

Almost Happily Ever After

When God Speaks – Part VI

Job 42:7-17

Introduction

We have all grown up with fairy tales in which, for the most part, the good guys win and the bad guys lose. Against all odds, the prince wins the princess and they ride off into the sunset to live – how? – “happily ever after”. The wicked witch gets it between the eyes and the greedy king is left holding an empty bag. This is the way we like our fairy tales.

However, we all know life is not a fairy tale. “Happily ever after” needs to leave room for the realities and challenges and hardships of life.

One author wrote, “Do you remember your first home – perhaps you built it and called it your dream home. Shortly after moving in, some of the electric plugs did not work, the roof sprung a leak, and one of the commodes kept stopping up.

“How about that new job? You believed it would make getting up in the morning easy. You expected it to fulfill you and confirm your love of that particular career. But many of the people there reminded you a lot of those you left behind, and the boss was not as perfect as you thought, and the health benefits were not all that great either.

“And how about that new car? It smelled wonderfully and ran beautifully – until that Monday morning it would not start. Then there was that afternoon when a guy parked next to you at the mall and opened his door and gave you the mother of all dings on the side of your polished chariot.

“One more comes to mind. How about that new baby? Do you remember thinking how great it would be to start a family and have that adorable little chunk of love cooing at you from her crib in the newly

decorated nursery? Everything was organized and clean and ready. Then the baby arrived – after thirty-six hours of labor. She refused to nurse and then had colic so badly she would not stop crying for six months – and finally fell asleep and woke up thirteen years later as a teenager.

“Farewell to fantasy land. It is not an easy world.”ⁱ

However, you might then think, “Job had it tough, but wait – it ended happily ever after for him.”

At first glance, it did. But this conclusion is for cynics and shallow thinkers.

Ask someone who has lost a child if having another child erased the hollow place in their heart.

Ask someone who has suffered with a painful disease or been hurt in an accident if they ever completely forgot the effects.

Ask someone who has been abandoned by friends and family or been the victim of a crime or abuse if they look at life in exactly the same way they used to.

Let us not trivialize Job’s troubles, now that we have come to the last chapter, by saying, “Hey, he had more children, his diseases cleared up, and he got rich again.”

Job will never look at life in the same way again – even regarding “good things”. He will have a deeper appreciation for his health, like he never had before. He will look at money and business and wealth with an entirely different perspective. He will hold his children and grandchildren a little differently than he did in the past. He will do so because he knows what it is like to lose it all in 39 seconds – which is about the amount of time it took for the

messengers to deliver the news of everything he had lost.

It is not quite happily ever after. However, many wonderful events are now taking place in Job chapter 42.

God Speaks on Job's Behalf

First, God speaks on Job's behalf. Notice Job 42:7.

It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has."

We cannot help but catch the repeated phrase that is used four times through this paragraph, "My servant Job".

Notice Job 42:8a.

Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. . . .

Can you imagine this scene? Nobody really knows where Elihu went – he seems to have disappeared as quickly as he had appeared – but here are these three friends, or former friends! These three have spent hours – giving one condescending, unfeeling, uncaring, super-spiritual speech after another – castigating Job as a rebellious man and a man worthy of judgment.

Talk about kicking a man when he is down! They had added grief to Job's misery.

Eliphaz even made up what he believed must be the horrible secret sins Job had to have committed to have received from God such a terrible judgment. Eliphaz and the others had implied that Job's sins were the reason his children had died and his fortunes were lost.

"Not so," God thunders at him, "not so. Job is My servant and you, Eliphaz, and your two know-it-all, pietistic windbags," – okay, I have added that part – "you need to come to Job, who happens to be My servant, and he will pray for you!"

Is this the ultimate vindication, or what?

What do you think Job is doing? What would you be doing if you were Job?

Is Job dancing around saying, "I told you so . . . na na na na na."?

No. Job has already repented of saying things he should not have said, and he has suffered so.

For those who suffer, there are more important things than being right. They are actually satisfied completely with having the pleasure and smile and commendation of God. He called them His servant!

No, I see tears trickling down Job's cheeks as he hears God call him, "My servant." That is enough.

God has spoken on His servant Job's behalf.

Job Prays on His Friend's Behalf

Secondly, Job prays on his friend's behalf. Proof that Job is not gloating over them is the fact that he is now praying for them. Notice Job 42:10a.

The Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends . . .

By the way, do not miss this in our hurry. Job prayed, not for himself and not for his own restoration of fortune. He prayed for these men who had wronged him. He had forgiven them.ⁱⁱ

Job was praying for God to show them forgiveness and mercy too.

How does a person do this?

Job recognized that he had maligned God and had been forgiven, and he is now turning to forgive those who had maligned him.ⁱⁱⁱ

Our problem in forgiving others is that we have forgotten how much we have been forgiven. A truly repentant sinner is most willing to forgive other sinners.

God Increases All That Job Has

We read, further in Job 42:10, that,

. . . the Lord increased all that Job had twofold.

What exactly does this twofold increase look like?

1. First, God restores Job's family circle and adds to it.

Notice Job 42:11a.

Then all his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came to him, and they ate bread with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the Lord had brought on him. . . .

This is a surprise. I did not know Job had brothers and sisters.

Where were they when the chips were down? We really do not know. It may be that the family hung in there and kept his wife from starving.

However, the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, a manuscript old enough for our Lord to actually quote from, includes a passage that indicates Job's wife had to go through the humiliation of cutting off her hair and selling it in order to buy food.^{iv}

We have every indication, although we cannot be certain, that Job's family had left them hung out to dry.

Frankly, I believe Job's family, like Job's three friends, was afraid of God's judgment too. In other words, if Job is being judged by God, then any attempt to help him might incur similar judgment from God.

So, they all kept their distance. This means that in order for this family gathering, along with that of all of their former friends, to take place in Job 42:11, with the level of fellowship that is indicated, there must have been apologies from and forgiveness demonstrated toward every family member and every estranged friend.

"Job, we're sorry – we didn't know what to do. Dinah (according to Jewish tradition, this was Job's wife's name), we're sorry for not helping you. We were wrong. We didn't believe you were innocent and we, like everyone else, thought you were under the judgment of God. We should have known better – we knew you walked with God. Please forgive us."

"No – and we never want to see you again!"

To this, we would have said, "They had it coming."

"Yes – c'mon over. I've finally got an appetite back – let's eat together and talk of all we've learned. And you are all forgiven."

Wow!

It is not long after this that Dinah comes up behind Job and whispers, "You won't believe it, but we're expecting a child again."

Notice Job 42:13.

He had seven sons and three daughters.

This is the exact number of children they had raised before.

But wait – God had promised that He would double Job's fortune, and God indeed did double his sheep and camels and oxen and donkeys. (Job 42:12)

However, Job still has only ten children. Ah, but this does mean that Job indeed has twice the number of children – because he did not entirely lose his first ten. Unlike camels and sheep and oxen, his first ten children are still counted because they are still alive and he will see them in Paradise.

God restores Job's family circle and adds to it.

2. Secondly, God restores Job's financial security and adds to it as well.

Notice the latter part of Job 42:11.

. . . And each one gave him one piece of money, and each a ring of gold.

The Hebrew text does not indicate a value for this that we can understand. All we know is that everyone gave Job a gift of money and a ring of gold.

One classic painting of this event shows Job cleaned and dressed in fine clothing, seated under a tree in a chair, with a long line of well wishers ready to make amends.

By the way, this is God's way of restoring Job's fortune. This is the way Job was able to purchase new livestock and get back on his feet.

However, do not overlook the fact that this was a slow and tedious process. God did not restore to Job in one afternoon that which He had taken away in 39 seconds.

How wise of God this was, however. Job's healing and restoration included people – a restoration of relationships which Job now knew was far more important than wealth alone.^v

Did you also notice that Job seems especially proud of his daughters? Their names are recorded in Job 42:14.

He named the first Jemimah [which means, "dove"], and the second Keziah [which means, "perfume"], and the third Keren-happuch [which means, "horn of eye paint"],

"Horn of eye paint"?! Was this third daughter being punished for something? Perhaps for eight months of colic?

This phrase referred to a bottle of dye used to paint the eyelashes, eyelids, and eyebrows to make the eyes more attractive.^{vi}

For the dads who are looking for a verse against makeup and mascara, the godliest man in the east actually named one of his daughters "eye shadow". Don't you hate it when that happens? Sorry, dads!

Job 42:15 tells us,

In all the land no women were found so fair as Job's daughters; and their father [sweetened the pot] gave them inheritance among their brothers.

Look at Job 42:16-17.

After this, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations [his great grandsons and his great-great grandsons – four generations of sons].

And Job died, an old man and full of years.

This is the Hebrew way of saying, “satisfied with a full life.”

If anyone qualified to live happily ever after, it would be Job. But even Job would eventually grow ill again. He probably stood by more fresh graves along the way, but Job eventually died.

Then, Job learned the real story. He learned that his affliction, as great as it had been, was light and momentary – producing a greater weight of glory far beyond comparison. (II Corinthians 4:17)

Conclusion

Before we say farewell to Job, let us hear his life echo once more across the span of some 4,000 years. There are still fresh principles – and desperately needed truths.

I have twenty-five sermons preached by Charles Spurgeon on the life of Job. I wanted to see what this renowned preacher of the 1800s had to say in his last sermon on Job. The book is entitled, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*. In this sermon, Spurgeon preached these words:

This may seem to be a very trite observation, commonplace, and such as everybody knows, but, beloved, the very things that everybody knows are those which we need to hear . . . those old things which we did not care about in our prosperity are most valued when we are cast down by the terrible blows of tribulation.^{vii}

When I read this statement, it made me wonder where you were when we started this journey through Job.

Perhaps for you, these truths did not matter so much because suffering was far from your door – but not now. Perhaps now, Job has more to say to you than ever.

You may remember that this book began with Job sacrificing for his children in case they had misspoken or acted improperly. His children were

already on their own, having their own families and their own homes. But Job was a shepherd. He cared about his children – not just physically, but spiritually.

The book began by introducing us to the best representative of God’s purpose for man on earth. This is what God intended a man to be – from his heart to his hands.

There was no question, Job was a godly man.

This leads us to the rather unsettling observation that God’s children are not immune to trials. Christians are not given some sort of flu shot against hardship. There is no such guarantee.

Maybe you have said under your breath, “Yea, I believe that God’s children can suffer great trials, but not godly children. Godly people are given a free hall pass against harassment.”

We had no idea that godly people actually invite harassment, even from fallen angles who hate God and God’s people.

However, the accuser was after Job. If he could get Job to walk away from God, he would win the pleasure of seeing God robbed of worship – which is Satan’s highest aim.

Satan comes to God and accuses Job before God. Then Satan will come and accuse God before Job.

He does the same toward us as well. Satan is called, in the book of Revelation, “the accuser of the brethren”.

It is his mission to tell God we are not worth keeping and then, to tell us that God is not worth following. Satan reminds God that we are sinful and repeats to us that God is absent. He whispers in the ear of God that we are unfaithful to Him and then, whispers in our ear that God is uninterested in us.

However, Job will sing of God’s faithfulness in those early days, and say,

*. . . I know that my Redeemer lives . . .
(Job 19:25a)*

It is no wonder that Martin Luther, the great reformer, would write hymn texts of Christ’s victory over Satan and say to his congregation, “Let us spite the devil by singing praise to God.”^{viii}

Imagine Luther composing these words in days of great difficulty and persecution, and even with the threat of losing his life:

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;

*Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills
prevailing;
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us
woe;
His craft and power are great, and armed with
cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

This great hymn is not just about the strength of Christ, but about the accuser and enemy of the believer who has not let up any since the days of Job.

Luther wrote:

*And though this world, with devils filled, should
threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to
triumph through us;
The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for
him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to
them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Him
who with us sideth;
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill, God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.^{ix}*

No matter what the accuser says; no matter what life delivers; no matter what trials may come; no matter the we might find ourselves with David, saying, “I am in the lowest pit and darkness is my closest friend,” (Psalm 88), five truths may mean more to us now than ever before. Let us look at these.

1. Whenever we conclude that God is not present, He is!

God says,

*... “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”
(Hebrews 13:5b NKJV)*

Job was convinced God was absent. God is present tense. He not only was and shall be, He is!

2. Whenever we feel life is hopeless, it is not! “I have plans for you . . .”

God says, “. . . not because you deserve it, but because I've promised it – and I keep My promises.”

“. . . I have promised to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 paraphrased)

Whenever we conclude that God is not present, He is!

Whenever we feel life is hopeless, it is not!

3. Whenever the enemy of our souls whispers in our ear that God does not care, He does! *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Literally, God continually, constantly, without ever stopping cares about us and our lives.

(I Peter 5:7 NKJV)

4. Whenever we believe God has not heard our crying, He has!

*I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He
heard me from His holy hill.
(Psalm 3:4 NKJV)*

*In my distress I cried to the Lord, and He
heard me. (Psalm 120:1 NKJV)*

You might ask, “But what about wayward believers?”

Jonah said,

*. . . “I called out of my distress to the Lord
and He answered me. I cried for help . . .
[and] You heard my voice. (Jonah 2:2)*

5. Whenever the accuser whispers in our hearts that God has ceased loving us, it is a lie – He never has and never will!

*For I am convinced that neither death,
nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor
things present, nor things to come, nor
powers,*

*nor height, nor depth, nor any other
created thing, will be able to separate us from
the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our
Lord.*

(Romans 8:38-39)

Paul was convinced of this, not by the whippings and beatings he endured; not by the stoning he received; not by the storms and shipwrecks God could have kept from happening; not from the abandonment of the churches he planted and the believers he discipled. He was not convinced by any of this, for what assurances can life provide for mankind? Paul was convinced because of the truth of God’s revelation to him.

For our trials will one day seem light – and momentary – yielding eternally a weight of glory far beyond all comparison. (II Corinthians 4:17)

Peter wrote,

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

*To Him be dominion forever and ever. . . .
(I Peter 5:10-11)*

Living happily ever after will not take place on earth. It will not take place until the earth is remade and we, along with all the redeemed, with our robes dazzling and clean, face eternity beside our sovereign Lord who has chosen to retain His wounds while healing all of ours.

Ladies and gentlemen, Job chapter 42 was not the end of Job's story, and ours will not be written any time soon. There is, for all of us who follow Christ, an ending like we cannot imagine. It will be beyond a fairytale ending, and it will be for real.

The Prince of Peace will one day come. He will come, and there will be a palace and there will be a throne and there will be a kingdom – even the streets will be made of gold.

Then, we will live happily ever after and our Prince will set everything right. He will make everything right and His reward will be in His hand.

So, by all means, not only then, but now, “To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

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ⁱ Charles Swindoll, Job: A Man of Heroic Endurance (W Publishing, 2004), p. 308.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 305.

ⁱⁱⁱ Roy Zuck, Job (Moody, 1978), p. 187.

^{iv} David J. A. Cline, Word Biblical Commentary: Job 1-20 (Word, 1989), p. 53.

^v Mike Mason, The Gospel According to Job (Crossway, 1994), p. 437.

^{vi} Zuck, p. 188.

^{vii} Charles Spurgeon, Suffering and the Sovereignty of God (Fox River Press, 2001), p. 370.

^{viii} Spurgeon, p. 7.

^{ix} Martin Luther, translated by Frederick H. Hedge (composed ~ 1527-1529).