



feeding . . . gathering . . . carrying . . . leading. (Isaiah 40:11)

August 27, 2013

Dear COSC family,

Sharing on Job as my commendable of choice on Sunday was an honor and a challenge. The man was extraordinary and the book named after him, challenging; challenging for multiple textual issues but challenging to us all in our walk with the Lord, particularly in seasons of pain. The fact that the author, date and genre of the book of Job all have uncertainties associated with them, serves to make it a text for everyman. We can all claim it for ourselves, we can all enter into it unabashedly and, as I sought to show through the lens of Healing Prayer, we can be helped by it.

If you were not in church on Sunday I suggest that a read through the book of Job is always going to be rewarding. Even though it is often categorized as a Book of Wisdom, it is full of folly, which is sort of the point really. When men talk out of their own thinking, false conclusions can be reached, as Job's Comforters illustrated all too well. In the Book of Job even the foolishness of men, including Job's desperate attempt to understand his own suffering, is expressed beautifully in exquisite poetry. Just enjoy the fabulous piece of literature it is. The preciseness of text, so complex and rich, is indeed what is needed in pain, a safe place of order. Apart from anything else God's amazing self-description in Chapters 40-41 is one of a kind in scripture and leaves one breathless at His splendor and majesty. Read it on any bad day you might be having and it will remind you that God is not on trial even when we are in trials.

I commend Job to you as a prime example of someone who found his healing in God. After extreme trauma, grief and physical pain, Job chooses to submit himself to God's truth about Himself. Job's image of God had been distorted through vision blurred by tears. Once that image is restored to truth, Job becomes for all history an inspiring example to us all. The display of God's holy power brings Job deep conviction of his own sin; but instead of it repelling Job, he is invited into that very holiness.

The enemy of our souls would always want to use suffering and trial to diminish our faith and, therefore, get at the glory of God. Instead God intends that we find redemption. Even in his darkest hour Job was able to proclaim; "My Redeemer lives". As we find out by the end of Job's story, God is not removed and distant from our pain, even when He seemed silent, he speaks from the pages of this unique book as He is described thirty-one times as El Shaddai, the Almighty God, who keeps covenant with us, who is faithful in His unceasing, nurturing care of us.

I commend Job to you as one who was a fulfillment of his own words in Job 14:7-9:

*For there is hope for a tree,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the soil,
yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put out branches like a young plant.*

Job's new growth in God was so significant it even eclipses his "happily ever after" ending.

We have met various commendables this summer. At the end of their stories they all had in common a deepened intimacy with The Great Commendable, the One and Only, Jesus, and His Heavenly Father.

Commending Him to you,
Celia

<http://www.christourshepherd.org/pastlet.htm> (and follow links to download MP3 audio of sermon)