

Blessed

A Study of Job for the Suffering Saint

Session 5: Unity of the Body

By H. M. Coker

*“As an example of suffering and patience, brothers,
take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.
Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast.
You have heard of the steadfastness of Job,
and you have seen the purpose of the Lord,
how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”*

James 5:10-11 (ESV)

Session 5: Unity of the Body

Session 5, Part 1:

Pray the Word: “Those who fear you shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in your word. I know, O LORD, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant” (Psalm 119:74-76)

Hear the Word: Up to this point we have been taking the book of Job in small nibbles. Now it's time to take some great big bites. I am praying for you, that you will not grow overwhelmed, that you will not give up, but that you will step up to the table and feast. The book of Job is filled with riches and all of it is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16b-17).

1. Review the “Outline of Job” which is included at the end of this session.
2. Read Job 2:11-13
 - a. Who are Job's three friends? (2:11)
 - b. Why did they come? (2:11)
 - c. How did they react when they saw Job (2:12)
 - d. What did they do (2:13)

3. Read Job chapter 3 in which Job expresses the depths of his suffering; he curses the very day of his birth. Who broke the silence first?

Apply the Word: Our memory verse this week is 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

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(2 Corinthians 1:3-5)*

Music stays with us. Children learn their ABCs through a song. Advertising agencies use jingles to sell their products. We leave church and hours later the closing hymn comes drifting into our minds. In his poem “The Solitary Reaper” Wordsworth wrote, “I listened – motionless and still; And when I mounted up the hill, The music in my heart I bore, Long after it was heard no more.”¹ The music we listen to stays with us. Let’s continue in our effort to fill our minds with God honoring music. Add the following song to your playlist and listen to it throughout the week. Disclaimer: these artists are in no way affiliated with nor have they endorsed this study.

“Christ Be All”

Performed by: Grace Worship

Lyrics By: Allison Allen and Chris Eaton

¹ William Wordsworth, *The Poetry of William Wordsworth: The Solitary Reaper* (Arcturus Publishing Limited, 2019), 144).

Session 5, Part 2:

Pray the Word: Dear Father, make me worthy of your calling and fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by your power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in me, and I in you, according to your grace and that of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11b-12)

Hear the Word: In the next section of Job, Job's friends speak to him. Eliphaz speaks three times, Bildad speaks three times (though his last time hardly counts as a half), and Zophar speaks twice. After each one speaks Job responds.

1. Read Job 4-26. This will take about an hour. You can do it all in one sitting, or stretch it out over several days. You may find it helpful to listen to an audio version as you follow along in your Bible. As you read, take note of who is speaking. Look for the progressive rise in emotions. Underline verses which are keys to the speaker's true thoughts and intentions (ask, "What are you getting at?").
2. In the space below. Summarize the words of Job's friends.

Apply the Word: Job's friends remind me of what so many of us do. "Why is this happening? There must be a reason? I must figure out what caused this so I can make it stop." We want to be in control, but we aren't. We want a solution, but suffering is not a problem to be solved by us; it is a valley to walk through to be sanctified and grown. We want our lives to be about us, but we are here for God's glory. When Jesus was walking with his disciples, "he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.'" Job's friends were focused on telling him what he must have done wrong to cause his suffering so that they could fix it. They didn't care about growth; they didn't care about God's glory. How about you? Are you looking for God's good purposes in your suffering? Is your primary goal to end the season of suffering. Are you asking God to glorify himself in your suffering? In Second Thessalonians chapter one Paul (having just written of when the Lord Jesus comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed) says, "To this end, we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). Today, submit to God's will; make this your honest prayer: "God, glorify yourself in me."

Session 5, Part 3:

Pray the Word: We bless you, our God, we praise you. You have kept our soul among the living and have not let our feet slip. For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. You brought us into the net; you laid a crushing burden on our backs; you let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance. (Psalm 66:8-12)

Hear the Word: First, review your notes from this session so far, then read Job 42:7-9, and lastly answer the questions.

1. Was the council of Job's friends right? To answer this, consider how the Lord regarded their words? What does the Lord say to Job's friends in Job 42:7? (Job 42:7-9)

4. Is everything that the three friends said wrong?

Apply the Word: I love clear rules. I love lines of demarcation. I love right and wrong, good and bad. My mind wants to be able to say, “Job’s friends were in the wrong, so everything they say must also be wrong.” But that idea falls apart when I get to a verse like Job 5:17-18, “Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he binds up; he shatters, but his hands heal” and then cross-reference it with a verse like Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights” and Deuteronomy 32:39b where God says, “I wound and I heal.” Oh, context, context, context. This is why I had you read the entire section of Job chapters 4-26. So much of what Job’s friends share is truth, but truth that has been either misinterpreted or misapplied. Was Job being disciplined? Well, when taken through the lens of Hebrews 12:3-13, discipline is the process of a loving Father training his children for their good that they may share his holiness, and when trained by it will result in the peaceful fruit of righteousness. This is the father’s training towards righteousness, not punishment of sinners. Does Paul not say, “For those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:28-29a). We will see in Job 42 that God does use Job’s experiences of suffering to grow him (see Job 42:5-6). (We will dive deeper into this in Session 6.) But was this the point Eliphaz was trying to make; was this his insinuation? Look back to the beginning of Eliphaz’s speech where he said, “You reap what you sow, Buddy Roe” (my translation of Job 4:8). Again, my mind goes to a New Testament cross-reference, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). Oh, context, context, context. Look at the very next verse, “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:8). So, what was the ultimate problem with the friends’ counsel? God spells it out for us. “The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: ‘My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right’” (Job 42:7b).

Paul teaches us to “not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). When the Devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness he said to Jesus, “If you

are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ““He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”” (Matthew 4:6). The Devil was quoting Scripture (see Psalm 91:11-12). But Jesus knew the Word, the whole Word, and understood its context. “Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test’” (Matthew 4:7). He responded with the Word (see Deuteronomy 6:16). This is what we must do as well. We must study and know Scripture. We must hide it in our hearts. We must not shy from verses that others have used as weapons, but we must work to accurately interpret, understand, and apply them.

2 Timothy 2:15-17a says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene.” Think about how you approach others who are suffering? Think about the verses you share and the things you say. Do you accurately handle the word of God?

Session 5, Part 4

Pray the Word: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

Hear the Word: After studying Job’s friends your first reaction might be, “Well that’s it then, until this season of suffering is over I’m going to find an accommodating rock and hide under it.” Ok, so we don’t actually hide under a rock, but many of us do hide behind a smile. We’re afraid of what others might think or do if we expose our vulnerabilities to them. We’ve been hurt in the past and now think we are protecting ourselves. We use excuses like, “I don’t want to be a bother.” But is this Biblical? Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions.

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3. In this passage, Paul says the Thessalonian’s faith is growing abundantly (2 Thessalonians 1:3). According to verse three, what is accompanying this growing faith?

2. 1 Peter 5:8-9. After telling us that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, Peter instructs us to resist him, firm in our faith, knowing what?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 12:24b-27.
 - a. God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no what? (12:24-25)

 - b. But the members of the body are to have what? (12:25b)

 - c. If one member suffers _____ (12:26)
If one member is honored _____ (12:26)

4. Read Romans 12:9-15. List each instruction given in this passage. Then put a star by those which require a fellow believer to be part of the equation.

5. Throughout his letters Paul asked for prayer. We are going to read just three instances of this today. Read the following verses and list what it was that Paul asked them to pray for.

a. Ephesians 6:18-20

b. 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

c. 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

6. Paul also accepted material help from other believers. Read Philippians 4:10-20.

a. What did the Philippians do? (4:10, 14-16, 18)

b. Paul said he wasn't seeking the gift, but seeking what? (4:17)

c. Paul says this gift is what to God? (4:18b)

- d. Now read again Paul's next words. After discussing in detail the giving and receiving of this gift, Paul says, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Philippians 4:19-20).

7. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11

- a. God is the Father of _____ and God of all _____ (1:3)
- b. What does God do? (1:4a)
- c. So that we may be able to do what? (1:4b)
- d. For as we share _____ in Christ's _____, so through Christ we share _____ in _____ too. (1:5)
- e. Paul says, "Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you _____ in our _____, you will also _____ in our _____" (2 Corinthians 1:7)
- f. How deeply were Paul and his companions suffering? (1:8-9a)
- g. This was to make them do what? (1:9b)
- h. What confidence did Paul have? (1:10)

i. What did Paul ask them to do? (1:11a)

j. Why and How? (1:11b)

Very good. That is enough cross-referencing for today. We will continue this subject tomorrow.

Apply the Word: As I worked on this session, I was struggling with what to say. My original application for this day went as follows, “Prayerfully ask the Lord to show you one person you can share your burdens with and then do it.” I struggled to write even that because I knew this was something I had failed to do in the past (praise God for the righteousness of Christ given to me, which means my sins do not change my standing before God, and for the conviction of the Holy Spirit toward repentance so that I may be trained and yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness).

I wrote that original application on a Friday morning. By Friday night my husband was in emergency surgery. This session came back to mind. I knew I should share our requests and needs with the church, but it was hard enough for me to ask my inner circle of immediate family and friends for help. If I shared, what would people think of me? Would I look weak? What if I said something wrong? Suffering is messy, I didn’t want other people to see me like that. However, I did reach out, and it was uncomfortable, it was messy, and some people saw me falling so utterly short of Christ’s perfection. But you know what? They didn’t care. They just loved me through it. They were kind, they were tenderhearted, and when necessary, they were forgiving towards my faults just as God in Christ has forgiven them theirs (Ephesians 4:32).

On Monday morning, we got our first bit of good news, and it wasn’t just my inner circle who were able to praise and thank God. It was our entire church. God brought this verse to my mind, “You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many” (2 Corinthians 1:11). I had shared our suffering with the church and now we could all share in praising God. The thanksgivings to God had increased to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 4:15). We will be studying “Growth and Glory” in Session 6, but I don’t want to leave this session without us realizing that sharing our joys and burdens with each other isn’t about us, and it isn’t even about the church. It is about the glory of God.

We have seen today that sharing one another’s burdens glorifies God. Please don’t misunderstand me. I do not mean you should share everything with everyone. There are certainly situations and struggles to share only with the Elders of your church or an accountability partner. But here is my challenge to you today: prayerfully ask the Lord to show you the believers whom you should share your current burdens with and then do it.

Session 5, Part 5:

Pray the Word: “I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs. When the humble see it they will be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive. For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners. Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them” (Psalm 69:30-34).

Hear the Word: Let’s continue looking at what the Word teaches about unity of the body of Christ in suffering. Look up each of the following passages and answer the questions.

1. Read Philippians 1:27-28a.

a. Paul tells the Philippians to let their manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether he comes to see them or is absent he may hear that they are doing what?

b. This unity of spirit and one-mindedness is present in the midst of doing and not doing what?

_____ for the faith of the gospel (1:27)
 _____ by you opponents (1:28)

2. Read 1 Peter 3:8. What does Peter instruct us to have?

3. Read Hebrews 10:32-34. How did the Hebrew believers demonstrate unity of spirit in suffering?

a. How did they suffer (10:32-33)

- b. Even when they themselves were not suffering they partnered with those so treated by doing what? (10:34)

4. Read Hebrews 13:3.

- a. What are we instructed to do?

- b. Why? Since....

5. Read 2 Corinthians 8-9.

- a. What was it that Paul wanted the Corinthians to know about the churches of Macedonia? (8:1-4)

- b. What was it that Paul wanted the Corinthian church to do? (8:7)

c. Why did he want them to do this? (8:8b, 8:10b, 24)

d. Is this a one-way street? (8:13-15)

e. How were they to give? (9:5b-7)

f. What will God do? (9:8-11a)

g. What is the purpose of all this? What does it result in? (9:11b-13)

Apply the Word: How are you doing at receiving? How do you respond when a believer wants to strive side by side with you in your season of suffering? Receiving help can be humbling, when rejecting help is rooted in pride. If you struggle with receiving from other believers, then write 2 Corinthians 9:11-15 on a note card or save it in your phone. When a believer offers help, read these verses, and do what the verses say: overflow in thanksgiving to God (9:12), glorify God (9:13), and pray for them because of the surpassing grace of God upon them (9:14).

How are you doing at striving side by side with fellow believers? Review what you have learned these last two weeks. In the space below, make a bullet point list of the specific things we have learned this week which we are called to do. Then consider ways in which you can fulfill that commission. For example, we have been called to pray for those who are suffering. So, on a piece of paper list everyone who has shared prayer requests with you this week. Then, spend a few minutes praying over each request. We are called to be compassionate and tenderhearted and to remember those suffering as if we were suffering with them. So, follow up with each person on your list. Send them a text, give them a call, ask them how they are doing and if there are any updates on their prayer request. We are called to contribute to each others needs. So, look at your list, are there any physical needs you can fill? Maybe bring a meal, or share some clothes your kids have outgrown, or mow a lawn. Ask what you can do and then go do it.

Session 5, Part 6:

Pray the Word: Look up Psalm 23 in your Bible. Even if you’ve had it memorized since you were a child, look it up. Read it slowly as a prayer to the Lord. Meditate on the promises of this Psalm and give all praise, gratitude, and glory to God.

Hear the Word: There is one final observation I want to make in this session.

1. In Part 2, we read Job 4-26 and I had you summarize what each friend said. Now I want you to consider Job's responses. How was Job feeling towards his friends?
2. Now read Job 42:7-9.
 - a. What did God want Job to do according to verse 8? I'm not asking what God wanted the friends to do. What did God want Job to do? (42:8)

- b. Did Job pray for his friends? (42:9)

- 3. Read Matthew 5:44-45. What does Jesus tell us to do?

- 4. Read Romans 12:14,16-21
 - a. What are we to do to those who persecute us? (12:14)

 - b. How are we to live with one another (12:16)

 - c. How are we to live? (12:17-18)

 - d. Are we to avenge ourselves? (12:19a)

 - e. Who are we to leave vengeance to? (12:19b)

 - f. So what are we to do for our enemy? (12:20)

 - g. Write 12:21 in the space below.

5. Read 1 Peter 3:9-17.

- a. What are the instructions given in this passage? (3:9a, 10b, 11, 14b, 15-16a)

- b. Why? What reasons are given specifically in this passage? (3:9b, 10a, 12, 13-14a, 16b-17)

6. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-12.

- a. What will happen to those who afflict you, those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus?

- b. Who is responsible for this, us or God?

7. What if we are hurt by someone who does know God? How do we handle pain caused by a brother or sister in Christ? Read the following passages and take note of what you learn.

- a. Read 2 Corinthians 2:1-11

b. Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

c. Matthew 18:15-22

d. Ephesians 4:32

Apply the Word: Joseph had suffered cruelly at his own brothers hands and yet in Genesis 50:20 he says, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.” Prayerfully consider today’s study. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there is any action you need to take in order to live according to the Scripture. Remember, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all (Romans 12:18). Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44).

Outline of Job

- I. Job 1-2: The Story of Job's Suffering
- II. Job 3: The Depth of Job's Suffering
- III. Job 4-26: Job's Three Friends Speak, Job Answers
 - a. 4-5 Eliphaz
 - b. 6-7 Job
 - c. 8 Bildad
 - d. 9-10 Job
 - e. 11 Zophar
 - f. 12-14 Job
 - g. 15 Eliphaz
 - h. 16-17 Job
 - i. 18 Bildad
 - j. 19 Job
 - k. 20 Zophar
 - l. 21 Job
 - m. 22 Eliphaz
 - n. 23-24 Job
 - o. 25 Bildad
 - p. 26 Job
- IV. Job 27-31: Job's Discourse
 - a. 27-28
 - b. 29-31
- V. Job 32-37: Elihu Speaks
- VI. Job 38-41: The LORD answers Job
- VII. Job 42: Job Repents, Job Prayers for his Friends, Job's Fortunes Restored

I would love to know you are doing the study! Send me an email by going to the contact page of www.Surpassing-Worth.com. If this study has blessed your life, please share it with a friend.

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