

# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY APRIL 5, 2020

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## "Learning to Wait on Our Big God"

Based on job 42:1-6

*What God does in us while we wait is as important as what it is we are waiting for. Waiting is not just something we have to do while we get what we want. It is part of the process of becoming what God wants us to be.*

~John Ortberg

Job was about as perfect an imperfect human can be in an imperfect world. From the outside looking in, he had it all: sheep and cows, land and servants, family and friends, food and gold and many tents.

- He was wealthy.
- He was respected.
- He was fair and honest.

From the inside looking out, though, the place where it is often easier to hide our shadows and secrets, things were looking pretty squeaky clean as well. Job was humble in spirit.

- He gave to the poor.
- He shared his affluence with a "no-strings-attached" generosity.
- He honoured his faith, visited the temple regularly, and offered the required sacrifices.
- He and YHWH were 'good in the hood' so to speak.

- He knew it. YHWH knew it.

**"I KNOW  
THAT YOU  
CAN DO ALL  
THINGS;  
NO  
PURPOSE  
OF YOURS  
CAN BE  
THWARTED.  
~JOB 42:1**

Which is why it was such a shock to the community when Job's world began to crumble around him. Not quickly, in some great horrific and traumatic event few ever recover from, but slowly and painfully. With almost morbid fascination, Job's friends and business associates and neighbours watched as one thing after another was taken away, destroyed, or died before him. His wealth quickly vanished, and his friends just as quickly. People avoided him on the street for fear of catching whatever bad karma or sorcery had landed on his doorstep. Then they took his doorstep.

Job was bewildered. Job was filled with pain and sorrow and grief and loss. But each time something was taken away, it seemed he would find his balance once again. Even when finally, he was forced to live away from the village, covered in sores, hungry, despised, and lost.

That is not to say that he was not angry; that he did not cry out to his God in frustration; that he did not become lost in the fog of depression and feelings of abandonment. He did.

New voices around pleaded with him to let go of his silly notions of faith, and urged him to turn his back on the world and on God. Time and time again, Job would come to the edge of letting go and giving over to the wills of the world. But...

- Something held him back.
- Something made him take a step back.
- Someone was quietly urging him to come back.

Come back?  
How could he come back to a God he had never left, he wondered?

**Had he not been a 'model' man of the faith?**

**Had ne not been richly blessed because of his faithfulness?**

What Job did not know, of course, was that a bigger game was at play, and he was the pawn caught in the middle. Job was the test subject, the guinea pig, between good and evil, between light and dark, a playing out of a hunch from the dark forces of the world, that when all 'good' was taken from Job, he would let go of 'good' as well. He would let go of God. But Job did not let go.

- He thought about it.
- He moved towards it a few times.
- He fascinated about it.
- But Job did not let go.
- Job waited instead, and listened to the stillness and the silence within.

And as Job waited, he discovered something about himself. He discovered that it was possible to get even closer to God than he had thought. Job discovered that despite all the right moves, with all the right humility, and all the right sincerity, and all the right generosity, it was not until this moment that he felt YHWH intricately wrapped around his very essence, with a visceral depth and understanding he had never experienced before. And it gave him pause.

*My ears had heard of you*

*but now my eyes have seen you. (v5)*

"Lord, I thought I knew you. I thought I knew all that there was to understand about You and about You in me. But I was wrong. I had barely scratched the surface."

*"Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. (v3)"*

Today, we begin a Holy Week journey that will become darker before light returns. It would be easier to skip over these coming days and return next Sunday to the joy and celebration of an empty tomb, of new beginnings, and salvation given. But the coming days begs us to take a journey that travels to dark places, to move into a place within:

- Where all the toys of the world don't matter
- Where all our plans and contracts and bargains are torn up
- Where all the arrogance of things we thought we knew are stripped away
- Where all the moments of self-fulfilling pride are shattered
- Until there is just you, and God, and the stillness, and the silence.

This is what Christ felt that day as he mounted the donkey and rode triumphant into the city. He did not hear the

trumpets or get caught up in the parade atmosphere. He nodded sadly to the misunderstanding crowd who thought he rode into the city for battle.

For the battle within had already begun. And Christ was bracing himself:

- For the beatings that would come,
- For the scorn and ridicule of the crowd,
- For the support of friends slipping away
- For the death that would shatter his body, and attempt to break His spirit, as the world had attempted to break Job.

As we continue through perilous days in our time, and have been forced in many ways to slow down, change our routines, and linger in uncertainty, we find ourselves perhaps for the first time: feeling the heaviness of Christ's heart as he entered Jerusalem for the last time, pushing back the fear of tomorrow, and lingering in the stillness and silence.

Waiting.  
Waiting for better news.  
Waiting for signs of spring.  
Waiting for Easter morning.  
This is the journey of Holy Week.  
And so now, we wait.  
We wait.