

Session 3: The Question of Job

WHAT WE FOUND

- The book certifies Job's character twice before the catastrophe (1:1, 1:8), God's own testimony included, then certifies his response after it (1:22). The tidy explanation, he must deserve it, is ruled out on page one.
- Job mourned fully and worshiped fully in the same breath: the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.
- The friends' finest hour was seven days of silence (2:13). Their theology failed the moment they began explaining. (Chapters 32 to 37 belong to a fourth speaker, Elihu, not to the three.)
- God's own verdict (42:7-8): the friends have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. God vindicates Job over the friends, and not every sentence Job shouted: the whirlwind had already rebuked him for words without knowledge (38:2), and Job retracted (42:3, 6). God receives honest speech and purifies what is wrong in it; he will not accept tidy defenses built on false premises. And the wounded man became the intercessor for his comforters.
- Jesus twice severed the link between suffering and blame: John 9:1-3 and Luke 13:1-5.
- God never answered the question Job asked, and Job still said: now my eye sees you (42:5). Consequences remain real; the forbidden move is inferring someone's guilt from the fact or severity of their suffering.

THREE VOICES WORTH KEEPING

St. Gregory the Great (*Moralia in Job*, in summary): he wrote the Church's most influential Job commentary while ill himself, and said his own scourging helped him understand scourged Job from the inside.

St. John Chrysostom (his biographers' account, in summary): he protested his unjust exile to the end, and ancient tradition preserves his last words on the road as: Glory to God for all things. Protest and doxology can live in the same saint.

St. Teresa of Ávila (*The Book of Her Life*, in summary): she wrote her own life partly so that others in long illness and dryness would not conclude God had abandoned them: closeness to God does not exempt anyone from trials, and the soul should keep speaking to him plainly through them.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Practice one shiva skill: in one hard conversation, nothing prescriptive. Presence, not explanation.
2. Memorize Job 19:25 exactly, and pray it once at night before sleep.
3. If your sealed sheet from Week 1 is still at home, bring it next week.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth."

Job 19:25

Before next session: Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Bring your sealed sheet from Week 1 if you still have it.

Catechism references for this session: CCC 164, 272-274, 309-314