

## Blessed Be the Name of the Lord

It is easy to bless the Lord when life is easy. When everything is turning up sunshine and roses, we find it natural to give God thanks and glory and praise. But life isn't always like that. In fact, for Christians it is often not like that. Don't get me wrong, there are blessings galore at all times. But often, Satan desires to sift us like wheat to get us to turn our backs on God. He will do anything and everything he can to trip us up. That can make for tough times.

Consider God's servant Job. God has blessed Job greatly. He is married with seven sons and three daughters. He is wealthy with over 10,000 head of livestock. He is a religious man, offering sacrifices not only for himself but also on behalf of his children. Things are great for him, until God brings him to the attention of the adversary, Satan. Then Satan takes the challenge to knock Job from his high horse. "Does Job fear God for no reason?" Satan asks. "Have you not put a hedge around 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. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face" (**Job 1:9-11**, ESV).

In the first attack on Job, Satan is given free reign as long as he doesn't touch Job's body. In the second round, he is allowed to do what he wants as long as he doesn't actually kill Job. Through all of this, Job loses all ten of his children and most of his herds. He is stricken with pain and sickness, covered with boils and sores. In a final stroke, Job's wife turns on him and encourages him to abandon the Lord, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die," she encouraged him (**Job 2:9**, ESV).

But in this beginning of his temptation (before his friends heaped onto his suffering with their sorry comforting), Job's character is impeccable, giving an example for us all in the face of suffering.

His response to the first round of attack is, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (**Job 1:21**, ESV). His response to his wife and the second round of attack is, "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" (**Job 2:10**, ESV).

What amazing perspective this reveals. I know Job will have more struggles than this once his friends start attacking him, but these first responses provide a great example for us in our suffering, putting our lives in perspective.

Perhaps the foremost principle demonstrated by Job's response is the stewardship principle. Job doesn't see himself as the owner of his goods or even his children. He sees God as the owner. Job is just a steward. Imagine it like this. You are the manager of another man's property. Your job is to oversee whatever he puts under you. He gives you stewardship over his house, his cars, his stables, his business. You are doing fine with it, but then the bottom falls out. The stable burns, the cars break down, the house is hit by a tornado, and the business collapses. That would be painful and certainly would impact you emotionally and even financially. But you would have a leg up because you can look at all of that and say, "Wasn't mine. I haven't actually lost anything." That is exactly the approach Job is taking. Oh, I'm sure he is emotionally devastated at the loss of his children and herds, but he recognizes that the only reason he had children and herds was because of God. It wasn't his power that produced any of those. He had simply been placed as a steward over what belonged to God. If God decided to remove it from him, that was God's business. What perspective?!

Second we see Job's perspective about what his goal really is. Job doesn't think his main goal in life was to be wealthy. He believes his main goal is to bring glory to God. He can do that as a poor, sick man as well as a healthy, wealthy man. If God decides the best way for Job to glorify Him is to be an independently wealthy man, so be it. If God decides the best way for Job to glorify Him is to be a poor beggar, so be it. All things are in God's hands and the goal is not to have the most, but to bring God the glory with whatever he has. And thus, Job can say in any and all circumstances, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The third principle we see in Job's response is the sovereignty of God. Job rebukes the idea of believing that the God of the universe is obligated to only ever make sure that everything goes smoothly for us every day. Will we only serve God when He is submitting to our desires? Or will we serve Him even when He doesn't? Are we fair weather friends who honor God as long as He caters to our whims? Or will we serve Him no matter what? Which one of us in this relationship is really sovereign? Are we going to punish God by turning our back on Him because He doesn't direct His almighty power in service to us?

Let's face it, suffering is never easy. The rest of the book of **Job** demonstrates that even someone with great perspective can have trouble in the face of great suffering. Yet, the perspective Job offers in these first two chapters is beneficial as we face the attacks of Satan. Let us always remember that we are merely stewards of God's gifts, the main goal is to bring God glory not just manage certain gifts, and that God is sovereign and we are not. We are looking forward to His promised reward. Hang on to that when Satan attacks. In all circumstances, good or bad, blessed be the name of the Lord.

—Edwin L. Crozier