



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

October 16, 2022

“The Book of Job: Part I”

A Different Kind of Wisdom Story: Job and the Suffering of the Innocent

We have seen wisdom in Biblical scripture such as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes stated in verses like “Do this and don’t do that, and you will lead a good life.” The book of Job is different: it is a wisdom story about one of the toughest questions of humankind: why do innocent people suffer for no apparent reason? In brief, the Book of Job tells us about Job, a highly regarded person in his community, who is struck by a series of horrible disasters and struggles with his faith in God to understand the reason for his misery.

An Invitation to Begin Reading

There may be a few brave-hearted who will sit down and consume Job in one sitting. Don’t despair if you are not one of them! Let’s think of Job as a play meant to be viewed as a series of scenes and acts, a good way to break this challenging story into manageable pieces. I invite you to read the first two chapters, the “prolog” or Act I of the play. Here are some notes which will help:

- There are two locations in the opening “scenes”: (1) earth and (2) heaven. Note how the action goes back and forth between these locations. A hint: all the earthly characters, including Job, remain ignorant of what is going on in heaven.
- The characters: “The Accuser” (Satan or ha-satan in Hebrew); God; Job; Job’s wife; Job’s three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

How do we Understand Job’s First Expression of his Suffering? Are his Friends Helpful?

At the end of chapter one we hear Job speak these famous lines: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gives, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Is this a statement of faith? A complaint? A confused utterance? Immediately after this Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar join Job amidst his suffering. Is simply sitting with him what Job needs at the moment?

A Powerful Prayer:

I pass along this prayer to those of us, probably most of us, who have faced unexplainable suffering at one time or another, or whose family or friends have:

"Blessing in the Storm"

I cannot claim to still the storm that has seized you,
cannot calm the waves that wash through your soul,
that break against your fierce and aching heart.

But I will wade into these waters,
will stand with you in this storm,
will say peace to you in the waves,
peace to you in the winds,
peace to you in every moment
that finds you still within the storm.

-- Jan Richardson

Let us keep in our prayers: comfort and recovery for Keith, Mary, and Sally; for Elizabeth’s health; thanks for Dawn’s, Margo’s, and Bill’s renewed health; pray for ourselves as we continue to seek and live by Divine Wisdom. Lord, hear our prayer!