

Your Cross – Part 12

Welcome to Your Cross - Part 12 August 22, 2007. Thus far, remember, in the Kingdom of God, we covered salvation, the doorway into the Kingdom and then began to work out our salvation by studying faith, the fuel of the spirit realm because without faith it is impossible to please God. We used our faith then to come into that place called abiding in Him because apart from Him we can do nothing. So our choice is to abide in Jesus or accomplish nothing for His purposes and His glory. From that position of abiding, we then came into the subject of Your Cross to hopefully get a deeper understanding of the cross that we're to take up daily. The last aspect of Your Cross that we covered was the questions asked by Your Cross. We first laid the foundation of it; there is a battle and that battle is ongoing every second of your life. The mechanism of Your Cross is that by choice, we give up choice because we come to the purpose of choice which is to abide in Jesus; to become one with Him. The purposes of Your Cross, remember, were summarized briefly in tribulation/revelation, to reveal me to me, Christ to me, Christ in me to me, and Christ in me to others; and to fulfill the purposes of Jesus to seek and to save that which was lost, to usher in the abundant life, and thereby to destroy the purposes and work of the devil. We then looked at the choices of your cross to understand that for us as Christians the choices are to live life in the flesh or life in the spirit; in the flesh with self as the basis or in the spirit with Jesus as the basis.

Then we looked at the questions asked by Your Cross. Do you know that you get to choose? Do you know why you get to choose? Do you know that you cannot not choose? Do you know that you cannot choose the choices? Do you know what the choices are? Do you know and understand the choices? Do you know that you cannot choose the consequences? Do you know what the consequences are? Do you know you cannot be perfected in the flesh? Do you know you cannot choose both spirit and flesh? And that summary question of, who do you say that I am? Because every moment of your thought life you are saying something about Jesus Christ. Each word, each thought, and each deed simply reveals how you're answering that one question. But you can't understand all that without understanding the flesh versus spirit comparison and that's why we spend a fair amount of time using the selected 24 variables by which to understand the overwhelming contrast between flesh and spirit. It's critical to understand that because that's where your Christian life is empowered. That's where we are to live. That's how you know how you're answering the question, who am I saying that He is at this very moment? It's critical for us to use the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven that He has in fact given us in order to loose the Kingdom of Heaven onto planet Earth through us. That is to say to have the principles operative in Heaven be operative on planet Earth through me as an earthen vessel by focusing on being in the spirit with Jesus as the basis and every moment of my life asking myself the rhetorical question, who am I saying that Jesus is by this thought, this word, and this deed? Now all of those are intended to link together in an unbroken chain to bring us to a certain result; because God is not a God of confusion. He gives us all these links in the chain so that we can come to a point.

So we're going to look at the result by doing two case studies, one today from the Old Testament, an Old Testament believer interfacing with his cross even before there was a cross of Christ played out on planet Earth. We're going, of course, to use Job. Job 1:1 – There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God

and turning away from evil. The inspired Word of God (imagine that) makes all those summary statements about this man called Job. But then comes round one, as I call it and we're going to have Susan read for us, Job chapter 1, verses 8 through 12 – And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the Earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. Then Satan answered the Lord. Does Job fear God for nothing? Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has on every side. Thou hast blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has and he will surely curse Thee to Thy face. Then the Lord said to Satan, behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not put forth your hand on him. So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord.

Satan being the accuser of the brethren; can you hear that criticism of Satan in accusing Job before God be rampant in the church today? Because what do we say when a high-minded well intentioned Christian, in whose life everything is going well, says something to us about how to work through the things in our lives that are not going well? Well we say, anybody can worship God and hold God in awe and reverence if everything in their life is going well. We dismiss their testimony to us; we dismiss their testimony to the world. So that is not an outdated point that is being made there by Satan because we see it played out in the church daily, if not hourly and minutely by people who have no suffering apparent in their lives giving testimony to someone who is suffering. The one who is suffering tends to dismiss it because everything is going well in their lives and I too could worship God under those conditions. The Lord said to Satan, (can you imagine that?) that the Lord points Job out to Satan. For as we know from Scripture, Satan didn't come with a goal of accusing Job; but God says, have you considered my servant Job? He takes this upright blameless man, testified so by the word of God, and then points him out to Satan. There is no one like him on the Earth. And Satan, of course, makes the veiled accusation. Well, of course, he holds You in awe and reverence because everything is going well in his life by Your provision and Your protection. But, God, don't mistake that for worship. Job is as self-centered as any other man because as soon as You take away the blessing, Job's going to curse You to Your face. That is self centeredness veiled as worship and awe and reverence simply because things are going well in his life. But Satan says, don't tell me that Job is a worshipper of God, who fears God. Job is self-centered and appears to worship because he has no complaint before God because everything is going well. And God then turns him loose on Job. The Lord said to Satan, behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not put your hand on him.

Now certain points are worth noting even for us as Christians in this age. Job was the most righteous man on Earth; but that did not exempt Job from suffering. In fact, God called Satan on to him. Have you considered my servant Job? Satan created the suffering, but only within the confines of the limits established by this Holy God. It was Satan caused; but God permitted. The initial limit, of course, was to take all that Job had, but not to touch Job himself. I say again, God did not cause the suffering; but God permitted the suffering. It is also worth noting that Satan has supernatural powers; because some of the suffering imposed upon Job had to do with supernatural events—that is to say, wind that would destroy houses and kill family and so on. Satan has supernatural power, but not super God power. We, of course, were taught that by the miracles before Pharaoh when Moses was going to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt; that the sorcerers of Pharaoh did all sorts of supernatural things; but in the final analysis their power could not exceed the power of a transcendent God. And it will always be so. But in some

churches I know, everything which is supernatural is assumed to be of God which is probably one way of bringing deception upon Christians; because if you operate from the premise that everything which is supernatural is of God, then you're going to take some of the works of Satan and call them works of God.

Verse 22 – Through all this (losing everything he had), Job did not sin, nor did he blame God. Well, is that good or bad at this point? You probably aren't fans of Hee-Haw; but when I was growing up I used to watch the old country show called Hee-Haw and they would have this segment where they would go through this circuitous discussion, where one would make a point, and the other would say that's good. And the first would say no that's bad; then he would tell why it's bad. And then he would say, well that's bad; and no that's good because he would keep going in a circle making points where A would lead to B or lead to C. So is this good or bad? Well Job did not curse God. He did not sin as Satan had claimed that he would. That's good. But neither had Job received tribulation/revelation. At that point, he was at the same point he was when he entered the suffering. That is to say, he had not received a deeper revelation of God; nor had he received a deeper revelation of himself. So at that point it would be suffering for sufferings sake with no positive result flowing out of the suffering. It had not worked for good, and if it had not worked for good, then that would be bad.

Round two. Job 2:3-6 and 9. Susan will read for us. And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the Earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord and said: Skin for skin, yes. All that a man has, he will give for his life; however, put forth Thy hand now and touch his bone and his flesh. He will curse Thee to Thy face. So the Lord said to Satan: Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life. Then his wife said to him, do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.

So the ante gets upped in round two; but it begins the same way. God calls Satan's attention to Job. Have you considered My servant Job? In other words, you've taken all that he has; but have you considered where he is right now? And the same accusation comes back. What appears to be worship to you, God, is not worship; it's still self-centeredness. You just did not turn me loose on him enough to display his self-centeredness. He still appears to hold you in awe and reverence because you've not allowed me to touch him; and after all, that's what every human being holds dearest. And every human being will curse God if their bodies are touched in a way that is painful to them. Satan says, touch his bone and his flesh and he will curse You to Your face. In other words, this isn't worship; this is a curse waiting to happen. And you simply haven't let me stress him enough. And God expands the limits. He is in your power, only spare his life. And his wife, then of course, isn't very helpful. She tells him to take on the purpose of Satan and curse God. So much for being the helpmate. So, points worth noting: All the prior points still pertain, but the suffering was increased, the limits were expanded; but still within the confines permitted by our Holy, transcendent God. God still set the limits, gave the permission, but Satan created the suffering. Job had only two things left: his life and his wife. And she was telling him to fulfill the expression of Satan instead of remaining in his integrity with fear, awe and reverence toward his Holy God. The only external thing that Job had to help him through this suffering was his wife and his wife had adopted the purposes of Satan. Has any man ever

been more alone than that, apart from Jesus on the cross? But again, Job did not curse God as Satan had stated that he would. That's good! But neither had Job received tribulation/revelation—that is to say a deeper revelation of God and of himself. So the purpose of the suffering had not yet been fulfilled. So it was good and it was bad.

Now why was Job tested this way? Well, I'll give at least three potential answers. First, he feared something other than God by his own admission in Job 3:25 (in the King James Version) – for the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me and that which I was afraid of is coming to me. Now throughout Scripture, we're taught two things about fear. Fear God, hold God in awe and reverence, and fear nothing else; because everything else is less than God. So when we fear something else, at that moment we are not in the fear of the Lord—meaning holding God in awe and reverence. We are viewing that thing which we view as threatening to us with anxiety because the threat seems greater than our faith in a Holy transcendent God and His provision for us, and the fulfillment of His purposes for us. So whenever we fear anything other than God, at that moment we have wandered away from the purpose of God in our lives. Whatever we fear, remember, we give glory to and God says: I will share My glory with no one. Because whatever you're fearing is not worthy of glory when compared to Me, your Holy God.

The second potential answer: To reveal the hearts of his three friends to themselves, not through their tribulation, but through being witnesses of Job's tribulation. Eliphaz in Job 22:4-5 – Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you? Can you hear the sarcasm in that? Is it because of your reverence for God that God reproves you; that He enters into judgment against you? Is not your wickedness great? Bildad in Job 8:6 – If you were pure and upright, surely now God would rouse Himself for you and restore your righteous estate. Zophar in Job 11:13-15 – If you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand to Him, God, if iniquities were in your hand, put it far away and do not let wickedness dwell in your tents, then indeed you could lift up your face without moral defect and you would be steadfast and not fear. Elihu, the younger member, not formally the friend of Job, but he joins the chorus in Job 34:10-11 – Far be it from God to do wickedness and from the Almighty to do wrong; for God pays a man according to his work.

Do you see the consistency of what each of these four members is saying? They were operating under the presumption that Job was being punished for sin. Their obvious conclusion, since Job was suffering far more than they were, was that they were far more righteous than Job. In other words, they were self righteous, assessing their righteousness by comparing themselves, not with the righteousness of another, but with the suffering in the life of another. So, fast forward toward the end of the book. Job 42:7-8 – The Lord said to Eliphaz, the Temanite, my wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. Now, therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you; for I will accept him, Job, so that I may not do you according to your folly because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. These friends had made no mention of grace. They had no understanding of grace. And God told them they were wrong by showing them grace. But he did it in a certain way. All things did work for good; but they had to learn not to correlate the degree of suffering in the life of another human being with the degree of sin in that person's life. The very one to whom they had consistently attributed a greater level of

wickedness, hence the suffering, was now positioned by God to be the intercessor for their unrighteousness before the Holy God; because, in fact, the one that they had been critical of was far more righteous than any of them.

So, the reasons for the suffering: First, Job feared something other than God. Secondly, to reveal his friends to themselves and to have them let go of the notion that suffering can be equated with sin. Thirdly, look at Job. Job was double-minded at least to a degree. One the one hand, Job 7:20 – he says, have I sinned? What have I done to Thee oh watcher of men (speaking of God)? He is appropriately at that point looking for sin within his own life; he's looking for the beam in his own eye. Job 9:2-3 – But how can a man be in the right before God? If one wished to dispute with Him (God), he (meaning the man) could not answer Him (God) once in a thousand times. Now the correct answer, of course, when you're arguing with an omniscient Being is you can never dispute with Him; but Job at least is heading in the right direction when he says one in a thousand times. In other words, it would be highly unlikely. Job 9:12 – Who could say to Him (God), what are Thou doing? He is appropriately regarding God as holy; because God says, to whom will you compare Me? And Job has received at least part of that revelation. So all those things are good on that one hand. But on the other hand, Job 23:3-4 and verse 7 – Job says: Oh that I knew where I might find Him (God) that I might come to His seat. I would present my case before Him, fill my mouth with arguments. There the upright (that's me) would reason with Him (God) and I would be delivered forever from my Judge. So on the one hand Job knew that he could not defend himself before a Holy God; but on the other hand he had his moments when he thought that he could defend and argue his own righteousness before a Holy God, be shown to be right and thus, be acquitted and have the Judge admit that He was wrong. So Job was double-minded at least in this one area.

So what was God's answer? You hear those who say God never answered Job; but an omniscient Being usually answers a finite being with a question. But the question is never so the omniscient Being can gather the data. It's so that the finite created being can receive the revelation of his error. So God answered Job indirectly by asking the series of rhetorical questions: Where were you when I created the Heavens and the Earth? Because in the final analysis, every created being can rest only one place and that's in the Holiness of God, the other thanness of God, the transcendent majesty of God. The finite being can never receive omniscience so as to walk by his understanding. We're progressively given understanding; but it's always a drop in the bucket compared to the omniscience of God. So how can any man say I will only worship that which I understand? In other words, I will only worship the omniscient when I am omniscient. But, of course, no finite being can ever become omniscient. So it becomes a non-position.

Then afterwards, after the rhetorical questions, God asks Job three similar penetrating questions to cut into Job's heart, to cut to the heart of the matter, to circumcise the heart and these same three questions are totally and completely pertinent to us today as Christians. Job 40:2 – Will the fault-finder contend with the Almighty? Can you imagine a created being contending with the Almighty omniscient God? And two questions, then in the same chapter, verse 8 – (God asked Job) Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified? In other words, who is the judge, Me, the Holy God that created the Heavens and the Earth or are you, the finite created being, the judge of that Holy God? Who is the judge, Job, you or Me?

And the answer to that question is answered by the simple question, where were you when I created the Heavens and the Earth? And if you were nonexistent when I created the Heavens and the Earth, then how do you ever think you can argue your case before Me, defend your righteousness before Me, point out how My judgments are wrong, and display to Me that your judgments are more accurate and have Me acquit you and declare you to be right in your argument with Me? At that point, and not before that point, Job's heart was circumcised. He was not circumcised in his heart by round one; he was not circumcised in his heart by round two; so in this round, God Himself took over and did that which Satan had not been able to bring about—that is the circumcision of Job's heart which, in fact, I believe was the point all along. But if round one didn't achieve it, hence round two. If round two didn't achieve it, hence get in the ring with God Himself and let's achieve the point of this whole situation. On the one hand, Job had been right when he said, how can a man be in the right before God? But on the other hand, he had been wrong when he said I will present my case before Him, fill my mouth with arguments, display my righteousness to Him and then if He's truly upright then He will have to acquit me and deliver me from His own judging. Those questions addressed the root of all sin; because the drive of sin is to function in self determination instead of being God determined and by so doing, to position oneself as the judge of Almighty God.

So that's not just a series of rhetorical questions buried in antiquity from which we might learn a little something. When we are in the flesh and not in the spirit, it is because we are not answering these questions correctly. We're trying to annul the judgment of God. We're trying to condemn Him so that we can be shown to be righteous, show that our ways are higher than His ways and if He truly understood the situation, He would be doing something totally different from what He's doing. So what did Job then say? He finally gets the revelation. Job 42:5-6 – I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eyes see Thee. Therefore, I retract and I repent in dust and ashes. I was not there when You created the Heavens and the Earth. So what right do I, a created being, ever have to judge the Creator? Can the pot truly judge the Potter? Can a lesser being judge the greater Being? Can the one who was not there judge the One Who was there at creation? And remember anytime we're in self determination, we're going to end up judging God, taking offense at God, declaring He's not here and He ought to be, or He is here but He's misbehaving, not doing what He ought to be doing. Because it all comes together; you can't be in self determination without making those conclusions, taking those offenses and judging, in fact, what God ought to be doing at that very moment that He's not doing. So brothers and sisters, when you're tempted to take offense at God, tempted to find fault with God, tempted to defend your righteousness before God, tempted to judge God, just back off and ask yourself the question, where was I when He created the Heavens and the Earth?

So now look at summary points from Job's story. Sin may lead to suffering. That's the law of sowing and reaping. God does judge and does discipline in regard to sin. Suffering does not always correlate with sin. Often there's an inverse correlation between suffering and sin. That's because suffering can reveal secret sin; and the more miniscule the secret sin, the greater the suffering required to expose it. The dirty sponge analogy, remember? If a sponge is full of dirt, just a tiny bit of water and a tiny bit of squeeze will reveal all sorts of secret dirt. But if a sponge only has one little molecule of dirt embedded deep within, it takes much water and much squeezing, much pressure to reveal that last little bit of uncleanness. That, in fact, is what Satan kept accusing Job of before God; You didn't let me squeeze him enough. It's in there; You just

didn't let me get at it. Job was more righteous than anyone; yet God permitted more suffering than to anyone else. Yet even after that degree of suffering, Job did not receive the revelation that no matter what he's receiving on planet Earth, he should never think that he deserves better before his Holy God. God's penetrating questions were then required for Job to receive that revelation. The revelation, of course, is simple. It's that God always gives either mercy or justice, but never injustice. So please don't ever think for one second that your concept of justice is greater than the justice of God. So as a result of Job's suffering, his friends received tribulation/revelation that they were functioning in self righteousness in comparison to Job and that God has grace and they were functioning in none. Then Job received tribulation/revelation from the rhetorical questions pointed out to him by God. Each came to know God better and to know himself better. Tribulation/Revelation. I Corinthians 8:2 – The man who thinks that he knows does not know as he ought to know. So the friends knew that they knew God or thought they did so; but they only knew His judgment and what they saw as His expectations and saw none of His grace.

Self righteousness. Job thought that he knew God; but part of Job still clung to the thought that he could defend his righteousness before a Holy God. Except for tribulation, would either have changed? Would either have come to a clearer revelation of their Holy God and their comparison with that Holy God? I'll use Moses to finish with this last point. In Numbers 12:3 – Now the man Moses was the most humble man on Earth. The most humble man on Earth; so what was the attitude of Moses? Deuteronomy 3:24 – Oh Lord God, Thou has begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy strong hand. In other words, after the miracles performed before Pharaoh, after the parting of the Red Sea, after the water poured out of the rock, after the manna came from Heaven, Thou hast begun to show me. And that attitude is the antidote for anyone ever thinking that he knows; because the Christian, who thinks that he knows, never knows as he ought to know; because the man, who thinks he knows enough, is saying there's only a small part of God that I want to know. That's so I can remain in self worship, not God worship. So the person who tries to put a limit on how much he knows of this Holy God is in fact, doing so in order to excuse his continued self worship. And the antidote for that is the attitude of Moses. I don't care how much You've shown me in regard to the outflow of Your miraculous power, You have begun to show me that which is the fullness of Yourself.

So that'll use my time for today and we'll pick it up next time at which time I hope to finish the last part of Your Cross—namely the results.