

Liberty Corner Bible Church

Worship at a Distance

May 31, 2020

Call to Worship

Prayer

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies.

I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at his command, and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food;
he formed the creatures with his word and then pronounced them good.

Lord, how your wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eyes,
if I survey the ground I tread or gaze upon the skies.

There's not a plant or flower below but makes your glories known,
and clouds arise and tempests blow by order from your throne;
while all that borrows life from you is ever in your care,
and everywhere that I can be, you, God, are present there.

Isaac Watts, 1715

Traditional English melody

All Praise to God Who Reigns Above

All praise to God, who reigns above, the God of all creation,
the God of wonders, pow'r, and love, the God of our salvation!
With healing balm my soul he fills, the God who every sorrow stills.
To God all praise and glory!

What God's almighty pow'r hath made his gracious mercy keepeth;
by morning dawn or evening shade his watchful eye ne'er sleepeth;
within the kingdom of his might, lo, all is just and all is right.
To God all praise and glory!

I cried to him in time of need: Lord God, O hear my calling!
For death he gave me life indeed and kept my feet from falling.
For this my thanks shall endless be; O thank him, thank our God, with me.
To God all praise and glory!

Johann J Schütz, 1675

Bohemian Brethern's Gesangbuch, 1566

Announcements

Norman Dietsch's Birthday: May 31

Prayer Needs

Reinhard Fabiunke
John Carpinski

Bruno & Iris Schwaigert
Johanna Majorana's family

Those affected by COVID-19
The Sisters

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture Reading

Job 9 & 10 (ESV)

9¹Then Job answered and said:

2["]Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? 3["]If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times. 4["]He is wise in heart and mighty in strength—who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?—5["]he who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, 6["]who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; 7["]who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars; 8["]who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; 9["]who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; 10["]who does great things beyond searching out, and marvelous things beyond number. 11["]Behold, he passes by me, and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him. 12["]Behold, he snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'

13["]God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab. 14["]How then can I answer him, choosing my words with him? 15["]Though I am in the right, I cannot answer him; I must appeal for mercy to my accuser. 16["]If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. 17["]For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause; 18["]he will not let me get my breath, but fills me with bitterness. 19["]If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him? 20["]Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse. 21["]I am blameless; I regard not myself; I loathe my life. 22["]It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked. 23["]When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. 24["]The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges—if it is not he, who then is it?

25["]My days are swifter than a runner; they flee away; they see no good. 26["]They go by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle swooping on the prey. 27["]If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face, and be of good cheer,' 28["]I become afraid of all my suffering, for I know you will not hold me innocent. 29["]I shall be condemned; why then do I labor in vain? 30["]If I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, 31["]yet you will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me. 32["]For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. 33["]There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both. 34["]Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me. 35["]Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.

^{10.1}"I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. ²I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me. ³Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked? ⁴Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? ⁵Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man's years, ⁶that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, ⁷although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand? ⁸Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. ⁹Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust? ¹⁰Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? ¹¹You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. ¹²You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. ¹³Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. ¹⁴If I sin, you watch me and do not acquit me of my iniquity. ¹⁵If I am guilty, woe to me! If I am in the right, I cannot lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and look on my affliction. ¹⁶And were my head lifted up, you would hunt me like a lion and again work wonders against me. ¹⁷You renew your witnesses against me and increase your vexation toward me; you bring fresh troops against me.

¹⁸"Why did you bring me out from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me ¹⁹and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave. ²⁰Are not my days few? Then cease, and leave me alone, that I may find a little cheer ²¹before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow, ²²the land of gloom like thick darkness, like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness."



Sermon

A View of Life With Only Natural Revelation

...if it is not he, then who is it? Job 9.24

As a Christian, have you ever thought about how the Bible provides insights into life that are not what others see? And not just life, but even who God is, and how the world works?

Perhaps you haven't been in the faith very long; perhaps you have not spent much time in the Bible. But it won't take too much time reading Scripture before you realize that there is a different view of the world presented in it. As a matter of fact, that really is the appropriate description—a world view. Everyone has one. Some are more accurate than others.

What Job “Knows” about God Apart from Scripture (9.2-35)

Keep in mind that Job is a contemporary with the patriarchs. He lives and dies long before Moses went up to Sinai to receive the Law, long before Moses penned the Pentateuch, long before the psalms were written and collected, long before the prophets preached and wrote.

***Sovereign & Unwavering*, 9.2-12**

In v. 2 Job is agreeing with Bildad from 8.20: God does not reject the blameless.

If someone wanted to argue with God as in a court of law (vv. 3-4), not even one try in 1000 will get a correct accusation against him. He is the ultimate in wisdom; he is almighty. No one is tough enough to stand before him.

God is powerful enough to move mountains, to shake the foundations of the earth, to keep the sun and stars from shining—it is his world, after all (5-7).

He stretched out the heavens, formed the constellations, and continues to do wonders in his world beyond our understanding (8-10).

God is elusive: there is evidence of his movements, yet no one has seen him, no one perceives his activity until it is already started.

Beyond Reproach, 9.12, 32-33

Not only can no one see what he is doing until it is already started, but no one can stop him, no one can successfully challenge him in his actions.

He isn't a man like Job, he is not an equal. There cannot be a successful lawsuit with such an adversary. And there is no one who could be an arbitrator between us, Job says. He is that sovereign—no one else will be able to intercede as if God and Job were on equal footing, equal before the eyes of the law.

So why would that make a difference?

What Job “Knows” about Himself and His Condition Apart from Scripture

Job knows that he is Righteous/“in the right”, at least in a relative way, 9.14-15, 20-21. The best that Job can hope for to choose his words carefully and hope for mercy, for God himself is the judge.

Even though Job is in the right and that he is not deserving of such treatment at God's hand, yet as soon as Job opens his mouth his own words would condemn him in God's law court; he may be blameless, yet not perfect in the absolute sense (vv. 20-21). Should there be a trial, God would not hold Job innocent (v. 28).

He knows that his life is very brief—the days are fleeing like a swift little boat, like the speeding dive of an eagle after its prey (25-26)

He knows that he can't put on a happy face in the midst of his suffering, because he is aware of his lack of innocence at some level (27-28).

He also knows that he is suffering greatly, and “knows” that God is the ultimate cause (chapter 10).

When we were in grade school, we used to make model boats out of kits. For a little while our models sat on our dressers or book shelves at home. But then we found another use for them. Rather than put them on display, we decided to actually sail them in the brook. But not content with that, we would load them with firecrackers of various sorts, light them and watch them explode as they sailed in the stream.

You may think that was foolish, we thought it great fun. What Job seems to be saying in this chapter is that what God is doing with Job is what we did with those boats. It is as though God created Job just so he could destroy him.

God fashioned him out of clay from the dust of the earth, with the end goal of returning him there. God watches him, hunts him down because of sin. Whether Job is innocent or not, he is still ultimately guilty. And then God even brings witnesses against him!

And so the big question at this point is, why did you even bother to allow me to be born, to punish me like this? Why don't you just leave me alone and let me die and lie in darkness?

All this is what Job "knows".

What Job and His Friends Are Lacking

Job and his friends—whether they are using Eliphaz's secret revelation or Bildad's wisdom of the ancients, are ultimately missing the bigger picture because they lack something that we have: special revelation. They are relying on natural revelation, having observed life in their world. Hence they come up with the Retribution Principle and faulty logic—that bad things only happen to bad people, and good things only happen to good people.

They cannot see any other option.

So what is natural revelation?

Natural Revelation

Natural revelation is where Job's perspective, and his friends' perspectives come from.

The pages of Scripture tell us what it is:

Psalm 19.1-6: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ²Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy, ⁶rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. The majesty of the heavens tell us the greatness of God—Job clearly understands that, as he has said in chapter 9.*

Natural revelation is what Paul appeals to on Mars Hill in Athens when he sees their idols, including the one that reveals that they are hedging their bets, not wanting to offend any of the deities:

Acts 17.18-31: *So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸for "'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.' ²⁹Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness*

by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Romans 1.18-20: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

Natural revelation can lead you to the knowledge of the existence and essential character of God—which is what Job is working with. But as we see in Job’s case, more is needed for the full picture—or at least, a fuller picture.

If we only had this natural revelation, the further we get from the act of creation, the further we get from even that knowledge of God, as Paul opens up in the rest of Romans 1. For as mankind rejects the knowledge that they have by their behavior, they lose, not gain, knowledge and awareness of life, right and wrong, and thus the societal collapse that mankind experiences.

Job and friends have natural revelation—nothing more.

And yet, they, and we need more. And God provides more—certainly for us, but in a way, he does so for them as well.

What Job Lacks: Special Revelation

Job is ascribing all of the actions in the universe to the sovereign, all-wise, all-powerful creator. And he is right. From his perspective, there are no “independent actors” who can do anything apart from God commanding them.

Sabeans don’t just attack servants & kill them, stealing oxen and donkeys.

Fire doesn’t just fall from heaven and destroy sheep and shepherds.

Chaldeans don’t just steal camels and kill servants.

Winds don’t just blow across the wilderness and knock down houses and kill a man’s children. And all of this in one day.

Skin lesions don’t just cover a person’s body all at once.

And for Job, from where he sits, there not only isn’t any arbitrator for him, there is no adversary, no accuser. Only a sovereign, untouchable God.

Perhaps you have noticed in the Psalms that when a person laments, it is with the suffering that comes from others, not from God. The appeal is to God to bring relief from what others have done. In the imprecatory psalms, the writers are not challenging God, they are appealing to God to deal with the adversaries.

If Job had the insight, the special revelation that we do, to know what was going on in the heavenly court of the King of the Universe when the adversary challenged God and targeted Job, his words would have been very different.

What we know from Scripture is that although God is indeed sovereign, there are adversaries and independent actors that He allows for his ultimate purposes. He does no evil, but in this fallen world he allows the Evil One to create chaos for the short term, because there will be relief, mercy and grace in the long term.

Job is quite right when he regards God as sovereign and above reproach. His error is not being able to see the larger picture.

And of course, he is not alone.

How many times have we heard people say that they don't understand why God took their child, their mate, their friend in death? Like Job, they are working not with Scripture, but with natural revelation. Often, it is corrupted natural revelation at that. And so they are very limited in their understanding of life and death and the work of God in his world.

And so the accusation that often follows the admission of their not understanding, is that God is cruel to do such a thing, as if death were the worst thing to happen, and if he were the immediate cause of death. So now they are mad at God, and refuse to acknowledge him. Not unlike a child in a tantrum striking out at the parent that is holding them to prevent a greater danger that the child cannot see.

In the natural world, with only natural revelation, we miss a great deal. We miss seeing more of God's attributes—not just his justice, his power, his sovereignty.

For us, we get to see what has gone on in the heavenly throne room that effects Job so greatly. We miss seeing how God does reveal himself to Job and his 3 friends by the end of this little book, even if he chooses to not answer all their questions.

We miss seeing his covenantal love for his people.

We miss the great mercies that are new every morning and that he extends to all of mankind, and especially to his people.

We miss seeing his saving grace.

We miss the blessing of the knowledge of the Resurrection of Christ, and the promise of our own resurrection.

We also miss God's revealing himself in the actions of human history, working out his plans for the good of his people and the glory of his name.

It is for that reason we gather each week—to worship, yes, that also. But to open the Scriptures to see the saving work of God in its pages. Even in the pages of a book like *Job*.

And maybe, especially in a book like *Job*.

May we not shut our eyes in foolishness to the revelation that God has provided for us. May we continue to search the Scriptures to see in redemptive history like *Job* the Smiling Face of our great Lord of all creation in the midst of the mystery of our own lives. We may not understand all the mystery, but we will find his love, grace and mercy in Christ.

Prayer

God Moves in a Mysterious Way

God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will.

*God of mercy! God of grace! Give us eyes to see!
Eyes to see your smiling face within the mystery,
Within the mystery!*

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face. [***Refrain***]

His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain. [***Refrain***]

William Cowper, 1774;

K Jason French, arr. Mark Rice

All Praise to God Who Reigns Above

The Lord forsaketh not his flock, his chosen generation;
he is their refuge and their rock, their peace and their salvation.
As with a mother's tender hand he leads his own, his chosen band.
To God all praise and glory!

Ye who confess Christ's holy name, to God give praise and glory!
Ye who the Father's pow'r proclaim to God give praise and glory!
All idols underfoot be trod, the Lord is God! The Lord is God!
To God all praise and glory!

Then come before his presence now and banish fear and sadness;
to your Redeemer pay your vow and sing with joy and gladness:
Though great distress my soul befell, the Lord, my God, did all things well,
To God all praise and glory!

Johann J Schütz, 1675

Bohemian Brethern's Gesangbuch, 1566

Benediction