

Time of Grace Ministry
When Life Gets Hard
Book of Job
January 29, 2017

PASTOR JESKE

One of the new features at Time of Grace that we're really pretty excited about is a digital series of devotions that we call "Your Time of Grace." There are half a dozen or so younger pastors – younger than me, at least – who have been preparing online and digital and Facebook-type devotions. They come in a set of five, one for each day of the work week, and each one's only about three minutes long and they're a great way to start your day. And they have found great success and enjoyment for the people who have subscribed to that service.

We are absolutely thrilled to have with us here at Time of Grace today, one of those young speakers who's a pastor in Florida. His name's Pastor Jon Enter and we're delighted to have him here with us today. Welcome, Jon.

PASTOR ENTER

Thank you. It's incredible to be here.

PASTOR JESKE

We're glad you're here.

PASTOR ENTER

Thank you.

PASTOR JESKE

I'm a little curious – today, we're going to be seeing in a few minutes, your series that you did on the book of Job.

PASTOR ENTER

Yes.

PASTOR JESKE

And the book of Job is kind of a dark story and it seems like a little bit of a downer, so I've got to know – why did you pick Job?

PASTOR ENTER

I picked Job because Job's real. He's going through pain, emotion, like we all do. Life doesn't always turn out the way that we want it to, and yet, Job is crying out to God – not always against God; most of the time it's not against God. He's just saying, "God, I need you, but this doesn't make sense." And so often, when life doesn't make sense, there's only one place to turn. And even in that pain and that darkness, Job found light and hope in God.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm. Do you think that has relevance for people today?

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely. Because in the world we live in, sin is growing, pain is immense, and so, everyone needs a place to turn to. And they can relate to Job because Job just lays it out there and we need to lay out our sins and our needs before God and Job's a great example of that. And God gives peace to Job at the end of the book and that's what we all desire and what we all need.

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah. This story of Job is kind of personal for you and your wife, isn't it?

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely. Job lost 10 children; my wife and I lost a child. And it was a – man, a time of just deep darkness for us. And for about 34 days straight, I couldn't make it through the day without crying. My wife said it took her a year and a half to kind of come out of the darkness. And so, we felt like Job felt.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm. As we watch this first episode, you're going to notice some dramatizations where we actually brought in some people to kind of illustrate the things that Job and his suffering wife were going through.

PASTOR ENTER

Now, if you don't know Job, Job had it made. I mean, life was good! He was rich beyond rich. The Bible says he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camel, a thousand oxen, 500 donkeys. On top of that, he was married. He had 10 children and the love and respect of everyone that was around him. Then, in the course of one afternoon, it was all gone; taken away from him. Servant after servant came running over to Job and said, "Remember those sheep? They're gone. The camels? Gone. Oxen? Gone. Donkeys? Gone. The servants either killed or hauled away; they're gone." And then one more servant came with the worst news of all: His 10 children died in an accident.

We read that and it just begs the question: Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people? And you see, that question right there is the reason so many people aren't believers in Christ because they say, "How can your God, who you say is so loving and so full of mercy, allow bad things to happen to good people?"

Well, the answer to that question is actually two-fold. First of all, the evil that is in this world is not from God. When God created this world, it was absolutely perfect. Adam and Eve, in their will, chose to disobey God. They ate that fruit, the forbidden fruit that God said, "Don't you dare eat of it," and yet, they did. And they broke this world; the perfection was gone and sin was upon us. That's not from God; that's actually from the human race. But yet, God in love, he holds back that evil and if he didn't, it would be only evil all the time. And every once in a while, he lets a little bit of it through – just for a short time – to remind us that this life is not really the good life. The good life, the best life, is the eternal life waiting for us in heaven.

We hear this in 1 Corinthians 10: "God is faithful. He will not let you tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you're tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

Whenever that pain hits you in your life, God says, "I am going to be there. I know you'll need my strength." He gives you a way out and that way is – well, it's Jesus. I mean, look at Job. His life was absolutely amazing; blessed beyond comprehension from God with all those animals and all those servants that were there. And yet, he lost it all and it was horrible. But that was just for a season and just for a time.

You see, the Bible, at the end of Job, says that after that point, whatever he had before, God doubled it. When God allows the evil of this world to hit you, it's just for a time. It's just for a season. So if you're feeling pain right now, you're in your season. Cry out to God and know that he is right there with you. May this message from Job, this lesson, give you comfort in your life, no matter what it is that you're going through right now.

PASTOR JESKE

You suspect that there was some anger with Job and, especially, his wife?

PASTOR ENTER

How couldn't you be tempted to fall into that? When you lose absolutely everything and there's no reason, rationale, behind it?

PASTOR JESKE

Well, God could have stopped those things, couldn't he?

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely. In his power and his might? In a second; in an instant. And that's what makes it so difficult saying, "Why, God?"

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah.

PASTOR ENTER

"Why did you let this happen?"

PASTOR JESKE

It makes you suspect either he's not as powerful as he claims to be or he's not as smart as we like to think he is or he doesn't love us anywhere near as much as we had been led to believe. One of those three things – or maybe all three – he had to feel.

PASTOR ENTER

Yes.

PASTOR JESKE

So I can imagine if Job's wife went off on him, I find it hard to kind of judge the woman.

PASTOR ENTER

Yeah, we need to remember that truth; that she went through everything he went through. And for some reason, we push that aside but yes, she was struggling in the midst of all the loss she was in.

PASTOR JESKE

Okay, I kind of get a little personal now.

PASTOR ENTER

Okay.

PASTOR JESKE

As you and your wife went through your season of loss, were you ever tempted to be angry with God?

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely. Absolutely. There was no explanation. And then when all of a sudden we got that word that we lost him –

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm-hmm.

PASTOR ENTER

We instantly felt that. That is a problem that I think all of us fall into; a temptation we all fall into. When life doesn't go the way we want it to, we think we're bigger than God and we've got a bigger plan than God. And when our plans don't match his plans, that's one of the first places we can slip into is anger with God: Why didn't you do this for me? Very me-centric.

We see how God allows some peril and problems to come into our lives. But God is always there to give us the strength that we need. Today, we're going to look at Job's wife and the reaction that she had to the pain that came into both of their lives. Now, before we see her words, I need to remind you of something. The same thing that happened to Job, happened to his wife. They lost absolutely everything in the course of one afternoon. Thousands and thousands of animals that they had were wiped away and gone. And worse than that, their 10 children died in an accident. Now, it doesn't make it right what she's about to say but it sure makes it real.

Job though, Job reacted in amazing faith and trust in God. When they lost all that, Job looked heavenward and he looked through eyes of faith to the Lord and said, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. May the name of the Lord be praised." Job's wife didn't react the same way. Instead, she looked at her husband who was trusting the Lord and looked at him and said, "Curse God and die."

Could you imagine hearing something so hurtful from your spouse; the one that you love so much that you married? And actually, maybe you don't need to imagine that; maybe you are stuck in a marriage where someone is just mean, vile, hurtful, and you're struggling to show that love back. And maybe for you it's not just in your marriage; maybe for you it's at work. You've got that unrelenting boss who just won't stop beating down on you or the co-worker, for some reason, has it out for you and just goes after you and after you and just can't get him to stop. How do you show kindness back to them when they're so mean?

Job gives us an amazing example. Him living out his faith when his wife said something so hurtful, you'd think he had reacted in anger. But he didn't; his faith shined through. He said this to his wife in Job 2: "Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" What amazing words! Words of faith to say even in pain, should I not accept the good and the bad? And see, the way Job reacted to his wife is the same way that God reacts to you. He forgives you; changes your life so that you do not have to react that way again because you don't have the pressure of sin on you, the pressure of the stress of that wrong reaction. You have Christ in your heart and it's Christ that's in your heart as he is. He changes how you can react to others, as Job reacted to his wife. May that give you peace in your heart if you've got guilt right now over how you've

reacted in anger to someone else and then give you the strength to react as Job did; to accept their good and their bad and to pray for those who are hurting you.

PASTOR JESKE

As we are overhearing the bitter words coming out of the wife of Job, this can have an impact on our family relationships, too, can't it?

PASTOR ENTER

In our own home, there was a lot of strife and a lot of stress that was there because – and my wife dealt with it like a mom would and I was dealing with it like a husband would; trying to lead the family through it. And we didn't always match up perfectly and that created some difficulties in our house.

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah. I imagine you want to try to be a role; like the guy is supposed to be the rock, right? Did you feel like a rock all the time?

PASTOR ENTER

No, no. I tried to be Mr. Macho and I would hide my tears. At night, I would go in the bedroom and have my kind of alone time and I was, you know, doing work for church, but I would just breakdown. And my wife wasn't seeing that side of me because I was trying to be the rock for her and I kind of think she was feeling like, "Where's Jon's emotions? Where's his brokenness on this?" And finally, I just let it out before her one day and it was amazing how much that brought us that much closer together.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm.

PASTOR ENTER

She saw my strength in my weakness, which, as a man, doesn't make sense.

PASTOR JESKE

Makes no sense.

PASTOR ENTER

No, it doesn't. I think just simply asking the question: "Are you okay? What can I do?" as opposed to suffering in silence, in our own corners, or other sides of the bedroom or crying on the side and wanting to not be weak in front of the other person and just being real with one

another and just saying, “Honey, what can I do to help you?” is a question that anyone – man, female, man, woman – you know, wants to be able to hear.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm-hmm.

PASTOR ENTER

Now, we’re looking at Job’s friends. They hear that Job’s in a lot of pain. A friend comes in when everyone else goes out and Job’s friends, at first, come in; they look like they’re going to give him the peace that he needs. But they say nothing! For seven days, they just look at Job rolling around on the ground in pain and agony of losing all of his children, losing all of his animals, his livelihood, and now boils have set in on his flesh; he’s scraping his arms with broken pottery to try and get relief. And his friends just stare at him!

Then, when his friends finally do speak, what they say is something not helpful, at all. They basically say, “Job, you must be so awful, have done something so horrible in your past, that God is now coming after you and he’s punishing you for the wrong that you’ve done.” That’s something that we say to ourselves a lot. When we’re in pain and we’re in anguish, we tend to look to our past and go, “What have I done so horrible in my past that now, now God is coming after me? You know, it’s probably cause I got drunk in high school, got drunk in college. That’s why this is happening to me now.” Or, “Because I was intimate with someone who was not my wife, now that’s the reason I don’t have intimacy with my wife or maybe that’s why I can’t have children with my wife.”

That’s not how God works. God does not hold back sin to punish you later. No perfect parent or any parent would do that. Would that make any sense for me? I have four daughters and let’s say one of my daughters does something just mean to her sister; makes her cry and break down in tears. And then when I’m talking to that same daughter, she disrespects me as I’m trying to teach her, she back talks me and then grabs one of mommy’s china plates and just smashes it onto the ground. Would it make any sense if I waited two or three months, my daughter’s upstairs sleeping, and I burst into the room and wake her up and start scolding her about how naughty she had been and then put her in timeout and say, “Now you think about what you’ve done!” Would that make any sense? No. No parent would do that.

Neither does your Father in heaven. He doesn’t stockpile sin. In fact, what he does is the exact opposite. As you and I confess that sin and wrong, whatever the wickedness is that we’ve done in our life, he forgives it and he forgets it. It’s exactly what he says to you here in Hebrews 8: No matter how bad you’ve done wrong, no matter what wicked or wretched thing you’ve done in your life, you think, “God could never love me.” He says, “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

God does not stockpile your sins. Jesus is not out to get back at you. Jesus is out to get you back to him. Please share today’s message with someone you know who’s blaming themselves of their past; of something Jesus has already forgiven them of.

PASTOR JESKE

Job's friends came to try to help him out but I don't think he got a lot of help out of his friends, did he?

PASTOR ENTER

No, his friends were there to help him and they see him rolling around on the ground and they don't show him any love or care. Instead, they start accusing him. "Clearly, Job, you must have done something wrong. Clearly, you are a wretched, awful person. You hid it from us but God knows and that's why this is on you." That was the message they were grilling him with.

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah. Why don't you like that advice? I don't think Job liked it, either.

PASTOR ENTER

No, who would want that? But we do it even ourselves.

PASTOR JESKE

Seriously?

PASTOR ENTER

Yeah.

PASTOR JESKE

So tell me the truth – did you start beating yourself up looking for causes in your own life for your personal disaster?

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely. Absolutely. Instantly. From the immediate – did something just happen? What could we have done differently this last week? You know, is God mad at me? Is God after me? Or maybe it was something I did even decades earlier and it's an endless rat race and it puts you down a hole and it's never a good pathway to go and that's not how our God works.

PASTOR JESKE

No.

PASTOR ENTER

But yet, as a pastor, human being as I am, I went that way.

Today, we're looking at the fact that even when we lose control in our life, God is still in control and that can give us comfort and we need that because we're creatures of habit. We go and do the same things over and over again. Even if you don't have assigned seats at the office or at your school, you typically have the same seat that you want to sit in and when you sit there, you feel nice and comfortable. We order the same food at restaurants constantly because we know, "Well, I like that!"

See, the devil knew that about us and so he wanted to use it against us and he did that with Job. The devil went to God and said, "The reason why Job loves you so much, Lord, is cause he's so comfortable. He's got the good life, the cush life. He's rich, he's wealthy, he's well-loved, he has a big family. You take that away from him, God, and he is going to falter. He's going to fall apart. He likes to be in control."

So, sure enough, the devil took everything away from Job and Job fell hard though, too. Later on in the book, he's struggling. He says he feels like he's in shackles, chained up, because he's no longer in control in his life. You and I can have peace and comfort in our life as Job eventually found out, as well; that even when we lose control, God is still in control. And when things don't go the way we want to, God's got a purpose and he has a reason behind it.

I learned that in a very unique way with my wife. I'm a very punctual person; I like to be on time wherever we go to. And my wife and I were finally going to go out on a date; we had to be at the restaurant at an exact time. And my wife is a beautiful woman who doesn't take a long time getting ready but for some reason, this day she was mad at her hair; having this big fight with her hair in the bathroom getting ready. And I'm like this caged animal out in the living room saying, "Let's go! Let's go!" and I was losing control and I didn't like the feeling. Finally, we leave about 10 minutes late and we're driving down the road as fast as we can to try to make it to our reservation and we came across this horrible, horrible car accident; maybe five or 10 minutes old. And it hit me: Maybe that's the reason why my wife struggled with her hair that day, which is out of character for her. Maybe God was in control when I was out of control in order to keep us completely safe. And it changed my perspective. God used that moment to change my outlook. I still am a very punctual person; I don't like it when we're late. But for some reason, when it happens that way, when we're late, I can say, "Well, God had his purpose. He had his plan. He's always in control."

So when things go out of control in your life, don't sweat it. Don't get stressed out. God is still in control; always watching out over you. Always working for you. And that purpose is to always bless you. So today, as you go about your life and things go out of control, have that trust in Christ that he is still watching out over you.

PASTOR JESKE

You know, I'm a little bit of a control freak. I don't like to admit it but I don't like feeling weak and, especially, over an extended period of time. I've got to imagine Job, especially as a guy trying to be the "guy," trying to be the leader –

PASTOR ENTER

Yes.

PASTOR JESKE

Especially, because, you know, he had a lot of employees, he was like a business, he was the business boss, he had a large family, he was the patriarch. What do you think it did to his head to sit there scratching himself and be basically helpless for a while?

PASTOR ENTER

He lost it. I would think we all would; we all have our sense of control. We sit in the same places at church, we go to the same restaurants, we order the same food at the same restaurants. We like to have control, as big as that is or as small as that is. And Job completely lost it.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm. Can I get personal again?

PASTOR ENTER

Yeah.

PASTOR JESKE

What did it do to your head to realize that as you had lost a child, here was a problem you couldn't fix?

PASTOR ENTER

I'm a fixer. I've always been a fixer and I'm a fast fixer and there was no fast fix to this. And so, that was so frustrating to me and that's what brought me, I think – I can't say "more" because the loss of our son was the worst – but that's what also really brought me deep on my knees because I wasn't in control and I liked being in control. I think we all like to be in control.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm-hmm. In other words, it's possible that God had a kind agenda in allowing you to be weak for you – for a long season.

PASTOR ENTER

Hmm.

PASTOR JESKE

What did that do for you and for your wife?

PASTOR ENTER

I'm a much better husband now because I'm a better listener now. I'm a better dad now because I cut time off of work to get home to my kids because I was a control freak, you know, at church and do, do, do and find my worth in my work. And all of a sudden, that changed.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm-hmm.

PASTOR ENTER

Completely changed. And so, I'm carving out more time for my family, as a lot of young professionals don't and I wasn't doing, because we want to be in control.

Job's been in a lot of pain; unimaginable pain. To lose absolutely everything he has in his household, to lose all 10 of his children in an accident, to lose the respect of his wife and his friends, and then to have his health be lost, as well. He cried out to God: "Enough! I just can't do it anymore, God. I don't see your power. I don't see your love. Show yourself to me!"

I've had my breaking point in my life; I'm sure you have, too. You've cried out to God: "This doesn't make sense! This isn't you. This isn't the God that I love and that I know loves me. Show me, God!" And see, when Job cried out to God that way, God answered him but probably in a way you wouldn't expect. God asked Job, "Job, where were you? Where were you when I made the world? When I laid out its foundations? When I made the mountains to go this high and the rivers and streams to go here? Set the stars in their place? Where were you when I did that? I am powerful and I am mighty." And you would agree and go, "Yeah. Yeah, God, that shows your power but how? How does that show your love? Why would you answer Job that way?"

Well see, we look at 1 Peter and 1 Peter connects the creation to God's love for us. "He," it says, and that's Jesus, our Savior, "He was chosen before the creation of the world." Let that sink in. Before God made the world, he knew that we would break it. He knew that we would sin. He knew that he had to choose to send his Son to die on the cross to be our Savior before the creation of the world and yet, he still made the planet, made us to be here. That shows his love. Why would he make us even though he knew that we would sin and we would disappoint him?

Well, before my wife and I had children, we had our cool cards. Oh, we could do whatever we want, whenever we wanted. We'd be sitting there at home at night just kind of bored on the

couch and I'm like, "You want to go out?" "Sure!" And then we had children and that is all changed. I've been pooped on, I've been peed on, I've been thrown up on. But if you're a parent, you know what I'm about to say next: I wouldn't change it for the world. Because when I get home and that key hits the door, I can already hear my children on the inside screaming, "Daddy's home!" and they run and they throw their tiny little arms around my neck and give that big, beautiful hug and suddenly, it's all worth it.

God the Father thinks the exact same thing of you. That you are worth it; worth all of the parenting, all of the work with you. When you make decisions and disappoint him, he still loves you. Still cares for you. And still has you as his top priority in his life. May that give you peace, not just today, but throughout your entire life. That your Father in heaven cares for you.

Please share this message. Share it with anyone whose hearts are hurting to give them encouragement; to lift them into Jesus.

PASTOR JESKE

You know, I'd like to think I'm a patient person but I think if I had been in Job's sandals, I think my patience would have gone to school.

PASTOR ENTER

And you see Job lose his patience with God and cry out towards the end of the book against God, saying, "God, I don't get it. I don't get you. Why?"

PASTOR JESKE

God, at the end, he had a little conversation with his suffering servant and before he brought all of the healing and all of the wealth and gave him all his stuff and his family back, before he did that, he had a few things he wanted Job to know.

PASTOR ENTER

Yeah, he said, "Job, look at the world I made. This world is breaking down but I will restore you, Job. I will take your broken body and I'll make certain that you know that in me, you will live. Live forever."

PASTOR JESKE

He wasn't going to be resurrected in the sad, diseased –

PASTOR ENTER

Of course.

PASTOR JESKE

state as he was scratching himself. When God puts us back together, we're going to be our ideal selves again.

PASTOR ENTER

Absolutely; bodies of perfection with the perfect One in glory.

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah, you know, not only are our grandmothers who died, you know, frail and with tired and elderly bodies, they're not going to come back as –

PASTOR ENTER

No.

PASTOR JESKE

Ninety-three year olds again. But also, little ones who passed away –

PASTOR ENTER

Yes.

PASTOR JESKE

Are not going to be babies in eternity. They're going to come back according to the beautiful blueprints that God had drafted for them.

PASTOR ENTER

And what a beautiful thing: To hug my son, hug my grandpa, hug all my loved ones in heaven and be hugged by Christ, the Almighty.

PASTOR JESKE

Yeah, and he'll be big like you. Won't that be insane?

PASTOR ENTER

It will be amazing, yeah. Absolutely.

It's an incredible joy to be here at Time of Grace and add my voice into the ministry that is here and just share the passion I have in serving Christ.

PASTOR JESKE

Hmm. Would you like to pray with me today? Let's pray for Pastor Jon and for all people who are going through a Job-time right now.

Dear Lord, our Heavenly Father,

Please look with blessing and kindness upon Pastor Jon, upon his ministry in West Palm Beach, but all the work that he does in mass media to bless and anoint his words so they bring comfort and encouragement to people who are suffering like Job.

We pray today, also, for all of the people who've been hammered in their lives with some kinds of suffering and disaster; who personally are experiencing terrible health, who've lost family members, or who are suffering terrible health or financial stress. Lord, be with them as you were with Job and give them your words of comfort in their season of waiting and suffering. Let them know of your almighty power. Let them know of your wisdom; that you have a design and a plan for them. Let them know to be patient and wait for your season of relief to come. And let them know, most of all, that they have a Savior in Jesus, your Son, a Redeemer who's alive; who himself suffered horribly, died, was buried, and rose again and who's coming back. And in the end, we, too, will stand upon the earth and see him with our eyes. Help us to have Job's confidence in our soon return of our Savior Jesus. We eagerly look forward to his coming.

Thank you, Lord, for the comfort of your word. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

For Time of Grace, I'm Pastor Mark Jeske, here with Pastor Jon Enter, celebrating God's amazing grace with you and it all starts now.



TIME OF GRACE®

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When Life Gets Hard

1 Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Job 2:10: “He replied, ‘You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?’ In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.”

Hebrews 8:12: “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

1 Peter 1:20: “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”

Job 19:25-27: ²⁵ I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. ²⁶ And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷ I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”

Points to Ponder

1. Why do bad things happen to good people?
2. Can you understand the anger that Job’s wife felt? How did Job react out of faith and trust in God?
3. Does God remember particularly bad sins that we’ve committed and then punish us for them later? How *does* his forgiveness work?

4. When things seem out of control in your life, of what can you remind yourself? And how does God feel about you even if you don't feel so great about yourself? In what major way did he show you that love?

5. Read Job 19:25-27. After all of the stress and trials in Job's life, what amazing testimony was he still able to make? Realize that this is absolutely the truth for you as well!

Like Job in the Bible, our lives don't always turn out the way we want them to. We too are touched by death, job loss, tragedy, divorce, and other troubles. But like Job, we can turn to God in our pain and darkness and find light and hope. He has all power; he is in control; he has a plan for each of us. And he already carried out the ultimate plan of salvation for us.

What else does God say?

1 Chronicles 16:11: Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.

Isaiah 43:1: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.