A God More Powerful than Job

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[0:00] Amen. Thanks for reading, guys. If you keep your Bibles open and turn with me, we're just going to read a few verses from chapter 40 as well. Our text for this morning is chapter 40, verse 6 to chapter 42, verse 6.

So if you turn with me to Job 40, verse 6, and I'll start reading. This is God in his second speech to Job. He says, Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.
Brace yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer me. Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's? And can your voice thunder like his?
Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor. Clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath. Look at all who are proud and bring them low.
Look at all who are proud and humble them. Crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in the dust together. Shroud their faces in the grave.
[1:04] Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you. Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you, and which feeds on grass like an ox.

What strength it has in its loins. What power in the muscles of its belly. Its tail sways like a cedar. The sinews of its thighs are close knit.
Its bones are tubes of bronze. Its limbs like rods of iron. It ranks first among the works of God. Yet its maker can approach it with his sword.
The hills bring their produce and all the wild animals play nearby. Under the lotus plant it lies. Hidden among the reeds in the marsh.
The lotuses conceal it in their shadow. The poplars by the stream surround it. A raging river does not alarm it. It is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth.
[2:02] Can anyone capture it by the eyes or trap it and pierce its nose? And I wonder if we could just read those final six verses as Job responds to God.

But if we could stand as we say, as I read these words for us. So let us stand together as we read Job's response. Upon hearing all that God has said, Job says, I know that you can do all things. No purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge? Surely I spoke of things I did not understand. Things too wonderful for me to know. You said, listen now and I will speak. I will question you and you shall answer me. My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.
As we take our seats, let me pray once more. Father, we thank you for your word. And we pray this morning that the words of my mouth, that the meditations of all of our hearts would be pleasing to you, our rock and our redeemer.
[3:12] Amen. It is so easy, isn't it, to see something go wrong and to think that we would do a better job. Maybe you feel this in your every day as you maybe see some shoddy workmanship of a building contractor who leaves live wires sticking out behind the plug.

Maybe you see a government spokesperson addressing a whole country and stumbling over their words or the statistics they're trying to read out and you just feel embarrassed. Or maybe you're out for a meal and you see a waiter drop an entire tray full of drinks.
When we see these things, we automatically think that we would do a better job. Now those are very trivial examples, but the same applies to really big and important things as well, doesn't it? When we're suffering, when our lives are a mess, when chaos is all that we seem to know, deep down, we think that we should be capable of fixing ourselves.

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We think that we should be able to just be better, to do better. The world we live in, maybe even you this morning, have a worldview that is black and white.
[4:28] If you do good, good will happen to you. And if you do bad, bad things will happen to you. We think that we should be able to fixing, be capable of fixing ourselves.

We think that we should be better. But all we need to be reminded of our inability to save ourselves, our inability to fix ourselves, our inability to glue ourselves back together, is the death of a loved one, a traumatic experience, a doctor's appointment that goes, doesn't go the way we wanted it to, a mental breakdown.
And suddenly we are confronted again with the reality that in on of ourselves, we can achieve very little. This morning, as we turn to the book of Job, in God's second speech, God asks Job, do you really think that you can do a better job than God?
Job will be confronted with humanity's ultimate and final enemies, death and the devil. And God says, Job, do you really think that you can stand before these alone?
Do you have what it takes to face death and the devil without God? By your side? The answer has to be a resounding no.
[6:01] As mere mortals, we cannot face death and win because death comes to every single one of us. And we cannot face the devil. Because as finite beings, we don't have the strength enough to resist temptation.

Never mind to face the tempter and accuser head on. But what we're going to see this morning, as God asked Job, if he really thinks he can do a better job than he does, is that we can't.
We simply cannot. But we are not without hope. Because we come to a great God who is in control of all things and who has the power to save.
And who is in control of our worst enemies. We come before a God this morning who has defeated death. And who has defeated the devil.
So keep that passage open in front of you as we turn to Job 40 to 42. And let us be blown away by the God who is in control. And see how that can bring comfort, even in the darkest of times.
[7:11] So the first thing we see in this passage is the question, can you save yourself? In chapter 40 verses 6 to 14, can you save yourself?

So God begins his second speech to Job with the same courtroom language as the first. Job's been asking throughout this whole book for a chance to plead his case before God in the courts.
There were times where Job wanted to put God in the dock. And question God about why he's suffering so much. And so for the second time, God says in verse 7, Brace yourself like a man.
And I will question you. And you shall answer me. In the original language, God literally says, Job, gird up your loins. Which means prepare yourself for something difficult.
Dress yourself with boldness. And get ready. Because you are the one who's being questioned this morning. And Job will need every ounce of energy and wisdom that he has for this interaction with God.
[8:19] And so God begins with three rhetorical questions. Look with me at verse 8. Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?

Do you have an arm like God's? And can your voice thunder like his? So in God's first speech, he reminded Job of his absolute control over creation and the created order.
God reminded Job of his finiteness in comparison to the greatness of God. God reminded Job that he is the created, not the creator.
And now in God's second speech, he begins by saying, Really Job? Really? You think you can do better than me? You think you can be me? Job is met with the sheer magnitude of God.
His eyes are lifted to see a vast and glorious picture of God. And then these questions come and shake him to the core. Throughout this book, as Job has been suffering, he has said wrong things about God.
[9:31] And we'll come to a little bit more of that next week as we end the series. He has called God's justice into question. He's doubted whether God would or could save him.

And so the rhetorical question in verse 9, Do you have an arm like God's? Is designed to help Job see that despite how his situation may make him feel, Job needs to know that God is unfailingly just.
And that God is the only one who can save Job. Job needs to be reminded of who it is that he is talking to. See, God is not just some minor authority figure that we entertain.

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God isn't just an important guy that maybe governs a tiny village with a few houses in it. Job is speaking to the God of the universe. The God who governs this world with a mighty hand.
The God who judges justly and the God whose voice thunders with authority. This is a powerful reminder that God is God and Job is not.
[10:46] And God points this out in verses 10 to 14 by challenging Job to be and act like God. So in verse 10, God says, Job, be like me. Adorn yourself with majesty.

Clothe yourself with all the glory and splendor you can even begin to imagine. Be holy and perfect like I am. And in verses 11 to 13, God says, Job, judge justly like I do.
Condemn the proud. Bring down those who oppose others. The wicked in heart who oppose God. Bring righteous anger and judgment on them. And then the clinch comes in verse 14.
Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you. So Job, if you can do all of this, then and only then can you save yourself.
No amount of good works, no amount of righteous acts will save Job. God is the reminding Job that he alone can save him.
[11:54] Only God has the power to save and redeem people. To make people right with God. And that is what God asked Job.

Confronted with each other in the courtroom. Can you save yourself, Job? And the response has to be a resounding no. Friends, in the midst of great suffering and pain, our temptation is to think that we would do a better job than God.
We wouldn't give ourselves cancer. We wouldn't put ourselves through pain and suffering. There is a mindset in the global church as well that has duped people into thinking that they can do things to earn their salvation.
Now let me be absolutely clear. There is absolutely nothing, zero you can do to earn your salvation. When it comes to your salvation, the question we need to ask ourselves is not, what can I do to be saved? The question you need to ask yourself is, are you trusting in the completed work of Jesus Christ?
[13:05] Because salvation is not based on what you do, it is based on what he has already done. Friends, we need to hear this speech from God.

We need to realize, like Job does, that God alone is the one who saves people. That God is God and we are not. We are nothing in comparison to his might, to his splendor, to his unfailing love and faithfulness, to his majesty.
God is the only one who can save people. And then the second thing we see in this passage is God's second question to Job. Can you control evil?
In chapter 40 verses 15 through to the end of chapter 41. Can you control evil? Now in these chapters we are introduced to two characters.
Behemoth in chapter 40 verses 15 to 24 and Leviathan in chapter 41. Now these creatures are described at length.
[14:16] And they are described in ways that would be understandable to Job. And yet ways that go beyond what is physically possible for any creature or animal known to man. They are a bit like the final undefeatable enemies at the end of a video game.

You have played for days and you have beaten all the other bosses along the way. But right at the end, that final boss comes out and you are dead in seconds. Game over.
But these aren't characters in a video game, are they? These are poetic descriptions of humanity's worst enemies. Death and the devil.
Despite the fact that some of these descriptions may seem like they are normal creatures and animals. Like a hippo or a crocodile. Maybe your Bible even says that.
Many scholars, in fact most scholars, agree that these creatures are poetic descriptions of death and the devil. That is the historical view. That is what the original readers of the book of Job would have understood.
[15:20] So these lengthy and frankly terrifying descriptions are there for Job to answer the rhetorical question.

As he stands in the dock, as he is questioned by God. Do you think you can do a better job than me? Can you control evil? I come with me to the text and I'll explain why I think that behemoth is a symbolic picture of chaos, evil and death.

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So behemoth is a plural form of the common Hebrew word for beast. But from the text, it's pretty clear that only one character is being described. So the plural use of the word is being used as an indication of the strength and size of this beast.
And look at some of these terrifying descriptions. Verse 15, this beast has an insatiable appetite like an ox. Verse 16, it is powerful and strong.
Verse 17, it has a tail as thick as a tree. Verse 18, its legs are like pillars of bronze and iron that keep buildings in place.
[16:36] Verses 20 to 22, speak of this beast as always being there. It may be lurking in the shadows. It may be standing in plain sight. But as verses 23 to 24 say, a raging river does not alarm it.

It is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth. Can anyone capture it by the eyes or trap it and pierce its nose? This beast is fearless.
It cannot be tamed. No one dares to draw near to it and it cannot be put on a leash. These are symbolic descriptions of a mystical creature that does not actually exist, but one that strikes fear into the heart of Job.
It's maybe a bit like how we would describe the grim reaper today. A mystical description of death itself. A tall, dark, hooded figure walking to and fro, bringing death to those whose time is up.
And so you can imagine, Job, aren't you standing in the dock before God hearing these terrifying descriptions? And I know I would want to run a mile. It is terrifying.
[17:54] Just the thought of this beast, just the thought of death, shakes the most hardened of people to their very core, and they tremble. Death is not our friend.

And yet there is hope. Look at verse 19. God says that Behemoth ranks first among the works of God, yet its maker can approach it with his sword.
So God says this beast, death, seems like the most powerful creature imaginable. But know this, Job, that I hold the sword.
This beast is terrifying to everyone, but I am the one who controls it. And so if you stand before death and you're afraid, how much more should you fear the one who controls death itself?
And the second creature we meet is Leviathan in chapter 41. Here we get 34 verses that are used to describe this massive, terrifying, deadly creature who wreaks havoc and feeds on disaster, evil, and chaos.
[19:06] Similar to Behemoth, some people have looked at these descriptions and argued that Leviathan is basically a big crocodile. But none of those descriptions really fit the mold.

And I think it makes more sense that the Leviathan is not an animal, but is instead the devil, that we met in Job 1 and 2. So from a plain reading of the text in Job 1 and 2, we meet the devil, but we don't hear from him or see him again.
We're told that he attacks Job in chapters 1 and 2 with the Lord's permission. The Lord's goal is to prove the genuineness of Job's faith, but the devil's goal is to make Job curse God and reject him.
But in chapter 3, Job speaks about an evil creature who brings calamity and destruction, the Leviathan.
And then the Leviathan is described in chapter 41 a bit like a dragon. So the word Leviathan literally means twisting one. And some of the descriptions in this chapter conjure images of a massive snake-like or dragon-like creature.
[20:17] So look with me at verse 12. It speaks of this, of the Leviathan's mighty strength and his humongous body. Verse 14 says that his teeth are surrounded by terror and fear.

Verse 15 says that his back are full of scales like armor. And verse 18 says it's snorting, throws out flashes of light. Its eyes are like rays, the rays of dawn, flames stream from its mouth, sparks of fire shoot out.
This sounds like a supernatural, bone-chilling, terrifying, fire-breathing dragon, doesn't it? And no matter what humanity throws at it, nothing will harm it.
Look at me at verse 25. When it rises up, the mighty are terrified. They retreat before its thrashing. The sword that reaches it has no effect, nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin.
So when this beast launches itself in humanity, even the strong and brave are brought to naught as they shake in fear at the sight of the Leviathan. Verse 26 says that humanity can throw every weapon of defense they have at this thing and nothing will even touch it.

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[21:38] No sword will scratch it. No spear will pierce its armor. No gun will slow it down. No weapon will bring this thing to its knees. And that's why God says at the end of the description in verse 34, nothing on earth is its equal.

A creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty. It is king over all that are proud. So all of this together leads us to think that the Leviathan is the devil.
Sure, we have plenty of questions about that. I lived in this text for a while and I have tons of questions. But I think that's where the text is leading us to conclude.
Because it's also similar to the description of the devil as we read it as a serpent in Genesis 3. Who enticed Adam and Eve into sin and peddles a message of doubt by asking, did God really say?
A message of doubt that continues to plague minds today, especially in suffering. When we're tempted to think that we could do a better job than God.
[22:48] because we wouldn't let all that suffering happen in the world. It's similar to the description in Revelation 12, where it speaks of the devil as a dragon who waged war against Jesus and a dragon who continues to fight against the Lord's people.

Isaiah 27 speaks of Leviathan as a great dragon, a snake-like monster who brings nothing but chaos and destructions. Now looking at these descriptions, are terrifying.
So why is God doing this? Why is God letting Job see behind the scenes, to see the devil who is afflicting him? Is God playing a cruel joke on a man who's suffering?
No. God is saying, Job, if these two enemies of humanity are the things that you fear, if these are the things that keep you awake at night, then you need to remember, I am in control of them.
These beasts that are the enemies of humanity are dogs on a leash that are under my command.
They cannot go an inch beyond what I have decreed.
[24:05] And I am good. And I am faithful. And I love you. So Job, can you control evil? Absolutely not. But God can.

Now we might be tempted to think that this is not an encouraging message. Especially in this kind of extreme suffering that Job is in. Why didn't God just tell Job why he was suffering?
Surely that's the easier thing to do. We think that knowing the reason for our suffering will help us, but to be honest, in most cases, I really don't think it does.
Job doesn't need to know why he's suffering. He needs to know who is by his side. He needs to know who is fighting his corner.
He needs to grasp the greatness of God, who is in control of all things. And friends, we need that too. It is hard to see God's, how God's control over evil can make sense.
[25:10] And of course, we have tons of questions about that. But friends, think about our brothers and sisters right now in Afghanistan. Or elsewhere in the world.

Fearing for the day that their door gets kicked in and they are dragged to the streets to an almost certain death. Their comfort comes from the knowledge that God sees all things.
That God knows all things. And that one day he will right every single wrong and hold people to account.
Genesis 3 speaks of a serpent, the devil, but it also speaks of a serpent crusher. The one who would defeat death, sin and the devil and make union with God possible again.
Job 41 speaks about a God who's in control and who alone can bring the sword against these beasts and render them defeated. Revelation speaks about a dragon who bent, who is bent on destroying the Lord's people, but a dragon who is defeated by the completed work of a lamb.
[26:32] A sacrificial lamb. A sacrificial lamb. Who takes on all the suffering that sin deserves.

The punishment that each and every one of us deserves. Who took the punishment of death.
Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice. Who took these beasts literally by the horns and obliterated them.
So think back to death and the devil being the final terrifying bosses of a video game. And imagine that instead, when you turn on your console, you realize that the worst enemy has already been defeated for you.
Because of the work of Jesus, death and devil are not foes that we should fear anymore because they are defeated enemies who have already bowed the knee to the ruling and reigning Christ.
Friends, we do not serve a God who is helpless in the face of suffering and death. We do not serve a God who quivers as Satan does his work.
[27:44] We serve a living God who has defeated the devil. We serve a ruling and reigning Savior, Jesus Christ, who has won the battle. Who has paid the ultimate price.

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The mighty King who alone can save us and who controls death and the devil. And so if you think, if we think that we can do a better job than God can, we need to look at Jesus and say like Job does in chapter 42 verses 1 to 6, God, I am so, so sorry.
I have said things that I do not understand. I have spoken of things that I cannot even begin to comprehend. And I turn to you and I humbly repent.
Because brothers and sisters, the right response to a grand view of God's sovereign control, even with our questions, even in our suffering, even with our pain, is seen in Job chapter 42 verse 5, where Job says this, My eyes, my ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. You see, before this moment, Job had an understanding of God. But his suffering had blinded him to see God's goodness.
[29:15] But now Job sees God for who he is. And the natural response and the logical conclusion to seeing God in all of his splendor is humility and repentance.

The Bible calls us to see God. It calls us to see his majesty, to see his control, to see him in all of his glory and to repent and turn to him.
Friends, if you want to know what God is like, look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, the one who calmed waves with his words, the one who casts out demons with power and authority, the one who spoke and dead people were raised to life.
The one who even, as he was nailed to a cross, was in absolute control. And the one who rendered Satan, the dragon, a defeated enemy.
And all those who call, and the one who calls his people into a relationship with him and a glorious fellowship with God. Maybe you're here this morning and you're not a Christian.
[30:28] Or maybe you're listening in and you're not a Christian. Maybe you read these descriptions of death and the devil and you are afraid. Because you don't want to face those enemies alone.

Let this be a warning to you this morning. That if you reject Jesus, you will face death and the devil without an advocate by your side.
But the flip side of that, let this also be a call for you to see the truth that you do not have to face these enemies alone. Come to Jesus, listen to his call and follow him and death and the devil no longer have a claim on you.
Because Jesus has defeated these enemies for his people. So we might think at times that we can do a better job than God, but I guarantee you that you would not be willing to die for a world that had rejected you from the very beginning.
And Jesus is the only one who has the power to defeat our worst enemies and make it possible for us to be right with God. So can you do a better job than God? Not a chance.
[31:43] Can you save yourself? Not in the slightest. Can you control evil? No, but I know who can. Jesus Christ, the sacrificial lamb of God who has slain the dragon and who calls us to follow him.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, as we read these descriptions of death and the devil, it is natural for us to be afraid.
As we look at suffering in our lives and past trauma, as we look at whatever suffering has come our way, it is so easy for us to think that we can do a better job than you.
But Father, I pray that by your spirit you would remind us every single day of your greatness, of your glory, of your majesty, of your splendor.
And would we know the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross? And so we can say to death, where is your sting?
[32:58] because we worship a risen Savior, Jesus Christ. And we ask that we would glorify him with all of our lives.

In his name and for the sake of your kingdom, we pray. Amen. Amen.

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