

03b JOB

Let's resume our study now in the book of Job. We are right at the threshold of chapter two. And the response that Job has given to this set of reports, these four reports from four servants, four points of the compass from which these calamities have come, they've come from the earth and they've come from heaven.

His response is, naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

And this, of course, fulfills Satan's prediction. If you stretch forth your hand and take away what he has, he will bless you to your face. We had that back in verse 11.

Of course, blessed being a euphemism for curse. And Matthew pointed out that back in verse four, when Job said, or verse five, actually, when he said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. It's the same euphemism there.

It's the word barak. And from context, we can tell whether it means to bless or to curse. It means to speak a strong opinion about someone, either very, very good or very, very bad.

And he was right. Technically, what Satan said came to pass because when Satan touched all that Job had, Job did bless God. Well, this brings us now to chapter two, and we see this scene marker that we noticed.

Again, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, from where do you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro on the earth and from walking back and forth on it. Now, what do you notice different there than what we saw in verse six and seven? In verse six, it says, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them not to present himself.

He doesn't really have any business being there, if you will. But God has entered into this discussion or this sort of test case with Satan. God has given him permission to do a thing, and now Satan does have business coming to the assembly of the sons of God.

And this is the reason I suggested to you last time that when the sons of God assemble, it is because they have business to transact. They have something to discuss with God. Satan didn't have anything to discuss.

God brought up a topic of debate and discussion. But now, the cherubim frowning at the entrance of the courtroom here have to let Satan in because he says, hey, I'm here to see the One, capital O. I'm here to see God. I've got some business.

I need to present myself. So, it's very interesting. He came also to present himself before the

Lord.

This is the fallen Satan come to present himself before the Lord. Now, what is his report going to say? He gave me all of the stuff into his hand. Is Satan going to say, well, and he did bless you, so I was right.

I mean, obviously, the intent isn't what he looked for. But God, in typical Middle Eastern fashion, doesn't come directly to the point. There are these preliminaries, these niceties to be observed.

So, with all of the angels seated in the gallery, God enters into this parley. He says to Satan, from where do you come? And I have to think that there's a smile playing at the corner of his lips when he says this. From where do you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro on the earth and from walking back and forth on it.

This tells me two things. He doesn't say, I've come from plaguing Job. This was only one of many things that he was up to.

He's been doing essentially the same thing with one addition. He took time out of his schedule to do the Job thing. So, the Lord says, very same thing he said before.

Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth? A blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil. Still, we put in italics, he still holds fast to his integrity. Boy, wouldn't this be a great epitaph? Wouldn't this be a great commentary on our life if God could say this about us? No matter what I allowed in their path, no matter what came into their life, he still holds fast to his integrity.

Although you incited me against him to destroy him without cause. Now, this is fraught with interest to me. You incited me against him.

What did God do to Job? Removed the barrier, removed the defense. And God says, you have incited me against him. And this is attack by lack of action.

This is assault by not doing something. Now, to me, this is a giant wooden stake in the heart of Calvinism. Because Calvinism says, well, God elects some to salvation, and he just doesn't elect others to salvation.

But that doesn't put any blame on God. God says, by my inaction, I have been against Job. You have incited me to be against him.

And how was God against him? By doing nothing. That was against him. Doing nothing is against.

God failing to elect people to salvation in the weird Calvinist mind is against those people. That is inciting God against. And that is something God does not do.

It isn't in the divine nature to fail to elect, and thereby leave people headed for damnation. And whether they want to call it double predestination, or we shouldn't ask, why doesn't God save everyone? We should ask, why does he save anyone? That's all just tap dancing around the issue. If someone is drowning, and you're standing right there, and you could simply reach out a hand and pull them to shore, and you don't, are you guiltless that they drown? If that was someone's two-year-old, and the parents come rushing up, are they going to look at you and say, oh, it must have been traumatic for you to watch my child drown.

I hope you're okay. Is that what they're going to say? Wouldn't they hold you accountable because you could have done something, and by your inaction, this horrible thing happened? This two-year-old child drowned because you didn't take 15 seconds to reach in there and pull him to safety. You're guilty, and Calvinism makes God guilty of the damnation of people that he fails to elect.

And you can see the principle right here. God himself says, when you talked me into removing my protection on Job, you incited me against him. My inaction is an offense against him.

And still, he holds fast to his integrity. He's been destroyed without a cause. The second thing I find very interesting here is the fact that God says, Job has been destroyed without a cause.

We look at pictures of judgment in the New Testament, and we think, well, when it says someone is going to be destroyed from before the face of the Lord, that must mean they're going to the lake of fire for eternity, and they've lost their salvation. You can be a son of destruction. You can be a son of perdition.

You can be a son of loss, and you have not actually perished. Everything that you possessed or would have possessed perishes, and that is called destruction in the Bible. Job losing everything he has, God says, he has been destroyed without a cause.

So, when we see destruction of believers in the New Testament, it doesn't entail the loss of their salvation. Well, Satan has lost round one, convincingly. God has been glorified.

God's testimony to Job has been vindicated because of Job's faith. Who made Job into what he is? Who gave Job the strength of soul? Who transformed him in the inner man? Who made him like a tree planted by the rivers of water so that when the gale force hurricane winds came, it didn't blow him over and uproot him? Who gave him that strength? It's all God. But Job's faith is what reflects the glory of God, and that's the opportunity that all of us have.

It's a hard thing. It's easy to get bitter. It's easy to be impatient.

It's easy to shake your fist and say, this is not fair. Anybody can do that. The worst dissipated wino land in downtown Dallas someplace can do that.

God is looking for those of us who will trust him when the chips are down, when life is hard, when it's painful, when it's not easy. Still, he holds fast to his integrity, even though he's been destroyed without a cause. Well, what is the rejoinder? How does Satan counter this failure? Satan answered the Lord and said, skin for skin.

Yes, all that a man has, he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse you to your face. Satan is still hoping that God will get actively involved here.

You stretch out your hand. You touch his bone and his flesh, and he will bless you to your face. You do it.

Now, this skin for skin idea here is a little difficult to translate into modern English. This appears to be a sort of a, well, Alzheimer's setting in. I can't remember the term for a figure of speech of this nature, but it's an aphorism.

It's a statement that made good sense to people in Hebrew. But when we say skin for skin, I'm not quite sure what that connotes. But it's clear when we think back to our comparison in chapter one, what's the analogy? Job in his prosperous state compares to Satan in his unfallen state.

What does Job compare to now? Who's the angel that has lost everything and can only walk to and fro and up and down in the earth? So, does Satan have some insight into the mind of Job? And Satan says, well, at least God didn't incinerate me, yet I'm still alive and I'm not suffering. I lost all of my stuff, lost my standing, lost my influence, lost my job, lost my access. But Satan, as Hal Lindsey will tell you, is alive and well.

In planet earth, what is Satan's fear? To be incapacitated. Satan says, the thing that would tick me off is to be incapacitated. What's going to happen to Satan at the end of the tribulation? The mighty angel is going to take a hold of him and cast him into the bottomless pit and he's going to be totally incapacitated.

And he's dreading that. And he is going to be angry beyond all reason and beyond all measure. He's already angry knowing it's coming and he's going to be really angry when it happens.

And when he gets out, he is going to instigate the Gog Magog rebellion and he's going to play every card in the deck trying to overcome God and the camp of the saints. And he knows that this is a source of deep and bitter anger on his part. And he figures, if you stretch out your hand and incapacitate Job, he'll be as angry as I am.

It is a dangerous thing. And this is a principle of life that you can learn by observation, even if you're not a believer. But it is a dangerous thing to judge others by yourself.

If you're a particularly good person, it's a dangerous thing to judge others by yourself because

you're going to overestimate their goodness. And if you're a bad person, it's a dangerous thing to judge others by yourself because people may not be as bad as you. Or you may be harshly judging people who are worse than you.

We tend to think this is the problem in America with the North Koreans, with the Iranians, with the Iraqis, and with a lot of other people around the world. We think, well, they're just people like us. They've probably got a civilization.

I mean, their clothes are funny and they've got a different language. But they're like us. They want peace like we do.

They're reasonable. And they have this same basic outlook, and values, and goals, and priorities that we have. And people who have grown up in the United States and have never traveled overseas, never spent any time in a foreign culture are like, it's like trying to describe the color green to a blind person.

They have no clue how different people in other cultures can be, how little they can value life. This is what nearly lost us the war in the Pacific against the Japanese. Americans in the World War II generation could not wrap their mind around the ferocity and the lack of respect for human life that the Japanese had.

And the whole kamikaze thing, they couldn't figure it out. They thought the guys were nuts and they weren't nuts at all. And that's the problem.

When you have a determined enemy who is careless of human life, as we have now in Iraq, and we have the same trouble today, where people do not understand the intensity and the weirdness of thought of the Middle Eastern mind. They ought to get a clue from the Israelis. The Israelis who have grown up in Israel are Middle Eastern, and they have got in a better way, but in the same vein, they've got that attitude.

I will kill or be killed. I will do whatever is necessary. And that's why the Israeli intelligence service is the most respected and feared in the world, because those guys are ruthless.

They stop at nothing to attain their objective. We have scruples. We have compunctions.

We have things that shock us. And that's a nice thing, but it's a dangerous form of naivete to judge others by yourself. One of the things that is happening in this scene is Satan is judging Job by himself.

And by extension, he's judging the unfallen angels and the rest of faithful humanity by himself. And he figures, well, every man has his price. There's something that will topple everybody.

Everybody basically thinks like me. And that is a dangerous, dangerous way to think. You cannot judge others by yourself.

And you have to allow for the fact that there are going to be people who have a mindset that you absolutely cannot enter into. I mean, if you want an example, I think most of us, when you look at the world of entertainment and the homosexual element that is just burgeoning and is ubiquitous and is everywhere, I cannot enter into that. I cannot figure it out.

And I can't figure out people who want to tolerate it and who say, well, you know, being anti-homosexual is like being anti-black or anti-women's vote. You know, this form of pervert, well, they wouldn't even call it perversion. This alternate lifestyle is something that people are born with just like their race.

And they should be respected. And they should be given the space and allowed to have marriages and this and the other. It is demonstrable by a logical mind that this is a corrosive element in a society.

Look at history. Look at what happened to the Greeks when they started tolerating perversion. Look at the Romans when they started tolerating perversion.

Look at any major society in history. And when it has reached the point of tolerating, promoting and encouraging perverse lifestyles, it has gone off the edge of the world. It has disappeared from history.

It has, I mean, read the decline and fall of the Roman empire. Given will tell you flat out in plain terms what happened to Rome. And it was their toleration for perversion and this sensual gratification that led them to watch people get eaten by lions.

They had become so jaded by the usual pleasures. They had wine and dined and fornicated themselves into numbness. And it took something like the graphic ripping apart of human bodies right in front of them by gladiators and by lions and so on to penetrate the numbness.

They had tried everything. They'd done everything. Nothing could move them anymore.

And the only thing left was shock. Well, look today. Look at the horror movie genre.

There are people who they can't wait for the next, you know, what's the most shocking thing you can put on the screen for me? How graphic can you make it? How much can it splatter and squish and so on on the screen? Show me that. Why? It's like any other form of sensual addiction. You get numb and you have to have more and it has to get worse.

And you start breaking out the whips and chains and you start doing sadomasochism and you start doing bestiality and you start doing pedophilia. You have to do something to break through the scar tissue that has numbed you to normal human experience. That's what homosexuality is.

Did you know that all pedophilia, you know, they have this, what is, I forget the name of this, man-boy love association or something. Well, they don't want to, I made this point one time in a public

forum and got roundly scolded for making the point that these man-boy, the pedophiles, these man-boy type pedophiles are homosexuals. This is a manifestation of homosexuality.

Oh, you can't, you're tarring all homosexuality with the pedophilia brush. Okay, and your point being? Yes, that's why homosexuality is a bad thing because this is one of its many ugly little medusa heads. Well, anyway, we digress.

It is dangerous. We can't enter into these perverse mindsets. Don't try.

We don't judge things by ourselves. We judge them by the Word of God. The great thing about the Word of God is that it is an absolute objective standard.

If the Word of God says a thing is wrong, you can take that to the bank. By the way, the Word of God roundly condemns homosexuality as an abomination. It was a death penalty offense in Israel.

Paul says people who choose that in Romans chapter 1 deserve everything they get. God turns them over to destruction. God does.

That's God's last word on it. You choose that, you're going to corrupt your way into oblivion with it. So we have to judge things by the standard of God's Word.

And that's the thing that saves Job in this fourfold test. The number four is all the way through that. Four points of the compass.

Four attacks. The four corners of the house get hit. He loses four different kinds of animals.

I mean, it's comprehensive. It is everything all at once. What holds him in place? What anchors him? What maintains his integrity? It's the objective standard of the Word of God.

The Word of God tells him, you came into the world without anything. Everything you have comes from God. And when you leave, you can't take anything with you anyway.

But you do get the impression when he shaves his head that he figures, well, I look like I did when I came into the world. Maybe I'm just now getting ready to hit the exit. But then we shift back.

We had the introduction to Job. Then we had a heavenly scene, earthly scene. Now we're back to a heavenly scene.

And we're going to go to the fourth scene, which is on earth and is going to stay on earth. So in the book of Job, although the first three are very compressed, we have four major scenes. Two in heaven and two on earth.

Just like these attacks. Two from heaven, two on earth. Not a coincidence.

The Lord said, Have you considered my servant Job? There is none like him on the earth, blameless, upright, fears God, shuns evil, holds fast to his integrity. Although you incited me against him to destroy him without cause. Sometimes things happen to us and it is not any fault of ours.

It is also a mistake. Point one is it's a mistake to judge others by yourself. Point two is it is a mistake to always assume that you have done something wrong when things are bad.

It's not always the case. Maybe somebody else did something bad. Maybe nobody did anything bad.

In Job's case, nobody did anything wrong. His sons and daughters weren't worthy of death. They weren't homosexuals.

They had not done any death penalty offenses. Job certainly had not. Without a cause.

Sometimes things from an earthly perspective happen without a cause. Now we know that in the heavenly realm, there is a cause. And evidently this is a very important cause.

This bears directly on the fate of uncounted millions of angels and uncounted millions of human beings who are going to live and die and be judged. So Satan says, stretch out your hand now, touch his bone and his flesh and he will surely bless you to your face. Verse 6, just as God did before, he says, behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.

You can do anything to him short of killing him. So, verse 7, Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Now, do you notice anything here? I gave you the clue in the first session.

What is the change of scene marker that we saw for the first three scenes? And there came a day. And there was a day. This tells us that there may have been an interval of time.

There was, Satan picked his day to come before God. Satan picked his day to afflict Job. And there came a day when he went back up and presented himself before God.

But now it doesn't say, and there came a day when Satan afflicted Job. That is noticeable by its absence. So we ask ourselves, well, why is it absent? It's been such a consistent thing.

You really miss it when it's not there. And secondly, in the first set of four calamities, we didn't see Satan anywhere. We saw Sabians.

We saw Kazdim. We saw fire falling from heaven. And we saw this wind.

Now, Satan personally comes down. And it appears that he went directly. It said last time he went out from the presence of the Lord.

And then there came a day. Satan obviously put some effort and some planning into it. Here, he's wasting no time.

He goes out from the presence of the Lord. You get the idea. He stepped out of heaven, right into Job's household and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

He, Job, took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Now, so far, Job, in this entire chapter and a half, has spoken four lines. All Job has said is, came from my mother's womb naked.

Naked shall I return. The Lord gave. The Lord's taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. Now, this latest calamity comes. And again, Job's reaction is body language.

He takes steps to break the tops off of these boils with this broken piece of pot. But he doesn't say anything. Job has control of his tongue.

Job is careful with what he says. And you know that if these are boils from Satan, this is not like a mild case of the measles. This isn't a few uncomfortable bumps.

You've seen pictures of people that have been bit by thousands of ants or have some other kind of horrible disfiguring all over their body, swelling and blistering and so on. Whatever this is, it pretty much made Job unrecognizable. Satan wants to do this right.

He's doing everything short of killing Job and this probably gave Job a fever. It's some kind of skin infection, some kind of nasty, oozing, horribleness that he can find no relief for. All he can do is get essentially a sharp rock, sharp piece of busted pottery and scrape himself to try to get some relief from the pressure under his skin.

So he's sitting there oozing and bleeding and infected and miserable. And his wife comes up and says, do you still hold fast to your integrity? The same witness is visible on earth as it is in heaven. This is the very same phrase that God used.

Job holds fast to his integrity. His wife looks at him and says, look, he's holding fast to his integrity. And she says, are you still holding fast to your integrity? Bless God and I. So for the second time now, Job speaks.

And he says, very carefully, very measuredly, you speak as one of the foolish women speaks. He doesn't say, shut up, you foolish woman, which is what many of us might be tempted to say. What Job himself might have been tempted to say, but he says, your speech is like the speech of a foolish woman.

Please don't imitate the foolish women. Shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we not accept adversity? Job understands that God is not the genie of the lamp to be praised when he does good things for us and to be cursed when we suffer adversity. It's just incredible.

You cannot, and for 3,500 years, people have been looking at this and been awed at the faith and the objectivity of Job. And it reminds you of Christ on the cross when he looks at the people who put him there, who are ripping out his beard, stuck the crown of thorns on him, beat him, mocked him, put him to shame. And he looked down on them from the cross and said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

Do not lay this sin to their charge, Stephen says as the hypocrites are stoning him. It's a rare category of maturity for a believer to maintain their integrity in the face of this kind of onslaught. I mean, what else could you do to Job at this point? His wife is nagging him.

All of his children are dead. All of his wealth is gone. His health has been destroyed.

In all this, Job did not sin with his lips. Now, the first time it said, In all this, Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. The second time it says, In all this, Job did not sin with his lips.

And you get the idea that mentally, Job is starting to struggle with charging God with wrong. And as we're going to see in subsequent speeches by Job, he is going to tread near the border of that. He is certainly tempted to find fault with the Almighty.

But he does not sin with his lips. What does James say? The man who can bridle his tongue has his whole body in subjection. It just gives you the picture of a horse with a bit in its mouth.

If you can control the mouth of the horse, you've got the whole horse under control. Now, we're going to have the introduction of Job's three friends. Actually, four friends, ultimately.

Come up here, beginning in verse 11. What's missing? Introduction to Job. Everything is great.

He's on top. Then you have the heavenly scene and the dialogue with God and Satan. Let's take away his stuff.

Okay. Satan comes down and takes away his stuff. Then you're back in heaven.

Have you seen my servant Job? Maintains his integrity, even though you've incited me against him without a cause. Satan says, well, skin for skin. You stretch out your hand on his bone and his flesh.

God says, you do it, but spare his life. So Satan comes back. So we would expect at this point, what? Another heavenly dialogue.

Another point where God says, have you seen my servant Job? He's still holding on to his

integrity. Even though you've incited me against him. Even though his wife is incited against him.

Even though his own body is incited against him. He has not sinned with his lips. And it's kind of like stepping and there's nothing there to step on.

And we have sort of a jarring note here because we don't go back. And in fact, we're not going to see Satan for the rest of the book. Where's the next page of dialogue in the heavenly realms? Where is, and there came a day when the sons of God presented themselves before God.

And Satan also came among them and presented himself before the Lord. And God says, and we have this dialogue. We assume that this would happen.

We assume that there would be a resolution of this issue. And it does not come in this book. Why? Well, it's kind of like that fourth place where we were expecting, and there came a day.

And it didn't show up and it draws your attention and you say, well, what, what did happen? And look, Satan is personally involved. He comes down and afflicts him with the sore boils. Now we're expecting this heavenly dialogue and we don't get it.

Instead, we're going to get a dialogue on earth. And it is as though a veil has been pulled across the heavenly scene. And we're not privy to the next phase up there.

And we have to deduce it. We have to figure it out. That's what the three friends are going to try to do is interpolate and deduce what's going on in Job's situation.

Because in fact, my question is, how did we get the first two heavenly scenes? Where did that information come from? Job wasn't up there. Mrs. Job wasn't up there. I don't think Satan came down and said, let me write this down for you.

How did we get this information? I don't have the first idea. I would guess that if anybody figured this out, it was Job. And after the events of the end of the book, as Job lived for another hundred and some odd years, he wrote the autobiography of Job by Job, starring Job.

And he, through that which God reveals to mature believers, filled in these blanks. Maybe Gabriel came down and said, let me tell you what happened. Now that you've survived it, let me fill in a few blanks for you.

Some kind of way, a human author got this scene from heaven. And it is accurate. It is word for word what took place.

We've seen Gabriel reveal heavenly things to Daniel. We've seen Ezekiel receive information about the heavenlies. We've seen John the apostle receive information.

Paul the apostle talks about knowing a man who upwards of 14 years ago was caught up to the third heaven and saw things that he's not allowed to talk about. And so it should not surprise us

that Job or someone near at hand to Job got this information from what could only have been an angelic witness to the conversation. I am confident in saying some angel communicated this scene to a human author who I would guess to be Job.

I can't think of anybody better qualified to write it than Job himself. He remembers what he said. He remembers what his friends said.

He's got scribes. His household, by the way, is not wiped out. The house servants and all of his staff and his accountants and his scribes and his literate guys who make up contracts and all that are all still around.

So he's got an extensive group of people who can write stuff down, who can take notes as these friends speak. And so once again, that points to Job as being the one who assembles this information and puts it in a form where later on Moses will collect it and add it to the canon for Israel. Well, what can we say about this? First of all, we are not the center of the universe.

Life is not all about us. Much as we would like it to be, we do not live in a pre-Copernican universe where everything circles around us. The sun, moon and stars are all focused on the earth before Copernicus.

And they tried these elaborate mathematical models to predict the movement of the planets and they never could get it to quite fit. And Copernicus and one or two other guys got to looking and saying, you know, this whole thing really swings a lot better if you put the sun in the middle. Why, boy, look at how these formulas all work better.

And the church had a holy uproar because they said, no, no, no. The Bible teaches that the earth is at the center of God's whole thing here. They drew an unwanted conclusion from scripture and tried to fight with science, not for the last time, about the evidence of nature.

We have no trouble at all with a solar system instead of a Terran system. We have no problem with a post-Copernican universe where even the sun itself is a minor star in a very large galaxy. And we are in an infinitesimal speck of dust in a huge cosmos.

By the way, they're playing the Cosmos series, the Carl Sagan series again. They've brightened it up and dusted it off in 2001 and it's replaying. It's really worth seeing if you ignore Carl Sagan.

But the point is, we have to realize that we are not the issue. God has bigger fish to fry than just being a giant grandpa up there, giving us everything we want and stirring our path with roses. We have the opportunity.

We were lost and hopeless, headed for the lake of fire, and God rescued us. And we have the opportunity to be of service, for our lives to count for something and mean something. All God asks from us is that we be willing to put up with a momentary light affliction.

They will earn for us an eternal weight of glory. Do we have just that much patience? Remember what Jesus said to the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane? Could you not wait with me one hour? They couldn't pray for the Lord Jesus. He told them he was about to die.

He told them it was an important night. They couldn't keep a focus on the Lord Jesus. They said, oh man, and off they went.

And he went and woke them up. He said, look, it's an important night. I need you with me.

Peter, James, and John, come along. And they couldn't focus. They couldn't concentrate.

They couldn't keep their eyes on the Lord Jesus for that one hour. Well, our life in the vastness of eternity is like that one hour. Could you not watch one hour? Momentary light affliction compared with an eternal weight of glory.

There's no place in the Bible you can see it more clearly than the life of Job. He's going to go through this for something measured in weeks. And God is going to doubly bless him afterward.

And he's going to be blessed in the millennial kingdom and in eternity. But he has a rough go, a really rough go for these weeks. What would have happened if Job had just flung his arms in the air and said, curse you God, I don't know what you are doing.

What did you put me here for if this is what I'm going to go through? And we are so easily tempted to fall into that trap. It is very helpful to let God the Holy Spirit impress the Word of God on our hearts and remind us that we are one figure in a much larger tapestry of God's plan, which is perfect, which is for our good and not for our harm. But we have to trust God when it doesn't look like it makes any sense, when it doesn't look like it has a favorable outcome.

And it all boils down to choice. We either choose to trust God, we choose to believe what he says, or we don't. And if we don't, we miss opportunities like this.

Well, when we come back next week, we are going to begin in chapter 2 verse 11 with Job's three friends. And our pace through the book of Job is going to pick up. We have taken a very close look at the introduction, which sets the stage and paints out for us, marks out for us the major issues, what is at stake in Job's situation.

Now that he is in that state, there is going to be a detailed discussion. And we are going to summarize and distill the major points from each of these pieces of dialogue that are going to come up in the next many chapters and move with reasonable speed through the book to the conclusion and see what is the theme, what is the point, what is the purpose beyond what we've already seen of these three great believers, mature believers of the Old Testament age and their take, their attempts to apply the Word of God to Job's situation. What's good about it? What's bad about it? And why is it here? Why should we study it? That's the question we'll start to answer

next week.

But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for this great timeless example from the life of your servant Job. We pray that we too, in our way and in our time, can be faithful servants, that we can hold fast to our integrity with so much more by way of resources, with the full armor that you provide for us, the sword of the Spirit, which is your Word, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of faith, and all of the other things that you have given us.

From those to whom much is given, much is expected. And we pray that we can too be worthy of the time that you allot to us, the opportunities that you give to us in this life. We pray that in all things the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified.

We ask it in his name. Amen.