

Trends

A recent study found that a great proportion of people claiming to be Christians are clueless about the "Great Commission." The study asked the question, "Have you heard of the Great Commission?" The results:

- ☛ 51%: No
- ☛ 25%: Yes, but I can't recall the exact meaning.
- ☛ 9%: I'm not sure.
- ☛ 17%: Yes

- via Barna Group

Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you..."

Sentence Sermons

"God stands out in the universe as the most glaring of all superfluous sore thumbs."

—Richard Dawkins, atheist

Psalms 14:1: "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

News & Notes

Pray for one another: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please pray for Malachi Darling and his family. Malachi's mother, Donna, passed away this past Thursday.

Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



Jump Start # 2235

Roger Shouse

Job 42:5: "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."

Monday with Job. We continue this Monday morning series based upon the book of Job. Our verse today comes from the final chapter. God has asked Job a series of questions about nature. Job has been unable to answer them. Twice as this chapter begins, Job quotes God and instead of answering God, he apologizes. He says that he has spoken things that he did not understand. What follows is Job retracting his words and repenting. The suffering and this journey has allowed him to see God in a way that he never has before. It also allowed Job to see himself in ways he never has before. His suffering not only changed him on the outside, but it changed him on the inside.

And, here in the final chapter, God still never explains why He allowed Job to suffer. He never mentions Satan, faith or apologizes for putting Job through all this pain. Job may have never understood what you and I know about his story.

One sad take away from this final chapter is the conclusions that some seem to reach that are not supported by the text and are not characteristic of Job. Popular writers, such as Philip Yancey, has used the Job events to declare that we can say anything to God when we are hurting. Throw your anger, your grief, your disappointment, your bitterness at Him. He can take it, we are told. Such false conclusions would allow a person to blame God. It would allow someone to scream at God. It would allow someone to even cuss at God. You feel this way, these authors tell us, you might as well express it to God.

And with such conclusions, it seems that they missed the point of this book. It's not about Job's suffering, but rather, Job's faith. Satan was proven wrong. Job never cursed God to His face.

Consider these thoughts:

Right after the deaths of Aaron's sons for offering a strange fire to God in worship, the Lord said, *"By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy and before all the people I will be honored"* (Lev. 10:3). The next verse states that Aaron held his peace. He kept his mouth shut. He didn't explode on God. His two sons just died a sudden, tragic death as a form of punishment. How easily Aaron could have declared, "that's not fair." Or, "You didn't give them a chance." Aaron held his peace. God will be treated as holy.

Jesus showed the disciples how to pray by the example, *"Our Father, who art in Heaven. Hallowed be Thy name"* (Mt. 6:9). Hallowed means "holy." Not only is God's name holy, but God Himself is holy. He's not one of us. He's not on par with us. I may say something to you that I cannot and will not say to God. We might critique, criticize, complain and even offer suggestions on how to do things better. However, we should never, and must never, do that to God. The Lord is the Almighty. His position, His holiness, His eternal nature, His authority demands that we not only respect Him and reverence Him, but that we treat Him differently than we do each other. Among us, we are peers and equals. We are never that way with the Lord.

All the questions that God asked Job was to get him to see that he was not God and that he didn't understand the ways of God. Why did God ask all those questions if Job was able to chew God out and say anything to Him? The very fact of these questions was to get Job to see God and to see himself as they should be.

We can forget that God never answered any of Job's questions or complaints. He ignored them. God took the issue to a different level. Who are you Job to question God? That applies to us. Who are we to question God? When tragedy happens, and in sorrow someone shouts out, "Why God?" they are not thinking out what they are doing. God does not owe us an explanation. He doesn't have to run His plans by us first to get our approval. God doesn't work for us. That's all backwards.

This thinking trickles down to moderns changing worship to please and satisfy an entertainment driven crowd that is thirsty for happiness rather than righteousness. How dare anyone change what God has established? How can anyone change what the Bible says? How can anyone change the organization, the pattern of worship or even the plan of salvation? What right do we have to do these things? The answer to all of these things begins with the idea that I can say anything to God and He will have to listen and answer me. We start thinking that we can improve upon what God has established and we can alter and make changes here and there and there will be no divine consequences to that, off we go.

The book of Job reminds us that God is God. There are things that you and I will never understand. There are things that happen and we don't know if it's a test, a trial, Satan, bad luck, or misfortune. We want to know the cause of all things, and we can't. We want to put a label on all things and we can't. We want to put everything in a nice category but we can't. There will be days that we sit like Job and we just don't know. Rather than trying to look backwards and trace the origin of our problems, God is more concerned about what the problems do to us. Will that simple problem crush your faith? Will you look beyond it to see Heaven's perspective of things? Will you grow stronger because of these things? You and I ask, "Why, why, why?" And, God is looking to see if we are going to still worship Him, follow Him and trust Him.

The book of Job ends well for Job. It is as if God has returned the hedges around Job once again. The number of animals doubles from the first chapter. Job has exactly the same number of children and the same combination, seven boys and three girls. Unique to that time period and Biblical history, the names of the girls are listed.

But not everyone has a happily ever after endings. Some never recover from their trials and sufferings. Some never get back on their feet again. The book of Job does not promise a happy ending to everyone's suffering story. That's not a promise in the book. The restoration of Job's things were temporary. The true treasure is found in Christ and in Heaven. The conclusion is not about what I get, but what have I become. That's the message. That's the story for us.

Are our problems greater than God? Is our faith limited to sunny days and health in our bodies? Is God worthy to be followed even when the hedges around our lives are removed?

It is a whole lot easier to read, study and teach Job, than it is to walk in the shoes of Job. Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear. But our Lord is great. We are more than conquerors through faith in the Lord.

This we must always remember.

A good friend and fellow gospel preacher, Willie Pastor, needs some help. Willie is a faithful gospel preacher in the Philippines and his wife Kathy is suffering from thalassemia and papillary thyroid carcinoma. Any donation you could make would be appreciated! Willie is a tireless worker in the kingdom and deserves our help. Please give your personal donations to me at services. CVT