



## Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

November 20, 2022

The Book of Job Part V: "Saying Goodbye to Job"

### **It's hard to say goodbye to the Book of Job at this point.**

Between the wisdom poem of Chapter 28 and the end of the book, there are several intriguing scenes:

- Job's 10<sup>th</sup> speech, chapters 29-31, Job continuing to demand a "trial" so he can argue his innocence, and his three friends stop talking.
- A new character, Elihu, chapters 32-37, tries to find a middle ground between Job and his three friends, claiming that suffering may not be an actual punishment for sin, but a warning.
- And then God appears in a whirlwind, chapters 38-41, and confronts Job.
- Job is vindicated and God restores his good fortune "twice as much as he had before" (42.10)

### **What did God say to Job? What are we to take from this story?**

You are not alone if you are not satisfied with the ending of the story. What questions were we asking? Remember this old saying: "if you don't want to listen to the answer, don't ask the question!" Some key points for reflection as we form answers to our questions:

- God's answer to Job does not explain why righteous people suffer. The cosmos is not designed to prevent righteous people from suffering. God asks for trust, not understanding, and states the cosmos is founded on his wisdom, not his justice. (God points out humankind's feeble understanding of God's creation. See chapters 38 and 39 especially.)
- Human pain and suffering do not always happen as a clear consequence of anyone's sin. There may be a reason, but there may not be. God himself said that Job's suffering was not warranted for "any reason" (Job 2:3)
- So, the book doesn't unlock the puzzle of why bad things happen to good people. Rather, it does invite us to trust God's wisdom when we encounter suffering rather than trying to figure out the "reasons" for it. When we search for reasons, we tend to either simplify God like the friends or, like Job, accuse God based on limited evidence.

### **We live in an incredibly complex, amazing world, which we cannot always explain or understand.**

When all is said and done, the Book of Job invites us to honestly bring our pain, our grief, our doubts and fears to God and to trust that He cares, realizing that He knows exactly what He's doing!

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### **The Serenity Prayer**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

**Let us keep in our prayers:** Elizabeth, Keith, Mary, and Sally; for those affected by severe weather; for the hungry and homeless; give us strength to resist our culture of confrontation; pray for ourselves as we continue to seek and live by Divine Wisdom. Lord, hear our prayer!