

Great Expectations *Philippians 2:19-30*

The “*Abundant Life*” Lie:

John 10:10/ John 8:44

Today's Passage:

Philippians 2:19-30

• **First Notice:**

Maybe these are the good old days!

Ecclesiastes 7:10

God promises to get us through, not keep us from hardships.

Acts 14:21-22/ 1 Peter 5:8-11

• **The Way Things Really Were:**

Paul's Disillusionment & Timothy's Dedication. (vs. 19-24)

Epaphroditus' Despair. (vs. 25-30)

Where Is God When He Doesn't Show Up?

Five Tough Questions/ Five Strange Answers

❶ **Is sickness a sign of sin? Sometimes and Always.**

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 & John 5:5-14/ John 9:1-3/ Romans 5:12 & Hebrews 9:27

❷ **Do some people have a gift of healing? Yes and No.**

1 Corinthians 12:7-9, 30/ Acts 5:14-16 & 28:1-9/ 2 Timothy 4:20, 1 Timothy 5:23/ Philippians 2:25-30

❸ **Why are some people healed while others suffer? Only God knows.**

Deuteronomy 29:29/ Acts 12:1-17/ 2 Timothy 4:6-8 compared with 4:18

❹ **How important is faith? It's Essential and Overrated.**

Hebrews 11:6/ Acts 14:8-10 & Mark 6:1-6/ Luke 17:5-6 & Acts 12:1-17

❺ **How should we respond to serious illness? Weep – Pray & Trust God.**

Romans 12:15 & Proverbs 25:20/ Luke 18:1-8 & James 5:14-15/ 1 Peter 4:19

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 5, 2006

QUICK REVIEW: Was there one particular point from this weekend's sermon that caught your attention, challenged or confused you more than the others?

MY STORY

1. Have you ever personally experienced or seen "firsthand" a miraculous healing or miraculous solution to a crisis?

2. Has your life experience and spiritual background downplayed or promoted God's ability to heal and miraculously step into a situation?

How has this impacted how you feel and respond today?

DIGGING DEEPER

Working through the issue

1. In the story of Job, God gives Satan permission to take away Job's wealth, his ten children and finally his health (Job 1-2). As the story unfolds, Job deals with the pain of his loss and battles through the confusion and sense of God's abandonment. Read the following verses and jot down his responses and how they can help us develop a more realistic and appropriate response to difficult (and seemingly unfair) circumstances we may face in our own life.

Job 1:18-22

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]

Job 2:7-10

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. [8] Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

[9] His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

[10] 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. [NIV]

Job 27:2-7

"As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice,
the Almighty, who has made me taste bitterness of soul,

[3] as long as I have life within me,
the breath of God in my nostrils,

[4] my lips will not speak wickedness,
and my tongue will utter no deceit.

[5] I will never admit you are in the right;
till I die, I will not deny my integrity.

[6] I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it;
my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.

[7] "May my enemies be like the wicked,
my adversaries like the unjust! [NIV]

Job 29:2-6

"How I long for the months gone by,
for the days when God watched over me,

[3] when his lamp shone upon my head
and by his light I walked through darkness!

[4] Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,
when God's intimate friendship blessed my house,

[5] when the Almighty was still with me
and my children were around me,

[6] when my path was drenched with cream
and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil. [NIV]

Job 42:1-6

Then Job replied to the Lord:

[2] "I know that you can do all things;
no plan of yours can be thwarted.

[3] You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?'
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.

[4] "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'

[5] My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.

[6] Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes." [NIV]

Does God's response to Job's questions in Job 38:1-7 help or confuse you? How so?

Job 38:1-7

Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said:

[2] "Who is this that darkens my counsel
with words without knowledge?

[3] Brace yourself like a man;

I will question you,

and you shall answer me.

[4] "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

Tell me, if you understand.

[5] Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!

Who stretched a measuring line across it?

[6] On what were its footings set,

or who laid its cornerstone--

[7] while the morning stars sang together

and all the angels shouted for joy? [NIV]

2. How is Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 contrary to how most of us would normally think when facing physical or emotional challenges?

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] 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. [5] For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [7] And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

[8] We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

[9] Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [10] He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, [11] as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. [NIV]

What part of this Scripture is most encouraging for you?

What part is most challenging?

If you are facing a great difficulty or a time of suffering, what would you want someone to do (or not do) in their attempt to bring comfort or share in your suffering?

3. Prayer is obviously one way we can come alongside someone who is ill or suffering. What does Luke 11:5-12 teach us about prayer and how does it apply to praying for those who are suffering or sick?

Luke 11:5-12

Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, [6] because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'

[7] "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' [8] I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

[9] "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. [10] For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

[11] "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? [12] Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? [NIV]

Have you found anything that helps you be persistent in praying for others?

What are some of the roadblocks that keep us from being persistent in prayer?

TAKING IT HOME

1. The quote below was written by C.S. Lewis as he imagined a conversation between a senior demon and his protégé as they scheme to bring down a new follower of Jesus. In light of this week's teaching, what's your response to the following quote?

"Do not be deceived, Wormwood. Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks upon a universe from which every trace of God seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys."

– From the Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

2. Is there any personal healing (either physical or emotional) that you would like prayer for this week?