

We are in the mess of life again today,

So I want to explore, how it was, that on one of the worst days of Jobs life, he ended up praising God?

Job 1 1-8 & 18-22

I wonder however tough we have had it this week, at work, at home or down the Gym was it ever be as bad as the day Job experience?

Here he was the greatest man in the east, blessed beyond his wildest dreams and in an instant it's all gone. His children, his livestock servants and friends destroyed.

I wonder what our response would have been who would we have turned to?

However messy our lives get and however angry and frustrated we are with the apparent unfairness of life. God is by our side and promises never to leave us or forsake us. Job at the time did not have a clue what was going on in his life, but he had cultivated a deep relationship with God that we can all learn from.

If we are going to get through life's challenges we need to understand Job's life and his walk with the Lord.

I think part of the problem with life, is that we don't often see our situations from Gods perspective, we listen to the wrong people however well-intentioned there advice is; we rely on ourselves, our own strength and abilities to fix the problems of life. Rather than following Gods direction and call on our lives as Christians.

The question is how much do we really love God to want to be obedient to him and follow his ways?

Do we trust him enough that he only wants the very best for us however hard the circumstance of life may appear?

The more I reflect on Job in this first chapter, the more I like him and realise what a great man he was, one of Gods faithful servants, just

Abraham before him and David and after him, he was a man after God's own heart. Job was a holy man and sort to live a holy life in God's presence.

How do I know this? By God's description of him

God describes Job as a man who was blameless, fears God, is upright and shunned evil. In other words he was holy and there was no one else like him on earth. If I got to Heaven and these were the words used to describe me, I would be more than happy.

I think these values Job had cultivated over his life were the fundamental is sustaining him in the utter mess of his life; he had cultivated a life rooted and established in God.

If you get nothing else from listening to me today, I pray that you would study and discover for yourselves what it means to be rooted and established in his love and to grow in holiness.

1 Peter 1: 15-16

But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you as you read God's word and grow in your relationship with him.

Holiness or sanctification (which just means growing and wanting to be more like God) should lie at the heart of our Christian lives. Jesus reminds us to take up our crosses daily; therefore we also have to consider holiness on a daily basis until we reach heaven.

Hebrews 12 v 14 says "Make every effort to live in peace with men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord"

I am not suggesting it's our works that get us to heaven Jesus has already paid the ultimate price for our sins. But it does take effort on our part to grow in grace day by day whilst on earth.

Therefore if we truly want to be a radical people for God we need to be holy people for God and his glory.

So what can we learn from Gods description of Job and his pursuit of holiness?

First, Job was blameless man but interestingly not a sinless man, the reality is we live in a fallen world and as much as we try and deny it we can't escape this fact that life will be messy.

Jesus said to his disciples in:

John 16 v 33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

We need to hold on to that!

We will face challenges and trouble every day of our lives but it's our choice as to how we respond to them.

In Job's case no one had a bad word to say against him in other words I believe he responded and acted in Love actually, 1 Corinthians 13 v4 says love is patient. Often people say we need "The patience of Job"

How loving have we been today? Have we been patient, kind and unselfish?

I must point out I am on the same Journey as the rest of us, speak to my wife and she will let you know what I am really like. Sometime I think it is a real blessing that those close to us can remind us how to live better lives!

But take heart, a single spark can set tinder alight and Gods waits every day for us to turn to him and fan into flames our desire for him, to live a blameless life to bring glory to God.

Secondly Job was man who feared God, he worshiped a mighty all powerful and Holy God. I wonder today in the age of grace have we lost our reverence, our fear of God?

When we came to church today did we expect to meet with God? Do we realise we are on holy ground? As Isaiah said “wow to me I am ruined I am a man of unclean lips” as he met with God and the angels declared “Holy Holy, Holy is the Lord almighty the whole earth is full of his glory”.

Did we come here today in the fear of the Lord?

But it's not a fear that keeps us from God it's a fear that draws us closer to God. We can draw strength that this awesome God sent his son to die for us so that we can be called his children and that God is the author and perfecta of our faith.

It's a fear that deepens our relationship with God as we regularly meet with God and allow him to search our hearts and make us more like him.

As David asks God to do in Psalm 139 he says “search me oh Lord and see if there is any offensive way in me” in other words make me more holy, he feared God but trusted that God would ultimately act with love and compassion as Job did.

Job new the importance of what it meant to have a clean heart before God in

V5 perhaps his children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.

It was Job's regular custom to offer sacrifices for himself and his family. In other words he had an on-going relationship where he spent time with God, listening confessing and interceding before God on a daily basis.

If we are to live in the mess of life we need to do it in the strength That God provides, through his guidance and grace. How is your daily relationship going with God?

Thirdly God describes Job as an upright man, today he may be called a man of integrity. We can so easily forget that many people will judge us as Christians not so much by what we say, but more by what we do.

I read this the other day ‘ I cannot see the use of so much religion said an irreligious tradesman not long ago. I observe that some of my

customers are always talking about the gospel and faith and election and the blessed promises and so forth and yet the very people think nothing of cheating me of a pence and half pence when they have an opportunity'

We must take every opportunity to live our lives by Gods values and standards and be consistent in all we do. I have to admit I struggle with this, as its easier to follow the worlds ways than Gods ways. But in the long run I am learning this has an impact in my relationship with God which is why scripture says

### Romans 12v2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Finally God says Job shunned evil, what does it mean to shun evil?

### Colossians 3 says:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator

When you read this list you realise the type of man Job was, amazing.

Again I would like to say I haven't mastered this list but with God's help I hope I am getting a little better each day. The danger is I could just end up saying that's just who I am and I can do nothing about it. I would suggest that is just spiritual laziness, God will always make us more holy if we ask him.

The danger we can treat sin too lightly in our lives the old testament it says

if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt; or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt— when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned. As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering[a]; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

God did not want his children to be in the same room or to go near sin. What life would we lead for the Lord if we could keep sin as far away from us as possible? But often we play with sin and convince ourselves if won't matter this time, it was only a small thing. But it does matter to God.

So in the mess of life we need to have the same attitude as Job did to be blameless, upright, to fear God and shun evil. We need to cultivate a close relationship with God in the good times and in the testing times.

But ultimately when life gets too tough, too hard to handle we need to humble ourselves and fall before a holy God, surrender our lives afresh into his hands and be assured of his love for us.

For “The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised” where will you put your trust today?