

September 1, 2019

The Life of Job  
Never Forget  
Job 38:1-11

**Opening words:** Hidden in the Wisdom Literature section of the Old Testament is the Book of Job. The entire book is a poem, written by an unknown author. Alfred Lloyd Tennyson (1809-1862) called Job, "*The greatest poem of ancient or modern times.*" However, it is not just a poem. It is an epic poem. This type of literature is not intended to simply tell us an account of a character or situation, but it is meant to teach divine truth. Job teaches us about theodicy – the justice of God in the light of human suffering. Job is a rich theological work setting out a variety of perspectives. However, this is the bottom line. The Book of Job is universal. Everyone knows the basic storyline, and everyone can relate, because life is hard. I have called this entire body of work *The Life of Job*.

Mental health professions tell us there are four things we should never forget. They will lead you to a longer happy and healthier life. This is their list:

- 1. Never forget to maintain your health** Gandhi (1869-1948) once said, "*It is health that is the real wealth more than pieces of gold and silver.*" My father loved driving and cars. On the day before he died, he could only lie in bed. With a clear mind he looked at me and said, "Russell, I have a beautiful car in the garage, and I can't drive it." He illustrates the point. Poor health deletes any source of happiness in your life. Never forget to maintain your good health.
- 2. Never forget to maintain your relationships** John Lennon (1940-1980) once said, "*Love is like a precious plant. You've got to really look after it and nurture it.*" Healthy relationships take time. How many relationships in your life are withering away? Never forget to maintain your relationships.
- 3. Never forget a positive self-image is paramount** Dr. Joyce Brothers (1927-2013) once said, "*A strong, positive self-image is the best possible preparation for success.*" Without a good self-image you care too much about what others think and are constantly comparing yourself to others. Never forget a positive self-image is paramount.
- 4. Never forget your dreams, values or purpose** Steve Jobs (1955-2011) once said, "*If today was the last day of your life, would you do what you are doing today?*" We spend too much time trying to make other people happy and not enough time trying to keep ourselves happy. What does God want you to do with your life? Never forget your dreams, values and purpose.

Those are four things mental health professionals say we should never forget. As your pastor there is one more thing you should never forget. Never forget, God is God! That sounds simple but for many it is hard to remember. Our scripture reading for today is Job 38:1-11. Let me call this message *Never Forget*.

**Job 38:1-11**      **1** Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:  
**2** Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? **3** Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. **4** "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. **5** Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? **6** On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— **7** while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? **8** "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, **9** when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, **10** when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, **11** when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'?

It has been said, "*Humility is the greatest quality that man can have, and arrogance is undoubtedly the worst.*" I can't disagree with that quote. How many arrogant people do you know? If you find some truth in that quote say, "**Amen!**"

On May 9, 1864, one of the forgotten names of the Civil War was lost at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House. His name was Union General John Sedgwick (1813-1864). History tells us he was inspecting the left flank against the Confederate defenses. His officers suggested he stay low out of the range of the Confederate sharpshooters. He refused and stood upright. They were 1,000 yards away. He boldly proclaimed, "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." He never finished that sentence before a sharpshooter hit him under his left eye. He dropped dead. He never knew what hit him. Can I ask you a question? What killed the general? Did the confederate sharpshooter kill the general? Did the general's arrogance kill the general? One thing God won't tolerate is arrogance. If you can remember that divine truth say, "**Amen!**" That leads us to this morning's scripture lesson.

We find ourselves today in the thirty-eighth chapter of Job. Much has already happened. We have looked at the story in the past. When our story began, Job had a good life. He was rich in resources and relationships. He feared God and shunned evil. He was considered the greatest man in the East. Even God is impressed with Job. That is when everything seemed to go wrong. God may have been impressed with Job but not the Dark One. He is convinced his pious ways would pass once hardship entered his life. Sad but true, God grants Satan permission to test Job. The tests are not easy, they are hard. Over a short period of time, he loses everything. Job's money is gone. His oxen, donkeys and lambs are taken by foreign raiders, who killed most of the servants. His relationships are gone. All ten of his children, seven sons and three daughters, are

gone in an instant by a mighty wind from the wilderness, while partying at the eldest son's home. Even his good looks are gone. He is covered with painful boils from head to toe. He loses everything, except for his charming wife. She adds nothing to his life. Too bad the raiders didn't take her too. Thank goodness for his friends. Job was fortunate. He had three true friends. At first, they say nothing, but in time they begin to speak. Their words are not helpful, they are damaging. They offer Job nothing but bad advice. Job rebukes them and begins to question God. All this takes us to this morning's scripture lesson.

The thirty-eighth chapter is significant because it is the first time God, Himself, speaks. The first eleven verses are His opening words. Those words set the tone for the entire discussion. To say the least, God puts Job in his place. God reminds Job that he created everything and brought order to the universe. That means God is in charge and has the final word. Mankind is only a temporary fixture in this world, but God is eternal. God is God and Job is nothing. Some things don't change. God is still God and, we are nothing. It is a humbling thing to compare yourself to God. When was the last time you compared yourself to God? If that makes you think say, "**Amen!**" Can I state the obvious? We live in arrogant times.

One of the things we must guard against is arrogance. Proverbs 16:5 says, "*God detests arrogance of the heart; Be sure of this: they will not go unpunished.*" There is a world of difference between confidence and arrogance. Webster defines confidence as, trusting in our own abilities, qualities and judgement. Webster defines arrogance as, exaggerating one's own worth. You can be confident and humble. It is impossible to be arrogant and humble. Confident people can use their gifts to the glory of God. Arrogant people only promote themselves. There is a world of difference between self-confidence and arrogance.

Many believe, including me, we live in extremely arrogant times, especially in America. Many believe we simply don't need God because our world supplies all our needs. Just think about it for a moment. From the moment we are born, we are told America is different from the rest of the world. We are told Americans is better than the rest of the world. We have an economy that is healthy and a military that is powerful. We see people trying to come into America illegally because they want what we have, opportunity. Our patriotism tells us to be proud of America, but when does our national pride turn into national arrogance? That is a hard question to answer. It is hard not to be arrogant, when you considered all the modern advances we have made.

We have advanced when it comes to **communication**. Years ago, Kathryn would travel to Eastern Europe and I would stay home with the girls. During those early trips, we would hear nothing from her for two weeks. We used to joke CNN will tell us if something goes wrong. Over the years, those trips have changed. Today, we travel together, and communicate daily with people at home. Sometimes, it is a text. Sometimes, it is an email. Occasionally, it is phone call. Some call me when I'm out of

the country and they think I'm in the country because the signal is so clear. It is an incredible evolution. It is a good time to be alive. We have advanced when it comes to communication. If you agree we have made some progress in communication say, **"Amen!"**

We have made advances in **transportation**. Did you know it took the Pilgrims 66 days to sail to North America in 1620? That is over two months. The Wright brothers had their first successful flight in 1903. That experience changed our world. People fly regularly today. When Kathryn and I flew to Scotland a few weeks ago we were there in less than twelve hours, including layovers. Did you know, according to FlightAware, there are 9,728 planes in the air on an average day carrying 1,270,406 people? It is a good time to be alive. We have made advances in transportation. If you agree we have made some progress in transportation say, **"Amen!"**

We have made advances in **medicine**. Did you know Mary Queen of Scots married Francis II of France at sixteen years old in 1558? Did you know he died two years later making Mary a widow at eighteen years old? His death was tragic. He died because he got an ear infection. They didn't know how to treat ear infections in 1560. That sad fact illustrates a simple point. We have made advances in medicine. We are making medical advances regularly. It is a good time to be alive because the medical world has advanced. If you agree we have made some progress in medicine say, **"Amen!"**

Don't misunderstand what I am about to say. There is nothing wrong with patriotism. There is nothing wrong with advances in communications. There is nothing wrong with advances in transportation. There is nothing wrong with medical advances. There is nothing wrong with any of those things, until they lead us away from God. It is a great time to be alive, but it is a dangerous time to be alive spiritually. Each one of our blessings, each one of our advances tells us a lie. Each one says we don't need God anymore because we have evolved beyond Him. In many ways we are like every other generation in history. Mankind always has and always will need God. Never forget, God is God. It is God who placed you in the United States of America. It is God who developed the world's languages. It is God who gave us the minds to develop modern transportation and medicine. It is the same lesson Job received years ago. Mankind is only a temporary fixture in this world, but God is eternal. And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"** How easy it is to be arrogant in our time. Never forget, God hates arrogance.

The date was September 11, 2001. Do you remember that day? It started like every other day, but it would become a day we would never forget. You know the facts by now. There were four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda. Using commercial aircraft, they were successful on two of the attacks, the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC. They failed on a third, the White House or the Capital Building. That plane crashed in western Pennsylvania, thanks to the bravery of the passengers. In the end, 2,996 people died and over 6,000 more were injured. There was over \$10 billion in property damage. Let

me state the obvious. Our country changed on that day. Any innocence we had as a country was gone. For a short time our country united and swore we would never forget. It has been nearly eighteen years and we haven't forgotten. If you were alive on that day, I don't know how you could forget. Some things are unforgettable.

One thing you should never forget as a disciple of Jesus Christ is that God is God. That is unforgettable. In comparison, we are nothing. When was the last time you compared yourself to God? Do you remember the opening quote? "Humility is the greatest quality that man can have, and arrogance is undoubtedly the worst." And all of God's people said, "**Amen!**"