

JOB SERIES FOUR
WHEN MOURNING AND DEPRESSION ARE NORMAL
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JOB 3:1-26; MATTHEW 5:4; 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4; PSALM 139
(S-1584)

What does it take to ruin your day?

SLIDE #1: How about a relationship that's gone sour at work?

SLIDE #2: car breaks down?

SLIDE #3: child has trouble at school and you're called in for parent-teacher interview—now, before the day is over.

SLIDE #4: Maybe you're just sick

SLIDE #5: Maybe your triplets are teething

SLIDE #6: Or, the police officer stops you for speeding

SLIDE #7: What if you lose 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and 7 sons and 3 daughters—and your health.

Might that ruin your day?

Unfortunately, too many Christians feel that when life goes sour, they shouldn't let it ruin their day—good Christians should always be “up”. In their thinking, unwavering “faith” and “trust” in are indicators of good Christianity.

However, wise Christians know it is all right to respond to loss with some measure of grief, hurt, and depression. There is no lack of faith here.

Let's take a moment and REVIEW the first two chapters of Job (Act One, Scenes 1-5).

SLIDE #8: Scene One: Earth: Job has wonderful life: This is a sparkling resume of a good man. Job is a praying man, trusting man, priestly man, faithful man, family man and godly man.

SLIDE #9: Scene Two: Heaven: God and Satan make a bargain about whether or not Satan could get Job to curse God: God is on trial. God lowers the hedge and Job becomes a pawn in the game.

SLIDE #10: Scene Three: Earth: In a quick and brutal sweep of calamities, allowed by God, but engineered by Satan, Job is reduced to a twisted mass of brokenness and grief. He is left penniless, homeless, helpless, and childless.

Standing beside ten fresh graves on a windy hill, his wife heaving in sobs beside him, having lost all Job says in faith,

SLIDE #11: Read Job 1:20-21. “The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” His wife bitterly whispered, “Just curse God and die.”

SLIDE #12: Act One Scene Four: Heaven: God and Satan bargain again: Skin for skin, all that a man has he will give to save his life. Let me touch his body, and he will curse you. God lowers the hedge.

SLIDE #13: Act One Scene Five: Job loses his health. Satan afflicts Job with painful sores (boils) and he sits in the city dump with a piece of broken pottery scraping his sores.

SLIDE #14: Read Job 2:9-10: His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

When bad things happen it seems that they always happen to the wrong people.

Johnny Gunther was a handsome teenager, a straight A student at Deerfield Academy. He had high hopes and great dreams. He was majoring in math and chemistry, and everything looked bright on the horizon for Johnny until the dark shadow of brain cancer crossed his life.

During the fourteen months after the diagnosis he endured two serious operations and even after the second operation he passed the grueling entrance exams to Columbia University.

Two weeks after being accepted to Columbia University, young Johnny Gunther died.

His character was revealed after the first surgery. The parents, John and Frances, were alone with the physician who told them the grim prognosis. John said, "Our son is so curious and bright. He'll want to know everything; but, how shall we break the news?"

They decided that the surgeon would be the one to go alone and tell Johnny the whole story. So, all alone he slipped into Johnny's room and the surgeon told him the seriousness of the malignant brain tumor. The boy listened in bed with rapt attention and hardly blinked.

When the physician finished, Johnny's only response was, "Doctor, how shall we break this news to my parents?"

That takes guts. That is Job's response in chapters one and two.

But now we turn the page to chapter 3 and we meet a Job of a different color—and if we are not careful, we will wonder what has gone wrong with Job.

Nothing has gone wrong with Job.

Listen rather than follow along in your Bible. Listen to the tone of Job's heart.

READ JOB 3 FROM "MESSAGE" PARAPHRASE.

Need to warn you, Job three is not easy preaching.

I don't know of a person on earth that has ever said, "Job 3 is my favorite chapter in the Bible."

I don't know of anyone who has ever memorized a verse out of Job 3. We want to pass quickly over this chapter, unless we have known the black hole of depression ourselves – and we read, not shocked, but with understanding expression.

Here the scabs are pilled from the sores and the pus of reality runs down Job's life.

If his story was made into a movie and you rented it for tonight, when you came to this part of the story you would not want your children to watch. It's unedited and it's raw—

and you don't want to believe that the same man who wrote the words of faith and worship in Job 1 and 2 is the same man who wrote these words of despair and depression in Job 3.

Even the godly can be depressed.

There is nothing here that makes Job's unspiritual. No, what he does here is the most spiritual thing he could do.

This is how to handle suffering—we mourn it and grieve it.

SLIDE #15: Now, notice, Job does not go through this alone. Job's comforters were in place.

READ AND TALK ABOUT JOB 2:11-13.

Don't ever begin mourning without comforters in place. God and others.

We are now in Act Two, Scene One.

■ SLIDE #16: 3:1-10 – Job regrets his birth.
3:11-19 – Job wishes he'd been born dead.
3:20-26 – Job longs to die.
End of sermon.

■ SLIDE #17: JOB 3:1: After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

He did not curse God. He cursed the day of his birth.

“After this” (3:1)

After loss of all children and everything he held dear, ability to make a living, sores running and scabs pulling loose, Head shaved, wife wringing her hands, three friends sitting and staring speechlessly for seven days and seven nights. “after this”, he opened his mouth and out comes these words,
“I wish I'd never been born.”

This is depression. This is what grieving looks like.

■ SLIDE #18: JOB 3:3-4: May the day of my birth perish, and the night it was said, 'A boy is born!' That day-- may it turn to darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine upon it.

Oh boy, a boy is conceived. “No, no, no, don't say that.” May that day be dark – obliterated.

In the midst of the darkness of all of this we come to verse 8.

■ SLIDE #19: JOB 3:8: May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.

Job not experienced at cursing so he offers to those who curse well to pick up the day of his birth and curse it well.

“To rouse Leviathan”. What is Leviathan?

Webster: “A sea monster represented as an adversary.” But it goes further back than that.

Leviathan was a seven-headed sea monster of ancient near-eastern mythology. In the Ugaritic Literature of Canaan and Phoenicia of ancient days, eclipses were caused by Leviathan coming out of the sea and swallowing the sun or the moon and therefore causing darkness to be cast on the earth.

Job says, “While I am at it, Let Leviathan swallow up the sun and make it all dark.”

Does Job believe in mythology? Perhaps. I really don't know. Perhaps for him Leviathan had no more meaning than our present day Santa Claus.

We may say, “Santa will come”, but that doesn't necessarily meant that we believe in him.

Four stages of Santa (1) We believe in him, (2) We don't believe in him, (3) We are him, (4) We look like him.

We joke about Santa and we have fun with the myth. But Job is not joking.

■ SLIDE #20: JOB 3:11: Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?

■ **SLIDE #21:** Job 3:16: Or why was I not hidden in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?

If I had to be born, I wish I had just been born dead.

■ **SLIDE #22:** JOB 3:12: Why were there knees to receive me and breasts that I might be nursed?

We understand the nursing, what about the knees?

Some say it refers to child passing by mother's knees. But this says, "receive".

Refers to patriarchal process of father receiving child shortly after birth and father placed a baby on knees and gave it the family blessing.

Seen "Roots" – remember child held up by the father before God and gives him to the Lord in ancient African custom.

And Job says, "Why was I ever so blessed? Why did those knees ever receive me? Why wasn't it a corpse they held in their hands?"

Then with the thought of being a corpse, he turns to the subject of Heaven (or death).

■ **SLIDE #23:** 3:13-15: For now I would be lying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest with kings and counselors of the earth, who built for themselves places now lying in ruins, with rulers who had gold, who filled their houses with silver.

■ **SLIDE #24:** 3:17-19: There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest. Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver's shout. The small and the great are there, and the slave is freed from his master.

Beautiful picture of peace and solemnity and ease. That could have been my lot, but I've lived, and I've lost it all.

Then he moves to several philosophical questions and musings of confusion and longing.

■ **SLIDE #25:** Job 3:20-22: Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure, who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?

STORY of Stretch Kline's wife in ER: "pray that I will die."

She had not lost her faith. Just wanted to go to heaven.

Why do I have to keep on living? Why can't I just die?

Dr. Kevorkian would respond, "You don't. Let me kill you."

Interestingly, suicide never enters his mind. Never an attempt, never a word about it, never a warning against it – so foreign to the life of the faithful.

No suicides at Casas in 15,000 cases.

Verse 25 he speaks of his fear and his dread.

■ **SLIDE #26:** Job 3:25-26: What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.

Refers to better days.
End of speech.

His friends are nearby, staring him down. Analyzing him from their vantage point of social health and planning their sermons as they will soon rebuke him because he's getting what he deserves.

SLIDE #27: Did you see, "The Elephant Man?" There is a picture of the original Elephant man: John Merrick, a 19th Englishman stricken with Proteous Syndrome.

The movie of his life is really not for children. The movie documents John Merrick's struggle with a disease that resulted in a deforming and a defacing of his person. Head is enlarged and thick folds of skin replaced smooth skin that we have. He looks like a sideshow freak.

But he is a great man deep inside. There's a tragic scene where he is trying to get away as the cameras are flashing and people are grabbing at him and he finds his way to a railway station and races down steps to get away and finally ends up in the latrine – a soiled place of this public station. And they pour in after him.

At the height of the film he struggles to get the words out, "I am not an animal. I am a human being! I...am...a...man." You can hear a pin drop in the theater.

If I'd been there I don't think I could have refrained from walking over and throwing my arms around him and telling him how much I love and respect him. That is what he needed. That is what Job needed.

SLIDE #28: Matthew 5:4: "Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

But, of course, that is not going to happen for Job.

LET'S DRAW OFF SEVERAL LESSONS FROM JOB'S EXPERIENCE which will better equip us for ours.

SLIDE #29: IT IS NOT GOOD TO MOURN AND GRIEVE ALONE. MAKE SURE YOUR COMFORTERS ARE IN PLACE BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

Job's comforters were in place. Don't begin mourning without comforters in place: God and others.

Can't Mourn and comfort alone: takes two

If mourn alone become a rock. Don't want to stop feelings and emotions.

Who are our comforters?

SLIDE #30: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

SLIDE #31: WE NEVER FULLY GET OVER PAIN AND GRIEF UNTIL WE EXPRESS IT FULLY WITH PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO COMFORT US FULLY.

Story: boy in airport at TUS grill: Get up, you weren't hurt.

Let it all out.

Picket fence of Psalm 139.

SLIDE #32: IT IS NORMAL FOR TIMES OF MOURNING AND DEPRESSION TO FOLLOW TIMES OF LOSS (AND VICTORY). IT IS NOT NORMAL FOR DEPRESSION TO GO ON ALL THE TIME.

Experience a loss: Mourn + Comfort + (Understanding, forgiveness) + Time = Healing

It is not normal for it to go on forever. Go to your doctor.

SLIDE #33: Brain picture, single neuron firing

SLIDE #34: Brain picture, serotonin.

Explain the four temperaments: melancholy, sanguine, phlegmatic,

SLIDE #35: EVEN THE GODLY CAN BE DEPRESSED. THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN BEING A PERSON OF GREAT FAITH AND A PERSON OF GREAT DESPAIR AT THE SAME TIME.

If you doubt that, read the imprecatory Psalms.

SLIDE #36: THOSE WHO HAVE PLUMBED THE DEPTHS OF THEIR OWN INADEQUACIES ARE THE ONES GOD INVARIABLY CALLS TO SHEPHERD OTHERS.

Is it any wonder that Job has ministered to hearts the world over? Is it any surprise that those depressed after a few of the Psalms, quickly turn to the Book of Job?

Peter: "Lord, I will follow you anywhere. These others may desert you, but I will never desert you."

Jesus: "Well said Peter, Feed my sheep." No, "tonight you will deny three times that you ever knew me."

When did he call Peter to feed his sheep and tend his little lambs? After, denial, after Peter left the ministry and returned to fishing. Breakfast, "Peter, do you love me?" Be the shepherd of my sheep.

At risk until 35.

Be a great speaker, leader at young age, but can't be a great pastor until at least 35.

Glenn is now 35.

It's easy for us on a lovely Sunday morning, dressed up, cleaned up, to hide the truth of that is really going on deep within us.

For most of us, it pains us to hear these words. The truth is, we've breathed words much like these more often than we would like to remember.

Ours is a dark world, one that's lost its way, and rather than being smug and complacent for those who've lost their way, may we have deep compassion for those who can't find their way home.

May we have a sweet understanding of miserable situations some people are in so that we might light their darkness, and bring hope in their hurt, and rescue from their valley, and comfort in their grief.

Bow our heads.

Don't know where you are in all of this. Some of you are saying, "Move over, Job, I know exactly where you are." I am there now.

Perhaps you've been through it and are better equipped to help those who go through it. You'd have no criticism for Job.

If you're there and never found Christ – sad story for you when you work through all this without Christ you still won't have peace. Maybe all of this is designed to bring you to the cross. I'd like to think that.

If you die today without Christ you have no idea what misery is all about. So come, today, don't delay, to the prayer room. Counselors will help you find your way home. Christ died for the sins of the whole world.

Thank you, Father, for going with us to the Valley of the shadow of death and rescuing us there. Amen.