

05a JOB

This is Friday the 26th of May 2006. We continue tonight our study in the book of Job. Picking up at chapter 3, let's take a moment, as we always do, to clear our minds and prepare our hearts and ensure that God the Holy Spirit can teach us without encountering obstacles in our hearts.

Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for this opportunity to spend time in fellowship and in the study of your word. We pray that we will find in it those truths that you have for us that will transform us and renew us and equip us for every good work. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We have seen the setup, the background of Job's situation, the two heavenly dialogues and the absence of a third. And last time, we saw this very interesting new circumstance, which is the arrival of the three friends.

We looked at their names. We saw that they are all associated with Edom, which was renowned for its wisdom in Job's day. It was the seat, this was the capital of smart people.

That's where they all lived. And so, three really smart guys. We already have fairly high expectations because these men are Job's friends.

And we figure they are close friends because when they hear of his distress, they arrange to meet together and to comfort him. And so, the last thing we saw in chapter 2 was that they had heard of his adversity and when they saw him from afar, he was so changed that they were in shock. He looked to them nothing like his normal self.

It says they didn't recognize him, but obviously they did. And they said, wow, can that be Job? And they began to weep. They lifted their voices.

They tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. They sat down with him on the ground for how long? How long did they sit there and not say a word? Anybody? Seven days and seven nights, right? What do we know about seven days and seven nights? If you're in the time of Moses and somebody says seven days, what are you going to think of? What would suggest itself to your mind? What other period of seven days might spring to consciousness? The book of Genesis hasn't been written yet. You can't think about Joseph mourning for Jacob seven days and seven nights.

It hasn't been written down yet. What's the only seven day period you can think of that would be known to someone in Job's day? Pretty much the first one, right? The days of creation. Six days, God created the heavens and the earth and he rested on the seventh.

What do we understand the span of human history to be in terms of the Word of God? How long is human history going to last? Seven thousand years? Seven days? A day with the Lord is a thousand years? We have six days where we labor and do all of our work and then we have the

millennial kingdom which is the time of rest. We cease from labor and enter into God's work just as he has ceased from his work. So it's interesting in some ways you can almost put the book of Job right after Genesis.

You could say Genesis, Job, Exodus, Leviticus numbers in terms of chronology, right? I understand they have chronological Bibles. I don't know if any of y'all have ever seen one, but they have one of these where they try to take, I think it's called the chronological Bible and they try to put everything in its historical order. I don't know where they put Job in one of those, but if they do it right, it ought to be between Genesis and Exodus.

And so if you look back, and of course Job is living in the land of Edom. All of his friends are Edomites, so how much of the Jacob history are they likely to have? They'll know something about Abraham and they'll know something about Isaac. But if they're descendants of Esau, then their knowledge of Jacob may be somewhat limited and certainly early from before Jacob and Esau split.

And then they would just have the hearsay or remote secondhand knowledge from caravans or whatever. But it's highly unlikely that the Edomites, of course they are the seed of knowledge, maybe they know all about Israel. But suffice it to say, this seven days and seven nights, why is it mentioned? You could say, well, it just shows how really shocked or sorrowful or sympathetic or it was so tragic a situation and it's kind of an exaggeration.

Today's Friday, right? You all came here. Suppose you came in and you saw that I had had some horrible accident and had disfigured my face and was in a body cast and had broken out in sores and all my hair had fallen out just since the last time you saw me. Think about this.

If you would sit down here, and you might have a few servants, a few little butlers who would bring you snacks and bring you food and bring you a clean robe every once in a while or something. You'd get up and leave to go brush your teeth or do routine things. But basically you would sit here and not say a word, just sit here and look at me until next Friday.

All three Memorial Day weekends, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and all day Friday, you would just sit here and look at me in my body cast with my horrible disfigurement. It's a long time, isn't it? And people think, well, this is just poetic saying they really felt sorry for Job. Why does the Bible record seven days and seven nights? The reason I'm belaboring this a little bit is think about what we've already seen as far as Job in symbolic terms.

Who has he reminded us of both in his elevated, rich, powerful, influential state, and in his diminished, cast out state? His circumstances compare to two phases in Satan's career, don't they? But there is similarity in the first, and there is a difference in the second. The similarity in the first is they're both rich and powerful. Satan's a rich and powerful angel.

Job is a rich and powerful human. Satan falls and Job does not. So then Satan says, well, I'm all

deprived of my station and my influence and my angelic property, whatever that was.

And if you do that to Job, then he'll feel the same way I do. So God allows that to happen. And so now Job compares to Satan in his fallen state, and Job still doesn't make the decision that Satan made.

In the rich and powerful state, he doesn't choose like Satan did. In the beaten down and afflicted and suffering state, he doesn't make the decision that Satan makes. So when we step back and we look at human history and we look at the creation of the world and the creation of the human race, how long did it take God to do that? It took him six days, and on the seventh day, he rested.

And at the end of that period, what do you have? You have Adam and Eve sinning and falling and having to leave the garden. And their spiritual state, the spiritual state of the human race at the end of the original seven days of creation is kind of like Job, isn't it? Hopeless, helpless, useless, can't do anything to save ourselves. And once again, Job, in his condition, seems to be representing larger things.

I think that's why this seven days and seven nights is mentioned here. You could imagine the three friends, in one sense, sort of like the angelic watchers. And they look at this, and it's unrecognizable.

The last time the angels looked down at mankind, they had Adam and Eve in glowing glory in the garden. They were beautiful. They were perfect.

They were surrounded by all these wonderful things. And now they look, and here's man driven out of the garden, dressed in the skin that used to belong to an animal, having just had children and tilled the ground by the sweat of their brow. And the comparison of what they were before and what they are now to the angels has to be this sort of contrast.

My goodness, man was created in the image of God, and now, look at him. He's pathetic. He's dying now shall die.

So, I would suggest to you that one of the reasons that seven days and seven nights is here, because it suggests two things about the human race. Seven days always talks about the human race. It took seven days for God to prepare, complete, and rest from creation that is centered on human beings.

And human history itself is represented as seven days. Six thousand years. Four thousand years from Adam to Christ.

Two thousand years from Christ to the denouement. Seventieth week of Daniel, the rapture, and so on. And then you have the thousand years of the millennium.

So, this suggests to us that as we go forward now, as we enter into chapter three, and we start

listening to Job speak, you could say, well, and if you've read chapter three, you know that Job is going to say, my life has really taken a downward turn, and he's going to talk about some things. But with this little hint and this clue of the friends coming and seeing him, and not recognizing him, he doesn't bear any resemblance to his former state, and they look at him for seven days and seven nights, the ones who have an ear to hear and an eye to see are going to be thinking in bigger terms. They're going to be thinking, Job, in his actual, literal career as a real human being, this is a historical account, it's not a fable, but Job's situation and his experience reflects larger things.

And so we're turning now, because human history itself, if you look at the Bible, why is man operating down here? One of many reasons why God has created us and is having us live this 7,000 years of history is we are a teaching tool for God to demonstrate some things to the angels about what it means to have free will, what it means to choose God for or against. And at the same time, we who are created a little lower than the angels, through God's grace and saving plan, are going to be raised up and eventually be equal or superior to them. In Christ, we are raised far above all principalities and powers.

It tells us at the end of Ephesians chapter 1. It tells us that in the Psalms. He was made a little lower than the angels. He is crowned with glory and honor.

It's talking about man. So, it is not a far-fetched idea with those concepts fresh in our minds to see that Job reflects Satan, unfallen and then fallen, and now man, unfallen and fallen, because that's the point of human history. When God created us, of course, He knew we were going to fall.

But what better way to show a fallen angelic creation that they are accountable and responsible for their choice to leave God than to have an analogous creation, another sentient creation with free will, and look at them sort of from an objective point of view and see that the same things are true. So, Job becomes a linkage and a hinge point because you can easily see in the first two chapters, this is a reflection of Satan. Satan is up there and God's almost tongue-in-cheek dialogue with Satan, Job, where have you been? Have you seen my servant Job? He's upright.

And they go through these removals of Job's stuff and then of Job's health, and Job doesn't make the same decision Satan did. That's a powerful argument against Satan. Well, it's not just Job that has experienced this, is it? The entire human race.

We live in a fallen world. We are corrupt. And all of us are a part of this grand plan of God.

One facet, not the only facet, but one facet of which is to demonstrate that when God says a creature has free will, it's really free. You're not a victim of environment. You're not a victim of... What is Job's family and his possessions if not his environment? Satan's argument is environmental, isn't it? Well, you've created a hedgerow.

You've created a great environment. If you change his environment, he'll change his mind. God allows his environment to be egregiously changed, and Job doesn't change his mind.

Volition is free. Choice is free. You can be in a wide variety of circumstances and make the very same choice.

Be in a bad environment and make a good decision. Be in a good environment and make a bad decision. Or good-good, bad-bad.

The two are not causally related. That's the point. So, before you totally lose the bubble here, chapter 3, after this, after the seven days.

This is the setup. This is the background. We're ready now because Job is going to open his mouth.

He hasn't said but like two lines in the whole first two chapters, right? Well, we've received the good things from God. Should we also not receive evil? The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

That's about as much as Job has actually said up to this point. Now, Job is about to open the floodgate, and we are going to hear a lot from Job. Chapter 3, let's take a look at these first.

Well, we'll read the whole chapter quickly because we're not going to be able to study every single word. Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. What's the first thing you notice in that? If you've got your Bible in front of you, you can see this right away.

Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of what? How's the word birth printed in your Bible? It's in italics, isn't it? You know why? It doesn't say anything about birth in the Hebrew. It says, after this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. We just got through talking about seven days and seven nights.

Now, Job opens his mouth and curses his day. Now, he's going to talk about the day when he was conceived and the day when he was born and all of that, but his day is a more comprehensive term. His day means his whole time.

You know, the day of the Lord is a period measured in months and years and sometimes even refers to the entire millennium. Day in Hebrew, yom, y-o-m, is a flexible word. So, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day.

That's what it says. And Job spoke and said. Now, we just had the introduction.

This is like a title. You've read books where you've got several paragraphs, but it has a little title at the top. Even your New King James, if you look at it, in mine here, it says, Job deplores his birth.

In big type, does yours say that? Well, this line, verse 1, is a title in Hebrew. After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. That's the title for everything in this chapter.

This is Job's cursing of his day. All of it. Now, there are actually going to be three parts to this because Job is going to talk about his birth in the first ten verses.

Then he's going to wish that he had never been born alive at all in another nine verses. And then he's going to wish, now that he is alive and was born, that he could die. And that's verses 20-26.

So, as we read through this, and this is the only word-for-word thing we're going to be able to do on this chapter, so you want to pay attention, but watch for those three phases. First ten verses, I really am sorry I was born. Second, middle nine or ten verses, I wish, since I did have to be born, that I had been born dead.

And then the third set, I wish I was dead. May the day perish on which I was born and the night in which it was said a male child is conceived. Now, right away, I will just point out that people seldom make an announcement on a day of conception.

Right? I mean, nine months after conception, there is a birth, and you say, you know, you hand out cigars and say, it's a boy or it's a girl, right? So, why does this say a male child is conceived? Well, in Hebrew, this is equivalent of, on the night the child is born, you say, it's a boy, it's a boy. That's what was conceived nine months ago. This is not talking about the day of conception.

This is talking about the day that he was, in fact, born. Hence the sort of mistranslation or the interpretive translation in verse one. They're deciding that because verse three is talking about the day of his birth, that's what one is talking about.

And they're not recognizing that this is a title for all 26 verses. 24 verses the following. Anyway, may the day perish in which I was born and the night connected to that day in which it was said, it's a boy.

That's what was conceived. May that day be as darkness. May God above not seek it nor the light shine upon it.

May darkness and the shadow of death claim it. May a cloud settle on it. May the blackness of the day terrify it.

As for that night, may darkness seize it. May it not rejoice among the days of the year. May it not come into the number of the months.

Oh, may that night be barren. May no joyful shout come into it. May those curse it who curse the day.

Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan. May the stars of its morning be dark. May it look for

light but have none and not see the dawning of the day.

Because it did not shut up the doors of my mother's womb nor hide sorrow from my eyes. So you see that that's phase one here. This is all regret about his birth.

All of it is about the day of his birth. And the reason I am emphasizing that point a little bit, especially in chapter three, is that from the standpoint of the abortion debate and when is life human and this, that and the other, the uniform view of the Bible is your life as a person begins on the day of your birth. You look at Adam.

There was a process when God scraped... Now, by the way, this is not an argument for abortion. Please understand me. But it is equally wrong to make an erroneous argument from the Word of God against abortion.

If you're going to argue against something, argue right. Don't argue wrong. And it's wrong to say that the Bible teaches that life in terms of human identity and so on begins at conception.

I will tell you the right argument against abortion in a moment. But look at this. All of these ten verses, verse three through ten, he's talking about the day of his birth.

And when he says the day that a male child is conceived, this is the announcement. They didn't have ultrasound in the ancient world, did they? They didn't know that you could put a penny on a thread and suspend it over the pregnant woman's tummy and it would go in a circle if it's a girl and a line if it's a boy. They didn't know that back then.

And you'll find that funny if you read forwarded emails. That's one of these urban legends or something. You can tell the sex of the child before it's born.

They had no way of knowing. Nobody could announce anything about a male child is conceived until the male child was born, right? So that's why he says, the day on which I was born, may that perish, and the night where they said a male child was conceived. That's the idea.

But all of this is the day of birth. Think about Adam. How was that process? God formed Adam's body from the dust of the ground.

Handful here, handful there. Made an arm. Made a shoulder.

Made a torso. Made another arm. Scooped some dirt together and made his head.

Scooped dirt together and made all the rest of his body complete. And of course, God's doing more than mud pies. I mean, he took the elements out of the soil, out of the ground, and he created this biologically perfect, genetically flawless human body.

But it was not alive. Then Genesis says, God breathed into his nostrils. After his body was complete, God breathed into his nostrils what? The breath of life.

And man became a living soul. A living nephesh. Not at the point the body was complete.

At the point that God breathed. Breath, uniformly in scripture, signifies life. Life is breath.

Breath is life. Translates the word nephesh both ways. Now, you say, oh, well, fine, then we can abort things all the way up to the day of birth and it's not alive.

Not at all. Let me just ask you one question. Oh, by the way, before I even ask you that question, I'll remind you that in Ezekiel, remember the vision of the valley of dry bones? God says to Ezekiel, prophesy to these bones so that they will live.

So Ezekiel prophesied, and there's this rushing noise, and skin and sinews and flesh cover the bones and makes this mighty army all laying on the ground. They are biologically complete. Their bodies are completely fully formed, right? And then God says to Ezekiel, prophesy again to these bones.

And when Ezekiel prophesies the second time, breath enters them and they stand up on their feet. Very same process that took place in Genesis. Complete the body, stick in the life.

That's how it goes. Now, let me ask you this, because you say, well, gee, Sam, that's terrible. You're just opening the door for people to say abortion is great.

Not at all. Ask yourself this question. God is in the garden, forming the body of Adam out of the dust of the ground, puts on his head, makes his arms, plumbing, wiring, structure, endocrine system, digestive system, circulatory system.

All of this stuff is being put in place. And Michael the archangel comes walking by and says, Lord, what are you up to? Well, I'm a fashioning man. And Michael says, oh really? And he comes up there and just starts kicking the body apart.

Kicks the head off, rips an arm off and throws it under a tree in the garden. How happy is God going to be about that? The issue is not when life begins. The issue is what is God doing? If God is in the process of creating a human body, in the garden or in the womb, you are messing with the work of God to dissect it and kick it all apart.

The issue of is it murder or is it alive, you can decide that any way you want. It's immaterial. You're interfering with the work of God and you will have to answer to God for that.

What do you think God would say if an angel kicked Adam's body apart? Or after he got the structural member out of Adam while he was asleep and started fashioning Eve, somebody came along and started playing soccer with Eve's head or something and didn't let God finish his work. Well, listen, a lot of abortions are accomplished by decapitation. Poking a hole in the skull and dragging out what's left.

So, I'm just telling you. Or what if somebody poured burning saline solution all over Eve while God had her half finished? What do you think would have happened if Ezekiel had not prophesied the second time so that those bones would live? How happy do you think God would be with Ezekiel? So, those are the questions to ask. Don't get yourself tangled up into a debate about, well, are four cells human life, eight cells? I mean, how far along does it have to be before it's alive? Is it when it has a brain wave? It's nonsense.

It doesn't matter. Look at it from God's point of view. God is creating a body and it is no different to abort a growing fetus in the womb than it is to go into the Garden of Eden and kick Adam's body apart before God can breathe in the breath.

That's the proper way to look at it. So, all of this in chapter 3, verses 3 through 10, Job is concentrating not on the day of his conception but on the day of his birth because that is when the breath came into his body. That's when he became a living soul.

And he regrets it on this day. The second section begins in verse 11. Why did I not die at birth? First of all, I wish the day had never happened when I was born.

But since it did and I was born and the day didn't shut the doors of my mother's womb and out I came, then why could I not have died at that point? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb? Why did the knees receive me or why the breasts that I should nurse? Do you know what it means when it says, why did the knees receive me? Ancient women were a lot smarter than a lot of modern times. And childbirth was accomplished in a different way. Women were in a different posture so that gravity would aid the birth process and they would squat to give birth.

And instead of laying on your back and pushing against gravity, you are upright and gravity is helping. And there is a midwife right behind the birth mother to catch the child. And she catches it on her knees.

Why did the knees receive me? That's the knees of the... I just said it. What am I talking about? Midwife. Old timers.

Why did I not perish when I came from the womb? Why did the knees receive me or the breasts give me suckling? And you'll notice also that obviously there was no baby formula. There were no bottles and that kind of thing. But many times women who gave birth might have trouble nursing a child and you had nursemaids.

And these nursemaids were amply endowed and able to nurse very well. And so this is not necessarily referring to Mrs. Job or Mrs. Job's father. Job's mother in other words.

This could be the nursemaid or the midwife or whoever is involved. Ladies were involved in the birth process. They provided all kinds of support.

Why did the knees receive me? Why did the breasts allow me to nurse? For I now would have lain still and been quiet. I would have been asleep. If I had died at birth, I would be asleep.

In the Old Testament. In the New Testament. Death is pictured as sleep for believers and for those who have not yet been able to make the choice.

A baby that dies on the day of its birth, Job says, I would be asleep. I would have been at rest with others who are asleep. With kings and counselors of the earth who built ruins for themselves or with princes who had gold who filled their houses with silver.

Notice, he doesn't say anything like that in verses 3-10. If he had never been born, if his birth had not taken place, he's not some undesignated soul on the shelf that never got assigned to a body. There is no existence until you're born.

Once you're born, if you die, even on the first day, now you are asleep with the rest of the dead. And with the best of them. With kings.

With counselors of the earth. Those who built ruins for themselves. What does this mean? It doesn't mean they built it as a ruin.

It means they built these wonderful things long, long ago that are now in ruins. In Job's day, there are ruins from the time of the flood forward. And he'd say, people have been dying ever since Noah.

Ruins previous to that are pretty well obliterated, but there are ruins in place. He said, I'd be asleep with the people who built those if I had died on my first day. The Bible is consistent in its view on when human life, in terms of here is an accountable soul that is going to have to face God at some point, when that comes into play.

And it's not before you're born, it's after. I would have been at rest with princes who had gold to fill the houses with silver. Why was I not hidden like a stillborn child, like infants who never saw light? And this is the fate, when a child is stillborn and it never breathes a breath, what do they do? They're just buried.

They're hidden away. And he doesn't say anything about, if I had been stillborn, I would be sleeping with the kings of the earth. He says, I could either have died on my first day and be sleeping with the kings and the makers of ruins, or I could have just been hidden away like the stillborn who never saw the light.

And that would be no existence. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together.

They do not hear the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master. This is the place of repose.

This is the place of rest. The Old Testament view was that you've ceased from your earthly labors and you're asleep. That's pretty much as much as they knew.

They didn't think, oh, you're in Abraham's bosom. They didn't think you were in some disembodied state floating around in front of God. They didn't think you were down in torments, bobbing around in a preview of the lake of fire.

They said, everybody's at rest. The small and the great are like that frog in Jonathan Winter's pocket. Remember that? His eyes are closed.

The sleep of death. There they are free. They are at rest.

They cease from troubling. Look at verse 20. This is the third section.

So, first section, wish I had never been born. Second section, since I was born, I wish I had perished on that first day and just been asleep or been born stillborn and just been hidden away and that wouldn't even be an issue. Third section, 23-26, why is light given to him who is in misery and life to the bitter of soul? If I didn't fail to be born and I didn't fail to die at birth, why is light given to me? Why is light given to him who is in misery and life to the bitter of soul who long for death but it does not come? And search for it more than hidden treasures who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave.

Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden and whom God has hedged in? For my sighing comes before I eat and my groanings pour out like water. For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me and what I dreaded has happened to me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet.

I have no rest, for trouble comes. I'm here and I'm sorry I'm here. I long for death, but death is not an option.

I search for it more than hidden treasures. What are we supposed to search for more than hidden treasures? What's one of our newest memory verses? What do we look for like hidden treasures in Proverbs chapter 2? Wisdom, right? If you lift up your voice for wisdom, if you cry out for understanding, if you seek her as silver, if you search for her as for hidden treasures, then you understand the fear of the Lord, then you find the knowledge of God. Job here is depressed.

He's discouraged. He is very, very non-optimistic. He's very pessimistic.

Why is light still shining? Why is life still given to those who are so miserable they just wish they were dead? And whom God has hedged in. Now, this is ironic, isn't it? The whole argument at the beginning from Satan was the reason Job is so happy and so faithful is that you've hedged him in. And Job says, well, I'm hedged in, alright.

I'm hedged in and I want to die. I'm now, instead of being hedged in with blessing and hedged in with prosperity and hedged in with my family, I'm hedged in with what seems to be an incurable

disease. I'm hedged in with troubles.

I'm hedged in with sorrows. And this happens sometimes to military forces who see an enemy coming and so they build up a defensive position. In fact, I'll give you a better example.

This happens to people who put bars on their windows to keep out burglars. Burglar bars. Then there's a fire in the house and they can't get out of the house.

What started out being a hedge to keep bad things on the outside becomes a hedge that you can't get away from the bad things on the inside. And Job's hedge is kind of like burglar bars now. And he says, I'm hedged in, I can't get away from it.

My sighing comes before I eat. And this, again, is an ironic comment. You know, it used to be people would eat and have a really fine meal, you know, like after Thanksgiving.

You'd hear a lot of people going, Oh, that was good. Oh, great gravy. Oh, wonderful dressing.

Wonderful cornbread. Wonderful this, wonderful that. And people make a lot of sighing because they're full and contented.

He says, well, my sighing comes before I eat. And it's just the opposite of that happy, contented sighing. It is the sighing of the one in pain and the one in misery.

My groanings pour out like water. Now, without being indelicate, there is water that pours out of all of us from time to time. And it is unavoidable.

It is a natural consequence of being alive. And Job says, my groanings are as unstoppable as trying to never take a restroom break. I mean, pretty soon they are pent up and they have to issue forth.

That's what my groanings are like. People in the ancient world didn't always have the same sort of polite standards of conversation that we have or subject matter. They would talk about things because it made sense to them.

And he says, look, I can only hold this so long. And then I have to let out my misery. And it's a very powerful image.

It's a little less than what you want to use in polite society today. But you get the idea, don't you? He says, I can't stop this. I can't help myself.

My groanings pour out like water. For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me and what I dreaded has happened to me. Now, this is the first clue we have about the pre-misery Job that gives us insight into his calamities.

Job tells us, I was afraid this would happen. I have always had a lurking fear that I would lose

everything. The thing I greatly feared has come upon me.

What I dreaded has happened to me. Now, why is Job so down on the day of his birth, on the fact that he survived his birth and on the fact that he's still alive now? He had dreaded and feared the very condition that he's in and now it has happened. Here's a thought for you.

And I am not trying to pick on Job. Job is one of the greatest believers of the Old Testament. But, everything's been written down for our instruction.

What lesson would we draw from this comment? What I feared, what I dreaded has happened to me. Just for instance, if Job, before Satan's machinations, back when all of his family was around and he had tremendous wealth and he kept having this recurring fear and dread that he would lose it all, that's the time to deal with it, isn't it? That's the time to have the Word of God, have faith in God, have your relationship with God, eliminate that fear and eliminate that dread. If that is a worry, before you ever lose anything, that's already a warning sign, isn't it? That's like a light on the dashboard.

Just because I have all of this stuff, why do I fear and dread losing it? You fear and dread losing things when you are too attached to them. The only thing a believer should really fear and dread is losing relationship with God, is losing the status of being pleasing to God, of losing that potential for well done thou good and faithful servant at the judgment. Why is Job afraid of losing his stuff instead of afraid of losing God's approval? That is a problem.

And Job confesses it here and he says, I was afraid of this. Well, at the point that he was afraid, that was the time to get the fear fixed. And the principle is this, the application is this, many times circumstances are going to test us and it's not always adversity.

Sometimes it is prosperity. And if we find ourselves worrying or having a fear or having a dread and nothing has happened yet. You know, there's people all concerned, I was talking to some guy about the president, domestic spying, oh, we're going to lose our freedom, they're going to listen to our cell phone calls and all this.

Nothing has happened. The government is trying to find terrorists and they're using every means legally available. They check with the lawyers, they check with the constitutional experts, and they say, okay, this is legal.

And they do their very utmost to try to root out terrorists. We've gone more than four and a half years now without an attack and it is because the government is working day and night using every means at their disposal to root these sons of Belial out before they do something to us. Well, there are people that are concerned and they say, we could lose our freedom, President Bush is abusing his authority, he's flouting the Constitution, he's trampling the Fourth Amendment, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Well, this is an unreasonable fear because there's no substance to it. It hasn't happened yet. Nobody has been indicted and put in jail because the government overheard their cell phone call and wrongly construed a joke or something and, oh, there's hundreds of people rotting in prison because the government's... It's nonsense.

Well, we often create problems in our mind that have not happened. We find ourselves in adversity and we assign it to causes that are not true. And the time to fix that is when it first occurs.

If Job had a dread and a fear, the time to fix it was when it reared its ugly head, not later. And that's what we need to do. God has not given us a spirit of fear.

It is a spirit of power, a spirit of love, and a spirit of a sound mind. That's what the New Testament tells us. Perfect love casts out fear.

Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee.

Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. We have to put ourselves in that position.

And I will say this. I think, and I think you can demonstrate from God's Word, that when we do that, God has no need to out that fear or that dread by bringing it to pass. If we strengthen our souls, if we learn those lessons, there's no reason for God to have to teach us those lessons through circumstance.

And many times, our fears and our dreads are self-fulfilling prophecies because it's a weakness in our soul and we don't fix it. And so God has to use more extraordinary means to shore up our soul and to teach us and to build us up. So the worst thing about having a fear and not fixing it is it can very possibly come true because that's an area that needs address, that needs fixing.

Well, this is the route for Job. Job is going to be a stronger believer when this is all over. We're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll pick up and finish Chapter 3 and move into Chapter 4.