Job In The Dock

Text: Job 38–42
Theme: God will be God no matter what man has to say about it

Introduction — I've only had to sit in witness stand one time in my life
- being interviewed as perspective juror
- questioned by both defense attorneys and prosecution attorneys, even the judge
- a bit nerve racking, but I endured it

Today, text before us, Job enters the dock
- prior to this, Job is one hurling volley after volley
- questions and accusations come from Job before God
- legal terms: litigation, law suit against someone
- this is Job and what he has brought against God in ch. 26–31
- Job sees himself as plaintiff, God is the alleged wrongdoer
- He has been silent, distant, and dealt unjustly with Job
- but remember this about Job:
  - has not sinned against God up to this point; upright, blameless
  - lost everything and everyone and health and friends
  - God has remained silent, true; not come to Job's defense

In Job 9.22–24, we see one example

• It is all one; therefore I say,
'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'
When disaster brings sudden death,
he mocks at the calamity of the innocent.
The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
he covers the faces of its judges—
if it is not he, who then is it?

Job has demanded that God appear and answer for Himself
- maybe not aware of saying: "Be careful what you ask for; you just might get it"
- because now, in ch. 38–41, God does speak
- suddenly Job finds himself in the dock and God is the plaintiff
- God is the one asking questions to which we will see Job has no answer
- Job wanted answers to "Why" he has suffered
- God speaks and gives no answer to this query
- instead, what we learn from God's words is this:
- God will be God no matter what man has to say about it

So, let's listen in as…

I. God Now Questions Job

- God enters the courtroom of Job's claiming
- and He enters as only God can do

• Job 38.1–3
• Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:
"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Dress for action like a man;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.

• I wonder how often we have been guilty of calling God into question
• something harsh happens to us, to a loved one
• or we look around us at the world and wonder if God really knows what He's doing
• after all, it is not going according to our plan of how God ought to work
• and therein lies our problem, and even Job's: persistent pride
• we think His timing is off or wrong
• we think His governing of universe and world is deficient
• but, if God were to appear this morning, I think it would be just like **Job 38.1–3**
• "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" Is what we'd hear
• and like Job, God is right to question us, His creatures

1. Where were you?

• in these chapters, God is relentless
• calls into question Job's credibility to call God's judgments into question
• the Lord begins by using creation as primary evidence of His position as God
• hear it in v. 4: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?"
• goes on in vv. 5– 33 to lay out examples of His creative power & majesty
• mentions measurements of the earth, placement of the stars
•the boundaries of the seas and shorelines is God's to command
• clouds, rain, storms all come from Creator's hands
• v. 12: "have you ever in your life commanded the morning?"
• daylight savings time, standard savings time: gov't thinks it controls the clock & sun: Ha!
• God questions Job's lack of knowledge
• creation comes from God's grand wisdom; Job knows nothing of this

2. Beyond the surface of the world

• v. 17 puts Job beneath the earth into gates of death: does Job control them?
• all God's questions are rhetorical: no answer given because it is framed in question
• or what about above the earth
• Job, did you put constellations in place we we marvel at them at night?
• Pleiades, Orion, even the Big Dipper or the Great Bear are mentioned here
• and Job must answer them all in the negative
• compared to God's creative wisdom, Job is completely ignorant
• indeed, Job has spoken words without knowledge

3. What about us?

• how many of you woke up Wednesday morning, read the news and questioned God
• How, God? How could this happen?
• from perspective of sanctity of life, sanctity of marriage, sanctity of sex and gender
• from fraud, false religions entering at more than just a creep, and so much more
• God, do you really know what You are doing?
• and we would be found to speak words without knowledge

4. All creatures great and small

• in ch. 39, God moves to the creation of His creatures: animals of all sorts
• mentions: mountain goat, deer, donkey, oxen, ostrich, horse, hawk, and eagle
• God provides in His loving care for them

• He orders their lives and knows them: how they live, breed, and move
• and once again, the Lord points out Job's inability to understand any of it
• Job 39.1–2 is just one example here
• "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you observe the calving of the does?
Can you number the months that they fulfill,
and do you know the time when they give birth,

5. Water creatures are next
• in ch. 40–41, God uses creatures who dwell in the water to make His case
• God may use only two water creatures, but He details them out fully
• He starts in v. 6–9
• God challenges Job to tell Him about His creation, but alas! He cannot

1) v. 15 brings in first water creature: behemoth
• not entirely sure what this is, but sounds like a hippopotamus
• more rhetorical questions asked to show that Job does not know
• God's magnificence and power are seen in this great creature
• vv. 18–19
• His bones are tubes of bronze,
his limbs like bars of iron.
"He is the first of the works of God;
let him who made him bring near his sword!
• no man can master this great beast
• only God approach this creature

2) 41.1–2 introduce something unknown but tremendous as well
• Leviathan: not sure of what this beast is
• many speculations: whale, ancient dinosaur like brontosaurus
• several commentators simply claim it is a crocodile
• still others claim this is a reference to the devil and his evil power
• they show themselves like Job who have no true knowledge
• what is clear is this: God created Leviathan
• and God rules over this creature; after all, He is the Creator

3) what is God's point here?
• Job and mankind is powerless in face of things such as this
• only God is sovereign over them
• God is putting on display His wisdom, knowledge, power, and majesty
• God is absolutely sovereign

6. God is God and no one else
• Isaiah 46.9–10
• remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me,
declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

- God rules over His creation: earth, sky and sea
- all it's creatures are His: in sky, land, or under the waters
- God is teaching Job—and us, by the way—that He is all-wise, all-knowing, all-powerful
- Job is none of these things; neither are we
- when we call God into question, we become just like Job
- we speak "words without knowledge"

There is only one point in this where…

II. Job Answers God…Sorta

- God has been relentless in His questioning of Job
- He is revealing how foolish it was for him to try to put God in the dock
- as ch. 40 opens, there is one brief moment where Job speaks
- he has been silent up to this point; and will be immediately after
- but it appears that he is quick on the uptake: he gets it
- **Job 40.3–5**
- **Then Job answered the Lord and said:**

"Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
I have spoken once, and I will not answer;
twice, but I will proceed no further."

- this is Job's confession: I am vile
- only thing he can do before holy & sovereign God: hand over mouth
- once this is done, God takes up His charge again
- all the way up to ch. 42
- there, as we'll see next week, as we draw this book to a close is this:
- Job will speak once again: words of repentance
- here's a preview:
- **Job 42.6—therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes."**
- Job gives in, fights no more and bows before his Maker
- God wins the case
- what is marvelous here, however, is this
- God does not leave Job in dust and ashes
- Job confesses a sin that was a result, not the cause, of his suffering
- and God is faithful and just and forgives Job
- He does the same to us through Jesus Christ

Want to ask one more question of this…

III. What Do We Learn From This?

- clearly God wins in case of God v. Job
- Job repents and seeks forgiveness
- yet is there something missing here?

1. God knows what He is doing

- that is very clear in ch 38–41
- God has created and rules over all His creation
- He alone has wisdom, power, and majesty
- relentlessly presents this
- but God never, not once, offers Job an explanation as to his suffering

- isn't that fascinating?
- God could have done all He did
- then, at end, said, "Let Me tell you what happened, Job"
- but He does not do that

2. Problem of suffering

- this is not addressed here
- why do good people suffer bad things?
- I have said: wrong question
- at least when it comes to Job and God's response
- I know this gets some really worked up, as if God owed them an answer
- which is exactly what Job thought…and was proven wrong-headed entirely

3. God's answer

- did you pick up on God's answer to the problem of pain & suffering?
- here it is…
- You ask why you have suffered & demanded of me an answer
- Can you make a hippopotamus? Do you control Leviathan?
- God's answer is this: I am God; you are not
- and Job accepts this; considers case closed and resolved
- God is perfectly wise, good, just, powerful and sovereign
- I am the same God over you who did all this
- reason for suffering? Comes from all-wise, all-powerful, all-sovereign God
- by faith, we read this, see this, hear this
- by faith, we must receive it as Job did

Conclusion – Tardigrades

- ever heard of them? I had not, until this week
- micro-animals, very tiny
- as you can tell, under magnification: called "water bears"
- about the size of a period in your bulletins
- live in water or lichen or moss
- and really hard to kill; survived since creation
- can survive even when for several minutes at high temps, even as high as 304º
- survive for decades in cold, as cold as -4º
- live through massive pressure, radiation levels, even for short time in space
- scientists subject them to all sorts of pain and suffering to see how they make it
- wonder what these little guys think of all this

We are not unlike tardigrades when it comes to suffering, God, and His wisdom

- Word reveals He is good, just, kind, compassionate God
- we rejoice in this:
- **Romans 8.28: And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**
- question becomes, not why we suffer
- but will we trust this glorious God when we suffer
- when see evil around us, will we question God or keep faith in Him

We must remember:

- **Romans 8.32 —He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**
- **Rom. 8:35–39**

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.