Pentecost 5 Job 38:1-11
June 27, 2021 760*-433-768**/420-439
*CW-S – "When Peace Like a River"
**CW-S – "How Firm a Foundation"

"Trust Me!"
I. God knows what He's doing even when we don't.
II. God loves us even when it doesn't look or feel like it.

Dear Christian friends,

"WHY, PASTOR? **Why** is God letting this happen?" I don't know HOW MANY TIMES I've been **asked** that question. **Sometimes** it's the suffering person who's asking it. **Sometimes** it's the family. **Sometimes** I'm wondering, "Why, God?" Here I'm coming to comfort them with the GOOD NEWS of a loving God and it just DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.

Job was struggling with that "Why, God?" We have here the BEGINNING of God's answer. God's answer boils down to **two simple words**, "TRUST ME!" We CAN TRUST God because 1)God knows what He's doing even when **we don't** and because 2)God loves us **even when** it doesn't LOOK OR FEEL like it.

I. God knows what He's doing even when we don't.

The **book** of Job begins innocently enough. ***"In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job."*** We don't know where Uz was **except** that it was SOMEWHERE in the Middle East. We can't say **for sure** WHEN Job lived either. There is, however, one thing that is MADE REAL CLEAR. Three times in the opening chapters we're told, ***"Job was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and turned away from evil."*** That's not to say Job was SINLESS. Job often confesses his **sinfulness**. Job was a BELIEVER. He was sincere in his faith and determined to live his faith. He was also a DEVOTED FAMILY MAN and SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN. ***"(Job) was the greatest of all the men of the East."***

One day as God and Satan **were talking** Satan accused Job of being a "FAIR-WEATHER Christian." Job was devoted to God BECAUSE GOD was **so good** to Job. ***"Just stretch out Your hand,"*** Satan challenged God, ***"and strike everything that is his, and he will certainly curse You to Your face!"***

God gave Satan PERMISSION to do whatever he wanted to **except hurt** Job himself. **In one day** Job LOST ALL his animals – **all** his servants – and WORST OF ALL all ten of his children. Job's REACTION? ***"He fell to the ground and worshipped. He said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. May the name of the LORD be blessed."*** AND we're told, ***"In all this, Job did not sin or blame God."***

Satan cried, "FOUL!" **Because** God had put Job himself OFF LIMITS Job had stayed faithful. So God gave Satan permission to DO ANYTHING he wanted to Job **except kill** him. ***"(Satan) struck Job with very painful sores from the sole of his foot to the top of his head."*** FED UP with God Job's wife told him to GIVE UP on God. Job told her, ***"You are talking like a foolish woman. If we accept the good that comes from God, shouldn't we also accept the bad?"*** And again we're told, ***"In all this, Job did not sin in what he said."***

Job's problems REALLY BEGAN when three friends came to comfort him. These **"friends"** did more damage to **Job's faith** than the devil had. They ACCUSED Job of some **secret, horrible** sin. Job **must have** BEEN REALLY BAD for God to punish him SO SEVERELY. Now it's true God punishes **some** sins with DIRECT CONSEQUENCES. The homosexual or **sexually immoral** person who gets a disease or AIDS can trace it back to their sin. But that WASN'T THE CASE with Job. These friends didn't know what they **were talking about**. They were trying to explain **God's ways** WITHOUT

HAVING **all the facts**. Their arguments MADE SENSE but they were WRONG. Later God told them, ***"My anger burns against you …because none of you have spoken correctly about Me."***

Their constant harping led Job **to sin**. Job accused God of being UNFAIR. **Rather** than HUMBLY TRUSTING God Job began to complain and **criticize** God. **Instead** of HUMBLY SUBMITTING to God's mysterious ways Job DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION from God.

"Then the LORD responded to Job out of a violent storm. 'Who is this who darkens My plans with his ignorant words?'" Job had wanted an audience with God and now he had it. Only Job THE PLAINTIFF became Job the DEFENDANT. ***"Get ready for action like a man! I will ask you questions, and you will inform Me."*** God throws QUESTION AFTER QUESTION at Job – 42 questions in just this chapter! **Each question** brings home the point, "Job, YOU DON'T KNOW **what you're talking** about." **Each question** says, "Job, TRUST ME! I know what I'm doing **even if** you don't."

There are some VERY IMPORTANT TRUTHS here. **1)**We don't always understand **God's ways**. We can't explain **everything** God does. But THAT DOESN'T MEAN God doesn't know what He's doing. To complain or criticize God when we don't have ALL THE FACTS is to say WE ARE SMARTER than God – that God doesn't know what He's doing. **That's** not faith but BLASPHEMY! We are to HUMBLY TRUST God and accept **His will**.

Lesson #2 and this one can BE REAL HARD to learn. God never does explain to Job WHY He let this happen to Job. God DOESN'T OWE us **any explanations**! **Instead** God assures Job and us that HE KNOWS what He's doing even if **we don't**. The **book of Job** is a call for HUMBLE SUBMISSION to **God's will** and TRUST IN GOD **even when** we don't understand His ways.

As God hammers Job with **question after question** you begin to fell SO LITTLE – so HELPLESS. That's good! WHO ARE WE to question God? **We need** to get off our HIGH HORSES – swallow **our pride** - and SUBMIT to **God's will**. GOD IS GOD – not us. GOD IS IN CHARGE – **not us**. That's not to scare us but COMFORT us. The God we trust in is the God WHO…

II. God loves us even when it doesn't look or feel like it.

It didn't FEEL OR LOOK like **God loved** Job. God looks MEAN – ANGRY – SPITEFUL. It **looked like** God didn't CARE ONE BIT about Job. WHAT GOOD was God doing Job? **What good** did it do Job TO TRUST in God? We've had those DOUBTS, haven't we?

Job's friends wanted to WALK BY SIGHT and **not by faith**. They judged God's love by what they SAW and were FEELING. That's a mistake often made. People take a good life AS PROOF that **God loves** them. When things are going **well** it's OBVIOUS **God loves** you. When we have problems it's JUST AS OBVIOUS that God is angry with us. And then people try to justify themselves. "WHY, God? **What** did I do to DESERVE this?" They're looking for **God's love** in the WRONG PLACES. They're judging God's love by what they SEE and FEEL instead of by WHAT GOD SAYS in His Word.

WHERE do we find the proof that **God loves us** if we can't go by what we see and feel? We go to God's WORD and to THE FACT that we have God's own Son as our Savior. BEFORE ASKING, "**Don't You care, God?**" we should really ask, "WHY SHOULD God care?" Yes, God made us and gave us life. But LOOK HONESTLY at the way we've treated God and His Word. How do we RESPOND to God's **love** and **care**? God says, "THIS IS HOW **I want** you to live your life." We come back and say, "NO, THIS is how **I'm going** to live my life" and off we go and **ignore** and **defy** God. **How often** don't we know EXACTLY what God says/wants and yet we do the **exact opposite**? We want GOD TO DO **whatever we** want but God better not INTERFERE in our lives or try to control us. How would WE FEEL if God had us explain **every one** of our sins to Him?

There are PLENTY OF TIMES it may feel or look as if God **doesn't love** us. "TRUST ME," God says, "I DO love you." But rather than answering our "WHY, God?" questions God tells us to "GO!" "GO to Bethlehem and kneel at that manger. That's My ***"beloved Son"*** born your brother to be your Savior. "GO," God says, "and watch **Jesus live** a sinless life. You owed Me that **perfect obedience** – you could never live a holy life – SO I SENT Jesus to live that life for you." "GO," God says, "to Calvary and **stand** at that center cross. THAT'S HOW MUCH I love you. I ***'didn't spare My own Son but gave Him up for you.'*** I took ALL your sins **off of you** and put them all on My **innocent** Son and punished Him **in your place**." "GO," God tells us, "to that grave where Jesus was buried. **That grave** is now open and empty BECAUSE YOU HAVE a risen, living triumphant Lord Jesus. And ***'because He lives you shall live also'*** with Me forever in heaven." There's THE PROOF God loves us. DON'T EVER JUDGE God's love by what you feel or see happening in your life. The PROOF of God's love is that we have Jesus as our Savior – that **for Jesus' sake** God has forgiven all our sins – that **trusting in Jesus** we are going straight to heaven when we die.

IN LOVE God may have us suffer **at times**. While God doesn't directly answer our "WHY, God?" He does give us SOME EXPLANATIONS. Our sufferings are meant:

1)to draw us closer to God. Satan likes to **use our problems** to DRIVE US AWAY from God. But **with those problems** God is saying, "You NEED Me. I'm HERE for you."

2)to exercise our faith. It's easy to talk about TRUSTING God when **life is going** well. **Sufferings let** us put our faith INTO ACTION. Sufferings often show us that our FAITH NEEDS a lot of attention.

3)to share our faith. **Few things** make more clear the DIFFERENCE between a believer and unbeliever than sufferings. AS WE SUFFER we **Christians** have the confidence that God **loves** us – is **with** us and **working all** things for our good. People notice that and it's a perfect opportunity to share our faith.

4)to take us home to heaven. **By God's grace** we have something more to LOOK FORWARD to than dreary days here followed by a **cold coffin**. In our LIVING LORD Jesus we have hope – we have HEAVEN!

We don't always understand God's ways. We don't always feel **loved** by God. But then God tells us, "TRUST ME – I know what I'm doing and I love you." Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED