

4. How much is enough?

May 20, 2012

It was Tuesday morning just like any other busy workday. The streets and the subway trains of the Big Apple were filled with New Yorkers and tourists, especially those who were heading down to the Lower Manhattan where they could get off the train at the World Trade Center Station.

The sky was clear blue. It seemed that it was going to be another beautiful day in New York. You could see the Statue of Liberty at the New York Harbor and the Battery Park near by the Twin Tower. You might even hear Frank Sinatra's famous song lyrics in the background: "I want to be a part of New York, New York."

At 8:46 a.m., five Islam Al-Qaeda hijackers crashed American Airlines Flight 11 into the World Trade Center's North Tower. The American people around the country were stunned how this kind of freak accident could happen and were wondering why the pilot and copilot of the plane could not avoid that big building.

While the same Americans were watching the morning news on TV, at 9:03 a.m., another five Al-Qaeda hijackers crashed United Airlines Flight 175 into the South Tower. People could not believe that they just witnessed this. They were thinking, "These don't look like accidents."

While they were horrified at what was happening in New York, another five Al-Qaeda hijackers flew American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. All of sudden, the Americans realized that they were under attack by unknown enemies.

While the Americans tried to figure out what was going on, a fourth flight, United Airlines Flight 93, under the control of four Al-Qaeda hijackers, crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, southeast of Pittsburgh, at 10:03 a.m. after the passengers fought the hijackers. Flight 93's target is believed to have been either the Capitol or the White House. People were wondering and asking one another, "When would this terror ever stop? How much is enough?"

Job must have asked the same question as the four waves of calamities crashed over one after another to his once-peaceful and serene life. Part of Satan's strategy was to hit Job while he was down. The cruel deceiver had already snatched away the lives of Job's children and all of his possessions, leaving him with nothing but his wife, a few friends, and his faith in God. Now, Satan was about to inflict upon Job the most terrifying and painful trial of all: the loss of his good health.

A. THE ROUND TWO

Job 2:1-5 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. 2 And the Lord said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." 3 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." 4 So Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"

Up to the middle of v3, this second recorded dialogue between God and satan followed the same pattern shown in Job 1:6-8. God used the repetition to impress upon satan the futility of his first attack against Job.

Furious that his first scheme to destroy Job had failed, satan came up with another insidious idea. He insinuated that everyone has his price and Job's price would be met when he loses his health and has nothing and no one to turn to.

Satan's underlying accusation throughout the Book of Job is that Job served God simply because the Lord had blessed him so much. The accuser snidely suggested that Job worshiped the Lord solely because of what he got out of the deal, and that once Job's blessings were gone, his loyalty to God would dry up as well. But as we continue to explore the depths of Job's character, we'll discover just how wrong satan was.

This brings up a very important truth against the Prosperity Gospel heresies of the Word of Faith Movement by Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, and now Joel Osteen. Their false teachings say that you are entitled to have wealth and health all the time from God if you have enough faith to demand them of Him.

But what if God Almighty says, "No," to people's demands? After all, He is the Almighty God who can do all things as He pleases, right? If that happens, are they going to desert Him for some other gods better than Him? Their theologies are so shallow, so ungodly, and so demonic. Their worship of God is totally based on how much they can get out of the Lord. That is exactly what this satan was saying to the Lord.

B. THE SECOND WAVE OF SATANIC ATTACK

Job 2:6-8 And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

Being a pastor of a small church allows me to get to know you guys more than a pastor of a gigantic church who cannot know his congregation very well. It is humanly impossible. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that I am better than big church pastors, I just get to have more opportunities with our people.

While I get to know you guys, I get to hear some of your heart wrenching stories – stories of continuing difficulties in your lives, continuing deterioration of your health, losing job, then about to lose your home, and stories go on.

I know that all of you guys are good people. In my ignorance, I sometimes ask the Lord, "How much is enough? How can they take this difficulty again and again? Why doesn't this calamity happen to bad people instead of our people?" I am sure that the Lord looks at me with that look – "Are-you-that-dumb-AGAIN?"

With God's permission, satan afflicted Job with a disease we cannot identify. Whatever it was, the symptoms were so terrible: severe itching, insomnia, running sores and scabs, nightmares, bad breath, weight loss, chills and fever, diarrhea, and blackened skin. When his three friends first saw Job, they did not recognize him!

I will take my high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type two diabetes, and acid reflux any day over what Job had. No thank you very much.

Physical suffering. Pain can weaken our resistance and make everything look and feel worse than it really is. More than one person has withstood tragedy only to fall apart under the onslaught of pain. That was what satan was counting on.

Please note that not all physical affliction comes directly from the evil one, though satan's demons can cause many diseases.

I read an article that said, "Missionaries in primitive cultures have reported that patients with the latter manifest symptoms similar to Job's, and many of these patients also soothe their sores with ashes."

According to Job chapter 19, he who once was the city's leading citizen and the wealthiest of all the people of the East was now living in filthy conditions at the city dump where garbage and human excrement were burned.

Some of you might feel like Job now. As I said, I heard and know many of your situations. We all have those haunting questions – "Why did such a thing have to happen? Why me? Why now?" It doesn't matter how many others have the same situation. We still ask this universal question, but the answer often eludes us.

C. A VOICE OF A BITTER WOMAN

Job 2:9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

When we read what Mrs. Job said in our comfortable air conditioned room, we might easily look down on her for her comment. Let's put ourselves in her sandals for a few minutes:

- She too had lost all of her ten children in a short time.
- She too had suffered the loss of their wealth and possessions, especially her home. You know this, ladies. To women, their home is more than four walls and a roof over their heads. It is their identity, their security, and their shelter. A wife can relate to her home far more intimately than a husband ever can.
- She became the suffering, shamed wife of the most scorned man in the entire town.
- She had practically lost her husband Job.

As far as Mr. and Mrs. Job are concerned, their comfortable life was over and it showed no indication of any improvement. So, either out of her bitterness toward God for allowing Job's suffering or her desire for her husband's misery to end, she advised Job to "take the easy way out" by cursing God and giving up on life.

D. THE THINGS WE MUST LEARN FROM MRS. JOB

Though we sympathize with the agony of Job's wife, we can also see that her negative responses and poor advice only served to further alienate and discourage her husband. From her example, we discover what to do and what not to do when one of our own loved ones faces a difficult and painful situation.

1) DO: We always need to guard our words when our loved one is going through a hard time.

Instead of shaming or blaming, offer a listening ear and kind words. During difficult times, our loved one needs a gentle dose of spiritual wisdom, perspective, and

strength. We need to encourage our friend or family member and lift him or her up in prayer. And remember that actions speak louder than words. So find tangible and practical ways to help.

As I said a few minutes ago, we have plenty of families in our church who can use your help right now. I am not necessarily talking about finance, rather being there for them, listening to them, maybe taking a meal to them. Please look for a way to be there for them.

Some of you may think, "What if they say, 'No thanks.?'?" I don't think that they will, but even if they do, you are doing it unto the Lord.

Matthew 25:35-40 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

2) DON'T: Never suggest that your loved one should compromise his or her integrity.

Even though you may not understand why he or she is suffering, you're responsible to encourage your loved one to move toward God, not away from Him.

Compromise may seem to offer temporary relief, but in the long run, it only makes the situation worse by allowing sin to widen the gap between your loved one and the Lord.

Don't ever, ever suggest drinking alcohol as a method of cutting the edge off. Alcohol is a depressing agent. If you want to make their situation worse, make that suggestion.

Speaking of Job's wife's communication skill, I found this from somewhere. It is so true. It is titled as "**5 Deadly Terms Used by a Woman to her man**":

1) **FINE**: This is the word women use to end an argument when she knows that she is right and you need to shut up.

2) **NOTHING**: It means something and you need to be worried.

3) **GO AHEAD**: This is a dare, NOT a permission. **DON'T DO IT.**

4) **WHATEVER**: A woman's way of saying, "Go fly a kite on I-19"

5) **THAT'S OKAY**: She is thinking long and hard on how and when you will pay for your mistake.

BONUS WORD – WOW!: Guys, this is not a compliment. She is amazed that one person could be so stupid.

E. JOB'S GODLY RESPONSE THAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

Job 2:10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

The two things Job would not give up were his faith in God and his integrity, and that's what his wife wanted him to do. Even if God did permit evil to come into his life, Job would not rebel against God by taking matters into his own hands.

Faith is living without scheming. It is obeying God in spite of feelings, circumstances, or consequences, knowing that He is working out His perfect plan in His way and in His time.

Those who do not have saving faith in Jesus Christ, scorn at the believers of Jesus Christ for having faith in Him. They say, "It is foolish." But God has the right thought about those people.

Psalm 14:1a The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

The Hebrew word "foolish" is "nabal" which means "spiritually ignorant or nondiscerning." Does that word sound familiar to you? It should. It was the name of the ding-dong husband of Abigail from 1 Samuel chapter 25.

1 Samuel 25:3 The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. And he was of the house of Caleb.

When life is difficult, it's easy to give up; but giving up is the worst thing we can do. I heard that someone who is wise said, "If Columbus had turned back, nobody would have blamed him, but nobody would have remembered him either." If you want to be memorable, sometimes you have to be miserable.

F. APPLICATIONS

1) When we encounter adversities in our lives, find a rest in the Lord. And don't feel forced to have an answer of "Why" from Him.

2) Be sure to consider each person's advice carefully and filter through the grid of Scripture. If you receive advice that contradicts the Word of God, ignore it even if it sounds logical.

3) Since our God is sovereign, we must prepare ourselves for both blessing and adversity.