

“WHY...?” A RESPONSE

“There’s an old, old story about a man named Job. It’s one of the oldest stories ever told. Now Job is a good man. In fact, the storyteller insists that Job is the greatest man in his whole part of the earth. Job was a good man, but he was also a wealthy man. He’s got land and crops and he’s got animals and he’s got servants and he’s got a house full of kids.”

Have you ever felt like everything in your life was going right, it was all working? If so, when was the last time you felt this way?

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I CREATED THE EARTH? TELL ME, SINCE YOU KNOW SO MUCH! WHO DECIDED ON ITS SIZE? CERTAINLY YOU’LL KNOW THAT! WHO CAME UP WITH THE BLUEPRINTS AND MEASUREMENTS? HOW WAS ITS FOUNDATION POURED, AND WHO SET THE CORNERSTONE, WHILE THE MORNING STARS SANG IN CHORUS AND ALL THE ANGELS SHOUTED PRAISE? (JOB 38:4-7).

“So we find him sitting in ashes, mourning his loss. And he’s got this broken shard of pottery and he’s scraping his skin just to try and get some relief. And his wife says to him, ‘Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!’”

Do you know someone who is sitting in the “ashes”? What do you think your response should be?

“And then Job’s friends come and they sit with him and they discuss what’s happened. And they each have their opinions about why Job is suffering like this. And so they take turns giving their answers and explanations. Because that’s what we want, isn’t it? When we suffer, we want answers and explanations. We want to know why.”

When it all falls apart, who are the people who would sit with you? What sorts of perspectives would they offer?

WHAT IS THE WAY TO THE ABODE OF LIGHT? AND WHERE DOES DARKNESS RESIDE? CAN YOU TAKE THEM TO THEIR PLACES? DO YOU KNOW THE PATHS TO THEIR DWELLINGS? SURELY YOU KNOW, FOR YOU WERE ALREADY BORN! YOU HAVE LIVED SO MANY YEARS! (JOB 38:19-21).

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”

Have you been taught that if you do the right things, God will take care of you? In what ways do you agree or disagree with that now?

THE WINGS OF THE OSTRICH FLAP JOYFULLY, THOUGH THEY CANNOT COMPARE TO THE WINGS AND FEATHERS OF THE STORK (JOB 39:13).

“And then God said to Job: Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”

What is the difference between asking and accusing?

“We want answers, don’t we? We want explanations. We want to know why we suffer like we do. Can somebody please explain this?”

What do we do when we don’t get the answers we are hoping for? Would having all the answers fix things?

IS IT YOUR WISDOM THAT MAKES THE HAWK SOAR AND SPREAD ITS WINGS TOWARD THE SOUTH? (JOB 39:26).

“But true wisdom, the kind we find here with Job, the kind that endures, the kind that sustains a person through suffering, that kind of wisdom knows when to speak and when to be silent.”

When should we speak? When should we be silent?

“Because your story is not over. The last word has not been spoken. And there may be way more going on here than any of us realise.”

How does suffering change our perspective?

“So may you be released from always having to understand why everything happens the way that it does. May this freedom open you up to all sorts of new perspectives. And may you have the wisdom to know when to say, ‘I spoke once, but now I will say no more.’”

Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.

You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 14

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the Lord. But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous. You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!