

Job Lesson 5: Disturbing Conclusions, Part 1

Daily dying to self, daily taking up my cross, daily surrendering my life to the Lord's will: these are things that will bring me joy and peace.

- ✓ They are what's coming for us, so they will insulate us; humble us; make us thankful; do away with most of our fears.
 - ✓ Do you know how to correctly interpret Job? Just let it say what it says!
 - ✓ Our problem is that its conclusions are so disturbing that we want it to say something different somehow.
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- ✓ There are a lot of difficult passages in the Bible, and the reason why they're difficult, in many cases, is because we just simply don't want to accept them, we want it to be something different.
 - ✓ We want God to be different.
 - ✓ We want God to act the way we want Him to act.
 - ✓ We want Heaven to be the way we want Heaven to be and life down here to be the way we want life to be.
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- ✓ We're like a bunch of spoiled children.
 - ✓ Do not change the Bible to assuage your prejudices! Let it say what it says.
 - ✓ We do not sit in judgment of the Bible, instead, it sits in judgment of us.
 - ✓ Picking up where we left off in Job chapter one, we might expect since there is a break in chapters that there will be a break in the sequence and that things are going to change for the better.
 - ✓ We might expect that God was going to turn everything around and maybe even that He is going to explain what was going on to Job so that he understands.
 - ✓ After the bad, surely now will come the good, right? Well, that's the way fairy tales read, but that's not the way this part of Scripture reads.
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- ✓ **Job 2:1-3** "without cause": There was not a direct link from what Job was experiencing to anything that he did.
 - ✓ God calls Job a blameless and upright man, not an accolade that God bestows on many to be sure.
 - ✓ **Job 2:4-5** This brings us back to our **first disturbing conclusion** from this book: **life isn't fair.**
 - ✓ Remember, if life were fair, all sinners would get what they deserve.
 - ✓ Being entitled only to hell itself was our **second disturbing conclusion.**
 - ✓ Sinners aren't in hell the moment; they sin because God is administering mercy and grace.
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How can we complain about getting the better side of unfairness?

- ✓ There are so many good things that we take for granted. Why do we do that? Because there's a part of us, deep inside, that says God owes it to us.

The third disturbing conclusion. God doesn't owe us anything good, not even an explanation.

- ✓ Job wants an explanation for what has happened. I can't blame him, I would too, but we need to understand that it wasn't owed to him.
 - ✓ God effectively refuses by saying to Job, "What makes you think you deserve an explanation?." That's all God says. Job never gets an explanation. Job is never told why.
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Why God?

- ✓ Do you have a lot of "why" questions? Me too!
 - ✓ You may get an answer to your "why" questions because God's nice and deals with us as a kind father would his children.
 - ✓ But please understand, God doesn't owe us any explanations. God doesn't owe anyone anything.
 - ✓ Even if we weren't sinners, we are still His creation over which He is totally sovereign, He still wouldn't have any obligation to us.
 - ✓ Nevertheless, you may ask God why this and why that and you may get a gracious answer, but don't count on it. You hold nothing over Him.
 - ✓ If Job, a blameless and upright man, didn't get an answer, why should you? That is part of what is disturbing about this book.
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Our fourth disturbing conclusion: Since God doesn't owe us anything, God's got a right to do whatever He wants.

- ✓ He's got every right to do what whatever He wants to do, in whatever way He wants and for as long as He wants. Are you okay with that?
 - ✓ Is it okay for Him to do whatever He wants to do in your life? I hope so because He doesn't need your permission.
 - ✓ We need to remember that God gives, and God takes away whenever He wants and how ever He wants because it's all His stuff and His world.
 - ✓ If He were not loving and kind, there'd be nothing we could do about it, but since He is the definition of love and kindness, we have so much to be thankful for.
 - ✓ A common phrase today is, "It's my life. "Are you sure about that? Seems like if it was our life, then we would get to keep it.
 - ✓ Life is given by God; He didn't have to give it and He doesn't have to let us keep it for any set time.
 - ✓ He decided to give it, and He can decide when and how He takes it back.
 - ✓ Whatever God takes away and whenever He does, be sure of this, it is something He was going to take away anyway. So, we need to be settled with that.
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Our fifth conclusion, (and it may be the most disturbing of all): Good Deeds Don't Earn Good in Return.

- ✓ You may strongly disagree with that one, but it is a clear implication of the book we are studying.
 - ✓ Job did good stuff, he was a good person according to God's estimation and had an excellent reaction to catastrophe, surely, he deserved good in return, right?
 - ✓ You may think that way about yourself and your good deeds. Do your good deeds negate all the bad ones?
 - ✓ Do your good deeds change your status from sinner to saint? Of course not!
 - ✓ There's no statute of limitations on sin because sin is a life-ending, eternal crime. In our sinning, we've broken eternal laws which make us eternal criminals who deserve an eternal punishment.
 - ✓ Being good in time does not in any way fix our eternity does it?
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- ✓ The gospel of grace clearly teaches that we're not saved because of anything that we do, but only because of what Christ did. It's not the works that we've done, but the finished work of Christ on the cross.
 - ✓ You may think, "I'm making up for the things that I did when I was young. "No, you're not because they cannot be undone.
 - ✓ You cannot make up for a single sin or a single law that was broken. When it's broken, it's broken.
 - ✓ Not even God fixes the laws that we've broken!
 - ✓ Laws can't be fixed; they can only be paid for.
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- ✓ A broken law is an eternal offense since they are eternal laws; that's why hell is an eternal place, and that's why it took the Eternal One to pay for our broken laws.
 - ✓ The penalty has to be paid for. Either we pay for it by spending an eternity in hell, or Christ pays that penalty for us. Those are the only options.
 - ✓ We're still sinners who have (if we have accepted Christ's offer of forgiveness) been forgiven for our sins because Christ paid the penalty.
 - ✓ Even if we stack up enormous number of good deeds, we will not have paid God back for a single sin.
 - ✓ We can never merit the favor of God because we are sinners. All of our merit is in the person Christ.
 - ✓ Therefore, to think that we deserve good in return for our doing good is a falsehood.
 - ✓ All of the good we experience will be because He has graciously decided to bless us and nothing more.
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Our sixth disturbing conclusion: when bad stuff happens, it may have nothing to do with our behavior.

- ✓ We'd like to think bad circumstances can always be remedied by good behavior, but it isn't always true.
 - ✓ Understand, I'm not saying that there's **never** a relationship between bad behavior and bad consequences because, clearly, in the Bible, there is. I am just saying there **may not** be.
 - ✓ We should not just conclude that good things come to people who we think are good; neither should we conclude that bad things will always come to those who we think are bad.
 - ✓ Disproving those two fallacies is the main reason that the book of Job is in our Bible!
 - ✓ Stop for a moment and think of all the experiences, all the good and bad of your life. Can you do that?
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- ✓ Now I want you to consider the possibility (not the certainty but the possibility) that there may not be a relationship between any one of those things and how God feels about you.
 - ✓ On the one hand, this realization may come as super good news.
 - ✓ Think of the good stuff in your life, the things that make you think you're blessed and that you're God's favorite.
 - ✓ Why do you think those things have happened to you? Are you prepared to think that the good you have experienced may not have anything to do with your behavior or God's opinion of you?
 - ✓ The fact is that there may be no relationship whatsoever, a necessary but disturbing conclusion.
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