

ASKING GOD WHY

If someone told you that he was going to take a knife and cut you open, can you imagine telling him that it is OK and that you will pay him to do it? People do that sort of thing all the time. That is how surgeons make their living. We are willing to allow someone to cut on us because we understand that the process is for our ultimate good even though it may be painful and costly. If someone told you that they were going to take four years of your life and cause you to spend it in a highly regimented environment where you would need to work long hours for no pay and in fact that you must pay thousands of dollars each year, then can you imagine doing that voluntarily? We call this getting a college education and many people are eager to participate because of the perceived benefits. In other words, we are willing to put up with a lot of pain, expense and inconvenience IF we know WHY.

This situation of wanting to know “why” is where Job found himself. Because he wanted to know why, he listened to his three friends but found that they did not have the answers. He could remember how it used to be and as far as he knew nothing had changed in his love for God, nothing had changed in his lifestyle, and his actions and yet for some reason his life was now in a shambles and he could not determine why.

JOB 29:1-3 Job knew how it used to be. He recognized that God was his source of benefit and prosperity. He knew that all the understanding he had of the world before this time and the wisdom that he possessed were because of divine light that God had provided. He now longed for those days but could not determine how to return to those times. He kept thinking that maybe he had missed a turn in the road and wanted to go back to get on the right track again.

JOB 29:4-6 Job's prosperity included

more than material possession. His most prized possession was the fact that he was able to fellowship with God and be trusted with insight into what God was doing in the world. In our day and age, the church has been entrusted with what the Apostle Paul call the "secrets of God" or the mystery of what God has been doing in His dealings with mankind. What a tremendous privilege and responsibility. Job could sense the presence of God in his life. We, as Christians, have been given the promise of God's presence through the Holy Spirit and we should be able to sense that presence. This is what Jesus said in John 14:21 [He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest (disclose, make known) Myself to him.].

Job also included his children ahead of any material possessions in importance. Many people today could learn from Job. So many children are left to raise themselves because parents do not put their children ahead of material possessions.

Job also had material wealth as represented by the abundance of butter and oil. With all his flocks he had abundance in dairy products and this provided great wealth that made the rest of his life easier. The rock that poured out oil may refer to a stone olive press that produce olive oil. In today's technology, that phrase could very easily refer to petroleum that is so abundant in that area of the world. Notice the contrast of his life now as to how it was then.

JOB 30:19 Job could only see God as been the source of his condition. It was as if God had been his friend and was now his enemy. Job felt trapped as when one gets into wet sticky clay. He was frustrated and could not function in his life because he was mired down. Job sensed that he was not of any

importance to God – that he was a throw-away item no more valuable than dust and ashes. All of this did not make sense to Job because he did not know why.

JOB 30:20-22 Job's feelings of insignificance are expressed here. It was as if God would not hear or see him. He felt that he could not get God to acknowledge his existence. This feeling may have been more bitter than the pain of the disease that Job had. Our society has the tendency to ignore the poor and the humble and treat them as if they are not of any importance. For years American industry treated its hourly workers as if they had no significance. This gave rise to the growth of unions to give a voice and get some recognition that the individual lacked. Today, people are recognizing that all workers are important, that each has a significant role and that our roles are different. Unions are on the decline because the workers find recognition and a sense of importance without their help.

Job thought that God had gone beyond the point of just ignoring him and treating him as of no value, but that God was deliberately trying to hurt him. Job pictured this as being set out in the midst of a wind storm in the desert. The driving sand would erode away what ever was there.

JOB 30:23 Job was convinced that God was trying to kill him. He thought that the disease would end in his death and that it would not be soon enough.

JOB 30:24-26 This first verse accuses God of denying death to those who want to die because of their suffering that is caused, according to Job, by God Himself. Job is starting to contrast himself with God and is about to conclude that he is more merciful than God. Verse 25 says "Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?" Job believed that he was not getting that kind of compassion from God and he just could not understand

why.

There is the idea being fostered that says if you expect problems you probably will have them. If you anticipate success, then you will likely find it. The idea is that a positive mental attitude will usually result in more victories than having a negative outlook on life. This is true, in general, and we would all do well to heed this bit of conventional wisdom. Job knew about this general truth. He had looked for *good* and he had waited for *light*. But instead of good he found evil and instead of light he found darkness. No wonder he had questions, no wonder he asked why.

It is in times such as these that faith must be strong. It doesn't take a lot of faith when you know why things are happening. Faith takes its most severe test when we keep trusting God even though what is happening doesn't seem fair or make sense.