

## Northwest Community Evangelical Free Church

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Sermon manuscript

### Sermon Series: GOD...in the Storm

(Studies in the book of Job)

## **The Ugliness of DEMANDINGNESS**

Study #7

(Examining Job's responses, part 2)

### Introduction: Frivolous lawsuits we have known and loved...

1992 - MacDonald's was sued because a customer using the drive-through window scalded herself with hot coffee. America raised its eyebrows when she received \$160,000 in compensatory damages and \$2.7 million in punitive damages.

1988 - Two carpet layers sued for damages when a can of adhesive that they had placed next to a hot water heater exploded all over them. They sued, despite the warning label on the can, "*Keep away from heat.*" They were severely burned in the incident and the jury awarded them \$8,000,000.

1991 - A man sued Anheiser-Busch (brewer of Budweiser) because, despite what the beer commercials seemed to promise, beautiful women would still not go out with him, even when he was drinking beer. And, no, that lawsuit was not successful.

1995 - A prisoner in Virginia sued himself for damages of \$5 million, claiming that he had harmed himself by getting drunk and committing crimes. Since he had no money, the suit required that the state pay. And that suit was also unsuccessful.

Frivolous lawsuits are sometimes funny, sometimes tragic. But for those who have been there, being taken to court or taking someone else to court is no laughing matter.

Unless you want to be listed on the Internet Hall of Shame, you don't file a lawsuit unless you REALLY believe that you have been harmed by someone else's malice or gross negligence.

When reasonable people go to the trouble to file a lawsuit, it is because they consider that the pain and suffering they have endured has been exceptional. It requires redress, so they take their opponent (be it a corporation or an individual) to court.

At the same time, "frivolous" is in the eye of the beholder. What may seem to one person to be a silly misuse of court time may seem to someone else to be a perfectly legitimate lawsuit.

Today in our time in Scripture we get a ringside seat to a scene where a complainant serves legal papers to his opponent - and I'll leave it to you to determine where this case should be placed on the frivolity scale.

### *Review*

Over the last several weeks we have been exploring the story of Job. Overall, the responses he has given to his devastating losses have been impressive.

When he lost his identify as a wealthy father of ten, he responded with this:

***[1:21] Naked I came from my mother's womb  
And naked I shall return there.  
The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away,  
Blessed be the Name of the Lord.***

Then, after he was afflicted with sore boils from head to foot, he responded to his wife's suggestion that he "*curse God and die*" with this:

***[2:10] "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"***

Then we listened to him *lament* (chapter 3) the shell of a man he had become in the most extreme language imaginable - and in all of this he did not sin with his lips.

By all of these responses, Job lived up to his reputation as a ***“blameless and upright”*** man.<sup>1</sup>

However, as counselor Larry Crabb has noted, this is often how it works. In the immediate aftermath of difficult times, many of us can manage to mobilize our resources and cling to God as we press on.<sup>2</sup>

It is commendable, but it is not all that unusual for someone to have an initial, healthy response to trials.

The greater challenge comes when the suffering goes on and on and on. Chronic pain, a loss that keeps on taking, a wound that won't heal - these are the life conditions that provide a perfect soil in which a very dangerous weed can grow.

Sadly, that weed grew huge in Job's heart and we're warned by his life to learn to identify it and to learn to pull it at the first opportunity.

For anyone here today who has suffered long, I pray that you will find great help from our time observing long-suffering Job.

Last Sunday we looked through Job's speeches and paid special attention to how he related to his friends. We saw that his very healthy *longing* for his friends' compassion turned to a very toxic *requirement* that they give him compassion.

It is OK to desire, to long for our friends to come through for us; it's not OK to require that they do so.

Well, today, we're going to look at Job's speeches again. But this time, we'll focus particularly on his words about God.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> You will notice that while the prose sections of the book portray a pious man who took hardships meekly and patiently, the poetic sections show someone who, in language stronger even than that of Jeremiah, lashes out against God, protests his innocence, and cries out for vindication.

<sup>2</sup> From *Inside Out*, p. 150, chapter 8 - "Demandingness"

<sup>3</sup> Hopefully, our increasing uneasiness over the attitudes displayed by Job and his friends will promote an awareness of our own disposition in suffering and of the inescapable fact that in this life we can demand neither genuine compassion from others nor immediate relief of suffering from God.

Scattered throughout Job's speeches are comments he makes about God. From these comments we discover that Job's "Theology Proper" is spot on!

For one thing, Job recognizes the awesome power and the sovereignty of God.

### **Job Struggles with God, as He Is**

#### **Embraces the Powerful "OTHER-NESS" of God**

*God, the all-powerful (9:1-10; 12:13-23; 26:1-14)*

***[9:5] "It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger..."***

***[10] Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number.***

Those words speak of God's omnipotent power. God has all power, but God's is not a caged power. He is a free Sovereign.

To say that someone is "sovereign" means that they can do whatever they want. That's God. He does whatever He wants to do and rules the world as He sees fit.

***[12:14] "Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt; He imprisons a man, and there can be no release..."***

***[23] "He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.***

Today, you and I see evidence of God's "God-ness" everywhere. In His rule of nations, in the sun, moon, and stars, in the weather, in all of creation.<sup>4</sup>

But as even Job admits, all of these evidences of God's power are only ***[14] "...the fringes of His ways."***

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<sup>4</sup> ***[7] "He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing..."***

***[11] "The pillars of heaven tremble And are amazed at His rebuke..."***

In another speech, Job admits that while he knows some things about God, what he knows is only because God made Himself knowable. And what he doesn't know about God is much greater than what he does know.

We know what we know about God because He chooses to reveal Himself to us. Beyond what He reveals, we can never know. Clearly, God's not like us. He's wholly other. He's unapproachable in His majestic holiness.

*God, the unknowable and unapproachable (9:12-35)*

**[9:12b] “Who could say to [God], ‘What are You doing?’...**

**[14] “How then can I answer Him,  
And choose my words before Him?...**

**[16] “If I called and He answered me,  
I could not believe that He was listening to my voice...**

**[19] “If it is a matter of power, behold,  
He is the strong one!**

**And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him?...**

Job passes “Theology 101” with flying colors! There is nothing wrong with his understanding of God's essential attributes of power and sovereignty.

But there is a “*so-what*” behind every biblical “*what*.” And the “*so what*” behind the “*what*” that God rules the world is that He, therefore, must be behind Job's sufferings. He is behind them either in the sense that He caused them or He allowed them.

Job “gets” that. He owns the idea that God's power was behind his great losses. And he says it out loud.

### **Owens the Idea that God is Behind his Sufferings**

*Hurt by the power of God (6:1-4)*

**[6:4] “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me,  
Their poison my spirit drinks;  
The terrors of God are arrayed against me.**

He has been hurt by God. He even sees himself “set up” by God as if he was a dummy for target practice.

*Targeted for harm by God (6:17-21)*

**[6:20] “Have I sinned?**

**What have I done to You, O watcher of men?**

**Why have You set me as Your target,**

**So that I am a burden to myself?**

Job is being honest. He's not hiding from reality. He's not living in denial. His life has not been easy and God has had a hand in it.

But neither is Job simply resigned to his fate. He's struggling and he wonders what most people who have suffered greatly wonder at one time or another. He wonders, “*Why ME?*”

### **Confused about God's Ways**

*“Why me?” (10:4-22; 13:23-28)*

**[10:8] ‘Your hands fashioned and made me altogether,  
And would You destroy me?’**

**[9] ‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay;  
And would You turn me into dust again?’**

**[13:24] “Why do You hide Your face  
And consider me Your enemy?”**

In periods of stress and strain, you may have asked the “*Why me?*” question. You may have felt singled out for trials and troubles. If so, you and Job are a part of a very big club of sufferers who are confused by God's willingness to allow YOU to suffer.

There seems to be no good answer to the “*Why ME?*” question. But that non-answer leads Job to what he might consider an even better question - “*Why not THEM?*”

*Why not them?” (10:3; 21:1-34; 24:1-25)*

Job can think of lots of people who are waaay more deserving of suffering devastating loss than he is!

**[21:7] “Why do the wicked still live,  
Continue on, also become very powerful?”**

In this speech (chapter 21), Job describes people who do wrong AND live to a ripe old age, enjoy safety, affluence, and happy families. Job’s question to God is, “*What gives?*”<sup>5</sup>

Job looks around and observes that very often people who do wicked things prosper and that people who do good things suffer. That doesn’t compute to him. He is confused by the ways of God.

Again, over in chapter 24 we read a long list of injustices committed by people who never seem to get what’s coming to them. Abusers of orphans and widows and the poor often lead carefree lives.

Job has hit on a very sensitive spot for many of us. In an honest moment we’ll admit that the injustices in our world trouble us deeply. We hate it that the innocent suffer; we’re angry that those who practice injustice against the weak prosper. We’re as confused as Job was that God allows the world to work like this.

So we can trace a thread of thought throughout Job’s speeches. He struggles to understand God, as He is. His ways are inscrutable, beyond finding out. But there is more.

Another clearly discernible thread is Job’s struggle to accept and understand his own life, as it is.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [8] *“Their descendants are established with them in their sight,  
And their offspring before their eyes,  
[9] Their houses are safe from fear,  
And the rod of God is not on them.  
[10] “His ox mates without fail;  
His cow calves and does not abort.  
[11] “They send forth their little ones like the flock,  
And their children skip about.  
[12] “They sing to the timbrel and harp  
And rejoice at the sound of the flute.*

<sup>6</sup> From Reitman (Unlocking Wisdom): By framing the debate over Job’s guilt and God’s justice with “lament” and by culminating the debate with a plea for wisdom (chapters 3-31), the author illustrates how self-righteous presumption to know God’s purposes in suffering only serves Satan’s objective of subverting mankind’s

In what follows Job sounds like a very good friend I had whose life had, like Job’s, fallen apart at the seams. He once remarked to me over breakfast, Job-like in its honesty, “*I understand that God has a plan for my life. At the present time I just happen to think that His plan sucks.*”

Job remembers only too well how sweet life was before his losses and he longs for the good ol’ days. Listen as he recounts “*a day in the life of Job*” PRE-trials.

### **Job Struggles with His Own Life, As It Is**

#### **Laments His Life**

*Oh, for the good ol’ days (29:1-10; 29:18-25)*

**[29:2] “Oh that I were as in months gone by,  
As in the days when God watched over me;  
[3] When His lamp shone over my head,  
And by His light I walked through darkness;  
[4] As I was in the prime of my days,  
When the friendship of God was over my tent;**

What a sad look backward. All the past tenses give voice to his current sorrow.

Before the losses that changed everything, months earlier, Job knew God’s favor. Now he doesn’t. God used to watch over him. Now He doesn’t. God used to be his friend. Now He’s not.

Job also formerly enjoyed the admiration of the people who knew him. In the ancient world, respected city elders would sit at the gate of the city to do the city’s business. Hear what happened when Job would sit down:

**[7] “When I went out to the gate of the city,  
When I took my seat in the square,**

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intended agency by distorting the truth about God, so that readers facing adversity might resist the temptation to ascribe all suffering to personal sin or indiscriminate punishment from God and instead seek wisdom in the fear of God.

**[8] The young men saw me and hid themselves,  
And the old men arose and stood.**

**[9] “The princes stopped talking  
And put their hands on their mouths;**

**[10] The voice of the nobles was hushed,  
And their tongue stuck to their palate.**

He remembers thinking that his honorable, blessed life would be his life forever. (29:18) We get that.

When we are in the pits, we tend to think that we’ll be there for good; when the sun is shining on us, we tend to think it will always be sunshiny.

Job’s life, though, once dreamy, has become a nightmare.

*Job’s current, pitiful life (16:15-17; 30:1-19)*

**[16:16] “My face is flushed from weeping,  
And deep darkness is on my eyelids,**

He is now a laughingstock to all who see him. “*There’s the man who trusted in God. Look at him now!*”

Those even older than Job formerly paid him respect. But...

**[30:1] “...now those younger than I mock me,  
Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.**

The young men mock him and spit in his face (v. 10)<sup>7</sup> - and why?

**[11] “Because He (i.e. - God) has loosed His bowstring and afflicted me**

Yes, as we’ve already established, God was involved - in some way and to some degree - in Job’s sufferings. He knows that and so do we.

But as we get deeper into the speeches, Job moves past *observation* of that fact to *accusation*. In chapter 14, Job accuses God of habitually causing harm to people.

<sup>7</sup> [10] “*They abhor me and stand aloof from me,  
And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.*”

## Accuses God of Wrongdoing

*God harms people, generally (14:1-22)*

**[18] “But the falling mountain crumbles away,  
And the rock moves from its place;**

**[19] Water wears away stones,  
Its torrents wash away the dust of the earth;  
So You destroy man’s hope.**

**[20] “You forever overpower him and he departs;  
You change his appearance and send him away.**

Job’s opinion on God’s actions? “*You hurt people. That’s just what You do, God.*”

And then listen to Job’s accusation about how God has particularly, specifically hurt him.

*God has harmed Job, particularly (6:11-16; 16:7-14; 17:3-6)*

**[6:14] Then You frighten me with dreams  
And terrify me by visions;**

**[15] So that my soul would choose suffocation,  
Death rather than my pains.**

God has scared Job and exhausted Job (16:7) and handed Job over to gangsters to abuse him (i.e. - his friends, 16:11).

And Job continues to ramp up the intensity of his accusations. Now, his point is not only that God has harmed him. Everyone knows THAT! Job says that God has *wronged* him. God was *wrong* to harm him.

*God has wronged him (19:1-29; 30:20-31)*

**[19:6] Know then that God has wronged me  
And has closed His net around me.**

**[7] “Behold, I cry, ‘Violence!’ but I get no answer;  
I shout for help, but there is no justice.”<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> [23] “*Oh that my words were written!  
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!*”

As Job sees it, God's treatment of him is just plain cruel.

**[30:20] "I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me;  
I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me.**

**[21] "You have become cruel to me;**

**With the might of Your hand You persecute me.**

**[22] "You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride;  
And You dissolve me in a storm.**

And this terrible mistreatment has come to him despite the fact that he has done nothing wrong. As Job very forcefully argues, he is one of the good guys!<sup>9</sup>

### **Asserts His Own Integrity**

*A lifetime of righteousness (29:11-17; 31:1-34)*

Read through Job's speech from chapter 29 and you'll discover that he was exactly the opposite of the man his friends accused him of being.

He helped the orphan. Destitute widows rejoiced when Job showed up because they knew that he would help them in their distress. Poor people had a friend in Job.

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**[24] "That with an iron stylus and lead  
They were engraved in the rock forever!**

**[25] "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,  
And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.**

**[26] "Even after my skin is destroyed,  
Yet from my flesh I shall see God;**

**[27] Whom I myself shall behold,  
And whom my eyes will see and not another.  
My heart faints within me!**

The phrase "from my flesh I shall see God" is probably better rendered "apart from my flesh I shall see God" - an unusual, but clear Old Testament expression of faith in life after death.

<sup>9</sup> **[6:10] "But it is still my consolation,  
And I rejoice in unsparing pain,**

**That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.**

In his very first speech (chapter 6) Job asserts his unimpeachable integrity - and he becomes more and more adamant about it as the speeches continue.

If there was a miscarriage of justice, Job could be counted on to right it. He would see to it that the rights of the weak were honored - and he also saw to it that those who abused the rights of the weak paid dearly!  
(19:17)

In the last section of his speech, recorded in chapter 34, Job wants to convince anybody who'll listen - Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, you, me, God! - of his righteousness.

He tells us of his commitment to integrity. He refused to take financial advantage of traders and he refused to take sexual advantage of women.

He never took advantage of his servants. He always cared for the poor, the widow, and the orphan.

Yes, he was filthy rich, but he placed his trust in God, not his gold. Yes, he had enemies, but he didn't rejoice when they suffered. Yes, he had a good and blessed life, but he shared his bounty with anyone who needed it.

And that's Job. Quality through and through. The kind of person each one of us longs to be. The kind of person God calls each of us to become. Job knew that if someone threw an accusation of wrong-doing at him, it wouldn't stick.

And for that reason, he also was confident that, in the end, he would be vindicated. He didn't at all deserve the mistreatment and suffering he has endured - and he knows that this will become clear when the smoke has finally cleared.

*Confident of vindication (23:10-12; 27:1-6)*

**[10] "But [God] knows the way I take;  
When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.**

Now THAT is confidence, pure (or not) and simple. I'm not quite sure how to characterize the following words from Job's final speech.

**[27:2] "As God lives, who has taken away my right,  
And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul,**

**[3] For as long as life is in me,  
And the breath of God is in my nostrils,  
[4] My lips certainly will not speak unjustly,  
Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.  
[5] “Far be it from me that I should declare you (i.e. - his friends) *right*;  
Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.  
[6] “I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go.  
My heart does not reproach any of my days.**

Last week we saw movement in Job’s dealings with his friends, tragic movement from “*I want compassion*” to “*You better give me compassion!*”

Today we see movement, too, as Job wrestles with the brutality of life and the ways of God.

Oh, he’s rock solid on the basics of God’s power and sovereignty. And he’s honest throughout as he questions God about suffering, “*Why me?*” and “*Why not the wicked?*”

But we can also notice a change, movement.

- When he talks about his life, he starts off *complaining* and then shifts into an *accusing* gear.
- He begins with an assumption of God’s *involvement* in his sufferings, moves to God’s *harming* him, and ends with God having *wronged* him.

And there is one final realm in which we see movement.

Early on in the debates, a seed was planted in Job’s mind by his good friend, Eliphaz. Eliphaz counseled that if he was in Job’s place he would take his situation directly to God.

**[5:8] But as for me, I would seek God  
And I would place my cause before God**

Of course, it is a good thing to go to God when we are in pain and anguish. (It’s a good thing to go to God at any time!).

But in the heart of this man - Job - who had suffered long and hard, that suggestion by Eliphaz resonated with something that was already present. It was sleeping, latent, but alive in Job’s heart.

It’s in our hearts, too. I’ll name it in a moment. But we’ll first watch it develop.

At the beginning of the debates, Job doesn’t seriously consider the possibility of actually presenting a case before God. He saw Eliphaz’ counsel as nothing more than a passing comment.

### **Job Serves God (His papers!)**

#### **Arguing His Case Before God**

*What can a mere human do? (9:1-4)*

**[9:3] “If one wished to dispute with Him,  
He could not answer Him once in a thousand times.**

Job accepts that nobody could ever bring a case before God. He’s GOD, after all.

However, by the time we come to the second round of speeches Job’s opinion has shifted. He now thinks it might be a good thing to sit down and have a chat with God.

*Hoping for a hearing before God (13:3; 15-16; 17-22)*

**[3] “But I would speak to the Almighty,  
And I desire to argue with God...**

**[15] “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.  
Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.<sup>10</sup>**

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<sup>10</sup> We find the same thought in chapter 13:

**[17] “Listen carefully to my speech,  
And let my declaration fill your ears.**

**[18] “Behold now, I have prepared my case;  
I know that I will be vindicated.**

**[19] “Who will contend with me?  
For then I would be silent and die.**

And by the third round of speeches, Job is chomping at the bit to take God to court.

*EAGER for a hearing before God (23:1-7; 13-17)*

[23:3] *“Oh that I knew where I might find Him,  
That I might come to His seat!  
[4] “I would present my case before Him  
And fill my mouth with arguments.  
[5] “I would learn the words which He would answer,  
And perceive what He would say to me.  
[6] “Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power?  
No, surely He would pay attention to me.  
[7] “There the upright would reason with Him;  
And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.*

So here is the movement.

- Job initially thinks it would be *frivolous* to try and convince God that he is right and God is wrong. That transitions to an *openness* to try and argue with God which turns into an *eagerness* to do so.<sup>11</sup>

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[20] *“Only two things do not do to me,  
Then I will not hide from Your face:  
[21] Remove Your hand from me,  
And let not the dread of You terrify me.  
[22] “Then call, and I will answer;  
Or let me speak, then reply to me.*

<sup>11</sup> In the speech recorded in chapter 23, Job admits that God cannot be summoned - but he adamantly refuses to be silenced.

[23:13] *“But He is unique and who can turn Him?  
And what His soul desires, that He does.  
[14] “For He performs what is appointed for me,  
And many such decrees are with Him.  
[15] “Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence;  
When I consider, I am terrified of Him.  
[16] “It is God who has made my heart faint,  
And the Almighty who has dismayed me,  
[17] But I am not silenced by the darkness,  
Nor deep gloom which covers me.*

And the line is crossed into sin with the final words of Job’s final speech. Here we see the ugliness of demandingness.

**Demanding a Hearing before God (31:35-40)**

[35] *“Oh that I had one to hear me!  
Behold, here is my signature;  
Let the Almighty answer me!  
And the indictment which my adversary has written,  
[36] Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,  
I would bind it to myself like a crown.  
[37] “I would declare to Him the number of my steps;  
Like a prince I would approach Him.”*

Here, Job is serving God as a plaintiff serves the accused in a lawsuit today. And THAT is one frivolous lawsuit!

### Conclusion:

So what do we say to Job’s performance?

On the one hand, I honestly applaud Job for engaging with God as passionately as he did. To rail at God is a sign of life. It is to at least take God seriously.

Better to passionately engage as Job did than to live as if God is not. How many of us face life and its confusions with a resigned, “Oh well...” - and refuse to wrestle with God and His ways. A passive / aggressive skirting around life’s BIG ISSUES is cowardly and soul-killing.

On the other hand...

On the other hand, Job clearly crossed a line when He challenged God (God!) to a day in court. He demands that God see where He (God!) has been wrong. He demands that God admit that he (Job) is right.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> And how do we know that Job was wrong? We know because we have cheated and looked ahead to the speeches of God (Job 38-41) where God directly indicts Job for the sin of questioning His wisdom and justice in ruling the world.



Job's life had come apart at the seams and he was convinced that if he was in the driver's seat, he could do a better job of running his life and running the world than God was.

One of my favorite Christian authors is the always thoughtful Philip Yancey. Years ago, Yancey wrote the book Disappointment with God and in that book there are these thoughts about Job:

"I once regarded Job as a profound expression of human disappointment, and that with direct biblical sanction. However, I discovered that [the book] does not really represent the human viewpoint.

"When people experience pain, questions spill out - the very questions that tormented Job. 'Why me?' 'What's going on?' 'Does God care?' 'Is there a God?'

"This one time we the onlookers - not Job - are granted a view behind the curtain. As nowhere else in the Bible, the book of Job shows us God's point of view, including the supernatural activity normally hidden from us. Job has put God on trial, accusing Him of unfair acts against an innocent party. Angry, satirical, betrayed, Job wanders as close to blasphemy as he can get. And his words have a startlingly familiar ring to them because they are so modern. He gives voice to our most deeply felt complaints against God.

"But chapters 1 and 2 prove that, regardless of what Job thinks, God is not on trial. Job is on trial. The point of the book is not suffering: Where is God when it hurts? The prologue deals with that. The point is faith: Where is Job when it hurts?"<sup>13</sup>

That friend of mine I mentioned earlier, the one who accepted that God had a plan for his life but who didn't particularly enjoy that plan, was actually one of the most spiritually mature men I have ever known. (He would argue against that thought, of course, but his disagreement with my assessment argues for my point.)

And here's the thing. When that man spoke about the goodness of God, it rang exceptionally true.

He and every member of his family were suffering a serious, life-threatening health crisis. His career was greatly limited by his own disease.

And when he would lean across the table at IHOP and tell me something he had learned from Scripture, or when he would tell me about someone he knew and loved who was far from God and whom he was hoping to lead to Christ, or when he encouraged me to walk with God - there was POWER.

He didn't go where Job went. He didn't become demanding and he didn't rail at God. He continued to embrace his life mission as being a light sent to shine in dark places.

And you and I are called to the same. We must beware the possibility that we might nurture a demanding spirit, especially when life's losses linger.

We are to run from demandingness, for, of all the frivolous lawsuits around, nothing is a bigger waste of time and energy than demanding that "*the Almighty*" (31:35) answer our demands.

When faced with pain and loss, we are called to grieve and honestly lament. And we are called to continue to be His bright lights in a dark world.

You are most powerful for God when you embrace your mission to be "on mission" for Jesus' Great Commission in your pain. That's faith. That - FAITH - brings a smile to your heavenly Father's face and great joy to you and great blessing to your world.

<sup>13</sup> This quote is from found in Disappointment from God. I quote it from a footnote in Unlocking Wisdom (Reitman), p. 49.