

Title: Job's Second Reply to God: When Suffering Means Surrender

Number: 0224Job42.1-6(42)

Text: 42:1-6

Central Idea: Sometimes Suffering Means Surrender

Date: February 11, 2024

{Read Text / Prayer}

42:1–6 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 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 declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” 4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’ 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; 6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.”

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[i]For the Christian Suffering Often does Mean Surrender

It's when we suffer that faith is tested. Will we really trust G. when things go so very wrong? Will we submit to Him?

What Apost. Peter said is true. T/sufferings of life serve to test t/validity of our faith:

1 Peter 1:7–9 *You suffer*, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

I find it noteworthy that this incl. passing t/test of our love for t/Lord. Context ==>

8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith [*even a suffering faith*] the salvation of your souls.

[ii] Doesn't Mean we Fly Through Suffering Unscathed

BTIM - sometimes our faith wavers // tempted to give up // we're guilty of bad attitudes — even sinful actions. (I know!).

Will we survive t/fire? Back to 1 Peter 1 ==>

You suffer, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

[iii] That's the Surrender Part

When I say suffering means surrender I mean when we go thru intense suffering & we rebel against G. do we finally submit? Do we align our imperfect will w/His that is perfect?

My suffering eventually did mean surrender in this sense.

Same thing was true of Job. Job lost just about everything near and dear to him. That was a lot, his wealth, his reputation, his friends and His 10 children.

[iv] Remember Satan's Wager?

Before t/hammer fell upon him, Job was happy and prosperous.

But then T/Satan appeared before G.(G. who pointed Job out as faithful). T/Satan said:

1:9–11 9 . . . “Does Job fear God for nothing? ==>

10 “Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.”

Would Job cont. to believe in & love His God?

While his faith wavered, while he came perilously close, Job never did as Satan predicted: he never cursed his G.

He was guilty, however, of misrepresenting Him.

[v] Giving Job his wish, a face-to-face hearing in God’s courtroom, the Lord appears to him out of a whirlwind in chapter 38

38:2–3 *YHWH asks him* 2 “Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 “Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me!

For 2 chaps God lectures Job on His Greatness in who He is as Creator.

Will Job submit? Will suffering mean surrender? After God’s 1st reply, Job responded by basically admitting his insignificance. He would say no more. He was bending, but not broken; rattled, but not repentant.

[vi] God gives his 2d speech to Job in chapters 40-41
Looked at that last time ==>

The Almighty is Lord of the Great and Terrible.

We were introd. to 2 creatures that G. created: Behemoth & Leviathan, both of which represented God’s Lordship over power, chaos, death, evil, demonic.

He is Lord over things we see, things we don't. Those things that we charact. as "natural" & those things we refer to as "supernatural."

After all Job has been thru, will his suffering mean surrender? Will he "tap out?" Will he not only give up, but give in? Will his heart be changed?

That brings us to the 6 verses I want to cover today ==>

I. Job's Second Reply to God: When Suffering Means Surrender

A. Job's Realization: God Cannot be Overcome (vv 1-2)
1 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 2 "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

1. Two things that Job recognized in v. 2

a. God is omnipotent

2 "I know that You can do all things . . .

(1) God can do anything He pleases within the confines of His nature

(a) Can God do absolutely anything—no exceptions?

i. No—He only operates within the confines of His nature

T/supposed paradoxical ?s such as "Can G. make a rock so heavy He can't move it" are absurdities. Logic finds its genesis in G. He is t/author of formal logic. Therefore, equations such as $5+5=10$ are eternal. They cannot be other than they are. Heb. 6:13. (cf. lying / do evil, etc).

a. God is omnipotent

He can do anything He pleases w/i t/confines of His nature. Yahweh is bound by no law or principle outside Himself — He is *ex lex* in that regard.

(b) In the O.T. book of Daniel . . .

Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by G. When he came to His senses (when He surrendered) ==> “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’ (4:35)

(c) Job now “knows” this

2 “I know that You can do all things . . .

Heb. word *yada* which can carry t/idea of knowing by experience. More than theoretical knowledge. Job now “knows” this (*yada*).

G. demonstrated His omnipotence t/o chaps. 38-41: He is Lord over Creation, inc. t/Great & Terrible Beh. / Lev

(d) Note what Job doesn’t say . . .

He doesn’t say that now he understands suffering // why he suffered // why evil exists in G’s good creation.

Not why but Who. We ought to be content w/that.

[Don’t] assume that everything that takes place in God’s universe ought to be explained to us. [Don’t] assume that God owes us an explanation, that there cannot possibly be any good reason for God not to tell us everything we want to know immediately. [don’t] assume that God Almighty should be more interested in giving us explanations than in being worshiped and trusted. [D.A. Carson, *How Long O Lord*, 152-53]

Sometimes Suffering Means Surrender

a. God is omnipotent

b. God is teleological

G. works providentially w/a goal in mind. Purpose.

2b . . .and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

“Purpose translates a word meaning ‘plan or idea’—anything that God plans to do will be done.”

[UBS Handbook, 770]

Isaiah 46:10 [He is the One who declares] the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’

Eph. 1:11...[He] works all things after the counsel of His will
Acts 4:27–28 (1st c. disciples, reflecting on t/crucifixion):

27 “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

A. Job’s Realization: God Cannot be Overcome (vv 1-2)

B. Job’s Recognition: Job Admits Ignorance (v. 3)

1. Job begins by quoting what God said to him in 38:2

38:2 “Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?

a. Job echoes that in v. 3

3a ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?...’

Implied idea, “Yeah, I did that.”

3b . . . **“Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand [that’s his ignorance], things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”**

Note Clines’ transl.: “To be sure, I made my depositions—without understanding—concerning things too wonderful for me—which I did not know.

(1) Again, there’s that word *yada* (know)

“The words that came out of my mouth were ignorant of the wonders that I did not know before.”

2. “wonderful things” =

God’s glorious greatness in being G.
God’s Power and God’s Wisdom.

a. Yet there will always be things we won’t understand

Psalm 131:1–2 1 O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me.

Deut. 29:29 “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.

C. Job’s Reeducation: Job is Teachable (v. 4)

4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’

1. Job’s 3 friends tried to teach him

But w/exception of Elihu, they were teaching false ideas about G. & creation. They believed that suffering was always a result of personal sin. They kept trying to get Job to repent of sin that wasn’t there.

Elihu came along & focused not on what Job did B4 his calamity, but on t/words he said afterward. That was t/issue. Job laid the blame on G., accusing Him of mismanaging t/universe.

4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’

2. Two essential components of discipleship in v. 4

a. You have go to the right source

You want to learn? Learn t/truth from a source of truth. There are myriads of supposed authorities out there.

Go to t/internet and type in a controversial ? & see what you get. Job went to t/right source: God. For us today, it’s His Word (and a contextually / historically / exegetically accurate understanding of it).

4a ‘Hear, now, and I will speak . . .

What did Job say after G’s 1st reply to him (40:3-5)? He basically said I’m shutting up. I’m not talking anymore.

Job 40:4b–5 4b “. . . I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

(1) Job does speak again here—in fact these are his last recorded words in the book (ending at v. 6)

b. You have to go to the right source & then you have to have the right heart (want to learn)

4b “. . . I will ask You [right source], and You instruct me [right heart].’

3. These words Job utters here in v. 4 [^] echo what God said to him before each of His two speeches - but in reverse

What did God say to Job each time b4 He (G.) spoke? Imp.

B4 G's 1st - 38:3 "... I will ask you, and you instruct Me."

B4 G's 2d - 40:7 "... I will ask you, and you instruct Me.

G. was being sarcastic there. Not unlike a plumber challenging a brain surgeon on his technique only to have t/surgeon hand him t/scalpel saying, "You do it."

Job mirrors G's words - only Job isn't being sarcastic.

Job is ready to be educated.

He went to t/right source; his heart was right

4b "... I will ask You [God], and You instruct me.'

C. Job's Reeducation: Job is Teachable (v. 4)

D. Job's Revival: Job Now Sees (v. 5)

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;

1. Christophany — Does Job see Jesus (Mediator)?

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;

2. Sometimes we can hear but not see

Doesn't have to be lit. sight. Verse 5 parallels that Heb. noun *yada* "to know." Really knowing. Job says I've heard, but now I get it.

A.S. Peake in his old commentary on the book ==>

found v. 5 “the supreme lesson of the book ... Happy, even in his pain, that he has found himself and his God, he would rather suffer, if God willed it, than be in health and prosperity. He knows that all is well, he and his sufferings have their place in God’s inscrutable design; why should he seek to understand it? In childlike reverence he acknowledges it to be far beyond him.” [Peake, A. S. Job, Introduction,

Revised Version with Notes, and Index. CB. Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1905]

“His intellectual problem is unsolved, for he has transcended it.” [Rowley, H.H. Job. NCB. Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1970]

That’s interesting . . . Some of this may be speculation, but I don’t think it’s far off t/mark.

3. Job has undergone a personal revival of sorts

a. Good for us as believers to have those times of spiritual growth

It is not t/norm to have some subsequent to salvation experience that automatically transcends our life w/JC to a higher plane where we no longer struggle w/apathy or sin.

We struggle; our walk w/the Lord wavers. That’s t/norm.

I went thru a time of great spiritual depression few yrs. ago. In 2022 I did a series of messages on this.

Coming out of that spiritual depression was like another new birth. But unlike any genuine conversion, this one didn’t last. BTIM - I was on a spiritual high but it didn’t last. I came back down off t/mountain to taste again of t/dark valleys.

1 of t/reasons for that is I didn’t maintain some of t/hard disciplines that are required.

Another is simply t/fact that our sinful estate is quite unpredictable. We can be up one day, down t/next. Why we need to focus on t/promises of G.

Sometimes it's like being on a ship in turbulent waters. The ship is going up and down, side to side. Waves crashing against it. But I see t/shore in t/distance. There's solid ground. I keep my eyes fixed to t/nearing coast & off t/rocking boat — I feel secure. The land doesn't move.

ISW in t/midst of your turbulent life, fix your eyes on t/shore of God's Word.

b. Pray for revival — ask God that it start with you

c. To get a greater vision of Jesus!

It's one thing to see God's glory in Creation; it's another to simply see God's glory. As one writer noted==>
God means for us to be stunned and awed by his world of creation [as Job was]. But not for its own sake. . . . These are but the backside of his glory, as it were, darkly seen through a glass. What will it be to see the Creator himself! Not his works! A billion galaxies will not satisfy the human soul. God and God alone is the soul's end. Jonathan Edwards expressed it like this: "The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. . . . [These] are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the ocean."

[Cited in Talbert, 225]

Weak is the effort of my heart;
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art;
I'll praise Thee as I ought
[John Newton]

Live w/the hope of seeing him one day as Job did!

All questions flee before Him. As we said when we were looking at G's 1st reply to Job: *"Tough Questions Melt in the Light of God's Nature."* God's nature is His glory!

God's answer isn't "why" but "Who"

Christopher Morley: "I had a million questions to ask God; but when I met Him, they all fled my mind; and it didn't seem to matter."

Swiss psychologist Dr. Paul Tournier wrote in his book *Guilt and Grace*: "For God's answer is not an idea, a proposition, like the conclusion of a theorem; it is Himself. He revealed Himself to Job; Job found personal contact with God." [Guilt and

Grace, Harper & Row, p. 86]

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E. Job’s Repentance: Job Drops His Legal Case (v. 6)
6 Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.”

1. Depending on your translation you may have sometime different for the first part of the verse

Some translations have something like “I retract my words,” others have something like “I despise myself.”

a. The Hebrew verb (*ma’as*) most commonly means “to refuse,” or “to reject”

In t/Heb. there’s no object. What does Job reject or retract? Is it himself (do we translated it, “I reject/loath myself”) or is it his words (“I reject/retract my words”)? Translations are split. But I think “words” is t/better understood idea.

I don’t think Job is loathing himself; it’s what he has said that’s been t/issue.

(1) Two reasons why I prefer the NASB here (“C”)

(a) Context: It fits the context

Both Elihu and God confront Job as to his words (attitudes that lie behind those words).

i. Consider Elihu in his four speeches

33:8 (speaking to Job in t/1st speech) “Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words:

33:13 (speaking to Job in t/2d speech) “Why do you complain against Him . . .

34:5 (speaking of Job in t/3d speech) “For Job has said, ‘I am righteous, But God has taken away my right;

In his 4th speech, Elihu simply says to Job: “For truly my words are not false . . .” (36:4)

Job's biggest problem has been what has come out of his mouth. God concurs.

In chapt. 38 G. appears out of a whirlwind and prefaces His 1st reply to Job by saying: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

So understanding the Heb. word "*Ma'as*" as rejecting words rather than Job despising himself fits t/context.

(b) Court: It fits the courtroom setting

Again, God is appearing to Job in a metaphorical courtroom where YHWH is both Judge and P.A.

For Job to say in v. 6: "Therefore I retract . . ." is akin to Job saying that He drops his indictment against God.

Talbert brings both Context (words) & Courtroom tog.==>
"But the immediate and larger context (emphasizing Job's uninformed and ill-advised words) suggests a meaning that brings closure to the legal battle that began with Job's challenge and culminated in God's answer. Job is "abhorring" his rash and inappropriate words. A better rendering would be simply "Therefore I retract [my words]" (NASB). Job is recanting, withdrawing all charges, dropping his case." [Talbert, 221]

E. Job's Repentance: Job Drops His Legal Case (v. 6)

2. There are two halves to this verse:

a. Job drops his case against God (first half)

6a "Therefore I retract . . ."

Second half ==>

b. Job repents

6b ". . . and I repent in dust and ashes."

(1) Job's journey

Job began his sorrowful journey at the town dump, sitting in a pile of ashes (2:8); Job continued to live among the ashes in the town dump (chapt. 3 on). Here he repents, t/dust and ashes around him symbolic of his heart.

What a picture! Dust and ashes themselves symbolic of grief (2:12). Even in his grief, Job repents.

(2) What is repentance?

Definition: "Repentance is a change of mind and heart that results in a change of behavior."

(a) It includes verses 2 - 5

A. Realization (v. 2)

Knowing who God is; who JC is.

B. Recognition (v. 3)

That You Don't know it all / Sin

C. Reeducation (v. 4)

Learning; change of mind that reflects a change of heart

D. Revival (v. 5)

New direction in life.

That's what we did when we believed. Of course, Job was already a believer in YHWH; but as we say here: repentance isn't a one-and-done deal. We live lives of continual repentance. Not to be saved again, but to be sanctified again / again / again.

"The door of repentance opens into the hall of joy."
[Spurgeon]

(a) Of what does Job repent?

“He does not repent of sins that have allegedly brought on the suffering; he repents of his arrogance in impugning God’s justice, he repents of the attitude whereby he simply demands an answer, as if such were owed him. He repents of not having known God better . . .” [D.A. Carson, How Long O Lord, 153]

Three Concluding Thoughts:

1. Sometimes Suffering Means Surrender

We’ve seen that w/Job. I’ve lived it. Surr. yourself to G’s omnip. & His sovereign providence. What you are going thru did not take him by surprise; He has designed it for you.

We may not see it now, but trust in t/promise that “all things work together for good; for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.”

That takes faith // trust // surrender to His designs.

2. God Never Gives Up on Family

We’ve seen that w/Job. I’ve lived it.

G. will preserve & protect those who are truly His. He began t/work; He will bring it to it’s final teleological goal.

I’ve said it many times. It’s no cliché’ for me: If it wasn’t for G’s mercy and patience I would not be standing here today. I would have made shipwreck of my faith. Every time I was tempted to give up or do something really foolish, G. was there. And He used many of you in t/process.

3. Experiencing God Means We Truly Know Him

We long for a greater experience with Jesus. If my hunch is correct, Job saw Him face-to-face out of that whirlwind.

We are very unlikely to see our Lord face-to-face until that day when we stand b4 Him in glory.

Ours is as Paul said: “We walk by faith, not by sight.”

If we truly know Him we have t/H.S. who resides w/i us, guiding us, testifying to us that we are His.

My concern is for those who attempt to experience G. in ways that are not right. They have a hunger that’s not being filled in X — either because they are ignorant or because they don’t truly know Him.

Some seek fulfillment in bad theology & practice, attempting to conjure up new or better experiences.

Others demonstrate that they don’t know Him by forsaking t/truth of t/Gospel for “smells and bells” religion.

We experience G. thru t/daily disciplines of Bible intake & prayer, by taking up our cross daily & following Him.

That begins with genuine conversion, turning from t/darkness of sin & self to JC as Lord & Savior.

John 17:3 at t/beginning of Jesus’ H.P.P.:

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

We who know X have Him as our advocate in God’s Court. He stands w/us as our defense atty. & t/Judge who declares us “not guilty” in His sight because of His righteousness that has been imputed to us.

“For Christ’s righteousness, which as it alone is perfect alone can bear the sight of God, must appear in court on our behalf, and stand surety in judgment.” [John Calvin, Institutes. 3.14.12]

In X God's case against us has been adjudicated.

T/old Anglican Henry Law ==>

“... [F]or what exact purpose did Jesus become the woman's Seed?... You know that the Word of God has spoken and cannot be called back: ‘The soul that sins, it shall die.’ You know, too, that to die under this sentence means to suffer forever the torments of the lost. Under this condemnation you and I are brought by sin. You and I, then, must remain there unless God be pleased to take the death of a sinless one in the place of our death. Jesus is willing to bear all for us. How could He do so, without being man? He could not. Therefore, He is made man. So when God's truth and justice say, ‘I must have that man's life,’ Jesus is ready to reply, ‘I am of his nature; here is My life for his.’” [British minister Henry Law (1797-1884) on Genesis 3:15]