

## Trends

A third (34%) of Americans say they are sinners and are working on being less sinful, while a quarter (28%) say they are sinners and rely on Jesus to overcome their sin. Meanwhile, 1 in 10 Americans say sin doesn't exist (10%) or that they are not sinners (8%). Only 1 in 20 are fine with being sinners (5%).

- via LifeWay Research

**Romans 3:23:** "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

## Sentence Sermons

"I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever."

—Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence & 3rd President of the United States

**Jeremiah 18:7-10:** "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it."

## 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, recently passed away.

Please pray for Justin & Jennifer Atkins and their three boys. They recently moved into the community from North Carolina. May God bless them as they make a new home here!

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. Jennifer had her embryo transfer on February 5th.

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.

Please let us know of any in need of our prayers! We'll announce it and post it.

**Words of Life** is published by the **Westside Church of Christ** meeting at 1301 N. Enterprise, Bloomington, IN 47404

**Times of Service:** Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside  
church of Christ

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

John 6:68



Feb. 10,  
2019

Vol. 11,  
No. 5

## Jump Start # 223I

Roger Shouse

**Job 38:3:** "Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me!"

Monday with Job. We've been looking at this series for the past few weeks. Our verse today is found near the end of the book. God finally speaks. He speaks to Job for the first time in this book. You and I know more about the background than Job was ever told. Job has been struggling with his emotions about God. He has been up and down. His friends continually pull him down and discourage him.

After the three rounds of speeches, Elihu, a fourth and younger friend, finally jumps into the debate. His speech is nearly five chapters long. No one replies to what he says. It is at this point that God speaks. And, what is amazing is what God says and what God doesn't say.

First, what God says, is a series of questions. A bunch of questions. Over sixty questions that cover creation, weather, nature, and animals. God asks Job, "where were you" (38:4) and "have you ever in your life" (38:12), and "can you" (38:31) and "Do you know" (39:1)? Over and over God asks Job these questions. God knows, but does Job? God was there, but was Job? God can, but can Job? They cover snow, rain, clouds, and various animals.

What God asks are about visible and known things from the natural world. God doesn't touch things such as DNA, atoms, electricity, black holes in space, genetics. Job would have no clue about those things. What God quizzes Job on are the things he would have seen in a typical day. Eagles flying in the sky, mountain goats off in the distance feeding, rain, clouds-those make up Job's every day.

These numerous questions overwhelmed Job. He didn't know the answers. He hadn't thought about those things. Immediately, he is shown that he doesn't run the universe and that he is not God. And, these were simple questions. The great moral questions God never brought up. If Job doesn't know about mountain goats, can he truly grasp the concept of human suffering and the providence of God? He was demanding God to answer him, and yet, he couldn't explain the everyday simple things.

There are great questions that you and I cannot answer. Oh, we can pretend to know, but we are neither in the position nor have the character of holiness to answer these questions. Job couldn't answer about the mountain goat, but what about:

- ☛ Prayers: which ones will be answered yes?
- ☛ Allowing free-will, even if it hurts the innocent or blasphemies God's name. Do you allow it or limit it?
- ☛ What about those who have never heard of God? What do you do with them at the judgment?
- ☛ When is it time to send Jesus to end all of this?
- ☛ There is an appointed time to die. When do you decide that time for each person?
- ☛ Do you allow Satan to do the worst to one of the best?

These are questions that only God can answer. This is what Job quickly learned. This is what you and I need to learn. We can be too smart for our own good. We can put everything in a neat category and think we have everything all figured out, but we don't. We must stop trying to play God. We must stop trying to figure out who's in Heaven and who didn't make it. Our knowledge can make us arrogant and that is dangerous.

Second, when God spoke to Job, there were things that He didn't say. For instance:

- ☛ God never told Job about Satan and the conversation they had that began all of this.
- ☛ God never promised Job that things would turn around and get better. They do at the end of the book, but God never said that, not here.
- ☛ God never told Job that he was doing a good job with all this suffering. At the end, God would say that Job had spoken rightly about the Lord. But not here. Not among these questions.
- ☛ God did not give Job a pass for the things that he said. The rapid-fire series of questions that God asks to Job are humbling. It is to show that you live in one little puzzle piece in this giant world that we do not see, understand nor comprehend. You, Job, are not an equal. You, Job, are not in the position to understand what is happening. You, Job, need to trust and believe.

We do well to walk through those questions of God. I have read commentators who concluded from Job that we can throw any attitude, shout, scream, question, and even demand from God. They see God allowing Job to do that and get away with that. My thoughts are these writers don't understand the book of Job. God is not allowing Job to get away with these things. These questions are enough to make Job put his hand on his mouth and realize that he has spoken out of turn and he has talked too much.

If we really got the book of Job, we'd not ask, whether in anger or fear, "Why, God?" He doesn't owe you an answer. You probably couldn't

understand it even if He were to answer. But greater than that is understanding that God is not responsible to us. He was doing fine long before we came along.

I've heard people proudly say in a Bible class, "Well, when I get to Heaven, I'm going to ask God why this happened?" Really? With such arrogance and misunderstanding of your position and the holiness of God, you just might not make it to Heaven and if you did, you won't be asking God with the expectation that He has to tell you the answer. That won't happen. Just think of the mountain goat.

The trouble with the love of God and Jesus being our friend is that we can start to believe that we are equal with God. We can think that we are such buddies with God that He's going to share some inside secrets with us and that He'll tell us anything because we are just that close. Wrong. It's time to climb off the throne and realize that He is God and we are not.

Someday, I want to get a little mountain goat figure to keep on my desk. I think looking at that would help me remember that I do not know as much as I think I do and that God is God and I need to watch what I say and honor Him, even when the way is tough.

It took God asking a handful of nature questions to get Job to see that. What's it going to take for you and I to see this?

### **Improve Your Life**

Frank Himmel

1. Turn off the TV and read your Bible. The Psalmist said of the blessed man, *"His delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night"* (Ps. 1:2).
2. Hang up the phone and pray. I never cease to be amazed at how much time some people spend on their cell phones. Is all that talking necessary or profitable? *"Pray without ceasing"* (1 Th. 5:17). *"The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much"* (Jas. 5:16).
3. Get up out of bed an hour earlier and come to Bible study. *"As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed"* (Prov. 26:14).
4. Cut down your credit card purchases and give. Give to the poor. Increase your contribution at church. *"One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed"* (Prov. 19:17). *"It is more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35).
5. Change the conversation from sports, weather, and politics to spiritual things. Do that at home. *"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up"* (Deut. 6:6-7). Do that at work, too. *"He who wins souls is wise"* (Prov. 11:30).