

Now My Eye Sees

October 24, 2021

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

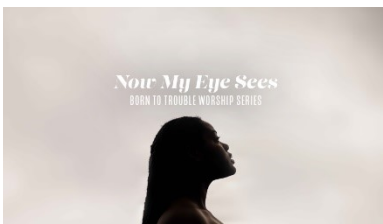
¹ Then Job answered the LORD: ² "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore, I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ⁴ 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me.' ⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; ⁶ therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."...

¹⁰ And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. ¹¹ Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. ¹² The LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. ¹³ He also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴ He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. ¹⁵ In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. ¹⁶ After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. ¹⁷ And Job died, old and full of days.

Mark 10: 46-52

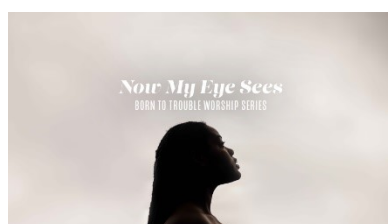
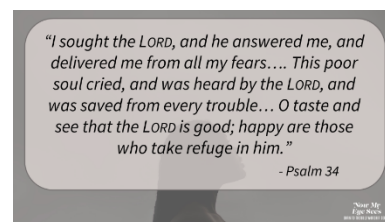
⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵² Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.



Today we come to a close in our journey with Job. On the surface, it is a happy ending to a tragic story. We all hope and pray for a good resolution when injustice or abuse or oppression occur; we all hope and pray for restoration when we or people that we know are broken and hurting. But there are folks who do not ever experience resolution. There are folks who do not ever come to an end to their suffering. In our grief support group, we talk about "moving forward". One never really "moves on" from a time of severe suffering or of deep loss. The pain of the trauma or the grief from the loss will always be a part of who we are. All who come through a time of trial bear the scars. There is never a truly 'happy ever after' ending. As we prepare to share this time together, let us pray...

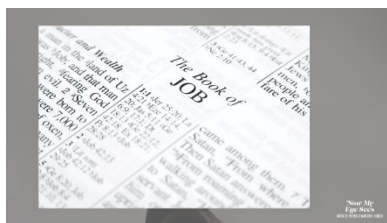
We begin our time of worship with Psalm 34:1-8. This Psalm reflects David's joy for God's deliverance in a time of trial. In these words, we hear David's deep faith in God. Hear again a few verses: *"I sought the LORD, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.... This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD, and was saved from every trouble... O taste and see that the LORD is good; happy are those who take refuge in him."* David was faithful in his walk with the Lord. Not that he was without sin, for sure. There was that whole adultery-murder ordeal when he should have been off leading the troops in battle. Yet David was known as a "man after God's own heart." Like all of us, David was far from perfect. But almost all of his days he sought the Lord. His life was not without trials and sufferings. What David did in each of these trials, even in the suffering after he and Bathsheba lost their child, was to turn to the Lord. David was humble and contrite of heart. David repented when he sinned and sought to be restored to right relationship with God. All of this came from walking faithfully with God, from seeking God in the highs and lows and in everything in between. Before we delve into Job, I wanted to share some time in Psalm 34. Overall, our experiences with God are what David's were – God is faithful and true, God loves us, God cares for us. That was the message last week – God loves us, God woos us, God pursues us.



As we turn to Job 42, we hear the story of Job's restoration. As people of faith, we love to hear stories of restoration. And yes, we do love a good happy ending.

They do happen in this world. But sometimes we are not so good at reporting on answers to prayer, on happy endings. Last Sunday we heard one such report as

LeAnne shared a joy for her successful surgery and as she shared her thanksgiving for all of the prayers lifted to God on her behalf.



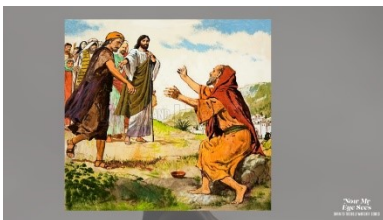
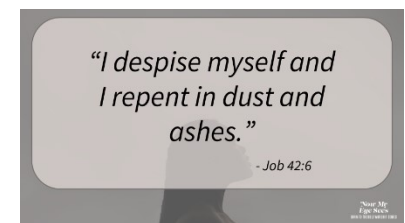
As we delve into the book of Job, chapter 42, we can even find a hint of grace that comes before the restoration of Job's life and material possessions. Our

passage today begins with Job admitting that now he knows that God can do all things and that he had *"uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."* Job admits that he was wrong. He is reaching out to God. In verse 4 we read, *"Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me."* Job is reciting someone else's words here. He is paraphrasing and quoting from chapter 38, verse four. Remember, that is how God started the speech to Job and his friends. Job goes on, in verse five, to say, *"I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you."* To me Job is saying, 'God, back then I knew you in my head, but now I know you in my heart. Back then I thought I had it all figured out. Now I realize how limited my understanding really was.'

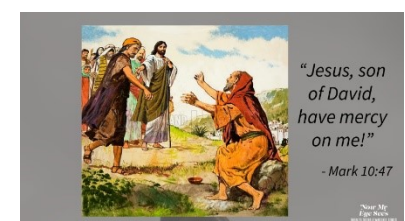
In these opening verses we find maybe an even deeper act of condescension. Last Sunday I spoke of the condescension of God in the act of taking on flesh and dwelling among us in the person of Jesus. In this week's text God sits beside him as Job stumbles out with his words of awe and humility. In and through this presence, God lets Job know, "I'll listen to your words, your heart, your hurt." In this act of empathy and love there is a sign of God's desire for a restoration of relationship, a restoration of the bond that was tested but never broken, but now needs tending in order to heal. And, again, the restoration doesn't sweep away what was, it doesn't erase the memory of the ones lost before.

We read that Job died, old and full of days. But his days were full of memories, tears, and the lingering effects of all that he suffered. I wonder, did Job look into his reflection in the water and sometimes see the pock marks from the boils, the scars from where he scraped himself with a pot shard? In our world today, some look upon scarred wrists and reflect on a pain that is still at least partly present within themselves. I look at this scar over my right eye and recall, over thirty years later, the pain of losing one I loved. We all bear scars.

In verse six Job says, *"I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."* Did he despise himself because he dared to challenge God during his time of extreme suffering? Or was this statement, this repentance, a summation of all that had happened, of all the pain that he bore and the loss that he suffered? Is Job connecting back to earlier thoughts, regretting the day that he was born? To me Job is lamenting how limited his understanding and vision of God was. Now that his eye clearly sees God for who and what God is, Job laments that he was comfortable with a relationship that was so shallow, so surface-level.



Turn with me now to Mark 10, to the story of blind Bartimaeus. As the story begins, we learn that Jesus has been in town. As he prepares to leave, Jesus passes by a blind beggar named Bartimaeus. The blind beggar must have heard in the crowd's chatter that Jesus was passing by. Bartimaeus cries out, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* He has faith that Jesus can heal him. Those in the crowd around him tell him to be quiet. They "sternly ordered" him to be quiet. Why? Do we ever try and quiet some people's cries?



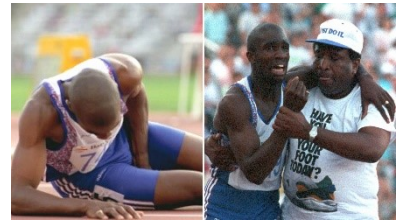
Are there times when we would rather not hear of someone else's trial or hardship? Are there times when we think like the crowd? Those in the crowd, those who know Bartimaeus, maybe they think that he is unworthy of Jesus' time and attention. Undeterred, he cries out even more loudly. Pause with me for a second and consider if you were in Bartimaeus' shoes. The one person who you believe can heal you is passing by. Wouldn't you do absolutely everything in your power to get his attention? He cries out even more loudly, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* He catches Jesus' attention. Jesus stops walking and says, *"Call him here."* Those in the crowd tell Bartimaeus to get up, to take heart – Jesus is calling. Listen to Bartimaeus' response: *"So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus."* Can you see his faith displayed in his actions? Can you?

Jesus says to the blind man, *"What do you want me to do for you?"* Do you recognize those words? These words mirror Jesus' response to James and John's request in verse 36 of last week's passage. How different the motivations! Yet Jesus responds in the same way. Bartimaeus says, *"My teacher, let me see again."* He wants to return to the time before he was blind, to the time when he could clearly see the world in front of and around him. Bartimaeus' healing is like Job's in a sense. He finally sees God as God is in the fullness of God's majesty and power. Bartimaeus leaves all behind and he follows Jesus *"on the way."*

Part of lesson that we can learn from Bartimaeus is the gift of asking for help. This is an important part of being human in the world, of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We cannot do this journey of faith alone. It is an acknowledgement that we cannot make it through this life on our own. To ask for help is an act of humility.

As an example of this need for help, please turn your attention to the screens. This is a scene from the 1992 Summer Olympics.

Video of Derek Redmond...



The Christ we proclaim declared himself to be the truth. How can we be less than truthful when proclaiming this Christ? What happened to Job and sometimes happens

to us is that our eyes are opened. We see the world as it is. We see deeper, and those who have suffered, or are suffering, see something others haven't yet seen. And that seeing makes us humble. That was the story of Derek Redmond too. The injury ended his dream of Olympic glory. But then he realized that there was more to it than just winning. He determined to finish what he had begun. Shrugging off help from track officials, Derek labored on. It was only when his father came down out of the stands and walked with his son Derek so that was able to finish.

Like it was with Derek Redmond, it isn't always happy ever after. Seeing and experiencing hardship and suffering leaves some people bitter, withdrawn, angry at a world like this. Humble is so much better. It allows for joy in restoration, even while in tune with the world's pain. I think that the loudest cheers at those Olympic games in Barcelona came when Derek and his father crossed the finish line. It was the slowest 400-meter time in Olympic history. This scene touched people's hearts. It is a picture of what it means to walk with someone through a trial. It is a picture of what it looks like to come alongside another in a time of need.

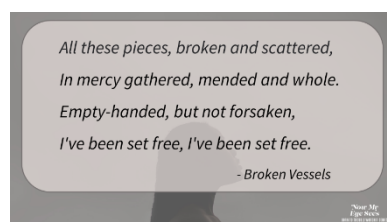
This is a picture of what it looks like to receive help from one we love. This is what it means to be like Christ as we journey together.

Returning to the book of Job, we see that God restored the fortunes of Job. In verse ten we learn that God restored Job's fortunes *"when he prayer for his friends."* God acts after Job demonstrates forgiveness towards his friends. This is a sign of real humility – being able to pray for those who condemned you. Job's family once again gathers around him and they celebrate and give him gifts. The one who was cursed, who lost everything, who was covered in painful sores is now "safe" to be around again. The unclean has been made clean. God again blesses Job with an abundance of livestock: 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. Job is again blessed with seven sons and three daughters. This time the daughters are the most beautiful women in all the land.

In verses sixteen and seventeen we read, *"After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days."* Then Job dies, *"old and full of days."* He was blessed. Job was blessed not because he had great herds of livestock. Job was not blessed because he had ten children – some even the most beautiful in all the land. Job was blessed because now, after his trials and sufferings, he now saw God for who God was. Before the time of testing Job saw God as amazing, powerful, all-knowing, majestic. But now Job also sees God as forgiving and loving and compassionate. And Job sees his relationship with God in a personal and intimate way. In short, when Job's eyes were opened to the totality of God, he was humbled.

We too can be humbled by the magnitude of God. But we can also be lifted by the power of God's love for us and by the love that we find for the God we worship. When we are open to go deep in our relationship with the divine, we will find that the Spirit works with us and through us. This Holy Spirit work leads us offer ourselves as willing vessels of that grace. In the song we are about to sing we will offer these words in verse one:

*All these pieces, broken and scattered,
In mercy gathered, mended and whole.
Empty-handed, but not forsaken,
I've been set free, I've been set free.*



These words could have been Job's words. These words could have been blind Bartimaeus' words. These men, like many others in the Biblical narrative, like many of us at points in our lives, perhaps some of us even now, felt broken and scattered. And through the power of God's love, we have been gathered in mercy, mended and made whole, redeemed and restored. We've felt empty-handed. But because of God's great love, we were never forsaken.

To be mended and made whole, to be redeemed and restored, we but have to humble ourselves and seek the Lord our God. In those moments of hardship, of trial, of suffering, we cannot fix ourselves; we cannot save ourselves. Bartimaeus knew he needed help. He simply said, "*Teacher I want to see*" and that is precisely what happened. Like with Job, like with Bartimaeus, this too is the story of our faith. When we seek to walk with our God, when we are willing to lay self down, God will walk with us.

God will take these broken vessels that we are, will pour in God's amazing grace and love, raising up the broken to life. In faith may we walk closely with the Lord each and every day. Doing so, we will be set free. May it be so. Amen and amen.

GPS – Grow, Pray, Serve

- 1) *Grow*. As you consider your journey of faith, when has God restore you or rescued you? What growth came from these experiences?
- 2) *Pray*. Job experienced God's reconciling love, restoring their relationship. This led him to pray for his friends who had hurt him. Who do you need to pray for, beginning the process of reconciliation in your relationship?
- 3) *Study*. Read Psalm 34: 9-18. What parts of this Psalm speak to you? What will be your response?