

“A LEAKING ROOF”
Job 23:1-10

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INTRODUCTION:

1) Wise words on storms: In an article on pain and suffering, I like this paragraph the most: “Sharp afflictions are to the soul as soaking rains to the house. We know not there are such holes in the roof until the storm comes and drops are dripping here and there. Perhaps there are unmodified cuts in our spiritual life we have never seen, and the many defects in our soul we always ignore to see until storms of pain and suffering come. The defects in our spiritual armor will show up under the pressure of fierce storms of affliction and pain.”

2) Storm came on a good man: The passage today is a personal testimony by Job as he was going through the tests of his spiritual life under the weight of storms of loss, pain and suffering. Even though Job was a man who “is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil,” (1:1) and God was so pleased with him, (1:8) he exposed his spiritual holes clearly in his attitude and words when he argued with his friends. It was after God challenged him on the wisdom of God to allow him went through the storms, Job repented his ignorance and said, “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust

and ashes.” (42:5-6) Let us examine some of the holes in the spiritual life of Job.

PRIDEFUL SENSE OF SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

1) Using human wishes as rules: Job never understood why a good man such as him would go through such horrendous pain and suffering. Throughout most of this book, he argued with his friends on the basis of his righteous life. To him, it isn't right nor fair for such a good and righteous man to face such loss, to endure such pain. To Job, God should be fair to exempt people like him from storms of suffering. This is what most of us will think and say when we are in deep waters. Most of us deeply believe that a just God will always reward good people with extra portion of blessing, including not to encounter bad things like serious sickness, losing a job, fail in business deals or any other kind of bad luck. There are two wrong concepts in this: a) Who do you think you are to judge yourself as good people? What kind of criteria do you use to do that. b) How dare you to compel or require God to do things your way? Are you sure you have done enough so called good things so God owes you his blessings?

2) Take God's protection for granted: When Jesus told his disciples that “In this world you will have tribulations,” (John 16:33) he included them into human race. What Job experienced in chapter 1, the loss of

wealth, property, the lives of his children and excruciating pain of sores, didn't just happen to him, but to unknown number of people before and after him. The fact that those things didn't happen to him and his family was because God had “put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has.” (1:10) This is a serious problem many of us have: We ignore or neglect the protection of God on us and all we have when we are in peaceful time with smooth sailing. We often times credit the blessings of God as results of our own work, good luck, good connection, and the smart choices we made. It is until God removes his protecting hands, allow us to float in the sea of worldly wickedness, and we are on our own to face all the problems of this evil world, then we realize it isn't us that we had all the good things in life. We need to acknowledge God anytime and every time we enjoy all the blessing of life.

SHAKY GROUND ON SELF SUFFICIENCY:

1) Indulgence in material sufficiency: “His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.” (1:4) We know that Job had 7 sons and 3 daughters, and they had good relationship with each other. They must be grown ups to have their own families and homes. We don't know why the Bible focused on their life style on

indulgence of luxury like feasts, wine and food, but that is easy to understand because of their wealth and they lived in peaceful environment. We see personal devotion of Job and his close walk with God, but we didn't see any such thing in the life of his children. One of the dangers of being rich is the indulgence of material luxuries in easy life without any desire to be close to God from whom comes all we have. When God grants us plenty of possessions, we are to be wise stewards to use it on good causes more than just feasting on ourselves. The fact that Job offered sacrifices on behalf of his children tells us that his children were burdens in his heart on their spiritual condition or lack of. In fact he worried that his children may have sinned and despised God. Many people snub at God when they become rich and self sufficient because they think they are secure enough not to need God.

2) No banquet will last forever: “One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house.” (1:13) This is the starting sentence of a total downturn of life for Job and his family. Things got worse in four consecutive reports of disaster came upon this otherwise rich, happy, smooth run family. Things like this happened to so many people in history around the world and it happened to good people like Job. This happened to Job after God removed his protecting hands over him. (1:10-12) Too

often, when God's people were blessed with abundance of riches they weaved a false sense of security with pride. They begin to build their security on the blessing of God instead of God, and that is a dangerous tendency of life. Moses gave stern warning to the Israelite in Deut 8:11-20, before they entered to inherit the land God promised to them. It is a slippery slope to build our sense of security on material abundance.

PUTTING THE BLAME ON OTHERS: Most of us, if not all, will blame on others when we fail, stumble, suffer loss or get into troubles, pointing fingers on everyone else except ourselves for the failure and trouble we have. Job is no exception. In the first part of the passage we have today, vv1-9, he put the blame of his problems squarely on his friends and God.

1) He blamed his friends for not understand him: “Even today my complaint is bitter, his hand is heavy in spite of my groaning...There (in the presence of God) an upright man could present his case before him (God)” (23:2, 7) Throughout the lengthy arguments between Job and his friends, he always maintained his innocence in his argument to counter attack the accusation of his friends who suspected him of sins he didn't see. Is Job truly a perfect man who had never sinned, had never done anything wrong? I don't want to judge him in this sermon because I am not qualified to do that. But the

Bible told us clearly that “All men had sinned, had come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) The friends of Job traveled from distant land to come to see him, to share his sorrow, and tried to comfort him from the pain of his loss. (2:11-13) Can you remember when it was the last time you have good friends who will come from a distant land just to be with you to share your pain when you suffered loss you can't bear by yourself? So, these men were not here to pour vinegar on the sore of Job's wounds to double his pain. But look at how Job treated them and blame them on their ignorance and heartlessness.

2) He blame God for hiding from him: “If only I knew where to find him (God), if I could go to his dwelling, I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments...But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; When he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.” (23:3, 8-9) How many times we wish that God is there when we need him the most but he wasn't. We wish that God is here to see our pain, to hear our cry, to give us words of comfort, pat on our shoulders or hold our hand to cross over the deep waters, but we didn't see his presence. That is exactly how Job felt and he was honest enough to tell us how he feels. In situation like this, Job is just one of us, not any better nor any worse. But does

blaming people and God help us handle our problems better or helpful to relieve our sorrows? This is like you blame the storm couple days ago, or the last roofer didn't do a good job when your roof is leaking. What does it help? Playing the blame game can only increase your anger and frustration, adding to your sense of helplessness if not hopelessness. When your roof is leaking, you need to find someone to fix the leak or put on a new roof. You can blame the whole world, but it won't stop the leak. Right?

CONCLUSION: Proper steps to fix the leak.

1) Have faith in the best roofer: “But he knows the way that I take.” (23:10) It could be better translated: “He knows the situation I am in.” One of the problems we face when we are in deep water is we doubt if God knows our situation, if he sees our needs and if he cares. When God called Moses to set the Israelites free from slavery in Egypt, the first thing God told Moses was: “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out...and I am concerned about their suffering.” (Ex 3:7) Having doubt in God is the worst attitude in our time of trouble and needs. Human roofers don't really care our leaking roof, they care about their business. But God is our best roofer when our life is in trouble like a leaking roof. With all the complaints Job has against his friend and God, he

knows that God knows his situation, his problem and his needs. There is no need to look anywhere else to find the best roofer to fix your leaks, God is waiting for your call.

2) Have faith on His best result: “When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” (23:10b) Since Job didn't lose his faith or his heart, he took the high road looking for the best result in all the troubles God allowed to happen to him: He will come out as pure gold, most precious in God's eyes. No fire, no purifying. No purifying, no precious pure gold. All best soldiers were trained in boot camps through strenuous and sometimes torturous routines. No best training, no best soldiers. We know this and do this in our schools, in our jobs, and in sport camps. Why can't we believe that it is the same in our spiritual pursuits. Remember this: God doesn't put us in deep water to drown us but to cleanse us so may become his best witnesses.