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Job 38:1-11

GOD DOESN'T OWE US AN EXPLANATION FOR EVERYTHING

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I know that I should be the coach and general manager for the Detroit Lions. For the last 58 years they have been horrible, winning a grand total of one playoff game in that time. If I was the general manager I would have all the best players in the league playing for me. I would get the other teams to trade their best players for my worst ones. Players would all be willing to play for less money if I was the general manager. Every draft pick would be a winner. There would be no problems with injuries or hold outs or anything else. Then I would coach the team. Every play would work. There would be no dropped balls, missed tackles, fumbled punts. I believe that we would go undefeated, untied and even unscored upon.

Every fan likes to think that way. At least that is what I seem to be hearing after every Lions game on talk radio and the internet. Everybody thinks that he can do a much better job than the coach. I have never played football myself. I've watched hundreds of games, but I can't diagram plays and if I did, I don't think that they would work. There are lots of things that I can do and there are lots of things that I can't do. I can't play the cello. I'm not a woodcarver. I know nothing about neurosurgery or quantum physics. I would leave these things to the experts.

There are people who do think that they know just about everything. No matter what the subject, they know more than the people who are the best in that field. Are you one of them? What about God? Do you know more than God? Do you wonder what God is doing and allowing to happen? Do you think that you could do a better job? Most of us really do. We demand that God explain his actions or lack of them. Is this right? This morning we see that GOD DOESN'T OWE US AN EXPLANATION FOR EVERYTHING.

Where do we start? How about Charleston? Nine people died in church as they went to worship God. In Church! Does that seem right? How about all the tornadoes that went through the Midwest including Michigan? Fires, floods, earthquakes? How about terrorism at home and abroad? What about the economy? There are a lot of things that should be going better. Why doesn't God do something about them?

Certainly Job had his questions. Job lived about the time of Abraham, about 4000 years ago. Job was a good man, a well-respected man, a wealthy man. He was a faithful worshiper of the LORD God. God had blessed him and blessed him abundantly. God allowed Satan to test Job and in a short time Job lost everything. All his animals were stolen. All his servants were killed. His three daughters and seven sons all died as their house collapsed and Job was infected by painful boils that covered him from head to toe. The situation is easy to describe and impossible to imagine.

The question that everyone had was "Why?" If God was going to let such a thing happen to someone, why would he let it happen to Job? Job was a good guy. There were then as there are now plenty of scoundrels, criminals, evildoers, people who really deserve punishment and suffering. Why didn't God let it happen to someone else?

Job had friends but as they say, “With friends like that, who needs enemies?” These so-called friends argued from the idea of cause and effect. God rewards people who do good things. God punishes people who do bad things. If all these bad things are happening to you, you must be a really bad sinner. You must have done something really bad in your past to have such horrible things happening to you now. So now is the time to come clean, Job! What is it you have done? Are you a child molester? Have you cheated on your wife? Are you into sorcery or idol worship? It must be something horrible that you’re keeping secret from us, but God knows. You can’t get away with it, so you had better confess your sin and hope that God will forgive you.

Now that sounds good to our ears, doesn’t it? It makes sense, perfect sense. People who do really bad things should be punished. People who do really good things should be rewarded. If Job is being punished, therefore he is guilty of doing something really bad. If Job is a good man, then he should not be suffering this horrible calamity.

We understand that, don’t we? We all have questions as we hear the news. Why did God allow a six year old boy to contract and die of leukemia? Why did God allow a 30 year old mother of three to die in an accident? Why did God allow Christian missionaries to die in Syria? We question God’s goodness and we question God’s love. We get angry and demand answers and we want them right now!

God owes us nothing. We hear that the LORD answered Job. That name is a very special name for God. That is LORD, all capitals. It tells us that he is absolutely independent. He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. God can do anything that he wants. He is the Creator, we are the creatures. He does not owe us an explanation for anything that he does. He will give us an explanation sometimes, but other times he does not. We can ask and sometimes God will answer. This isn’t the only time these things happen. Parents don’t always share everything with their children. The President of the United States is privy to a lot of information that he does not share with the American people. Your boss at work does not always share his reasoning for decisions with you, especially if you are at the bottom of the chain.

As Job stands up to God and demands that God answer him, saying in effect, “God, how dare you allow these things to happen to me? I don’t deserve to have such things happen in my life.” God will answer, but it wasn’t the answer that Job wanted or expected. God is not going to answer Job’s question of unfairness. God is going to put Job on the defensive. God is going to ask the questions and Job is the one who had better have an answer.

“Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.” You think that you’re so smart. Are you? “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundations? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!” God is going to speak about creating the heavens and the earth. He is the architect, the surveyor, the engineer. He planned everything out and created it in six days out of nothing by the power of his creating Word. Was Job there to advise him? Did Job measure things out for God? What did Job do for creation? Absolutely nothing!

How about the earth that orbits the sun some 93 million miles away? How about the moon that circles the earth every month affecting the tides? How about the four seasons, the axis of rotation, the variety of plants and animals? How about the atomic structure of things, the molecules that hold everything in place? Doesn’t that take some thinking? And God didn’t come and ask Job or you or me for advice!

Just think about creation. But people don’t want to give credit to God for his design. Man has gone to its wisest scientists and said, “Give us a plausible explanation for the creation of the universe and everything in it

and you can't use God for an excuse!" So scientists came up with the theory of evolution. Everything happened by chance. Conditions were favorable for life to spontaneously arise from the sea. How? We don't know. They just were. Every form of animal and plant life would come from a single one celled creature over the course of billions of years. Elephants, giraffes, dogs, cats, lake perch, robins, penguins, apes and man all came from that cell. Every tree, bush, flower and plant came in a similar way. And that is this world's wisdom!

Now we want to be popular. We don't want people to laugh at us as we say that we believe that God created the heavens and the earth. People want to make evolution compatible with Christianity so that we look smarter. Do we trust God or do we trust ourselves? Our rejection of God's Word is usually subtle. We don't get up and say, "I think that I'll reject God's Word today!" Our opinions slip in gradually. We want people to like us. We want to add our experience and emotions. We seek the praise of our fellow man rather than the approval of God.

What did Job say when God spoke of the foundations of the earth or the roaring of the seas? What did he say about land and waters? What could he say? He was dumbfounded. He wasn't there. God is all powerful and all sovereign. God did not answer Job's question. He did not have to do so. God's ways are not our ways. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Job and you and I are not on the same level with God and never will be.

God doesn't owe us an explanation for everything. He doesn't tell us everything that we want to know. He does tell us everything that we need to know. We live in a world of sin. We know that. We know that we are frustrated because we do deal with the theft of property and the death of loved ones and sickness and disease. They are here because of sin. Death entered the world through sin. Adam disobeyed God and we are all Adam's sons and daughters.

God would not walk away from his creation. He did not leave Adam and Eve all alone. He promised to send a Savior who would restore us to fellowship to him. His justice demanded that our sins be punished. His love demanded that he solve the problem himself. He would send his own Son to do the job. Jesus would show his love by taking our sins to the cross and leaving them there. He would bring us the full and free forgiveness of sins.

He shows that love over and over again. In our Gospel lesson this morning the apostles ask, "Lord, don't you care?" They want him to do something now. They question Jesus' motives, intentions, power and love. We do the same. Jesus asks them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" We say that the explanation of the First Commandment is "We should fear, love and trust in God above all things." It is easy to talk the talk. It is much harder to walk the walk.

We do not know why God allows certain things to happen when they do. Perhaps someday we will, perhaps we won't. Focus your attention on what God has told you, the sure and certain way to heaven through his Son Jesus. May God strengthen our trust in him! AMEN.