

“After” - sermon for October 28, 2018

Psalm 34, Job 42:10-13, Mark 10:46-52

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, *the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.* 11 *All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house.* They comforted and consoled him . . . 16 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17 And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

+++++

The Book of Job uses a word in verses 10, and 16 that we should consider: “AFTER.” From the very beginning of his trouble, chapter 1 and verse 20 we read:

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship.

From the very beginning to the end of his trouble, Job was perfect. He was a complete and whole human being, because he acknowledge God’s sovereignty, God’s right, God’s ownership of him and all that he possessed, and he concluded acknowledging God’s sovereignty over his friends

and his family. He began in worship, and he ended in worship. After-when it was all over, we read in verse 7 the first AFTER:

7 After the Lord had said these things to Job, After the Lord had said these things—We must turn to God’s word, not the pastor’s words, not the advice and comfort of friends, not our experience, nor our tradition, not the history of God’s dealing with us—but what is God’s word for right NOW? How is God directing us in the AFTER? After God spoke correction to Job, God said to Job’s friend Eliphaz the Temanite--

“I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. 8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.” 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the Lord told them; and the Lord accepted Job’s prayer.

So not only was there an after for Job. Not only is there an after for the person who has demonstrated faith, who has endured challenge to that faith and not sold out, not betrayed, not given up, but there is an AFTER for the sinner.

There is an AFTER for those of us who cried out in faithlessness. There is an AFTER for those of us who were overcome with anger and fear. There is an AFTER for those of us who gossiped or gave bad advice, or were guilty of backbiting, of criticizing and finding fault with Job when he was down. God did not abandon Job's friends and neither can we. We are to lift each other up—even after we have fallen, fallen short of God's righteousness, justice and love, fallen down from life's challenges and pressures.

With God there is always an after. But they had to go back to Job so that he, whom they had found so much fault with, whom they had so roundly critiqued and written off, they restore THEM to God.

This is God's way. God's AFTER is always a surprise, but it is also a win-win. Everybody gets blessed in God's after. Everybody gets restored I God's after. Everyone finds acceptance, forgiveness and love in God's after, and everyone is called back to worship, to faith, and to completion.

No matter how far away you may feel from God, how down and out, how abandoned and shunned by others, like Bartimaeus, blind and ignored, if you will yet reverence God and call out to him you will hear: "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

When Bartimaeus heard the voice of God in Jesus's call, he threw off his cloak, he dropped the weight that he had been carrying on his heart, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. Do you hear the AFTER call? Can you sense that there is an AFTER for you as it was for Job and his friends. Then get up and

come to his throne of life, which Christ has already built in your soul, and experience your AFTER.

The Psalmist in #34 joyfully calls upon us to sing:
8 Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

All you will need is a taste of your AFTER and you will see the goodness of God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.