

The Theme of Job

by Ed Miller

The book of Job teaches us about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, and the importance of ongoing repentance and reliance on God's Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:11:54

Scripture: Genesis 3:15, Job 1:6-12, Job 42:5-6, Psalm 23:1, Isaiah 43:2, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Suffering And Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Job and highlights the scene in heaven where Satan appears before God. He suggests that Job was the battlefield in a spiritual war between God and Satan. The preacher emphasizes Job's suffering and describes his anguish and despair. He also mentions Job's comparison of himself to various objects, such as a moth-eaten rag and curdle cheese, to illustrate his brokenness. The sermon encourages the audience to study the Bible with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to seek a deeper understanding of God's character.

Transcript

study that's absolutely indispensable, a principle that we cannot take for granted, a principle we can't live without. It's not new to you, I know that, but I need to repeat it for myself and I think we all need to hear it again and again, and that is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. This is the Lord's book.

Only the Holy Spirit can show us Christ. If we study the Bible and only come with the human side, just get the academics, we're going to become prouder and prouder because knowledge puffs up. We need the Lord and God alone can reveal Him.

He's promised if we would come as little children, we would come as adults. We need the Lord and God alone can reveal Him. He's promised if we would come as little children, we would come as adults.

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With thirst and this precious expression, I the Lord will answer them myself. As the God of Israel, I will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the Bear Heights, springs in the midst of the valleys.

I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land fountains of water. I count it a high privilege to be able to represent the Lord Jesus and share from His Word. But according to that passage and many others, you're not going to get any blessing because I'm sharing tonight.

You're not going to get any blessing because someone hands out an outline. By the way, that's not my outline. That's the outline of the book of Job.

Don't worry about it. We're not going to be here until next week. Just because I might have some illustrations, that's not what communicates the truth.

This precious word, if you're thirsty, I the Lord will answer them myself. He's the one that satisfies thirst. And so we praise the Lord for the privilege, but we know it's the Lord that must minister.

So with that in mind, I'm going to ask you to bow with me please and commit our time to the Lord and then we'll open His precious book. Our Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts, who searches the depths of God and reveals unto us the very life of Christ. We just praise this evening that by your grace you might open our hearts and our eyes, that we might behold the Lord Jesus in a living way.

Take us beyond the letter. Show us yourself. We know when we see you, we'll be like you.

So we just trust you now to unveil yourself to us. You know every heart. You know every need.

You know every hunger and every capacity. And we believe you've brought us here and now we just pray that you'd meet with us and show us our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you in advance that you've already prepared us and you're doing it now and you're going to continue to do it throughout the weekend.

Meet us where we are. Take us, we pray, where you would have us. We ask in the matchless name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Well as you know, we are going to look together to behold the Lord in his revelation of himself in the book of Job. And so without introduction, I'm going to ask you to turn to the end of Job chapter 42, verses 5 and 6. This will be the key passage.

This is the turning point. This is the goal of the book. Job 42, 5 and 6, I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you.

Therefore I retract and I repent in dust and ashes. That's where we're heading. And God aiding, God assisting, that's where we're going to go.

My eye seeth you. My eye seeth thee. Now I don't know what your background is and how much you've studied this wonderful book.

If you've studied it at all, you know there are many approaches to the book of Job. I don't know how acquainted you are with the man. There's many approaches to the man, Job.

Let me just give you some of the ideas my commentators had. These things they say is the theme of Job. Some say it's God's answer to the problem of suffering.

Or more particularly, why do the righteous suffer? And God gives His answer to the mysteries of suffering. Others say the book is God's revelation of His blessings on the afflicted. One commentator I read said the message of the book is the triumph of patience and faith.

Another says victory over Satan and over self-righteousness. Since the book ends with the double blessing and that is the blessing of the firstborn, many say this is a book about sonship, about adoption, about maturing through the cross to the place where you enter into the double blessing. Others teach that it's just a picture of Christ.

Job, the righteous sufferer, is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous sufferer. Some say it's a book that shows the transcendence of God and the sovereignty of God and how ineffable He is. And you remember some of those great descriptions.

I personally think that Job 42 and verse 2 is the greatest single verse on the sovereignty of God in the Bible. I know thou canst do all things and no purpose of thine can be restrained. What a wonderful verse that is.

That verse has helped me so much to make the sovereignty of God a mighty reality in my life. For a while I found myself half afraid to believe it. You know how you come to a verse and you just say, well, I know that's wonderful, but maybe it's too good to be true.

I was reluctant to pull out all the stops and just believe that with all my heart. I discovered that the devil tries to steal God's blessing from you by trying to make you think that one truth contradicts another truth. And so you've got to get the balance before you can embrace the truth of God.

He weakens God's truth by causing you to be afraid to claim it. And Satan says, now don't believe in God's sovereignty fully. You've got to tie that in with man's responsibility.

And until you can get those things balanced, you can't embrace it. I'll tell you, brothers, it's enough to know it ties together. God has tied it together.

You say, well, I can't explain it. I can't either. And I'm not going to try to explain it.

When I come to a verse like that, I believe it with all my heart. And when I come to a verse on man's responsibility, I believe it with all my heart. And don't let the devil weaken any passage like that.

The devil says, yeah, that's a good truth, but don't believe it too much. Well, I'm telling you, believe it too much. When you see a passage like that, ask the Lord to just give it to you and embrace it.

That's a resting place. Now, I suppose the theme of Job, and if God enables me to get the theme of the book before your heart tonight in the introduction, I feel like I've released my burden. That's what this is all about.

I just want to show you what I think the Holy Spirit intends as the theme of this marvelous book. But I suppose that would depend on how you view the man. I've read some comments that said he never existed.

That he's not a historical character. He's just a poetic figure of speech, an allegory, and the whole thing's an allegory. Well, I hope you don't believe that.

A few people think, and I was surprised that some of them, I won't call them because otherwise I respect their comments, but I had a little problem with this, that at the beginning of the book, they say Job is not even saved. He's not a believer in the Lord. He doesn't get saved until that verse we read.

I've heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, now my eye sees thee. And you say, but doesn't it say he feared the Lord? Doesn't it say he's perfect? And then they point out, yeah, but it says that about Cornelius, that he feared the Lord before he heard words by which he would be saved. And about Saul, before he became Paul, according to the law, perfect, righteous, and so on.

And so they say this is just a self-righteous sinner who finally gets saved at the end of the book. Others say he's self-righteous, but he's not a self-righteous sinner. He's a self-righteous believer, and he needs to come to the place where he dies to self, dies to self-righteousness, and then finally beholds the Lord.

I don't know if you've read G. Campbell Morgan's book on Job. He takes a different tack. He believes that the book of Job is the heart of man, and there are deep cries, cries that the debates and the arguments can express, and those cries can only be met in the New Testament by the incarnation of our Lord Jesus.

Like chapter 9, 2, how can a man be right with God? He said that's a cry, a deep cry, and man has been asking that, and only Jesus can answer that. And then in verse 14 of chapter 14, if a man dies, shall he live again? There's a cry, a deep cry, for redemption, you see, and for resurrection and eternity. In Job 9, verses 32 and 33, where Job has a cry for a daisman, you know, the umpire.

He said, oh, if there was only somebody that could get us together, that could put one hand on God's shoulder and one hand on man's shoulder and bring God and man together. A cry for a mediator, and in the person of our Lord Jesus, he not only put one hand on God and one hand on man, he became God-man. You talk about bringing God and man together in his own person.

And so G. Campbell Morgan says, there are these cries, I know that my Redeemer lives, and someday I'll stand and in my flesh I'll see God. He even takes chapter 3, where he condemns his birth and wishes he had never been born. He said, that's just a cry for a new birth.

He's crying out of a death on the natural birth and a cry for a new birth and so on. Well, is that what Job is about? Is it just prophecy in poetry, anticipating the day when our Lord Jesus will tell us about justification and resurrection and a virgin birth and a mediator between God and man and eternal life? Is that what Job is about? Asking the hard questions that seem to be latent in all of humanity, crying out to know these things, answered only in Christ. Certainly that's there.

How will we look at the book? Now technically, almost everyone outlines the book the same way, and that's the outline that I've given you. It's one of the easiest books in the Bible to outline. And I don't want to waste precious time with cold facts.

That's why I handed that out. You can do what you want with it, but we won't even hardly refer to that at all. I'm not using that as an outline.

I just wanted you to see that's how the book is arranged. I don't want to get involved in the controversies of the book. You didn't come here for that.

You came to see Jesus, didn't you? That's why I came. I came to see the Lord and present the Lord. You know, when you study the book of Job, you say, who wrote it? Well, there's a bunch of people who said Moses wrote it.

And some say, no, Job wrote it. And some say, no, Elihu wrote it. Some say, no, no, Isaiah wrote the book.

You don't know how to study. Solomon wrote that book. Some say, don't you know Hezekiah wrote that book? And there are arguments on all of these.

Brothers, I don't care who the human author of the book was. I know who wrote the book, and I think you know who wrote the book. Was it written early in Abraham's day, or was it written just before the captivity? I'll leave that for you theologians and you hermeneuts to iron out.

Was Elihu Abraham's nephew? There's a whole bunch written on that. I'll leave that for you to discover. This weekend, God helping, I want to just, in the simplest words I know how, I want to tell the story because the secret of God is in the simplest words.

I want to tell the simple telling of the story. We're going to just hear the simple story. The more you get into the heart of the story, the more the distinctive message will come before your heart.

And then God helping us, we'll be able to embrace that. Now in an introduction lesson, I'm going to be making many, many references to the book of Job especially. Some of you may be able to turn your pages quickly enough and follow along, or you can just trust me with the references.

I'm quoting from the New American Standard, sometimes twice from King James, once from Darby. You'll be able to pick some of that up, or you can get the tape later and then just look up the verses, or if you want I'll send you a set of notes, it doesn't matter. But the point is, we're just going to look at Job as God has given it to us.

Let me start by showing you Job at the beginning of the book and Job at the end of the story. What do we know about Job at the beginning of the book? Well, you're only one verse deep and you have God's opinion of him. There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.

That man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. So we know something about the man in the very first verse. He was perfect, complete, upright, the Hebrew word, he was straight, fearing God, turning away from evil.

Glance at verse 8 please. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on earth, blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. God calls attention to him.

There's nobody like him. And if you believe that he was written right after Abraham, not after he lived, but early Abraham and there's no one like him on the earth, that means even Abraham wasn't like Job. If you believe that it was written then.

And Melchizedek and other people that were on the earth then. This is quite a guy. We know he was a family man from verse 2. He had seven sons and three daughters.

We know he was concerned about their spiritual welfare. Verse 5, when the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning, offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all. Job said perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.

And thus did Job continually. We know he went through a lot. You know that from the record of Job.

How he suffered and so on. James 5.11 is the only time he's mentioned in the New Testament. And James 5.11 says you've heard of the endurance of Job.

You've seen the outcome. Of the Lord. The purpose God had in view.

Listen to these verses. I'm going to spot them throughout the record here. That illustrate the faith of this man.

When he lost his possessions and he lost his ten children, he said these words. Chapter 1.21. Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord. You know one of my commentators said he didn't mean that. He was in shock.

He was in shock because he lost everything and that was his custom of praising the Lord. So he just did that. When he had seven days to think about it, he changed his mind.

He was not in shock. He worshipped the Lord. He worshipped the Lord.

And then when he lost his health and his life partner in frustration said curse God and die. Chapter 2.10. He said to her you speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we not indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? And all of a sudden all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Don't read this la la la when trouble was heaped upon trouble and man is prone to vent all of his frustration. Chapter 6.10. It is still my consolation and I rejoice in unsparing pain. I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

And when you are very deep into his sorrow and deep into the book, even when he thought God was his enemy. Chapter 13.15. Though he slay me, I will yet hope in him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before him.

We are all familiar with his declaration in chapter 19. Verse 25. As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives.

At the last he will take his stand on the earth. And even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God whom I myself shall behold, whom my eyes will see, not another. And then he said my heart faints within me.

And when we are very deep into the book, chapter 23.10. He said he knows the way I take. And when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. I tell you, the Bible says a lot about this man.

It is called the greatest man of all the East. Not only in wealth, he was a very wealthy man. But this Gentile, don't forget Job was a Gentile.

This Gentile had come a long way in his knowledge of God. That is how the book begins. The book begins by telling you about a man who is perfect, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil, a family man, a priest in his own family, worshipping the Lord, under severe trial, trusting even under the heavy hand of God, and knowing at the end, he would emerge as gold.

Now look at the end of the book, 42.6. Therefore I retract, I repent in dust and ashes. I like to put those two things together. Job was perfect.

Job repented. I like to put those together because perfect men need to repent. Job is an illustration of that.

Don't think, dear brothers, that you will ever come to the place where you have arrived and you don't need to repent. Or where I have arrived and I don't need to repent before God. We need to see the Lord at all times.

The book of Job deals with those, I think, who have come pretty far in their heart knowledge of God, and yet they needed their eyes opened again. After all that was said, they needed their eyes opened again to enter into all that is meant when God says, Now my eye sees thee. Precious verse.

Now what do perfect men need to repent of? Well, we'll tell you that when we come to the close and examine Job's repentance. But right now I just want you to know that perfect men need to repent. And that sentence does not contradict the truth that every Christian is complete in Christ.

There's no contradiction there at all. Our capacity for fullness and for completeness increases with every revelation of God. I can be full today and more full tomorrow.

Totally surrendered today, more surrendered tomorrow. Because our capacity increases as we see the Lord. Now let me, God assisting, try to get the theme of this marvelous book before your heart.

If I can accomplish that, then that's the burden that's on my heart this evening. I want to begin where Job didn't begin. Now the book begins there, but not the man.

I want to start with the scene that he never got to see. That scene in heaven in chapter 1. Satan's appearance in heaven. The contest between God and Satan.

One has said that this was a spiritual war between God and Satan, and Job was just the battlefield of that war. Some have said that the greatest battlefield in the world is that famous plain of Israel. It goes about 40 miles.

How many battles have been fought there? But I'll tell you another battlefield probably greater than that. Your heart and my heart, your soul and my soul. The war of Genesis 3.15 goes on all the time against the seed of the woman.

I'm going to ask you to follow along as we read verses 6-12. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. This is chapter 1. And Satan also came among them.

And the Lord said to Satan, From where do you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, From roaming about on the earth, walking around on it. The Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. And Satan answered the Lord, Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands.

His possessions have increased in the land. But put forth your hand now and touch all that he has, and he'll surely curse you to your face. Then the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your power.

Only do not put forth your hand on him. And so Satan departed from the presence of the Lord. I believe the theme of the book was born in the heavenlies.

In that scene, something took place there, and God has given us this marvelous book as an answer to that. Again, I'm going to pass by the theology of that meeting and Satan coming in heaven. You can figure all that out.

The point I want to make is this, that on the day when God called Satan's attention to his servant Job, Satan the accuser came and made a double insinuation. He's an accuser, and he made a double insinuation. He made an insinuation about Job, and he made an insinuation about God.

Now what was that double insinuation? Once again, verse 9, Satan answered the Lord, Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him, and his house, and all that he has on every side? The insinuation against Job is this, that God is just a purveyor. He's just a giver of gifts. God is busy dumping blessings on Job, and that's why Job serves him.

And there's no other reason. He's a mercenary. He's a hireling.

He's in it for the money, and that's why Job serves God. According to Satan, to Job, God was just a cosmic bellboy, someone to carry his bags and run his errands and do what he wanted. He's a patron saint, someone just trying to take care of Job and to protect him, a glorified Santa Claus, hedged around with every blessing.

Satan said, You take that hedge down, you'll see he'll curse you. He'll curse you to your face. It's all about the money.

It's all about what you have given him. Satan is claiming that Job is the kind of friend Solomon mentioned in Proverbs 19.4. Proverbs 19.4 says, Wealth adds many friends. Well, you know what kind of friends those are.

And so that's what Satan is saying. That's why you have a friend. He sticks close to the fat pocketbook.

He wants to be your friend because you're so generous. I think Satan made a point, but not about Job. He made a point, I think, about a lot of people.

I think we'd be amazed at how true that is of so many. And I wonder if God would show us our hearts tonight if it wouldn't be at least partially true about some of us. I'm not saying we're in it for the money, but how much emphasis do we put on God's blessing? And I wonder if Satan wasn't trying to make that point.

From that same passage, chapter 1, 9 to 11, Job makes an insinuation about God. And here's the insinuation. He said, The Lord is not wonderful enough in himself apart from his gifts.

He's not intrinsically lovely. He's not desirable to be served and loved and honored and worshipped and adored. There's no attraction in God at all apart from his gifts.

That's what he was insinuating. Nobody would just choose God. If God didn't have a carrot to entice, he said not only would they not serve you, they'd curse you to your face.

There's nothing about you desirable, said Satan. And the only reason you have a following is because you keep giving stuff. You give gifts.

You give blessings. You've surrounded them with a hedge. And that double insinuation that man serves God because of what he gets and that God is not wonderful enough in himself apart from his blessings to be chosen, to be adored, to be worshipped.

That is made in the heavenlies in the first chapter. Now hold that double insinuation please and let me make another observation about the book as a whole. When you study the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let me make this recommendation that whatever passage you're studying, read it over and over and over again.

When you're done reading it, read it again and be on the lookout for recurring emphases. As you read it over and over, you begin to pick up the heart of the Lord and you begin to see what he's emphasizing. Sometime it's a word.

Sometime it's an expression that he uses over and over again. And I'm suggesting that that is very revealing. Well, there's a title of God in Job that's not used once or twice or three or four times but it's used over and over and over and over again.

The first time this title appears in the Old Testament, it appeared to Abraham and it was right after Abraham was trying to circumvent his wife's barren womb and he brought in Hagar. He's trying to help God. God wanted to reveal himself as the God of grace.

First mention of this title, Genesis 17.1, I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless and I will establish my covenant with you. Those English words, God Almighty, that's the title I'm using over and over again.

That's the English attempt at translating and I'm sure you're familiar with the Hebrew word. It's the title El Shaddai. El Shaddai.

God saved the book of Job for the revelation of himself as El Shaddai. El Shaddai appears six times in Genesis. Once in Exodus, twice in Numbers, twice in Ruth, twice in Psalms, twice in Ezekiel, once in Isaiah, once in the book of Joel.

In other words, from Genesis to Malachi, it appears 17 times until you get to the book of Job. And when you get to the book of Job, that name appears 31 times. More in the book of Job than in the whole Bible put together.

God saved Job to reveal himself as El Shaddai. Now there are other titles of God of course. In fact there are 15 wonderful titles of God if you take the compounds of El and Jehovah and so on.

But El Shaddai was reserved for Job. Now what's that name mean? It's translated God Almighty. What does it mean? Well you know the first part is El, that's God.

That's the part that's the God Almighty or Most High God or the Strong One, the Mighty One. If you want to get the power of it, the Latin in the Vulgate, the Latin word for that word is omnipotence, where we get our word omnipotence. That's El, that's Almighty God.

The second part is believed to come from the Hebrew word Shadd. The word Shadd is the word breast. It's the word breast used all through the Old Testament as breast.

It talks about a sufficiency and a satisfaction and a completeness. It's a picture of a mother holding that little baby in her bosom and through her breast she's pouring out her life. She's giving provision.

She's satisfying that little child. The root from which Shadd comes is a word that means to be sufficient. Now to get the impact of the word El Shaddai then, you've got to take those two ideas, that He's enough, that He's adequate, that He's sufficient, and that idea of satisfaction and completeness that comes together in the word.

And I like to paraphrase it this way. You say El Shaddai, the God who's enough, that's not the power of the word. El Shaddai, the God who's more than enough.

And for the rest of this series, I'll be referring to Him as the God who's more than enough. The God who's more than enough. Now why do you suppose God waited for Job to reveal Himself as the God who's more than enough? Well, if you know His story at all, you know that's a wonderful place to reveal Himself as the God who's more than enough.

If anyone needed to know God as the God who's more than enough, it was Job when his hedge came down. Now if He was enough and more than enough for Job when his hedge came down, I've read the book. I have an idea nobody here had their hedge come down like that.

Oh, you might have had your hedge trimmed. I might have had my hedge trimmed, but it didn't come down like that. And if He's more than enough for Job, may I suggest He'll be more than enough for you, more than enough for me.

Now let me bring those two observations together and give you what I think is the theme. The two observations being the double insinuation that Satan made, one against God, one against Job. Job is in it for what he gets out of it, and God is not worthy enough in Himself to be served.

And this wonderful title, El Shaddai, the God who's more than enough. I think many Christians miss the theme of Job and the wonder of Job because they did what Job did and what his three friends did for thirty-four chapters. They asked the wrong question.

They asked the wrong question. They wanted to know why. Why is Job suffering? Why is he going through this? Why do the righteous suffer? That's the reason those chapters, three to thirty-seven, get so heavy.

You ever try to go through them? They're so burdensome to read because they're attempting to answer a question that the book doesn't ask and doesn't attempt to answer. Now if the question's not the question, can the answer be the answer? If you ask the wrong question, you're not going to get the answer. That's why so many have been frustrated going through the debates.

They said, I love Job, that is chapter one and two, chapter forty-two, or actually where God begins to speak. I like all that. But that part in the middle, oh, that's just burdensome.

I don't want that because they're asking the wrong question. Now to get the theme, I've got to give you the right question. The question in Job that is answered is not, why do the godly suffer? That's not it.

The book doesn't address that. The book, after you're all done, doesn't tell you about the mysteries of suffering. It's not about that.

What's the right question? May I suggest this is the question and we'll try to answer it day by day. Lord helping us, we'll see God's heart in this. Here's the question of the book.

Is God enough when the hedge comes down? The book answers that question. That is the question of the book. Is the Lord more than enough when the hedge comes down? And I'll tell you the book gives a resounding amen and yes to that question.

I want to show you how God brought Job to see that because the way he brought Job to see that is exactly the way he'll bring you to see that. It's exactly the way he'll bring me to see that. This is a book about El Shaddai.

This is a book about the God who's more than enough. And is he enough when the hedge comes down? I suggest that is the theme of the book and the answer to that will show you that there are those, and may God increase their tribe, who choose the Lord just for the Lord because he's enough. To prove that, God allows Satan to remove this hedge under his sovereign control.

That's the theme of the book, the absolute sufficiency of the Lord, the God who's more than enough when the hedge comes down. There is no book in the Bible that presents the enoughness of God. Is that a word? The sufficiency of the Lord like this marvelous book of Job.

Now in the time remaining in the introduction lesson, I want to underscore that theme by showing you the extreme example. Job is the extreme example. Job's hedge was an amazing hedge.

You say, God put a hedge around him. Oh, what a hedge was around Job. Now as I said, maybe you've had your hedge trimmed or maybe there's been a breach in your hedge or maybe even God's mowed it down, most of it, but he didn't uproot it.

Not like he did to Job. I want to show you the hedge that came down because it magnifies the sufficiency of the Lord. If God enables you, put yourself in Job's shoe.

Some of us have experienced, I think, partial removals, but not like this. Now before I actually show you the height of Job's hedge, let me just call attention to three hedges that are mentioned in the book. There's this hedge in chapter 1, verse 10, the hedge of blessing, the hedge around Job, but in chapter 3, 23, there's another hedge mentioned.

Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? And that one's hedged in by trouble. And there's another hedge where it doesn't seem like you can see the light of day and every place you look is just trouble. Some people are hedged in that way.

And then, of course, I've got to mention that wonderful hedge of restriction around Satan. I love that. Chapter 1, verse 12, the Lord said, All he has is in your power, only do not put your hand on him.

Same thing in chapter 2, 6. He's in your power, but spare his life. Thus far, no further. I wouldn't trade anything for that truth, that God has a hedge around the enemy.

Aren't you glad for that? Aren't you glad you're not at the mercy of any second cause? And you're not at the mercy of the enemy of your soul? You are at the mercy of the Lord. God has a security hedge around

Him. He needs permissions to go into a pig.

He can't do anything without the Lord's permission. It's important to know what comes into my life, comes into my life by God's permission. By the time it reaches me, it has become God's will for my life.

And by the time it reaches you, it has become God's will for your life. See, Job was right when he said in verse 21 of chapter 1, Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I shall return. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away.

He didn't say the Lord gave and Satan took away. He said the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

What God allows, God does. I love that verse in chapter 2 verse 3. The Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on earth, a blameless, upright man, fearing God, turning away from evil, still hold fast his integrity, notice this, although you incited me against him to ruin him without a cause. Who ruined him? Was it Satan? Was it God? You incited me to ruin him without a cause.

That verse alone shows you the foolishness of trying to answer the question, why was he suffering? He says it's without a cause. Well, there you have it. You're only two chapters deep and you know there's no why.

It's not answered there. God is sovereign. Say the bullet killed the man.

No, the bullet didn't kill the man. The gun killed the man. The gun held the bullet.

Say the gun didn't kill the man. The man killed the man. The man held the gun.

Say the man didn't kill the man. The mob held the man. The mob killed him.

Say a mob didn't kill the man. Satan held the mob. Satan killed him.

Who's holding Satan? Who killed the man? I tell you, you've got to believe it. Nothing comes into your life without the permission of the Lord. There's an interesting verse in 27:11.

Job said, I will instruct you on the power of God. Darby's translation is, let me teach you concerning the hand of God. Let me teach you concerning the hand of God.

The whole book of Job is the hand of God and Job wants to instruct us. Of course, he wants to finally say, God is enough when the hedge comes down. He's more than enough.

He has a lot to say about that hand. Now sometime, Job 12:9, the hand of the Lord has done this. 19:21, the hand of the Lord has struck me.

Job doesn't understand all about that hand, but he never doubts for a lonely moment whose hand it is. It doesn't really matter, brothers, if that hand is giving or taking, if you know whose hand it is. It doesn't really matter if you are convinced this is the hand of God.

I'll tell you, you're in to see as he did. Now my eyes see it thee. Let me ask this question.

When you thank God for your blessings, I don't want you to answer out loud. Just think. Has anybody here ever, in thanking God for your blessings, ever thanked God for Satan? Realize what a blessing he is in your life? Would you be a better Christian or a worse Christian if there were no personal Satan? You just think about that.

I know there's a wrong way to thank God for Satan, but you know what I'm trying to say. God makes Satan sweat to make you a better Christian. And God makes Satan sweat to make me a better Christian.

God uses, Psalm 119 says, all things are his servants. And that all things includes Satan. Now let me show you how this representative hedge was allowed to come down to magnify the theme of the book.

The God who's more than enough when the hedge comes down. First of all, his hedge didn't slowly wilt and fade away. You know the record of that.

Job, as he goes through the book, he describes how it felt to him. 9-17, he bruises me with a tempest. 9-18, I am saturated with bitterness.

He hunts me like a lion. 10-16. 16-11, God hands me over to ruffians, tosses me into the hands of the wicked.

I was at ease. He shattered me. He has grasped me by the neck, shaken me to pieces, set me up as his target.

His arrows surround me. Without mercy, he splits my kidneys open. He pours my gall out on the ground.

He breaks through me, breach after breach. He runs after me like a warrior. 13-25, he said, I'm like a driven leaf, like dry chaff.

13-28, he says, I'm like a moth eaten rag. 10-10, he says, I'm like curdled cheese. 17-7, God has exhausted me.

See, we just sort of read that la-la-la. Let me show you his hedge. It's not enough to know that he was the number one man on the earth, family man, wife, 10 kids, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, men's servants, female servants.

Glance at chapter 1, 14-18, please. And did you notice that expression in 16, 17, and 18? While he was yet speaking. While he was yet speaking.

While he was yet speaking. In less than 5 minutes, Job learned that he was bankrupt. So rapidly that bad news came, he stunned.

Evil tidings. I live by the beach, and I was one time in a place that Job describes that God will not let me catch my breath. I was in a surf, and that would not let me get up.

And every time I got up, I went down with another wave. I was choking to death. And Job says that in Job 9-18, He'll not allow me to get my breath.

He saturates me with bitterness. In that chapter, one right after another, within 5 minutes, he lost everything he had, and he lost his 10 children in one stroke. And Job says that I say his heads came down, or started to come down, and to the treatment of his heads like that, he says, the Lord gave, the

Lord's taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Is God enough when you've lost all your possessions, and all your kids? That's an amazing thing. It wasn't sorrow that brought Job to his knees there. It was worship that brought him to his knees.

And then in chapter 2, verses 4 and 5, he lost his health. Satan answered the Lord and said, skin for skin, all that a man has, he'll give for his life. Put forth your hand now, touch his bone and his flesh, he'll curse you to your face.

Chapter 2, verse 7, Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes. Scholars describe what he had as black leprosy, a form of elephantitis.

And they go into graphic descriptions about the disease. I'll stick to the Bible. Here he is on an ash heap, scratching himself.

Talk about intolerable itching with a broken piece of pottery. In 7.5, he says, my flesh is clothed with worms and a crust of dirt. My skin hardens and runs.

We can't imagine it. We know when his friends came, they just sat there and they wept for seven days in silence. Let me show you a few side effects of his disease.

His hedge came down, brothers. He lost his health. Chapter 7.18, he was in chronic pain.

Chronic pain. You try him every moment. I have a dear friend who suffered from Crohn's disease for about more than 35 years now.

How he suffered and his family suffered. I don't know if you've ever praised God for not feeling pain, but that's quite a hedge. That's quite a blessing, not to feel pain.

But chronic pain. Let me ask, is God enough when there's chronic pain? Chapter 6.10, he calls it unsparing pain. Add to that chronic pain, chapter 7, verse 3 and 4, he can't sleep.

He said, I'm continually talking until dawn. And then he finally gets to sleep and according to 7.14, when he finally gets to sleep, he has nightmares. It's an amazing thing.

Is Jesus enough when you have insomnia? Is Jesus enough when you have bad dreams? Add to that chapter 6, verse 6 and 7, he has no appetite. He said, food is tasteless. Listen to 19.20, as he describes himself, my bone clings to my skin and my flesh.

I've escaped only by the skin of my teeth. Nothing but skin and bones, just fading away to nothing. He's dying before the eyes of his loved ones.

Withering away to nothing. He's pining away. Is Jesus enough when you've lost everything? All your money, all your crops, all your business, everything? We buried some of our family.

Buried our little granddaughter. That's one and that was painful. And you probably know loved ones that you had to commit to the earth.

Maybe some that you think didn't know the Lord. That's painful. Ten kids, all at once.

Wiped out. He didn't know how much they suffered before they died. This is amazing.

It's painful. Is Jesus enough for that? Enough when he touches your body? Enough when you can't eat? Enough when you can't sleep? Enough when you've got chronic pain every day, every day, every hour? This awful pain? According to chapter 19, verse 17, this disease as he was rotting away had an offensive odor to it and his friends were repulsed by the odor. Is Jesus enough for that? No wonder he longed to die.

He called his case hopeless. Chapter 19, verse 10, he's uprooted my hope like a tree. When you lost all hope, is the Lord enough for that? Say, well, that was quite a hedge.

No, you didn't even see his hedge yet. That's a little part of his hedge. When he lost everything.

When he lost all his family. When he lost his health. When he couldn't sleep.

When he had nightmares. When he lost a taste for food. When he was skin and bones.

When he's withering away. That's only a little part of his hedge. Job became a burden to his family and they came to the place where they wished he was dead and they told him so.

You ever come to the place where somebody wished you were dead? There are several parts of Job's hedge coming down that would devastate me. I know that. One is Job 2.9. He lost the support of his life partner.

His wife said to him, do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die. I know she was exasperated. She lost her kids too.

I mean, she was suffering. I tried to enter into her own feelings. She was having a hard time.

I'll tell you brothers, I don't know how I would respond if my Lillian ever said to me, curse God and die. I don't know how I would respond if my Lillian ever said to me, curse God and die. That's part of his hedge.

He lost the support of his life partner. That's almost unbearable. He was already greatly weakened when she made that temptation to him.

I read one commentator that said Satan to test Job took his children to test Job didn't take his wife. Well, I don't know about that, but that was a big part of his hedge coming down. There's still a lot of hedge to come down.

Job 19.13 tells us how everyone turned against him. 13-19 mentions his brothers, his acquaintances, his relatives, his intimate friends, the maids that work for him. He'd call them and say, come and they wouldn't come.

His men's servants, young children, and all his associates. So he says in verse 19, those I love have turned against me. Ever have anything like that? Is El Shaddai enough when the hedge comes down? You see, this is an extreme example.

God's going to show that he's more than enough for Job when he loses all his possessions and he loses all his kids and when he loses his health and when he loses the life support of the partner of his life and when his whole family turns against him, when his neighbors turn against him, when the kids turn against him, when his friends turn against him, when his acquaintances turn against him. You say his hedge is

down. Not yet.

His hedge is not down yet. I say he's got an amazing hedge. In chapter 29, he loses his ministry.

And what a ministry he had. That man had such influence as a godly man. In verse 8, he had a teaching ministry to the young and the old.

In verse 9 and 10, he had ministry to the dignitaries, 12 to the poor, 14 to the orphan, the dying and the widow, 15 to the blind, to the lame, 17, he stood up for the oppressed, he brought the wicked to justice, 21 to 25, he was a comfort to those who struggled in faith, to mourners he brought consolation. He lost his whole ministry. He lost his reputation.

It's amazing. I don't know if you ever were in ministry and all of a sudden the door was slammed. That's just a little piece of your head.

That's tough. El Shaddai. Is Jesus enough when the hedge comes down? This is an extreme example.

You say, well his hedge is leveled now. No, not yet. Not yet.

The biggest part of the hedge is still standing. He lost the sense of the presence of the Lord. Job 29, 1 through 9, Job took up his discourse and said, Oh that I were as in months gone by, as in the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone over my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, as I was in the prime of my days when the friendship of God was over my tent, when the Almighty was yet with me and my children were all around.

Behold I go forward, he's not there. Backward, I cannot perceive him. When he acts on the left, I cannot behold him.

He turns to the right, I can't see him. That was part of his hedge, that God seemed far away. Now you know and I know he didn't lose the fact of God's presence, but he lost the sense of God's presence.

I know a little about losing the sense of God's presence. I hope more and more I'm coming to rest in the fact of God's presence, but it's an awful thing to lose the sense of his presence. So distressing to the heart to run from one ordinance to another, to run to the Bible, to run to the field of meditation, to run to prayer and fasting, to run to the sanctuary, to run to the brothers and sisters in Christ, and you can't find the Lord.

Everybody else is enjoying the Lord, and you can't find him. That's what happened to Job. He did more than lose the sense of his presence.

He did something, brothers, that plunged him to despair. It wasn't bad enough that he stopped trusting in the fact of God's presence and began to be dismayed because he lost the sense of God's presence, but because God seemed so far away, he began to entertain suspicious thoughts about God. He began to doubt God's love, and he began to regard God as his enemy.

Job 6.4, the arrows of the Almighty are within me. They're poison my spirit drinks. Job 7.20, have I sinned? What have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target? So I'm a burden to myself.

16.9, his anger has torn me, hunted me down. He's gnashed at me with his teeth. My adversary glares at me.

19.6, if you can believe he said this, know then that God has wronged me and closed his net about me. Job 9.11, he's kindled his anger against me. He considers me his enemy.

I think that's the key to understanding chapter 3, to be honest with you. Jeremiah went through the same thing in chapter 20 where he wishes that he had never been born and so on. First he curses the day of his birth, and if you get into the Hebrew there, what he's actually done, that's not his birthday.

It's the day of his birth. In other words, if he was born on Tuesday, he cursed Tuesdays. He wished God never invented Tuesdays.

And for the whole, it was not in the calendar. And he thought that would solve the problem. I feel sorry for other people who were born on Tuesdays, if that curse came to pass.

And then he wished, and he's not thinking, he's not thinking soundly because it's cruel to his mother, but he wished that she had miscarried. How would that have been for her? And then if he had been born, he wished he had died on the spot, or been stillborn. And now that he's alive, he wished he was dead.

Commentators have a hard time, and they're very rough on Job for chapter 3. I was a little surprised that in the debates, his three friends never used chapter 3 against him. That would have been the first thing I would have used. What are you talking about you never said? You hear what you said in chapter 3? I would have used that.

They never did. And I have an idea, here's what was really going on. See, he lost his possession and he did alright.

The Lord gave, the Lord took away. He lost his kids and he did alright. Lost his health and he did alright.

Lost the support of his life partner. Did alright. Then he started to think.

And the more he began to think, God became his enemy. And I think what he said in chapter 3 was this. It would be better never to have existed, than to have God as your enemy.

I think that's what that's all about. It would be better never to have existed. And if you do exist, it would be better to die as soon as possible, rather than to live on the earth with God as your enemy.

That's a heavy weight to bear. I don't know if you've ever met anyone who thought God was their enemy. I met two.

And I pray God would deliver me. I don't ever want to meet another one. It's horrible.

Both of these, one was a brother, one was a sister, thought that they had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit and God was their enemy. One of them ended up in a cataclysmic stupor in a mental hospital. And the other one finally took her life.

We prayed with them. We talked to them. We pleaded with them.

We begged them. But they had that in their mind. And the one was like in a fetal position, in the pains in the stomach.

And that's what Job was going through. Job's hedge came down. And I'm suggesting to you brothers that that is the purpose for this book.

Because God wants to reveal Himself as El Shaddai. The God who's more than enough. Now, if God was enough, and I'm going to show you that God brought Job to that place where Satan's insinuations were absolutely dismissed, where God was wonderful in Himself and Job didn't care about anything anymore, only the Lord.

I'm going to show you how God brought him to that place. When that hedge came down, when he lost everything, he lost his possession, he lost his kids, he lost the support of his wife, he lost his appetite, he lost his health, he lost his sleep, he was in chronic pain, he lost his ministry, he lost the sense of God. He was devastated.

He lost everything. For our sakes, to the place where he saw El Shaddai. My eye sees Him.

God wants all of us to see Him that way this weekend. So you will know tonight, tomorrow, this weekend, and forever, that God is more than enough when your hedge comes down. That's what we're going to look at.

You pray that God will take us as He took Job. Job wasn't there. Not yet.

God had to take him there. We want to see how God took him there. Because, brothers, that's how He'll take us there.

That's what it's all about. He's enough. He's more than enough.

He satisfies. We are so hedge-centered, hedge-conscious. May God deliver us this weekend so we can say, I've heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees Thee.

Let's pray that we see El Shaddai this week. Let's bow. Father, thank You so much for this precious book.

Not our understanding, not what we think it might mean, but what You've inspired it to mean. Will You write that in our hearts? Lord, take us to the place where El Shaddai plus nothing is all that we need. Lord, thank You that You're going to do it, because we ask it in the precious name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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