THE LIFE OF JOB

**INTEGRITY ON TRIAL**

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In this Newsletter I want to take you into the Life and Heart of Job. We will put on his robe and mantle, slip on his sandals and walk in his shoes. We will study this Humble man, look at his Faith and Patience and examine his Character. No one on earth has ever suffered like this man other than our Saviour.

Job was a real man, in a real place and in a real time. The Apostle James writes about Job’s trial and said he was a man of great Patience. This humble man lived in the land of UZ, somewhere in Southern Israel near the Arabian desert with the modern-day land of Iraq just to the East. Commentators believe he lived right after the Flood of Noah before the time of Abraham. Job is the oldest book in our Bible. It has no recorded author. No one knows who wrote it but God saw fit by the Holy Ghost to include it in our Bible canon of Scripture. It is written for the reason that we may learn a lesson of what it means to trust God in times of trial. We must know that God is not our enemy. He’s not the tempter and the afflicter. It’s the devil that causes sorrow, pain and suffering. He presents himself in this story as the thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy. He’s the one that causes heartaches and trouble. He lies and paints God as bad and one who does not care. It’s Satan who seeks to take away your Faith and Peace and turn you away from God.

This book of Job has 42 chapters and it answers the questions: Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do the Righteous suffer? Is there a purpose in our Trials? In its blessed pages we find Job’s Integrity is on trial. It is actually a Battle between God and Satan with Job being the subject. Satan says to God – I will use Job and cause him to turn against you and curse you. God says – No Satan, I will use my servant Job to show and prove to you that he will love and serve me no matter what he faces or goes through! He won’t be like you, but he will remain Righteous and hold on to his integrity!

So, we have an All Wise Creator on one side of this conflict and Satan the adversary, arch enemy and Accuser of the brethren on the other side and Job is stuck in the middle of this battle.

THE DEVIL’S REQUEST

We read that Satan comes among the angels and presents himself before the Lord and God asked him – “Where have you been Satan?” He answered – “I’ve been going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it.” The Lord said to Satan, “Have you **Considered** my Servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth, a Perfect and an Upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth (shuns) evil?” Satan looks at God and says to him – “Job is only serving you because you have blessed him and he is prosperous.” Paraphrasing, Satan says – “You have made a Hedge about him, and about his House, and about ALL that he hath on every side. I can’t even touch him. You have blessed the Work of his hands and his substance is increased in the land. I have viewed this man and his family. I’ve been all around his house, I’ve seen your Hedge around his children. I’ve walked around his property, viewed his gardens, fields and barns. If you take down the Hedge you got around him for just a little while and let me hit him with some hard things and attack his blessings and make him sick and cause him pain, then I’ll do what I do the best. I’ll discourage him and get him so low that he will curse and blame you and walk away. I’ll cause him to stop serving you God!” A question we can ask ourselves – Can God trust us? Does He know and have confidence that we will never leave Him but forever cleave to Him through the good times and bad?

Remember, the Devil is after one thing in this story – and that is Job’s Faith in God! He wants Job to cave in, self-destruct and give up his integrity. Rest assured, we all have an enemy that hates us and he is ever seeking ways to undermine our confidence and faith in God by causing problems and hardships. Dear reader, do you still Love Him as much now as you did when He first Saved you and His sweet Spirit entered your life?

THE TRIAL BEGINS

 At Satan’s request, God dropped the hedge that was around Job and gave him permission to attack this Blessed man. God says – “Satan, all that he has is in your hand. You can rob him, take his children, his livestock, barns and servants. You can cause people to walk away and turn against him. You can take away his wealth and even his health but you cannot destroy him or take his life! His soul is mine Satan, he’s in my hand!” Don’t think for a moment dear reader that the Lord’s eye was not upon His blessed servant that He dearly loved! Just hold on my son Job, this is my way of blessing you double fold and making you greater than you’ve ever been. This will be the route to my Glory like you’ve never witnessed before! You don’t understand now but you will later! If you will Trust me and remain Faithful, You will come out with much substance and many songs and sermons will be sung and preached about you that give Hope to millions!!

 Just in a matter of hours, the biggest storm that Job could ever imagine or face struck him with unending fury. Remember, this is only a Test! There can be no Promotion without being tested. There can be no greater Blessings without passing through the fire of trial. It’s not the End for this good Patriarch but only the road to New Life and a brand-new beginning. In the end, it will usher him into a bright future he could never dream of. Yes, he will hit rock bottom and sink into the dust of despair. He’ll go so low that he will even stare death in the face. Through the months of suffering, Job loses hope that he will come out of it and he will wish he had never been born. Just how long this trial lasted in Job’s life, we do not know, but according to **Job 29:2**, it lasted for months!

 Everyone of us through our Christian life will find our self in Job’s life at one point or the other. Life is not without its hard knocks. We too will know suffering and loss. Sickness will come. Trouble and Conflicts that we do not ask for will arise and bring with them questions. We will ask Why! Why O Lord and how long? Will it ever change or get better?

OUR THEOLOGY WILL BE TESTED

 You see, we never need Faith when everything in our life is good. Job’s greatest battle in his trial was over his Faith and Theology. In other words, all he ever knew about serving God before the trial ever came was Blessing, prosperity and health. Take that all away and Job’s view of everything he thought about the Lord will change. His view of God would be tried. We too are like Job. This becomes the acid test of our Faith when things go bad and we suffer. You see, we believe that God is with us and He is for us when everything is going good and we are being blessed. But Satan wants us to think that God is against us and not with us when things go wrong. This is when we wonder and question and doubts come flooding in! “I must have done something wrong, I guess I have sinned. Am I even Saved? I guess I have failed and the Lord is angry and now I’m unworthy! I’m no good. I guess I’m being chastened or I wouldn’t be going through all this trouble and suffering!” Children, this is where the enemy works on our minds, especially those of young Christians when they say – “it doesn’t do me any good to serve God! My prayers are vain - I’m not good enough.”

 But remember, God is saying – “Yes you are important to me! It’s just a Test to show the devil that you’re still mine and you’re going to hold on and serve me till the battle is over. Hold on dear child, your blessing is coming!”

A SEASON OF TRIAL

 Listen to Simon Peter as he exhorts us: **I Pet. 4:12** – Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing has happened unto you. He said in **I Pet. 1:6** – Many are in Heaviness because of many temptations. They are going through a Season of trial. Their Faith is being tried by Fire and it’s much more precious than pure Gold. Gold will perish but if you’ll hold on, you’ll receive Glory, Honor and Praise when Jesus comes. Your Faith will bring the Salvation of your Soul.

REMEMBER – GOD CARES

 Peter goes on to say – **I Pet. 5:7** – Casting all your Care upon Him for He careth for you. You must know in this hour that no matter what you go through or face, God cares for you! He’s going to bring you through and you’re going to make it. It’s not the end! God will Keep, He will Sustain, He’ll take care of His own!! Peter goes on – Be Sober, be vigilant (stay serious minded, on guard and alert. Recognize Satan when he comes – he’s going to come! Somewhere, at some time, you’re going to be hit and attacked.) Listen dear reader, Satan knows that he cannot turn God against you! Before the trial ever begins, God has you in mind. He loves you and is not against you. But the devil surely knows that he has a chance of making you doubt that God loves and cares about you. The devil knows in your trial that he has a chance to get you down, disheartened and discouraged and turn you bitter. If he can’t turn God against you, then he will seek to turn you against Him. The devil wanted nothing more than to turn Job against his maker, blame Him and give up!

JOB BEFORE THE TRIAL

 Oh what a contrast as Job sits in a pile of ashes and looks back to what he use to have and enjoy before his trial. **Job 29:1-2** – Job cries out, Oh that I were as in Months past, as in the days when God preserved me. He’s remembering back to his former blessings and prosperity. These are some of the things he said: “God’s candle once shined upon my head and I walked through darkness. The secret of God was upon me in my youth. People stood and reverenced me when I prepared my seat in the street. When people heard me speak, they blessed me and gave witness to me, because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and those that needed help. I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on Righteousness and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and diadem. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame and a father to the poor. I brake the jaws of the wicked and plucked the spoil out of their teeth. My root was spread out by the waters and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, my children were about me. I sat as chief and dwelt as a king – but Now look at me! It’s all gone!

 By reading this, it doesn’t seem fair does it? Job was too good of a man and didn’t deserve this, wouldn’t you say? You couldn’t lay a finger on this man anywhere in his life to find fault! This lets us know that no matter who we are, how good we live or how much we give, none of us are exempt from suffering and being tempted! We are not beyond temptation. We will never get out of this world without being tested. Satan will surely come and try your metal. Your determination and firmness will be checked to see if you have a made-up mind to go on and trust God and serve Him till He brings you the Blessing and Victory!

BAD NEWS COMES

 You must know that Job loved his children! This man rose up early every morning and offered for each one of his children a sacrifice of burnt offering in case they had sinned in their hearts. This he did continually every day. O what a love and Spiritual commitment! Notice the steps that Satan took to come at Job. It wasn’t enough to hit him physically and materially, but Satan came at him aiming at his most tender point – his Spiritual life – this is the hardest part! Can you imagine as the messenger came running to Job and said – “Job, the fire fell from heaven and struck the field where all your 7,000 sheep were grazing. It came down from above and burned them all up?!” I am persuaded in my heart that the sheep were the very animals that Job offered for sacrifice for his children. Listen, we can stand to lose some things physically, but it’s a whole different story when you lose things Spiritually! What are you going to do now Job, said Satan? Believe me, I know how the devil can whisper to you. Look at you Job, you have nothing to offer now. Look what God did to you. Your sacrificing wasn’t any good or He wouldn’t have done this to you!

 This true story goes from bad to worse. Each messenger brings more and more bad news. Thieves come and take away the remaining livestock – 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she asses. Job looks out and his fields are now bare. Surely it can’t get worse can it? I can see the final messenger as he comes no doubt with tears in his eyes and head bowed, unable to look Job in the face and say – “Job, your Sons and Daughters were eating and drinking in the eldest Son’s house and there came a WIND from the Wilderness and smote the four corners of the house and it fell in on them and they are all dead!” It had to be a whirlwind to hit all four sides.

 Look deeply at Job’s heart touching reaction – he rose and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshipped and said – “Naked came I out of my Mother’s womb and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.” In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

SATAN COMES THE SECOND TIME

 Our enemy never ceases to give up. If he’s not successful He looks for another way, another avenue to hit where it hurts. So far Job is holding up. A lot of us would have crashed by now. We would have laid down and given up, but not this Blessed man. Satan again presents himself before the Lord and God asked him again – “Have you considered my Servant that there’s none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man that feareth God and escheweth evil? And still he **holdeth fast his Integrity.**” Satan answers – “Yes, but let him be touched in his flesh and bone and he will curse you to your face.” Again, God allowed Satan to strike Job where it was dreadfully painful. Satan smote him from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet with sore boils. He sits down in the ashes and scrapes himself with a piece of broken pottery. You can’t hardly imagine the pain of the sores that oozed, burned and itched. O what a picture of Suffering and hopelessness!

A GRIEF-STRICKEN WIFE

 Isn’t it amazing how the enemy of our soul uses things and People? Remember what Satan said to the Lord in the very beginning – “God, I will cause Job to curse you!” I’ve heard many preachers down Job’s wife for her statement to her husband but look at what she has lost! I can see her as she lays awake at night thinking of her children. I can see her as she approaches Job, looks down at him heartbroken and anguished. Husband, I can’t take it anymore. I pass by my children’s empty houses every day on my way to the cemetery. I’ve shed many tears at each one of their graves. I carried each one of them in my womb, I’ve fed them, clothed them and held them in my arms. They are Gone! And now look at you, you are a horrible mess. I can’t stand to look at you anymore in this shape. Don’t you realize that we’ve lost everything? If this is what it takes to get out of your misery, Why don’t you just Curse God and die. Maybe if you Curse Him these calamities will stop. But Job answered her – “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?” In all this did not Job sin with his lips! Two whole chapters and 35 verses of nothing but pain, loss and suffering and Job is still holding on!

INTEGRITY

 When bad things happen that are beyond our control, it is natural for us to question Why! There will be times in our life that we will wonder what caused the pain and loss. Why me? Why my family Lord? Why did this or that ever have to happen? This is where Integrity comes in. There’s no other way to explain it, but **Integrity** is something down in the deepest part of your Heart that doesn’t let go! It may get down to just a spark left, but it keeps you holding on and trusting God no matter how hard or dark it gets in your life!! Integrity means having Soundness. I’ve read articles in the News and seen the aftermath of strong earthquakes that have struck in different parts of the world. They show pictures of what was once nice big important buildings that now have big cracks in the walls and structure. In the caption under the picture are these words: “The Earthquake may have damaged this building’s structural Integrity. If there’s more aftershocks, the building may crumble and fall.”

Children, I don’t want to fall or go down in the midst of my trial. In these 44 years that I have served God, I have been hit many times by the devil, suffered blows by the enemy but God’s good Grace has kept me and brought me through. The Lord put something in me a long time ago when I bowed on my knees and gave Him my heart and I’ve never seen a time that I ever wanted to go back or quit serving Him! I’ve been low many times and have hit bottom but there’s something down deep inside that keeps me going. It keeps me Singing and praying and holding on. He has surely been too good to me. There’s been times I’ve doubted and failed but He has never failed. Yes, I have doubted and at times fallen, but His hand was right there to lift me back up. My Blessed Lord never gave up on me and walked away. This one thing I know – He has shown me Mercy! He really Loves me and He loves you also dear reader! He’s your Hope, your Keeper and Saviour, Healer and dearest friend!

As you read this Newsletter, there are many precious souls suffering untold hardships and misery and they are on the verge of collapsing. Many have lost Hope and are giving up. The enemy of their Soul has lied to them and told them no one cares. Take this message to them and tell them – there is a God who understands. He Loves you and He cares!! May God Bless my readers! (To Be Continued………)