



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

In years past, I struggled with the Easter idea of death and resurrection. I struggled to understand how Jesus' resurrection was good news to me when God didn't also resurrect loved ones who had passed on too early. Sure, I understood the hope of heaven, but that was little consolation for me when what I believed I needed was the person I loved back in flesh here and now. So Easter came and went, and I was always glad to see it go.

But then I became a preacher and had to start preaching Easter in earnest, in truth, with integrity. So I began what has been a journey of spiritual inquiry and growth over the course of my nine years as a preacher. What I have come to learn is that Easter is much more than a day we celebrate and then move on from; much more than one event that happened one day 2000 years ago. It is the foundational structure for spiritual growth; both a physical and spiritual reality. It is a cycle of growth: life, death, new life on the other side. We live, we die, we live again. Literally. We will all go through that. But spiritually, we go through it too.

What I mean is that sometimes it takes the death of something to move us on to new life. There is something about struggle and suffering that provides the pathway to spiritual maturity, greater understanding, fuller peace, the second half of life.

Now why do I talk about Easter in the middle of a Job series? First, because we are still in the middle of the Easter season (50 days following Easter Sunday). And secondly, because the pattern of God using suffering, sorrow, even death to grow us up in faith did not start with Jesus. We see it here in Job.

Does God make bad things happen to make us grow? No. But God does teach us through the struggles of life. And because of our working through those struggles as Job does, in God's gracious and bountiful goodness, we are given new life on the other side.

— Rev. Katie Meek, Associate Pastor

A Family Affair

The scripture this week continues the story of Job and the rough time he has been experiencing. He does not feel comforted by his friends.

Have you ever read the book *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst? Nothing seems to go right for the main character. Some days we feel like the character in the book and not one single thing is going well for us. When you have a rough day, how do you like to be comforted? Do you hug a special stuffed friend? Do you swing super high on the swing set? Do you try to recall a memorized Bible verse? As a family, discuss things you do to be comforted when going through your own "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day".

We learn to comfort others by remembering the Golden Rule from Luke 6:31, "Do to others as you would have them do to you". Think about ways you want to be treated when you need encouragement. How can a friend comfort you during a rough day? How can you offer comfort to a friend?

Job was really up against some hardships. However, God was with Job through all the ups and downs. Just like Job, God will never leave you. He will always love you and offer comfort.

Dear Lord, Thank you for loving us unconditionally. Help us be open to your love and be with us as we offer comfort to others. Amen.

Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Monday: Job 16:1-5, Zephaniah 3:17

Job has three cycles of back and forth between Job and three of his friends. His friends talk, generally giving pretty bad advice or reasoning, and Job responds. This week's reading is Job's response to the latest words from his friend Eliphaz.

- Read Job 15 if you have time. What is Eliphaz's argument?
- Notice Job isn't really buying what his friend has to say. He says, basically, "You're full of hot air." How do you handle friends who well-meaningly handle your struggles with little grace? Where do you find the most comfort in your struggling?
- How does it feel to read Zephaniah in conversation with Job?

Tuesday: Job 16:6, Ephesians 2:4-5

- When have you experienced searching for answers or looking for consolation, but it never comes?
- What do you make of this?
- How does this look like the process of grief?

Job 16:7-9, Galatians 2:20

Sometimes in Job it feels like Job is on trial. And sometimes it feels like God is.

- How do you think God feels about our questions and accusations against God?

In many ways, Job is set forth as a model for how to struggle. His model includes pushing against God, crying out to God, even sometimes blaming God.

- Why do you think this is considered a model for us to follow?
- Is it ok to get mad at God like that?

Thursday: Job 16:11-12, Psalm 139:1-18

Here Job feels like he is God's target.

- When have you felt like God's target, like God didn't like you very much? How do you make sense of those feelings?
- Place the Job passage next to Psalm 139. Which passage rings truer to your experience? What happens when we put all of Job in conversation with the rest of scripture? ...in conversation with Jesus?

Friday: 1 John 4:7-11, 1 Peter 5:6-7, 1 John 3:1a

I chose several verses that are not in Job for our Friday readings.

- How do these verses speak into Job's situation?
- How do they speak into yours?
- Spend some time praying or journaling about how God's love is present to us in all aspects of life.