

A Christian Shows his trust in his prayers

What would you do if you lost it all? What would you do if you lost your job? What would you do if after that all your family members died in a car accident? What would you do if even after that, you became sick and found out that you have cancer? What would you do? If ever you needed evidence that God was not on your side, that he hated you, you might think that you have found that evidence after you have lost everything. But in the words we read this morning, what was Job's response?

We remember how Job lost everything. In one day he lost all of his flocks and herds. On the same day he lost all of his sons and daughters. And the one family member left, his wife, was no help to him. When all of these hardships came into Job's life, she told him to curse God and then die. And from a worldly point of view, that might seem like good advice. When your life turns upside down and you can find nothing good in your life, it might be all too tempting to conclude that God hates you.

But what was Job's response? Job shows his trust in the lord in his prayers. First of all, he shows his trust in the lord in that he prays at all. If Job knew that he and God were enemies of each other, then why would he pray at all? And if he prayed, it would be curses against God, not prayers to him. Job prays. And that teaches us that Job trusted in God's mercy. And remember, what is mercy? Mercy is God looking down at us and having pity on us. It is a loving God who sees a people, powerless to help themselves. Notice, how when Job prays, he finds his faith, his trust and hope in God's mercy. In verse 7, we read: *7 Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath; my eyes will never see happiness again.*"

And this verse makes us ask a very important question: How do our prayers compare to Job's? Sure, we rejoice that Job's faith was as strong as it was. But do we act the same? When hardships come into our lives, what is our response? We are shocked. We might complain. We might despair. Or, we might forget to pray at all. And when we do pray, the words in our minds and in our mouths are not words of trust, but words of desperation or anger.

This shows us that what Job cries out is true. He says, *7 Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath.* But, literally, in the Hebrew it says, "remember that life is breath." In other words, Job is reminding the Lord that all humans are frail. They are weak. They are sinful. And we know the same truth in our lives.

A Christian shows his faith in his prayers. A Christian knows that he prays to a *gracious* God. But Job teaches us even more. A Christian also prays to a *knowing* God. We read: *Job 7:1 "Does not man have hard service on earth? Are not his days like those of a hired man? 2 Like a slave longing for the evening shadows, or a hired man waiting eagerly for his wages, 3 so I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of misery have been assigned to me. 4 When I lie down I think, 'How long before I get up?' The night drags on, and I toss till dawn. 5 My body is clothed with worms and scabs, my skin is broken and festering."*

Job tells the lord everything that is in his heart. He lets him know every pain and heartache in himself. But, what is missing? If you listened closely, there is something missing. Where's the part where Job tells the Lord what to do about his pain and troubles? It is not there. You see, Job knows that the lord is smarter than he is. Job knows that the lord knows all things. And if he knows all things, then he will be able to deal with all the problems that Job has.

And Job isn't the only believer who has shown that quality. Do you remember Jesus' first miracle in Cana? Jesus turned water into wine. But what did his mother tell him? Did she nag him? Did she let him know what the right thing to do would be? No, she simply let him know what had happened, that they were out of wine. Mary trusted that Jesus wasn't just her earthly son, but also her heavenly king. She trusted that if she threw the facts down at his feet, he would be faithful in dealing with them. And it's amazing to see the same attitude in Job. Notice, he isn't judging God. He isn't telling God what to do. He is simply letting his God know about the pain in his body and in his heart.

That's how a Christian shows his trust. He shows it by praying with the knowledge that Jesus knows everything. Here again we find sadness and sin in our lives. When we are in pain, whether on the outside or on the inside, we are all too tempted to tell Jesus what to do about our problems. We are all too tempted to tell him that what we want should be his will.

But, just as the lord was merciful to Job, he is just as merciful to us. He reminds us that he *knows*. He knows our pain, our stress, our panic, our anxiety, our despair and depression, our anger, our lack of control. He knows all of this. And he also knows the solution. He reminds us that he loved us so much that he sent his Son to take away our sins and make us his children. And since we are his children, how can he abandon us? He put his name on us in the waters of baptism? How can the Lord reject himself. He will be faithful to us in all of our hardships.

And so, a Christian shows his trust in his prayers. He knows that he prays to a gracious God. He knows that he prays to a knowing God. And, finally, he knows that he prays to a powerful God. I encourage you to read the whole book of Job at home on your own. Get to know the struggles that he went through. Get to know his friends who were at their best when they just sat in the dust and agonized with their friends. For, when they opened their mouths they became fools. Get to know Job's great struggles and troubles so that when you get to the end of the book you appreciate the ending. Job gets so very close to accusing the Lord of sinning. And the lord responds out of the storm: "Where you there? Where you there, Job, when I made you and everything that exists?" Job saw his power to create and destroy. And Job saw his power to rescue. Because at the end of the book, we hear that the lord gave to Job more flocks than he had every had. He gave him a family. And now he is with the Lord in heaven. But, Job went through months and even years of pain and misery before he saw that power with his own eyes.

Learn from these words of Job. Let your faith shine in your prayers. When our good and gracious lord sends crosses and pains into your life, pray! Pray, because you, like Job, know that you have a God who is merciful. You have a God who remembers that you are like breath in winter air. It is here for a moment and then it is gone. Pray, knowing that God knows everything. Lay all of your concerns, your fears, your tears, your pains at his feet. And rejoice that you know he knows about your pains. And finally, trust that Jesus is powerful enough to *do* what is right with your troubles.

Remember that our God answers prayer in one of two ways. He either gives us what we want. Or he gives us something better. And here is where the faith shows its strength. You might pray as Job did, over months and years. And it might seem like your prayers are never answered. But the Holy Spirit in you will give you the ability to trust what you can't see with your eyes or touch with your hands. Job waited for months before he saw the result of his prayers. You might very well wait until you are in heaven until you see the results of your prayers. But, pray! Pray because you know that your Savior is gracious, because you know that your God knows everything in your life, and because you know that your God has power not only to hear your prayers, but also to give you what is best. Amen.