



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

I love a story with a happy ending, don't you? But as a teacher of English literature for almost forty years, I've taught many works that end tragically. In fact, very little of the world's greatest literature ends happily. My students would often ask me why we read so many works about death. My answers to their question varied over the years, but essentially included the truths that bad circumstances are a test of true character and that heroic response to misfortune is inspirational.

In the book of Job, this week's scripture focus, we are given a story where a righteous man undergoes a severe test of character. As a result, Job is inspirational in several ways. First, he is God's all star! God singles Job out as a man blameless and upright, who fears God and shuns evil. Along the way, he has prospered and gained a great fortune. Furthermore, Job has shared his wealth with his children and done all he could to insure that they were also in right standing with God. But Job's story isn't a happy one. After all, what would be the point if all we knew of Job was his blessed life? Loving God is easy when life is full of blessings, right? Yet as Job's fortune is taken from him, as he loses his family, as his health is threatened, and as he is criticized by his friends, Job maintains his faith in God, enduring to the end.

In Job's story we see that true faith in God does not depend upon our circumstances. Now, we all hope we never face Job's perils, but we can learn from his example and check our attitude when bad things happen to us. If we trust God and lean on him, even argue and rant to him as Job did, we too can bring glory to God, and perhaps even inspire those around us as well.

— Paula Holmes, First Church member

Consider the Source Job 1:1-12

A Family Affair

Have you ever played the board game, Sorry, with your family? Each player uses colorful pawns and follows the rule cards to move around the game board. One card might put your pawn in a great spot on the board, safe and sound from trouble. Another card could start your pawn all over again at the beginning, losing everything you had gained!

Discuss how you feel when things are going your way versus times that seem unfair. Do you continue to pray and love God through all the times?

Read Job 1:1-12 together. Job had a strong and faithful relationship with God. He was happy, successful, and comfortable with his life. If you read to the end of chapter 1, you will discover Job loses everything, yet he remained faithful and served God.

Talk with your family about times you followed the rules and made good decisions when something happened that seemed unfair. Maybe you studied super hard and still didn't do well on a spelling test. Make a list of ways you keep a strong faith even during difficult times.

Pray together. Dear Lord, please help us remember to trust in you with all our heart, even when things don't go the way we wish. Amen.

Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Monday: Job 1:1-5

Job is a righteous man blessed with a family and fortune. He had a regular custom of worship and ritual sacrifice that would have been practiced during the days of the patriarchs when Job is thought to have lived. He seems to understand the sinful nature of humanity and seeks forgiveness from God showing conviction and love for his Lord. Job's example might help us examine our own hearts.

- What is the motivation behind the spiritual rituals of your life?
- When you worship, how can you better show God adoration?
- As a parent, how can you better nurture your children's spiritual welfare?

Tuesday: Job 1:6-12

God agrees to a test of Job's faith. This part of the story illustrates important truths about God and the evil of this sinful world. Unavoidable physical or natural disasters may happen to good people, but God's love for us never diminishes.

- How can we demonstrate our faithfulness to God in the midst of misfortune?
- What effect does our steadfast faith through suffering have on those around us?

Wednesday: Job 1:13-22

Job loses his fortune and family, but praises God despite it all. He grieves openly upon the loss of his children, but recognizes God's sovereignty and that all he had was a gift from God.

- How can we better understand that our blessings are a gift from God?
- How can we relinquish ownership of our blessings to better glorify God?

Thursday: Job 2:1-13

The Lord allows Satan to affect Job's health as long as his life is spared. The story turns darker as Job is afflicted with horrible boils and sores all over his body. His wife only makes things worse, but his friends (who later speak judgmentally) here offer Job some comfort through their presence alone.

- Even when we don't know what to say to a friend who is suffering, how can we let them know we love them and care about them?

Friday: Job 3:1-26

Job's misery continues and he wishes that he were dead. We don't blame Job for these feelings as long as he does not act on them. His extreme physical pain and personal loss have brought him to a crisis of faith. Will he curse God and give up or will he trust God and lean on God for strength?

- Read Romans 8:38-39. How does your faith in Christ prepare you for suffering that may come in life?

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us and promising always to be with us throughout good times and bad. Help us to feel your strength and power over sin and hold us firmly in your hands, especially when we are sick or suffering. We love you and worship you with all our hearts. These things we pray in Jesus's name. Amen.