

HOPE IN WINTER

INTRODUCTION

The Old Testament never shifts from the conviction that relationship with God is the ultimate ground of hope. It is God himself who is the hope of Israel. It is only by focusing our gaze on Him that we find a source of confidence and patience.

DISCUSSION

Have your GC discuss this question from Anne Dillard, *"When I begin to think about God's wild extravagance, His wastefulness, His passion for the unnecessary and the excessive and the completely useless, I am struck by a thought so wonderfully freeing I can do nothing but laugh. What if that extravagance extends to me?"*

Talk about how God's extravagance extends to you and how that brings Him glory.

EXPLANATION

Do you think there is any correlation between worship and hope? *What?*

Why do you think God never answers Job's question directly?

How do you think God answers Job's questions more thoroughly than Job could have ever imagined?

APPLICATION

Read Job 42:1-6

Have you ever complained to God when you have felt hope was lost?

When, where, why, how?

Do you ever feel like you don't deserve some of the negative things that have happened to you?

Have you ever felt forgotten by God?

MISSION

What is the best way that you could "Sit Sheva" for someone else?

How has someone else offered you hope by simply offering you their presence?

How can you offer the same thing?

Is there anyone you are aware of right now that could use your presence?

How does offering your presence reflect Jesus' heart for His people?



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Job 2:13

Romans 12:12

Psalms 88:13-14

Job 1:1, 3, 9, 21

Job 2:9-10, 13

Romans 12:15

Job 3:1, 8

Psalms 44:11-12, 23-24

Job 23:3-5

Job 38:1, 25-27

Job 40:14, 19

Job 41:33

Job 42:5

Matthew 27:46

Job 42:7-8, 13

Week 3

& SCRIPTURE VERSES



HOPE IN WINTER

Job 2:13 “Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.”

The Old Testament never shifts from the conviction that relationship with God is the ultimate ground of hope. It is God himself who is the hope of Israel. It is only by focusing our gaze on Him that we find a source of confidence and patience.

The Book of Job could be the oldest Old Testament book. In this book, Job expresses fear as a result of his suffering. It is tragedy that shatters his sense of a comfortable relationship with God. In Job 17:13-15 Job cries out: *“If I hope for Sheol as my house, if I make my bed in darkness, if I say to the pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’ where then is my hope? Who will see my hope?”*

As Job faces his fears of the future, he rejects the suggestion of one of his friends (Eliphaz) in 4:6: *Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope? “Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?”*

Job, ultimately, finds the solution of the psalmist in Psalm 39:7: *“And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you.”*

The hardest thing about HOPE is when God doesn't answer, when you and I do not feel like we can hear Him. No one seemed to endure a longer time of this silence from God than Job. When Job loses everything he grieves, worships, falls to the ground and cries Job 1:21 *“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

The question of Job is “Can a human have hope in God in the face of suffering and silence?”
Sometimes suffering is a test of love.

In 28 chapters, Job pours out bitterness, frustration, confusion, sorrow, loss of HOPE and anger towards God that is staggering. It is so raw that his friends can't stand it. Yet Job's friends spend 22 chapters voicing 1 primary idea that was the theology of that day (and today), which is totally false: “Doctrine of Retribution.”

- Goodness = prosperity and blessing
- Wickedness = suffering

When Job's friends were silent they drew him closer – when they spoke they pushed him away.

Survey a few years ago asked 1000's of people what contributed most to their spiritual growth. The number 1 answer was PAIN.

John Ortberg wrote: *“I don't believe God is the kind of person who delights in inflicting painful little moral object lessons on helpless mortals. But in my own life, at least, there is this strange duality about pain. It can cause me to wonder where God is as nothing else can. AND it can open me up to my dependence on His presence as nothing else can.”*

When God does show up in the book of Job it is unlike anyone would ever think. God reveals how He cares for the least of all the creatures on the earth in an effort to get Job to see that God cares infinitely more for him.

Job never gets all the answers he wanted, he gets something better; this something is offered to us as well, he finds out who God truly is...Job 42:5 *“I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you.”* Job now understands God knows Him and that God cares.

Karl Barth *“the great miracle is that God would rather be the suffering God of a suffering people than the blest god of an unblest people.”*

Because Job now understands God cares, his hope is renewed; he now delights in loving and giving to the least strategic creatures. Job is now graciously good, uncontrollably generous, and irrationally loving, because God is.