

How the Bible Ends!

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Date: 02 July 2023

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[0 : 00] Can I ask you to open up your Bibles at Job chapter 42 or the app you may have on your phone? Just give you a second to do that. Job chapter 42.

Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thought. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?

Therefore I utter what I do not understand. Things too wonderful for me, which I do not know. Here and I will speak.

I will question you and you make it known to me. I had heard of you by hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you.

Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. After the Lord has spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to AlphaZah, the Tenamite, my anger burns against you and against your two friends.

[1 : 19] For you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves.

And my servant Job and my servant Job and ask you. For I have accepted his prayers not to deal with you according to your folly.

For you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has. So AlphaZah the Tenamite and Bildad the Shudahite and Sopha the Namanite went and did what the Lord had told them.

And the Lord accepted Job's prayer. And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends.

And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then he came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before and ate bread with him in his house.

[2 : 34] And they showered him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.

And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkey.

He had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the names of the first daughter, Jemiah. And the name of the second, Kaziah.

And the name of the third, Kerehupach. And in all the land there was no woman so beautiful as Job's daughters. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

And after this, Job lived 140 years and saw his sons, and saw his son's son, four generations.

[3 : 40] And Job died an old man and full of days. Great. Thank you, Bernard. Let me pray for us briefly as we come and consider this passage.

So, Heavenly Father, as we've said so many times before, we come to your word not because we want to hear the opinions of man, because we want to hear you, we want to encounter you, the living God, in your word.

Won't you come and speak to us? God, you know where each one of us are at this morning. You know our heart. You know our worries and our fears and our anxieties, our joys and our delights. God, won't you speak to us and minister to us by your word we pray.

In your great and gracious name. Amen. Amen. Let me start off with a question. It's a simple question, but a deep question. Why should you trust God?

More particularly, why should you trust God when things go wrong? When suffering comes your way? When God's ways don't make sense? When God allows hardship and difficulty?

[4 : 44] When you get that report from the doctor saying stage four cancer? Why should you trust God? If you're new to church this morning or maybe new to Christianity, one of the simplest things that the Bible says is that Christians are people who live by faith.

Which really just means that Christians are people who in the day-to-day realities of life live lives of trusting God. If you've been coming to Watermark for a while, you'll know that one of our most basic definitions of a Christian is a Christian is someone who is growing to love God, trust God, and therefore obey God.

But why should we trust God? Why should you trust God? If you're a high school student here this morning, why don't you ask your parents that question over lunch today?

Mom, Dad, why should we trust God, especially when he allows suffering to come our way? Well, we've been working through the book of Job these last seven weeks, and that's the question that the book of Job is provoking us and asking of us.

Why should you trust God? And I hope it's been encouraging as we've looked at it. I hope it's helped us to make sense of the book of Job, and you can read it on your own now in light of this series.

[5 : 59] But I hope more than just understanding it, I hope it's been encouraging. I hope it's comforted us in some ways. And the point of the book of Job is that though there is so much in life that we don't understand, so often the question, why, Lord, doesn't get answered, the point of the book of Job is that we still have great reason to trust God, even in the midst of difficulty and hardship, even when we don't know why God allows the things to happen that He does.

Mark Devers summarized the book of Job saying, Sometimes we will suffer greatly. Often we will not know why. However, we always have reason to trust God.

I think that's one of the great messages of the book of Job. Well, if you're new to church this morning, let me briefly summarize for us the last six weeks so that you can catch up with us and tell us where we're going.

And so in chapter 1 and 2, we meet this man called Job. He's a very righteous man, a blameless man, a man that God Himself commends as an example of faithfulness and devotion.

And God calls him His servant. And one day Satan comes to God and says, God, Job doesn't really love you. He's just using you. He serves you because he thinks that you'll be good to him.

[7 : 19] Strike him. In other words, let difficulty come his way, and Job will curse you to your face. And God, for some reason, we still don't know really why, God allows Satan to strike Job, and Satan does so, and he strikes him terribly.

Everything that is precious and valuable to him is taken from him. His wealth, his possessions, his status in society, and ultimately his children are all taken from him in one single day.

And Job is unaware of this, why this is happening. He just feels the consequences. He doesn't know about the conversation in heaven. And Job has three friends that come to him, and they come to comfort him, except they end up condemning him.

And they challenge him. They confront him. And for most of the book of Job, there's this back and forth dialogue where Job's friends say, Job, you must have sinned terribly. You must have done some great thing, and God is now punishing you because of your sin.

And Job says, it's not true. I haven't done anything. I'm not perfect, okay, I admit that. But I haven't done any great sin that you're accusing me of. And you can imagine how well that goes well with their friends.

[8 : 27] They say, see, you are self-righteous. We told you. You're defending yourself. And Job defends himself. And in the end, Job says, oh, I wish that God would appear.

I wish that God would speak to me. I wish that I could see God, that he'd tell me what's going on. If only I could restore my relationship with God again. And last week, we saw that God eventually does appear.

And he speaks to Job, and he speaks profoundly. And he says two things. He says, Job, there are a bazillion things. I don't think that's an actual Greek word, but if it was, or a Hebrew word, there are a bazillion things that you don't understand about the world.

And you're not in control of because you are not God. I am. Secondly, God says, Job, there is a reason for suffering and pain and chaos and evil in the world.

And that's because there is a source behind it. And the source is the Satan. But Satan is not my equal. He is a created being. And I am over him. I am sovereign over him.

[9 : 28] And one day I will defeat him. And that defeat happened when Jesus came and died and rose again on the cross. And that defeat will ultimately happen when Jesus returns again. And so we come today to the final chapter of this great book of Job.

And let's see how it ends. And the main point of today, Job 42, is this. In the unpredictability of life, in all the ups and downs and the storms and the chaos of life, we can and we must humbly trust God.

We must humble ourselves and trust God, hold on to God. Because our hope and our vindication is in him, and he controls the outcome. In all the ups and downs of life, when we don't know what's going on, let us humble ourselves, and we can humble ourselves, and hold on to him.

Because our hope and our vindication is found in him, and he controls the outcome. So, let's look at this passage. I hope you got it in front of you, maybe in the bulletin or in your Bible. In this passage, there are three conversations that happen.

There's a conversation between Job and God, between God and Job's friends, and between the narrator and us. So, verses 1 to 6, Job speaks to God, and he confesses his sin.

[10 : 43] In verse 7 to 9, God speaks to Job's friends about Job, and God defends his servant. And then finally, in verse 10 to 17, the narrator speaks to us.

21st century Hong Kong, and he says, hold on to God, keep trusting him. So, let's look at those three sections together. Look at verse 1 to 6. Job speaks to God, and confesses his sin.

Now, we saw last week that Job encounters God, and he does so in an amazing way. You know, I said this when I prayed. One of our goals each Sunday, the reason we come to church is not just to hear the pastor talk.

Okay, you don't need to hear my opinion. I don't really know anything. The reason we come to church on Sunday is to encounter the living God. That's our goal, to walk out of here having said, I've met with God.

Now, I don't know how many of us have met with God like Job meets with God. That's quite dramatic. But still, I hope that we do in some way. And that's the first, that's the point of his first speech.

[11 : 49] God doesn't answer each and every question. He doesn't explain why he allows things to happen the way that they do. But he does reveal himself. And so he says, Job, there are a gazillion things you don't know, you can't control.

You are not God. I am. And it's kind of like Job has been looking at God through a viewfinder. You know, if you've got a camera, and you look through the little viewfinder to try and get a picture of the world.

And God takes away the camera and says, Job, let me just show you what's really going on. And Job sees God. And look at how he responds. Verse 1. Then Job answered the Lord and said, I now know that you can do all things.

That no purpose of yours can be thwarted. That means undermined or overcome. Then Job quotes God and he says, you said, who is this that hires counsel without knowledge?

Job responds, God, I've uttered words that I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me. Again, he quotes God, here and I will speak. I will question you, Job. You make it known to me.

[12 : 54] Job responds, God, I'd heard of you at the hearing of my ears. But now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself. I repent in dust and ashes.

For Christians, confession and repentance is a normal part of the Christian journey and the Christian life. And here we see a great example of it. How many of us, when you've heard somebody admitting that they've done something wrong, they always say, yes, I'm sorry, but dot, dot, dot, right?

I'm sorry for what I did, but you didn't explain it to me properly. Or I'm sorry for this, but the dog ate my homework, right? Or I'm sorry, but just when I was walking out of the house, this tornado came and, you know, I'm sorry I'm late.

I'm sorry, but dot, dot, dot. Well, but Job doesn't do any of that. He doesn't make any excuses. He doesn't blame his friends. He doesn't blame his upbringing or his childhood drama or trauma or the government or the economy.

He simply says, God, I was wrong. I said things that I shouldn't have said. I uttered words that were too wonderful for me. God, I repent. I'm sorry. But if you hear the last few weeks, it's a little bit confusing because Job repents, but one thing that's confusing, in most of the book of Job, his friends have been saying to him, Job, you've sinned in some great way and you need to repent.

[14 : 19] And Job has been saying for 28 chapters, it's not true. I haven't done what you've been saying I've been doing. I've got nothing to repent of. And yet here Job suddenly is repenting.

So has Job changed his mind and now he's agreeing with the friends? Well, what's going on? What we have here is a great example of Christian confession and repentance because Job is not confessing any great action that he's done.

He's not saying, listen, I've broken the seventh commandment or I swore at my boss or I lied to the tax man. Rather, what he's confessing is an attitude of his heart. He's looking at his heart and he's saying, God, when I think about what is going on inside of me, the way I related to you actually was out of line.

And that's true of all great confession, Christian confession. It's not just our actions, it's our motives. That's why actually Christians, sometimes we repent of even good things that we do. Good things done with the wrong motives.

And so here he confesses that he had thought of God as somehow being small and insignificant, almost as if God was his equal. He says, God, now I know that you can do all things. You are God.

[15 : 30] God, I'm sorry that I was so arrogant that I thought that somehow you should answer to me and explain yourself. He says, God, I've uttered things that I didn't understand, things too wonderful for me.

In other words, things that only belong to you. Things I didn't know. God, I spoke as if you and I were equal, as if I deserve an explanation from you.

God, I'm sorry. And what's it brought about, this repentance, this change of thinking? Well, he tells us. He says, previously, I'd heard of you with my ears. I knew a lot about you.

But now, God, I've seen you with my eyes. God, I've encountered you. Lord, I'd heard about you. I'd heard lots of sermons. I understood the Bible and theology. Oh, but God, now I've encountered you.

I've seen you in a new way. You know, it's kind of like if you're sitting in a restaurant or a cafe or coffee shop, and there's maybe conversation going on around you.

[16 : 27] Sometimes you're distracted, right? You're listening to conversation. But then the TV comes on. Which one's going to win, the TV or the conversation? Or which one's going to win if you're in your house and you see there's some music playing and then the TV's on?

Well, a visual's always going to beat audio, right? The TV's going to drown out the music every time. Well, Job says, God, I had heard about you, but now I've seen you.

I've encountered you in a profound way. What's amazing is that Job hasn't had his camels restored or his sheep restored, his children restored. Nothing's been put right.

Job's circumstances haven't changed. He's still sitting in the ash heap. And yet he has encountered the living God. He has seen God and his life changes.

Friends, maybe I can ask you this morning. Have you encountered God like that? Have you seen God like that? One of the ways that you know that you've encountered the living God is that you've been humbled, that you're willing to get to the place where you surrender yourself to God and say, God, now my eyes have seen you.

[17 : 38] You are God and I am not. Friends, have you ever come to the place where you've handed over your life to God and say, you are God and I am not? Lord, I used to think about you like this, but now I see actually you're like this.

Or God, I used to think of life like this, but now actually I see life works like this. Friends, have you encountered God like that? Have you seen him with your eyes?

Have you been humbled? If not, there's a chance that you're not actually a Christian. You might never be saved. You might not actually be born again. Friends, Jesus Christ has come and God the Holy Spirit has been given to us that we might know him and see him with the eyes of our heart.

Now here's a question. Where did Job see God? Because from what we can see in the scripture, he didn't, right? He hasn't had any heavenly vision.

God hasn't appeared to him or stood before him in the form of an angel. He's still sitting on the rubbish heap, scraping himself with pieces of pottery. So what does Job mean when he says, my eyes have seen God?

[18 : 48] Well, clearly he means he's heard God's voice in such a way that is spoken to his heart, that the eyes of his heart have been opened, that he sees God differently to how he did. His whole worldview has been changed.

Job encounters the living God in God's words to him. Now, what's the implication for us? Here's a really challenging implication.

You know, up until about 500 years ago, no Christians had the Bible in their own language or their own personal Bibles. The Bible is only in Latin or Greek or Hebrew.

And no Christians could afford Bibles. And so the only way that you could hear God's word was to go to church, but often it was read or preached in Latin, which most people couldn't understand. And so up until 500 years ago, most people didn't have access to God's word.

Friends, you know that most of us here have more access to God's word and God speaking to us than most Christians throughout the history of the world. In addition, we come to church week in and week out, and we hear God's word read to us and spoken to us and preached and hopefully explained to us.

[19 : 56] And yet, how often do we respond like Job? Friends, what's our response when God speaks to us by his spirit through his word?

It's very easy to say, oh, that was okay. So I'll talk. I thought, you know, Neil said okay today. Maybe not the best, but all right. Or maybe in the morning we read our Bible, we check off the Bible reading plan, put our Bible away, and go on with our day.

But friends, do we encounter the living God in his word like Job did? Do we come to God's word expecting that he will speak to us, that we will see him with the eyes of our hearts?

Do we, like Job, say, God, I've met you. I want to live differently. God, have your way in my life. Job responds to God, and he confesses his sin.

Now, the second conversation that takes place is that God speaks to Job's friends about Job, and he defends Job. So look at what happens here in verse 10. Well, before we get there, in the New Testament, there's a book of James, and James was written by Jesus' half-brother, and it's written to a bunch of Christians that are going through a difficult time.

[21 : 05] They are suffering, and James writes to encourage them to keep on going. And at the end of James, he writes this. He says, We said that earlier, Job 42 is written and says that in the unpredictability of life, we can trust God and hold on to him.

And that's what James wants his listeners to do, to hold on to God and trust him in the unpredictability of life. But James gives a very interesting reason. He says, Hold on to God.

Why? Because you have seen that God is merciful and compassionate. Well, here's the question. How in the book of Job do we see that God is merciful and compassionate?

Look at what he does here in verse 7 and 9. God doesn't say anything to Job. Rather, he speaks to Job's friends. And what he does is he vindicates Job.

The word vindicates means to justify somebody, to defend somebody, to speak to somebody's accusers, saying that what you're accusing this person of is not true. They are not guilty of your accusations.

[22 : 18] God vindicates Job. Look at verse 7 to 9 with me. He says, The Lord spoke these words. After the Lord spoke these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz, the Temanite, My anger burns against you and against your two friends.

For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Therefore, go and take some animals, go to my servant Job, ask him to offer burnt offerings for you, and my servant Job will pray for you.

And I will accept his prayer for you to not deal with you according to your foolishness. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. So they went and they did as the Lord commanded him, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

Friends, look at the mercy and the compassion of the Lord to Job, in the way that he not only accepts Job and affirms him, but he defends him. Four times God calls Job his servant.

It's a title of affirmation and dignity. It's kind of like when Jesus is baptized, God speaks and says, This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.

[23 : 28] With him I, with him I, sorry, this is my beloved son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased. God is saying, This is Job my servant, with him I am well pleased.

He's one of my people. I love him. God sends Job's friends to him, in order for Job to pray for them, and to offer sacrifices. You know, in the Bible, only those that are righteous, can expect their prayers to be heard, and received by God.

And it's amazing, Christopher Asher writes and says, If we wrote the book of Job, you know how we would do it? We would have God go to one of Job's friends, and says, Listen, Eliphaz, just come here for a minute. Listen, you know, Job's in a bad way.

He's kind of said some pretty bad things. He's sinned with his mouth, with his mouth, Eliphaz, I want you to go and pray for Job. And listen, I want you to go and offer some sacrifices for him, and let's see if we can get back on the right track.

Okay, can you do that? Can you help me? Right? That's how we would have written Job. But what does God do? He says, Eliphaz, you need Job's prayers. God goes to Job and says, Job, will you please pray for your friends?

[24 : 33] Will you please ask God to be merciful to them? It's amazing, his grace and his mercy, that Job shows, God shows to Job. You've heard of the steadfastness of Job.

You've seen how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. That even though Job has said some pretty outrageous things, God accepts his prayer and welcomes him.

But look at the third reason here. God says that twice, God says, Job has spoken rightly of God. And that's really interesting, because actually in the book of Job, Job says some pretty outrageous things.

He says, God is in the wrong. God is unjust, the way that he's treating me. And God here says, Job has spoken well of me, but his friends haven't.

What's going on here? See, the problem with Job's friends is that they've got a system in which God works, and they presume to speak on behalf of God, but they actually don't know God.

[25 : 31] But Christopher Ashe says that while Job's friends want a theological system, Job actually wants God himself. That's why God says, Job has spoken well of me.

You see, Job is, he's in pain, and he's confused, and he's grappling, and he's wrestling, but the one thing he does is he brings his pain and his confusion to God. Job longs for God.

He says, Oh, that God would answer me. Oh, that God would restore his friendship with me. He says, God, I don't know where you are. I don't know what you're doing, but God, I long to know you again.

And Job's friends are content to speak about God, but they've got no interest in actually knowing God. And Derek Kidner says, God's affirmation of Job reminds us that for all God's rough handling of Job's rude demands, God reads between the lines, and he listens to his servants' hearts.

You see that? Job says some pretty outrageous things. He says some pretty rude things about God, but the one thing Job does want is he wants God. And God sees that, and he says, that is a man that I can answer.

[26 : 40] Rather than the friends that say all the right things, but their hearts are cold and hard towards him. Friends, the mercy and the compassion of God, that he sees through our foolishness, and he sees through the dumb things that we say, and he sees our hearts, and he says, let me draw near.

The mercy and the compassion of God. My friends, here's a question for us. Do you find yourself trying to justify yourself? Are you someone who gets defensive easily, or comes up with reasons and arguments why you're not the way that people describe you?

Friends, do you constantly feel judged by others? If someone challenges you, do you get defensive quickly? Are you somebody that other people think are quite touchy and defensive?

And if so, why is it that you get defensive so quickly? For almost 28 chapters in the book of Job, Job's friends are accusing him, and Job is trying to defend himself.

And here, in two short verses, God says Job's friends are wrong, and he comes to Job's defense. Friends, in Job 42, we see the good news of the gospel, which is that if we, like Job, we'll humble ourselves, and we can because of God's great mercy and compassion in the person of Jesus, if we will humble ourselves rather than trying to defend ourselves and vindicate ourselves and justify ourselves, if we will confess where we've gone wrong and say, God, I spoke wrongly.

[28 : 16] God, the words of my mouth, the actions of my hands, or the attitude of my heart were out of line. God, I have sinned. If we believe that Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for us, we will be justified, defended, vindicated, not because we are righteous, but because God will defend us.

Friends, if you are in Jesus Christ, if you've put your hope in him, you too will experience the mercy and the compassion of God because God will defend you against the accusations that you justly deserve.

God will say of you, you belong to me, and you are my people, and I love you, and with you I'm well pleased because Jesus went to the cross for you.

Friends, in the words of that great hymn, when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, I would, I look and see him there who made an end to all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free, and God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me. Friends, the reason why you don't need to justify yourself and defend yourself and get defensive and touchy is because the only truly innocent sufferer, Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, lifted up his body as a sin offering on the cross for you to pay the price for your sin and my sin for all those who will humble themselves and come to him in confession and repentance that we don't need to justify ourselves.

[29 : 47] Friends, do you long to be free from the voices in your head that accuse you and tell you what a sinner you are? Do you long to be free from justifying yourself and defending yourself?

The irony is the only way to be free from that is to not try and justify yourself but to admit, God, it's true. I'm a sinner in need of your grace. And for those of us who can do that because we've seen Jesus, because we've seen what he did on the cross, because of the great mercy and compassion of God, God says, my son, my daughter, with you I'm pleased.

I love you. God, God, God, Job humbled himself when he saw the majesty of God. Friends, how much more shall we humble ourselves when we see the great mercy and compassion of God in Jesus on the cross, that Jesus died for us?

In the unpredictability of life, let's humble ourselves and hold on to God. And we can because of the great mercy and compassion of God, knowing that in the end he will vindicate us and the outcome is in his hands.

Job speaks to God and confesses his sin. God speaks to Job's friends and defends Job against their accusations. But thirdly, the narrator speaks to us.

[31 : 02] And so let's see what happens here as we come to an end. In the final section of the book of Job, the narrator speaks to us. And what we see here is that Job is not only justified and defended, he is completely restored.

And he's restored even more so than he was in the beginning. As great and as blessed and as abundantly fruitful as he was in the beginning, he's even more so at the end.

Look at verse 10 with me. It says, The Lord restored the fortunes of Job. The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before and they ate bread with him in his house.

In other words, they had a great meal, a feast. Each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold. Verse 12, And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than in the beginning. In other words, the narrator wants us to know things were great in the beginning, they're even better at the end.

Okay? Job is more than abundantly restored and blessed in the end. Verse 16, And after this, Job lived 140 years. He saw his sons and his sons' sons down to the fourth generation.

[32 : 08] Job died, an old and happy man full of days. One of the reasons why God blesses Job is because contrary to Satan's accusations, it's been proven that Job's hope is not in his wealth or his possessions but in God himself.

One of the interesting things about the way that the book of Job ends in chapter 42 is that Satan doesn't appear at all. He makes no appearance. It's almost like he's been banished from the story, right?

He's just disappeared. He's nowhere in the chapter. And after causing so much chaos and difficulty in the whole of Job, suddenly he's gone.

Why is that? Very, very deliberate. There's a reason for this. You see what's going on here? The story of Job is really, in a microcosm, the story of the Bible.

You see, Job 1 starts with paradise, right? Everything is wonderful. There's this wonderful man and he's righteous and he's blessed and he's prosperous and the world is as it should be.

[33 : 13] Kind of like the Garden of Eden. But very quickly, things go horribly, horribly wrong. And suddenly, paradise is turned to hell where Job suffers terribly.

And why does God allow Satan to do this? You know, we're never really told. We're given a couple of clues. There's this conversation. But why doesn't God just say, Satan, get lost?

Don't do that. Just you're talking nonsense. Just get lost. Why does God allow Satan to bring this agony on Job? We're never really told. Why does God allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve and to bring about the fall and the world and chaos and destruction?

We're never really told. And so most of the book of Job, there's this chaos, there's this pain, there's this wrestling, there's this agony, there's this, why Lord? How long, oh God? How can you let this be?

And there's this difficulty as life is not the way it's meant to be. And friends, isn't that true for our lives? Isn't that true for much of the Bible? There's this, how long, oh Lord? Why is it the way that it is?

[34 : 14] God, why did you allow evil and injustice to happen? And then at the end of the book of Job, God comes down, as it were, and appears. And he shows that there's a reason for the chaos in the world.

But he shows that Satan is not sovereign. That Satan will be defeated. And that God is sovereign over all things, including evil and justice and Satan. And friends, at the end of the Bible, God comes down.

And he shows that sin and suffering and Satan and death do not have the final word. Because Jesus died and rose again. And in his death, he defeated sin.

And in his resurrection, he defeated death and Satan. And the book of Job ends and Satan is banished and he's nowhere. And the book of Job ends with things much more better than they were in the beginning.

Infinitely more so in paradise again. Friends, you know how the Bible ends? The Bible ends with Satan banished into a lake of fire forever and ever. And there is no evil and there is no tears and there is no death and there is no more suffering and there is no more sin.

[35 : 20] There is no more Satan. And things in that day when Christ returns will be infinitely, infinitely better than they were even in the Garden of Eden. You see that?

The book of Job is a microcosm of the story of the Bible. Sorry about the mic. And what God is telling us here, he's saying, hold on to me. Trust me. Because in the end, not only will I vindicate you and justify you, I am the one who controls all things and in the end, I hold the end in my hand.

Friends, if you've read the Lord of the Rings, there's a great line where Sam, wakes up from a horrible dream and he says, it seems as if everything sad is becoming untrue.

That's what's going to happen in the end. Everything wrong with our world, everything sad is going to become untrue and as Tim Keller said, and it will somehow be greater for having once been broken and lost in the first place.

Friends, what's the point here? When I watch a movie with my kids, sometimes my daughters, they get scared and one daughter in particular, as soon as the music rises more than minus 100 decibels, she gets really nervous and she gets very scared and she wants to run away and I don't like this movie and we always pull her in close and say, don't worry, don't worry, I know how the story ends.

[36 : 36] Don't worry, Simba's going to be alive again, right? He's going to stay alive or whatever it is, right? I know how the story ends. Don't worry. Friends, God is looking us in the eye and he says, I know you're suffering.

I know it's hard. I know it's difficult. I know how the story ends. Yes, I defeated sin and death on the cross but one day I'm going to defeat Satan forever. Hold on to me.

Trust me. Know the great mercy and the compassion of God. Friends, God is coming to us with his word and he's telling us we can't trust him and so maybe you, like Job, on the middle, feel like in the middle chapters.

God's face seems hidden. One day, it will be restored and you'll see him face to face. Friends, when Job is in the middle chapters, that's not the end of his story and your suffering is not the end of your story.

Friends, maybe like Job, you too feel like you're having all your questions unanswered. One day, you will see him face to face and you will have your questions answered and it will be better for having gone through the storm.

[37 : 38] Friends, are you suffering this morning? Are you struggling? Don't do life on your own. Don't harden your heart. Don't let your heart get bitter. See the many compassions, the multitude of mercies of our Lord and see how it's going to end.

James chapter 5 says this, Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. You know how a farmer, he waits for the precious fruit of his labors, being patient about it.

You also be patient. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job and you've seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. Friends, why should we trust God?

In particular, why should you trust God when life is difficult, when things go wrong, when suffering comes our way, when God's ways don't seem to make sense to us? Friends, in the unpredictability of life, we can and we must humble ourselves, hold on to God, knowing that our vindication, our defense is in Him and ultimately He controls the outcome of all things.

Let's come to Him in prayer now. Oh, Heavenly Father, God, thank You so much for giving us the book of Job. God, sometimes it's hard to read the whole Bible and we get lost in all the details.

[38 : 59] God, thank You for giving us the book of Job and the story of Job to hold on to and to give us hope and to encourage us to hold on to You. Lord Jesus, I pray for each and every one of us this morning that God, whether we are struggling or suffering, whether we are in the middle chapters or whether life is going well, that God, this week, Monday morning, Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday evening, God, we will hold on to You.

When life is unpredictable and hard, when the storms of life come, God, may we lift our eyes onto You and hold on to You and trust You.

Lord, I pray that we will, in light of Your great majesty and mercy, humble ourselves, that we will come before You and get on our knees in confession and repentance.

God, won't You forgive us where we've uttered words too wonderful for us, where we've taken on things that belong to You. God, won't You forgive us, God, where we've treated You as our equal, demanded that You speak to us and respond to us.

Father, where we've tried to justify ourselves and defend ourselves, vindicate ourselves, God, we come and we open ourselves with open hands. We come before You this morning. God, we confess we are sinners in need of grace.

[40 : 27] Jesus, won't You come and flood our hearts with the gospel? Won't You show us, God, that it's only as we humble ourselves before You that we really are defended and vindicated and justified.

God, won't You come and speak to us, I pray, as we come to the communion table now, Lord, as we come and take the elements, won't You come and open the eyes of our hearts? May we not just hear about You, but may we see You and may You change us.

We pray this in Your great name. Amen. Amen.