

Pentecost 5 – June 23, 2024

Text: Job 38:1-11

Theme: Loud, Whining, Obnoxious Souls

**Sometimes we have extreme hardships in this life. If we live long enough, we face a lot of loss and a great many obstacles. We suffer people who we trust who turn on us or abandon us.**

**Sometimes financial ruin looms on the horizon and crashes down upon us. Then there is disease and disability that attacks our bodies, especially as we age. Add to this the day-to-day troubles of life like sewer lines that plug up and fences that fall over, and sometimes we grow weary. Almost before we are aware of what we are doing, we begin to whine to God.**

**We whine about how unfair life is. We whine about how God must not like us, or at least he must like someone else better. Of course, we don't think of it as whining. We call it prayer. Loud, whining, obnoxious prayer, but I suppose if we define prayer as communication with God, it still counts as prayer. If God ever answered us in the way we deserve, we would probably be highly offended. He answered Job, and I don't think anyone here would challenge Job's right to whine. I'm pretty sure that none of us could challenge him to a contest of who has had the most hardship. And really, Job did a fairly good job of not whining. Pretty much everything he said was fairly stated. Sometimes we get a hangnail**

**and scream unfair at God as though we had just be cut in two. Even when Job was at his worst, he was pretty good at just stating the facts. A little earlier in the book he said this,**

**"I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me. You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand, you persecute me. You lift me up on the wind; you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm." (Job 30:21-22)**

**Then we get to our text for today when God answered Job,**

**"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'"**

**That's the fundamental problem with much of our whining. It tends to be words without knowledge. We speak lots of words, but a good deal of them is spoken out of ignorance. We tend to have a vague, typically edited memory of the past and absolutely no knowledge of the future, so it's nearly impossible for us to place any of our suffering into real context. How would you feel about a blind person giving you driving instructions? Wouldn't you ask the same question God asked Job? Who is this that darkens my counsel by words without knowledge?**

**Now comes God's questions of us. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? I didn't notice you among the angels that day. Where were you when I set limits on the oceans? Funny how I didn't seem to need you for that task. We didn't contribute to anything that God provides for us to exist, and yet we dare to complain if it is not the way we think it should be. We can't see beyond the end of our noses and yet we sometimes dare to call on God to explain himself to us.**

**The truth of the matter is that we deserve none of the good we have and we deserve all the bad plus a hundred-fold more. That's the law. If we're going to start whining and complaining to God, we had better remember who He is and what He has given us and what we have done with it. When we accuse God and question his actions we encounter God in His courtroom, and when we encounter God in His courtroom, we had better have one heck of a defense team. Thank God that we do have just that, because as hard as we try, we have a hard time not whining and complaining.**

**Why didn't God just strike Job down and be done with him? How dare this worm question God! He listened to Job for the same reason He listens to us. Job believed in the Messiah who would come and deliver him, the Messiah who would mediate for him, the Messiah, who would be his advocate, the best defender in the**

**universe and the only one who can represent us before God the Father and win. Job says in Chapter 19,**

**“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!”**

**The heart of the Gospel is that Job was not struck down. God clearly corrected him, but look how He corrected him. He assured Job that the God who was in charge of his life was the very God who has power over the earth and the sea. This is something that no being has ever been able to claim, even in this enlightened age. Sometimes people of this arrogant generation act as though all wisdom has come to them in the last 20 years. And yet, even in days when we can manipulate genetics and fly to the moon, no one can calm the wind or the sea. Yet Jesus had only to speak and it was calmed.**

**You hear about tornados that wipe out whole towns. Often times many people are killed. These are people with power to make light by flipping a switch, people who can travel faster than the speed of sound, people who can literally reproduce themselves, and yet they were killed by something as intangible as wind. We're not**

**so powerful. In fact, we human beings rather fragile. But we fragile beings are the children of the one who created and controls the wind and the waves.**

**Because of Jesus, we have a relationship with God. When He questions us, we can answer him, and he will hear our answer and our answer will please him. It will please him because we have the very thing Job requested, an advocate. Job said,**

**“My face is red with weeping, and on my eyelids is deep darkness, although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure. ‘O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place.’ Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he who testifies for me is on high. My friends scorn me; my eye pours out tears to God, that he would argue the case of a man with God, as a son of man does with his neighbor.” (Job 16:16-21)**

**Job was only thinking of someone to attest to the truth, what we got was someone who paid the price for us and now defends us on the basis of His suffering. We answer God, but we answer through Jesus Christ who has kept the Law perfectly, who has died innocently, and who was damned in our place.**

**Knowing all of this convinces us that everything we go through on this earth is in the hands of the Almighty and since it cannot be**

**for our punishment, since we are no longer guilty, it must be for our good. We have no need to blame God or accuse God. That would be silly since we are not being punished. We are free to stop whining and complaining. Our souls can be still and leave it to God to order and provide, knowing that all is done for our greater joy.**

**Does that take away our impatience, our irritation, our temptation to whine? No, but it does remind us that we are in the hands of the God who controls everything and has promised that everything is turned for our good. Our advocate pleads our case day and night. Not only that, He has already paid the price for our sin. Not only that, but He empowers us to move on through life with his own body and blood and there simply is no better empowerment than that.**