

Text: Job 38:1-11

Theme: God has revealed our salvation through Jesus Christ

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who has brought us together”. Amen

This morning with God’s help we will meditate in the first reading of today; the book of Job 38:1-11. Let us pray: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” Amen

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The first reading for today talks about a servant of God named Job. If you have read this book in the Old Testament, you will read that Job had all “sorts of prosperity—including flocks and herds, wealth and family.” In chapter 1: 21 Job shows his trust to God. He says: "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." But then, in the wisdom of God, the Lord allowed that He lost everything that he had.

While Job is suffering, three friends come to him to encourage him. But instead of giving him encouragement, they gave him bad advices. They told him that the reason he is suffering, the loss of his family, the loss of his wealth, and his health was because he had committed a terrible sin. And the Lord was punishing him.

Brothers and sisters in Christ; this is the theme that we find in the whole book. This theme is the same argument that televangelists proclaim in our times. They say “if you are prosperous it is because God loves you. And if you are suffering or you are not prospering, it is because you have done something wrong toward God; and He is punishing you.”

Job responds to his friends again and again "that he did nothing wrong nor he has offended God." And he was telling the truth. But Job was indeed a sinner. Without doubt, the situation he was going through was not good at all. In the final speech of the book, he declared that God was unfair and that he was innocent in everything. He believed that he had done nothing wrong to be suffering. He also said that he deserves a better fate for his obedience to God. Then he starts to accuse God for what he was experiencing.

Due to this situation, the almighty God answers Job. The Lord asked him many questions. But before meditating in these questions, we must be clear about the following: The temptation that Job suffered... is the same temptation that the devil throws at us every moment in our lives. If you, right now, do not have this temptation, it will come in the future and you might say: that God is being unfair to you. And you may think that your sufferings are due to your sin and God is upset with you, and He is punishing you.

If we do not have this temptation right now, we might be tempted to apply these afflictions and lack of prosperity in others. But this temptation denies the gospel of Jesus Christ.

No matter what afflictions we have or we see in others, we clearly know what the attitude of God toward us is. And this is that: by the merits of Jesus Christ, God declares that you and I belong to Him, that we are His children, we are forgiven, holy and there is a place for us in heaven.

If we avoid the temptations thrown to us by our friends, we still are going to be overcome by the same temptation that Job gave in. We might say that God is unfair to us. This way of thinking also denies the gospel of Christ.

My dear friends in Christ: afflictions will always be present in our lives. We could try hard to confront them, but at the end they will make us stumble. They will hit us hard, and they will leave us without strength and powerless. These sufferings will make us reach our human limitations. This was the situation of Job at the end of chapter 37. Job instead of confessing that he has "reached his human limit, and trust in God," He declares instead that God is unfair toward him."

It is here that our Lord intervenes and responds the accusations of Job. And Because You and I face the same temptations; God in our text speaks to us too. God asked Job: Where were you?. Where were you when I created the earth, set the land and placed limits on the sea? Where were you? Did you witness it? Beyond the fact that I spoke, do you know how all this came to be, how I spoke it out step by step? Do you? No. And neither do we. We were not there, and it is too much for us to understand.

In these questions, the Lord speaks only of things that He did during the first three days of creation—and all of this is beyond our human understanding. You and I do not quite have that frame of reference. We lack the capacity to know what the person next to us is thinking, much less what is going through the mind of God. So...do we really want to claim we know what God is up to? Do we really want to say that we understand His will, His work, His reasons for everything He does?

It is no wonder that the Lord begins His words to Job by saying in v. 2 and 3 before our text: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? The Lord speaks to admonish Job in our reading. God is not insecure and trying to keep Job under His thumb, putting him in his place. No.

The Lord warns Job against his "words without knowledge" because those words without knowledge will lead Job away from Him and His grace. That is why this is a warning to us against those words without knowledge: speculation of what we do not know. All these will lead us astray from the Lord and His grace. That is not what the Lord wants from us.

That is why you and I repent when we doubt God's plan, question His will, and indulge in fruitless speculation as to what He is up to. And when we repent from that sin, we acknowledge a couple of important truths.

The first is this: God keeps secrets. He does not tell us everything. Anyway; You and I, with our sinful, finite minds, do not have the capacity to grasp it all. To demand answers

is not a right that God gives. But He does give us the promise that He works all things for our good. He does give us the promise that He will not leave us nor forsake us.

God keeps secrets. He says so: in the words of Job, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away: blessed be the name of the Lord." But the Lord does not keep everything a secret: He also reveals things so that we might have them forever.

What might this be? Here is the second truth we acknowledge: God reveals what we most need to know. He reveals to us -- salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. He declares His Law to us, in order to prepare us for that Gospel; and in that Law, He declares the crude truth about our sin—we are born dead in it, enemies of God. When trouble befalls us, it does not mean that we have committed some sin that suddenly deserves His judgment; rather, we are always sinful.

The Law preaches that, for the same reason, we should not expect prosperity for our attempts to be faithful—"for we deserve none of the things for which we ask." In other words: no matter the trouble we have in life, it is less than we deserve for our sin, because we truly ought to be God-forsaken since we deserve none of His help at all. That's a difficult truth for our pride, which shouts "That's not fair!" Fair or not, it's the truth about us according to the Law of the Lord.

But God does not stop once His Law is revealed. He also reveals His Gospel to us. He tells us that Christ has died for all of our sins. He tells us that, for Jesus' sake, we are His beloved children. For Jesus' sake, God promises to work all things for our good. For Jesus' sake, He will deliver us from every evil of body and soul, property and honour; and finally, when our last hour has come, He will grant us a blessed end, and take us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven.

That is the truth that God reveals: that is the Gospel He speaks to us, and by it He gives us the faith to hold onto it. So, whatever our troubles, He bids us to cling to the cross. We cannot know the reason for all of the troubles that afflict us—but we know the Savior who delivers us. We do not know about God's will, we cling to what we know: Christ has died for our sins. He is risen again. He reigns at God's right hand for our good, and He will deliver us.

In every trouble, by faith you cling to Christ. That's why your Baptism is important: it's an objective thing that happened at a specific place and time: in the midst of trouble, you say, "I know that the Lord has made me His, that Christ is mine and I am Christ's. God has revealed this to me in His Word, and I trust in Him." It's why, in the midst of trouble, you come to hear the absolution: for as you hear the Lord say, "I forgive you all of your sins," you have His promise that He has not forsaken you, but will deliver you.

Likewise, you go to the Supper to be forgiven your sins and strengthened in faith: because while you have no idea what happens next when you depart this place, you know that your Savior is here with you—and thus you depart in peace.

You do this by faith—by the faith that God gives, because the troubles that you see always appear greater than the help and presence of God. Look at our Gospel lesson for

today, with the disciples trapped in a boat in a great storm. The Lord was present with them in the boat, but instead the disciples stared at the waves and were terrified by the threat that they held. Likewise, you'll be tempted to fear trouble and doubt God's care for you.

What to do? Let us hear what Job said at the end. Once the Lord spoke to Job, Job finally responded in 42:3-6 , "I *have* uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know...I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes"

So my dear friends in Christ: we also live a life of repentance and faith. The Lord forgave Job. The Lord forgives us—all for Jesus' sake. Amen

"The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keeps your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour". Amen