

SERMON FOR AUGUST 13, 2023

TEXT: JOB 38:4-18 (V4)

THEME: A MIGHTY MYSTERY

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

In the name of Jesus:

It is one thing to be proud of your accomplishments, of who you are and of where you are going in life. It is quite another thing to be put in your place, to know your station in life and to be humbled for your own good. As a child I tried to be a good boy, always obeying my parents. But there was on occasion, the times when I would sass my mom, I would talk back to her, trying to show my authority, but in actuality I was really being too big for my britches. In those incidents Mom would ask the simple question to put me in my place, “who do you think you are?” Then she would tell me to wait until my dad got home. I got the message, I needed to straighten up, in a hurry. There would be no escaping the punishment that awaited me. And I might add, justly so.

In our text for today God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind. Job is remembered by many as a man of patient faith, of one who had all sorts of maladies befall him, and yet he patiently believed in God. Job was a man of great faith, probably a contemporary of Abraham, he was a man who seemingly had it all. Job was blessed by God with wealth, a loving family,

health, and a strong faith. He was truly a righteous man, a man upon whom God bragged to Satan, telling the Evil One that there was no one on the earth like Job.

But God allowed it all to be taken away from Job. His animals were stolen, his children died in a violent storm, his wealth---gone, and his health, well, let's just say that Job had his issues. The Bible says that Job was afflicted with sores all over his body, so that the only relief that Job could find was to take broken pieces of pottery and scrape the sores with the pieces of pottery. It got so bad for Job that his wife just told him to curse God and die, his fate would have been better if he had died!

Remember the phrase: With friends like these, who needs enemies? Such were Job's three friends who came to him in his misery, not to console and make things easier on him, rather these three friends told Job to consider his lot in life, and realize that there must have been something that he had done to deserve his plight. They wanted Job to admit that God was punishing him for some sort of reason. But Job was adamant, he knew that God was not punishing him, God was a just God, a holy God, a God who loved him. But Job eventually began to break down, he who was of strong faith began to waver, just a bit. Job began to think a little more highly of himself, and he wanted answers from God. Job wanted God to answer to him, to explain why the

circumstances had changed, explain why Job lost his wealth, his health, his family, and even his friends. Job revealed what he wanted to do, that if he had a chance, he would be asking God the questions that demanded, in his mind, answers! Job said: “**35** Oh, that I had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!) Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary!**36** Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown;**37** I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him.” (Job 31: 35-37).

Perhaps you have felt the same way, maybe you feel, like Job, that you haven't gotten a fair shake from God. You are tired of your lot in life, and if you had an opportunity, God would be the One on trial! God has some answering to do! God has some explaining to do! God, why did this happen? What have I done to deserve this? Why, God, are you allowing these things to take place in my life that are so troubling to me? Why, God, why? If you have had these and similar questions, you can relate to Job. And God's answer to Job, and to each of us who want to put God on trial, is humbling.

Listen to what God has to say: “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” God asks the question, do you know who you are talking to? Do you understand that you are speaking to the One who creates, sustains, and controls all things? Who are you to raise such questions about

matters you know nothing about? It is as if God is saying to Job, who are you? Why are you talking to Me like this? Who are you to tell Me about My creation? Who are you to question Me?

God then begins to question Job, questions to which Job has no answer. Job can't, and neither can you, understand the complexities and intricacies of God's creation! God asks: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Tell me if you have a clue! Tell Me, God asks, how the seas have limits of space, of how the world and all of created order came into being? Tell Me if you have commanded the sun to rise and set, tell Me if you have entered into the depths of the sea or the heights of the highest heavens? Declare, speak if you know all of this?

God's answer to Job, and to those who question God today, continues for two chapters! "Who let the wild donkey go free? Do you give the horse its strength? Have you clothed the horse with its mane? Can you lift your voice up to the clouds, send lightening to the earth? Can you explain how the hawk soars, how an eagle mounts up to make his nest on high? God says: Shall one who finds fault take issue with the Almighty? If you have an argument with God, then answer the questions that God asks!

Job was silent. He could not answer God! He was making himself out to be God, and Job was having trouble, not just with being a creature of God, but

also in attempting to be God, for Job didn't have all the answers, only One does, and He is God!

Today many desire to put God on trial, in doing so they make themselves out to be God. But they are not, they have no answers to the questions that God poses, and the answers they offer only touch the surface and not the depth of who God is and what His creation is like. Some who believe in evolution trust that we got here by accident and that there is no rhyme or reason to life. If that is the case, then what a poor lot we are for we have no hope of things getting better, no hope for help. For those who dismiss God and say that He does not exist, and say that man made God, these fools have no answer to death, or the questions of life. What a wretched people we are if we say God doesn't exist, for then there is no justice, no good, only evil and death reigns supreme!

Who are you? In reality, you are a person who was created in the image of God, but that image was lost, tainted and soiled by sin. You regularly disobey God, seeking to do your own will rather than the will of Him who created you. You certainly have a god whom you worship, and its you! You have created yourself to be an idol. But in God's sight, you are lost. You are a lost, condemned, poor, miserable, wretched sinner who if it were not for God, would be without hope, or love, or life. God is God, He is mysterious, you are

not. You are finite, He is eternal, you are sinful, He is holy, you live in hatred, envy, jealousy, and strife, God lives and He is love and He lives to share His love.

The greatest mystery is this: that this holy God who holds all things in His hands, seeks to have a relationship with you and with all sinners! To that end, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to invade this sinful world to do God's work. Throughout His life Jesus lived, doing the things of God for He was God! He came to bring forgiveness to those in bondage to sin, bring hope to those in despair, bring life and bring it abundantly to those who have faced or will face death. Christ, who knew no sin, became sin for sinners, so that by Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection sinners would be forgiven, made friends with God, and have the certainty not only of God's love and help in time of need, but also the certainty of eternal life with God, all account of the grace of God received through faith in Jesus.

This mystery is for you today! Our mighty God comes in holiness and humility, not to punish but to save. Our altar is dressed in white, the communion ware and its elements covered to convey that what happens in the Lord's Supper is truly a mystery beyond all human comprehension. God comes to you this day, in the Person of His Son Jesus, to give you the very Body and Blood of Christ in, with, and under the earthly means of bread and wine,

for the forgiveness of your sins and so that you might live! And God invites you to come, humbling yourself, repenting of your sin, trusting in Christ as your Savior, to taste and receive the salvation that God has prepared and offers to sinners on account of Jesus. He invites you to come in faith, trusting in God and in His mercy, to receive the Gifts that God freely wants to give.

God is a holy God and a loving God. He desires not the death of sinners, but that all might have life in Him. His will is that you recognize your sinfulness, your need for God and His forgiveness, and then in faith, receive the blessings God seeks to bestow. Repent. Trust in Christ! For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom! So trust in the Lord and don't rely on your own understanding.

Amen