

JOB

CHAPTER 42

Introduction

You have a glorious future to look forward to!

Very soon Jesus Christ will return to take you home to heaven. When He does, according to the Book of Jude, He will "...present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."¹ First John 3:2 says,

¹ John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Philippians 3:21 says that Jesus,

Philippians 3:21 will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...

When the Lord comes He will complete in you an amazing change that began the moment you were born again. You will be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"² and fitted for eternity. You are destined for glory at the return of Jesus for you.

The Bible also indicates you are being changed now, from moment to moment; from "glory to glory" is the way it is put in Second Corinthians 3:18. You are an ongoing project, being daily transformed by the work of God's Holy Spirit.

One of the key methods God employs in order to transform you from glory to glory is suffering. Notice, in these verses I am about to read, the connection between present suffering and future glory:

¹ Jude 1:24

² 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

1 Peter 4:13 ... rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

The apostles who wrote these verses always looked at suffering from the perspective of how God was using it to their advantage. You get the distinct impression from them that they considered suffering a great privilege.

Soon - - very, very soon - - we will be with Jesus. We have only a short time to wait. We call it "life." As we encounter suffering in it, it is our privilege.

How is suffering your privilege? Job tells us in these closing verses. His suffering was a privilege for two reasons: First, because it proved God's love **for** him, and, second, because it proved God's love for others **through** him.

We'll see these two things in our study:

#1 God Proves His Love **For** You
In The Privilege Of Suffering

#2 God Proves His Love **Through** You
In The Privilege Of Suffering

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#1 God Proves His Love **For** You
In The Privilege Of Suffering
(v1-6)

Remember chapters one and two? There you saw behind the scenes of Job's suffering. Satan had accused Job of serving God only for the blessings he received - - the blessings of health and wealth. Take these away and Satan felt Job would curse God.

God was so confident that this would not happen that He gave Satan permission to attack Job, within certain carefully set boundaries.

Was God confident in Job's love for Him? No; *God was confident in His love for Job!* His love for Job was powerful enough to keep Job and present him faultless before the throne of heaven. Nothing could separate Job from the love of God. The story of Job is one of the great illustrations of the keeping power of God's love in the life of the true believer. God proved His love for Job through the privilege of suffering; at least, that's the conclusion Job himself came to.

Job came to this conclusion as he realized that God had a *purpose, a plan, a perfecting, and a purifying* to accomplish through suffering:

▶▶ Suffering has a purpose:

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You."

Job uses the word "purpose," indicating that he understood his suffering had one. Whatever it was, that purpose "could not be withheld from God" - - it could not fail. It was his way of saying that what God began in him, God would see through to completion.

He who began a good work in you **will** be faithful to complete it. Suffering cannot, therefore, be a detour; it must be a development.

▶▶ Suffering has a plan:

Job 42:3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Another translation reads, "Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?" Job was ignorant as to why God allowed his sufferings; but, from God's perspective, Job's sufferings reflected an infinite wisdom. They were "too wonderful" to be understood by Job.

Wisdom indicates a plan. Job wasn't suffering randomly; his suffering was part of a greater plan for his life - - one he could not see, but one which God had foreseen and foreordained.

God has a plan for your life... And it will involve suffering.

▶▶ Suffering has a perfecting:

Job 42:4 "Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'

Job had been questioning God. God asked him a series of seventy-seven questions - - *none of which he could answer!* From this Job learned that suffering was something he should submit to as God's will for his life, as God's perfect will for his life. Thus suffering speaks of God perfecting us - - it is a tool, a technique that God uses to perfect us.

▶▶ Suffering has a purifying:

Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.
Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

Job saw himself as he was before God - - a hopeless wretch! Yet at the same moment he was glad, knowing that his extremity was God's opportunity. He didn't deserve to "see" God, but He saw Him nevertheless. He was confident he could "repent" and be restored to relationship with God.

How could he be so confident? Certainly not on the basis of his efforts to please God! By his own admission he was abhorrent. His confidence must be based upon the nature and character of God. His suffering had brought him to the point of realizing that God loved him despite the loss of everything else he had held dear. God had a purpose, a plan, a perfecting, and a purifying for Job. These are the efforts of love to benefit the beloved.

God's love was all that Job had - - but in the end it was enough. God had proved His love for Job through suffering.

Thus Job's suffering was a privilege... And thus **your** suffering is a privilege! It strips away everything else you hold dear, removes every confidence you have, and leaves you depending upon His love to keep and sustain you. This is why the apostle Paul can so confidently exclaim,

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:38 ... For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Far from separating you from God's love, sufferings of all sorts prove His love. There is a depth of fellowship, of relationship, with God and with Jesus that can only come through your suffering. Suffering provides a unique opportunity to know the love of God; and that is why it is your privilege as you await the glory that is to be revealed in you at the coming of Jesus Christ.

#2 God Proves His Love **Through** You In The Privilege Of Suffering (v7-17)

The book ends with Job's restoration. He gained double what he had lost. Is this a formula we can always count on after our sufferings? Not at all! It was God's formula for Job; it may or may not be His formula for you. As you read in Hebrews 11:33-38,

Hebrews 11:33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Hebrews 11:34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Hebrews 11:36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.

Hebrews 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Hebrews 11:38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

Some were delivered from suffering; some were delivered through suffering. God is under no obligation to restore what suffering removes. He proves His love with or without restoration.

More important than Job's restoration were his relationships. In these closing verses you see the love of God exhibited through him toward others - - beginning with those who had offended him the most:

Job 42:7 And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.

Job 42:8 "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job.

These three men had insisted that Job's suffering was for *discipline* and *destruction*. We learn through the book that Job's suffering was for his *development*, and as a *demonstration* to others of the love of God. Their counsel totally misrepresented God. God's lesson on love had been perverted by them into a lecture on the law. They had sinned badly.

We tend to list sins, putting them on a scale of bad to worse. Very rarely do we speak of misrepresenting God on those lists. Yet misrepresenting Him is of critical importance to God. *It kept Moses out of the promised land!* Be careful how you represent the nature and character of God.

Offerings of animals in the Old Testament spoke of the need for the blood of a substitute for you to approach God. They looked forward to the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

Why was it necessary for Job to pray for these men? Among the reasons that could be listed is this one: It gave them the opportunity to see God's love working through Job. Job had every earthly reason to loathe these men; instead, he loved them enough to pray for them. That kind of love can only come from God, through you, toward others. Job's suffering had prepared him to be a channel for that love to flow through.

Prayer was also important for Job - - giving him the opportunity to see the blessings of God's love:

Job 42:10 And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

It was "when he prayed for his friends" that Job saw his own resources restored and doubled. This was not his motive for praying. It was simply a demonstration by God that letting Him love others through you brings blessings. They may or may not be material blessings. They are material in the Book of Job in order to illustrate the point. More often they are spiritual blessings - - peace, joy, contentment. The point is: You won't lose by loving others with God's love; you'll gain.

These three friends had attacked and accused Job. Many others had simply avoided him. Their behavior had been equally hurtful. Job showed them God's love:

Job 42:11 Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

Through God's love Job could forgive them and they could fellowship with him. Again there is a sense of the blessings love brings, illustrated by material things but representing spiritual things.

Job 42:12 Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

Job 42:13 He also had seven sons and three daughters.

Job 42:14 And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch.

Job 42:15 In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

Remember Job's wife? She had urged him to "curse God and die!" He loved her, too, with the love of God. Their marriage was restored.

It was unusual for daughters to receive an inheritance. Sons were the ones who inherited; it was a patriarchal culture. Job's love

no longer made such distinctions. It's as if he had entered into the New Testament principle you find in Galatians 3:28,

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

God demonstrates His love through you as *you* ignore the distinctions of ethnicity, gender, age, class, status, and the like. When you love everyone regardless of these distinctions, people see God's love.

Job 42:16 After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations.

Job 42:17 So Job died, old and full of days.

Job was 70 when his suffering hit; he lived to be 210.

I don't know when suffering will hit me... *or you*. I don't know how long it will last when it does... I don't know how it will turn out...

What I *do* know is that God can prove His love **through** you to others who are watching as you are privileged to suffer. Suffering provides a unique opportunity for people to see that the love of God is real, and has real consequences. It is a privilege that God entrusts to you so that you can show Him to others.

Does this mean you must suffer perfectly - - without ever a doubt, a grumble, a complaint? No; Job certainly had his moments of doubts, his grumbings, his complaints! Remember - - it's not your love for God that is revealed in suffering so much as it is His love for you! You will probably fail in some points during suffering; but God will not fail you. It is this faithfulness of God **for** you and then **through** you that sets you apart as a believer.

Conclusion

You and I have only a short time before Jesus comes. He'll either take us in death, or in the Rapture; either way, where He is, we will also be.

I would rather not suffer along the way; but then my way would not be God's way.

God's way calls upon me to suffer. It is my privilege, and yours, to suffer as He proves His love *for* you and *through* you.