

Job 3 (The Message)

¹⁻²Then Job broke the silence. He spoke up and cursed his fate:

³⁻¹⁰ "Obliterate the day I was born. Blank out the night I was conceived!

Let it be a black hole in space.

May God above forget it ever happened.

Erase it from the books!

May the day of my birth be buried in deep darkness,

shrouded by the fog,

swallowed by the night.

And the night of my conception—the devil take it!

Rip the date off the calendar,

delete it from the almanac.

Oh, turn that night into pure nothingness—

no sounds of pleasure from that night, ever!

May those who are good at cursing curse that day.

Unleash the sea beast, Leviathan, on it.

May its morning stars turn to black cinders,

waiting for a daylight that never comes,

never once seeing the first light of dawn.

And why? Because it released me from my mother's womb

into a life with so much trouble.

¹¹⁻¹⁹ "Why didn't I die at birth,

my first breath out of the womb my last?

Why were there arms to rock me,

and breasts for me to drink from?

I could be resting in peace right now,

asleep forever, feeling no pain,

In the company of kings and statesmen

in their royal ruins,

Or with princes resplendent

in their gold and silver tombs.

Why wasn't I stillborn and buried

with all the babies who never saw light,
Where the wicked no longer trouble anyone
and bone-weary people get a long-deserved rest?
Prisoners sleep undisturbed,
never again to wake up to the bark of the guards.
The small and the great are equals in that place,
and slaves are free from their masters.

²⁰⁻²³ "Why does God bother giving light to the miserable,
why bother keeping bitter people alive,
Those who want in the worst way to die, and can't,
who can't imagine anything better than death,
Who count the day of their death and burial
the happiest day of their life?
What's the point of life when it doesn't make sense,
when God blocks all the roads to meaning?"

²⁴⁻²⁶ "Instead of bread I get groans for my supper,
then leave the table and vomit my anguish.
The worst of my fears has come true,
what I've dreaded most has happened.
My repose is shattered, my peace destroyed.
No rest for me, ever—death has invaded life."

Joe

Lifelong friends.

We grew up together in the church.

He was also an accomplished pianist.

When I graduated he gave me an arrangement of "Seek ye first"

In 6 variations he arranged himself. He was 16.

While he was studying music at McGill he and I had many spiritual

Conversations and I knew that like myself, he was called to ministry.

He completed a seminary degree and interned in Canada and England.

He finally settled here in Vancouver at a church in the north shore.

It was actually this very same week four years ago that Joe was installed
as a pastor during the Easter Service.

Then this... Picture.

A young felon named Ben had stolen a car to move stolen property. Suspecting he was being followed by the police, he ran a stop sign. Joe was coming from teaching piano. He was T-boned, and died.

Why? Why this?

This is the hardest question to ask.

This is where Satan, the adversary will not only pin us down,
But accuse God of being stupid.

“They love you only when things go well,” he whispers.

“Give them trouble and they will desert you.”

The story of Job is taken from a story set in 2000BC

But it is the story of us all for all time.

The fact that the Bible would take this head on is astounding.

Job teaches us three things:

1. The Necessity of Lament

It is important to cry.

It is healthy to share our pain.

A lament is not a complaint but an expression of suffering.

To lament is to acknowledge and take hold of reality.

2. Comfort in Suffering

Theology, sense and pick-me-ups are cold comfort in the depths.

All that is needed in the dark is a presence.

Weep with those who weep. Mourn with those who mourn.

There are no explanations.

Comfort is given when we give ourselves.

3. The Mystery of God's Goodness

We cannot and will not understand the why all the time.

But we are invited to ask.

Where job struggled is with whether God was Good.

He had no idea of God's purpose or plan.

He asked if God was fair because he didn't feel it.

All that Job is left with is his trust in God character.

That is after all, what it means to be Christian.

To trust in the Character of God.

When Jesus hung on the cross for our sins,

he sang the lament of Psalm 22.

“My God, my God why have you forsaken me?

He gives us comfort by being present

By giving himself to us.

It is in these things we taste of his character.

When we ask, is God good to me? Does he care?

We look to the cross.

The Body. The Blood.

When you partake of this, you cannot deny that he cares.

As for Joe's story, it's been four years.

I saw his family a week ago.

This week they will go to that intersection.

They will lament.

They will ask again, why.

It is still raining in their world and in ours.

But we hold onto the promise that we are loved.

That the sun has not lost its lustre.

It has only been obscured by our pain.