long to be called conversation or even dialogue."
There is not enough connection between them
to enable the argument to be traced through logically...

Each speech is a complete piece,
whose inner completeness enables
a whole lot of ideas to be thrown forward.
This is typical of the technique of 'contest' literature,
a form of debate in which the prize is awarded
to the person who develops the best case
by making the best speech. [Anderson 103]

It will be tough going, but those who stick with it
Will be rewarded with the last and glorious speech of God.