

One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?”

Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”

⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

⁹ “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. ¹⁰ “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

¹² The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.”

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.”

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. (NIV 84)

Theme: Trust God’s process.

Not everyone can see the whole picture—not everyone is able to see how all sorts of moving parts fit together. Bosses, CEO’s they are able to see the big picture—other workers are simply asked to do a job that helps out the company and they are asked to “trust the process.” Coaches, especially football coaches, like to talk about “trusting the process.” They understand how a defensive scheme works or an offensive play—and if a player trusts the process and does his job as told, then the team will be successful. You also might hear people talking about trusting the process of a national election or the judicial system—we simply trust the process that is in place, for it has served us well for so many years.

Maybe you are a big-picture person or not. But there are many instances and circumstances in life where you simply have to trust the process—and that stands for your life as a whole: Simply trust God’s process, for he is the one who is in control.

Job had it all. In the verses before our text we are told that he had seven sons and three daughters. We also, **owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.** And on top of it all, God had blessed him with a strong faith—he was righteous and upright; he didn’t go after the wicked ways of the world. There was no man like him on the face of the earth!

But then, one day he lost it all. In a series of events he lost everything that was dear to him. Two different groups of enemies came and took some of his animals. Fire consumed his flocks, and a house collapsed in a wind-storm and killed all his children. Job lost all his children, animals, his fortune, and most of his servants along with them. Job had a few things left: four servants, a wife, and his health.

But after our text, God would allow Satan to take away his health too. The precise nature of Job's sickness is unknown, but we do know that he had painful festering sores over the whole body (2:7 and 7:5), nightmares (7:14), scabs that peeled and became black (30:28, 30), He was disfigured and repulsive to his wife (2:12; 19:19), he ran a fever (30:30) was in pain day and night (30:17), he was excessively thin (17:7; 19:20), and perhaps worst of all, he suffered through a case of bad breath (19:17).

His wife began to hate him and even told him to, **curse God and die**. He had some friends who came to comfort him but they offered no real comfort, instead they kept on accusing him of some horrible secret sin for which God was punishing him. And because of all these things, Job's reputation was shot and he lost all respect.

How is your life going? Perhaps you haven't experienced the extreme highs and lows that Job did; but I'm sure you have had a lot of good in your life. It's not hard for you to think of some of the many ways God has blessed you: a job, a roof over your head, a car, friends and family, all the good times that you have shared with others, memories that you have made together—God has richly blessed you, there are many highs.

But has everything gone in your life exactly as you had hoped for, or exactly as you planned? Probably not. When you were younger you had big dreams, you had big hopes; but things don't always go as planned—life often gets in the way. You had hoped for a better job, a better paying job, more money in your bank account, more opportunities to visit different places or have good times. You expected to have more friends, less health problems, and you suffered through the death of people you loved. Maybe you wanted your life to turn out completely different—maybe it's about that same as you had hoped; but either way, we all have disappointments in this life.

And what do you do when those bad times come up in your life? If you are like the far majority of people, you start to complain. You

complain about how horrible something is or how rough your life is. You will whine that you haven't gotten a fair share, that life isn't fair. You'll tell whoever will listen how hard you've got it, and you will play the pity party whenever you get a chance.

You may start complaining to God about your life and all the problems you face. And at times, you may even reach the point of complaining about God—maybe even blaming him for all the hardship and difficulties going on in your world. The thought pops up in your head—put there by the devil, that if God really knows all things and is able to do all things, and if he loves me as he says he does, and yet all these things are happening to me, or my life is a disappointment, then he must be a liar. Either God is lying to me or he doesn't love me, or he even hates me.

If anyone had a right to complain, it would have been Job. He doesn't do so in our text, but later on in the book we do see him complaining to God that he is being punished unjustly. And it is interesting to read this story and see how Job reacts to the horrible things going on in his life, because we know the behind the scenes story—we get a peek behind the curtain.

And what do we see? We see God in complete control! He is the one who brought up Job to Satan. The Lord knew that Job was an upright man with a strong faith. Satan did afflict Job with everything in his arsenal; but he could only do as much as God allowed him to do. Was God making Job suffer simply so that he could prove a point to Satan? It may seem so; but God is really using Satan to test Job and to give him an opportunity to serve him and give him glory. He is also teaching Job (and us) an important lesson. At first, Job understood that less but when the bad things started piling up, he forgot the lesson God was trying to teach him.

That lesson is simple: God is in control and we trust in him all things. It may not always seem like it. With all the things we suffer though in our own lives and all the hatred, chaos, and wickedness going on in the world today—it seems as if no one is in control, almost as if God has left the world to fend for itself!

But nothing is further from the truth—just look at Job's story and the behind-the-scenes look we get. We know that from his throne up in heaven our omniscient and omnipotent God is watching over his entire

creation. He promises to love us, to provide for us, to always take care of us. He also guards and protects us from all harm and danger. It may not always seem as if this is the case. I hate to break it to you, but you're not God, you cannot see the big-picture. That was essentially God's message to Job at the end of this book. Job didn't create the world, he doesn't sustain it and he has no authority over anything in the world—only God does. And since God is God and we are not, we trust that God knows what is he doing and will do what is best for us in the end.

Just think of God's plan of salvation. The moment after Adam and Eve sinned God promised them a savior—one of their descendants would defeat Satan for them. This promise was repeated again and again—to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and so on—one of their descendants would bless all nations for he would save the world from their sins.

For thousands of years God made them wait, until the time was just right, then God sent his son born under law, to redeem us under law. It may have seemed as if God wasn't going to fulfill his promise—but he did when and where it pleased him. And it was his plan that the Messiah be both God and man so he could serve as our substitute, taking our sins upon himself and giving us his perfect life.

It also didn't seem as if God was in control when Jesus died—his secret betrayal and arrest, being beaten and mocked, and then crucified even though he had done nothing wrong. Satan even thought that he had finally defeated Christ when he died—but it was all part of God's plan, even prophesied by him again and again. It was the Lord's will that Christ die on the cross as he suffer through our eternal damnation. Jesus himself willingly went to the cross so that he could crush Satan's head three days later and give us his ultimate victory. So everything needed to be done for our salvation has been accomplished by Christ—we don't do anything to contribute in anyway.

As it turns out, God was in control the whole time! He always is. He is our omniscient, omnipotent God, who rules over his entire creation. And he loves us and promises to take care of us at all times. It may not always seem this way; it may seem as if he has forgotten about us, or that he doesn't care for us. But the fact remains that God is always in control and everything will turn out as he deems fit. He is God, we are not. He always sees the big picture, and we cannot. So we trust

that God knows what is best for us and will do what is best for us, just as he promises.

At the end of our text and at the end of this book, Job understood this. Job lost his children, his possessions, and his pride. And yet, what did Job do? He worshiped the Lord! He said, **The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.** Job realized that everything he had really belonged to the Lord and was really a gracious gift from him. And so the Lord could do whatever he so desired with what he had given Job—he deserved none of it. Job trusted the process, he trusted the Lord that he knew what he was doing and so he trusted him no matter what happened in his life.

And we would do well to follow his example. We can praise God and give thanks to him no matter what happens in our lives. Even when we suffer, even when bad things happen to us, we can praise the Lord, just as Job did. For God will make everything turn out for our eternal well-being, no matter what happens, it will be for our good.

So we trust the process—we trust God's plan. He is God and we are not; he sees the whole picture and we are left to trust his process. And why wouldn't we? For he knows all, sees all, and promises to always bless us. So we trust God to do for us what is right. And no matter what happens in our life we can say along with Job, **May the name of the Lord be praised!** Amen.