

**2-22-23 (Ash Wednesday)**

**Sermon: Repentance as Preparation**

**Scripture: JOB 42:1-6**

**Hymns: 81, 343, 632 Service will end With Communion**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1 Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. 4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' 5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

**Job says: MY EARS HAD HEARD OF YOU...**

**A. We have all heard that God created the heavens and the Earth.** We have all heard that God caused a flood to come upon the Earth. We have all heard that God delivered slaves out of Egypt. We have all heard that God used a young boy to conquer a giant. We have all heard that God healed a man of blindness, cured another man of leprosy, stopped a woman's twelve-year bleeding disease, and brought the brother of two sisters back to life from the dead... but do we really comprehend and respect the power of God?

## **II. NOTICE THERE WAS A CRITICAL CHANGE IN JOB'S LIFE BECAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE.**

**A. Verse 5 My ears had heard of you BUT NOW my eyes have seen you...**

**B. He moved from a place of only having knowledge of who God was and what God was like, probably passed down from a previous generation, from the oral traditions of the day.** This limited knowledge governed his life.

He lived in fear of a God that brought judgment on the wicked and blessing on the righteous. His religion dictated that if he wanted to stay within the favor of God that he had to be righteous. His suffering and the death of his family and the loss of all his wealth rocked his world.

**C. If Job had not gone through this season of vulnerability and brokenness then He would have been content to stay right where he was and continue to have a two-dimensional view of who God is.**

God no longer fit into his nice little box. For the first time Job could not understand God. His religion would not answer all the questions he had.

**D. Illustration:** A story is told of a Welsh woman who lived in a remote valley in Wales. She went to a great deal of trouble to have electrical power installed in her home. They noticed she didn't use very much electricity at all. In fact, her usage was minuscule. They sent a meter reader out to check on the matter. The man came to the door and said, "We've looked at the amount recorded on your meter, don't you use your electricity?" "Oh, yes," she said. "We turn it on every night to see how to light our lamps and then we switch it off again."

This sounds like the way the way many Christians apply the power of God in their lives. **They use just enough of the bright light to maintain the dim light.**

### **III. OBSERVATIONS**

**A. When we actually experience God, we have a greater understanding of God (verse 2).**

Verse 2 "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.

Job recognizes in the smallest way the Sovereignty of God

He recognized that nothing was out of the control of God.

**B. God has also broken into his world. He finally got his wish, not for God to vindicate him, but to actually hear God.**

He knew for the first time that God really did care. He cared enough to break through the silence and answer Job.

God cared enough to restore to Job everything that was lost.

God cared enough about Job's friends to ask him to intercede on their behalf.

**C. I know that God spoke the heavens and the stars into being,** but once you look at a star filled night sky, or experience a sunset, or hear the roar of rushing waves as they crash into a rocky shore, the words don't do it justice. 5 My ears had heard of you BUT NOW my eyes have seen you!

**D. You can read the words about babies being knit in their mothers' wombs,** but until you see that tiny body on the sonogram, or actually the feeling of holding a child in your arms that was made from you. That is amazing!!

**E. It's cool to hear about how God speaks to people –** but then He speaks to you, I know at least once in my life I have verbally heard the voice of God. 5 My ears had heard of you BUT NOW my eyes have seen you.

**F. You can hear about how God moves in power,** but when you are in a group of believers and God moves in such a way that the power of God falls on people and they fall under his power – or he uses you to share a message with someone, that is when a two-dimensional God becomes a 3 dimensional God. 5 My ears had heard of you BUT NOW my eyes have seen you.

**G. You can read about God's ability to heal,** and know he does it, but when you experience that healing – God moves from 2D to 3D!

#### **IV. WHEN WE EXPERIENCE GOD WE UNDERSTAND LIFE**

**A. Verse 3 says** "You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely, I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know."

Job's life was about accumulating wealth and being a good person.

His life was about holding back God's wrath.

That sounds like a lot of people today.

**B. I see many people that struggle through this life.**

They are trying to make more... make more money, make more friends, make less mistakes, make others pay for their hurts. Most are just trying to make it through the day, one day at a time.

**C. Many are trying to succeed** at school, at work, as parents, trying to succeed at living better, looking better, eating better, praying better, serving better, loving better.

**D. Most people fit the character of Charlie Brown when it comes to understanding life.** In one "Peanuts" comic strip, there was a conversation between Lucy and Charlie Brown. Lucy said that life is like a deck chair. Some place it so they can see where they are going; some place it so they can see where they have been; and some place it so they can see where they are at present. Charlie Brown's reply: "I can't even get mine unfolded."

Life is more than paying the bills.

Life is more than putting food on the table.

Life is more than attending church once a week.

Life is more than living for the weekends.

Life is more than just trying to have the perfect body.

Life is more than just trying to please people and avoid conflict, it's more than trying to be what someone thinks you should be or fitting into the mold of society.

Life is about walking with God.

Life is about delighting in the presence of God.

Life is about experiencing the fullness of His grace.

Life is about letting God make you into his likeness.

Life is about showing the rest of the world who God is.

## **V. WHEN WE EXPERIENCE GOD, WE UNDERSTAND OURSELVES (VERSE 6)**

Verse 6 says "Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

**A. We realize that without God we are nothing,** but He thinks we are worth everything.

**B. We realize that without Him we can do nothing,** but with Him all things are possible.

**C. We realize that we constantly walk away from God,** but He constantly is pursuing us.

**D. We realize that we are slamming the door in His face not wanting him to come in,** but he constantly stands and the door knocking waiting for us to let Him in.

**Example: A little girl finished her prayer and said:**

Before I finish, I want you to take care of mommy, take care of daddy, take care of my sister and my brother and please, God, take care of yourself, **because if you don't we'll all be sunk.** Amen!

**This little girl understood a very important lesson about herself.... she was totally dependent upon God.**

## **VI. APPLICATION**

**For the Lenten season, promise yourselves the following:**

**1. I want to know more about God. Knowing more about God means I need to allow myself to be more vulnerable.**

- a. I need to admit my weakness so I can walk in His strength.
- b. I need to give my brokenness to receive God's healing.
- c. I need to deny my will and follow His.

**2. I want to experience more of Life.**

- a. God has a purpose for my life and I don't want to settle for second best.
- b. I'm not just going to make it through the day. I'm going to make it the best day! This is the day that the Lord has made I will rejoice and be glad in it!!
- c. I will not settle for a mediocre life when God has promised me abundant life. I will not let the enemy steal away what God has promised!

**3. I want to become more of what God wants me to be.**

- a. I will stop looking through the eyes of how others see me and look through God's eyes and see who he has made me to be.
- b. My value is not based on how much I do, or how well I do it – but based on the grace of God poured out in my life.

I was created to be like Christ, and I will walk in that transformation. I was planned for God's pleasure, and I will strive to please Him every day. I was shaped or fashioned to serve God. I will let God use me in whatever way he sees fit.

I was made for God's Mission. I will do what he tells me and go where he sends me. Amen? Let Us Pray...