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WONDERING WHY

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A month ago, say Valentine's Day, few Americans could have imagined where we are today. On February 14, my husband and I went to a play in downtown Charlotte. Today, the play might have been cancelled. Social distancing was not an issue, then, but it is now! Grocery stores were fully stocked. I keep hearing about the toilet tissue shortage, but this morning, where I went, there was no milk. Our school district was approved for two e-learning days to use in the case of snow or other event, but it looks like a few more may be needed - maybe quite a few more. I never thought, in the age of modern medicine, that just performed a CAT Scan on my tooth...that there would be pandemic. Sure enough, however, the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 (Coronavirus) a pandemic. Unbelievable.

I heard a man berate a store employee this week because the store was out of bottled water. I later heard a woman using all sorts of profanity as she put her groceries into her car. Through social media we are privy to many different people's perspectives on the current situation. Most people are still trying to remain in control of their affairs, some are fearful about their finances, many are trying to think ahead to develop solid plans B, C, and D. Many are wondering why?



It is okay, even natural, to wonder why. Many years ago in the land of Uz lived a man named Job, pronounced Jobe. He was a good man, even by God's account. Scripture tells us he was blameless and upright. He feared God and shunned evil. Job was blessed to be the father of ten children, seven sons! He owned seven-thousand sheep, three-thousand camels, five-hundred oxen and donkeys, and many servants. He was truly a great man. (Job 1: 1-2).

With such an introduction, you might expect that his story of righteousness proceeds to explain how one of his sons or grandsons, marries the king's daughter and later becomes the king of Uz and acquires all of the gold, frankincense and myrrh in the land. On the other hand, you might expect that Job's story proceeds to tell us about some deep dark sin he harbored in his heart that eventually caused his family to turn away from him and how he died a lonely man. In the human mind, we tend to equate people's

goodness with success and reward. We think bad people experience misfortune and distress. We think good, successful people control their circumstances better than bad, reckless people who have constant setbacks and misfortune. We think this way because we are human and that is how we think it should be.

The book of Job is one that begs the question, why? It does not proceed as we would expect. The Bible tells us that one day when the angels came to present themselves to the Lord, Satan came too. We know that this is unusual because God addresses Satan wanting to know where he had come from. Satan says, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it." (v. 7) We can only imagine the evil Satan had been doing as he roamed throughout the earth - he continues to do this today! Job's name enters the conversation and God remarks on how good Job is, saying that he is righteous and blameless and would not be tempted by Satan's ways. Satan decides to tempt Job to speak against God, but God is certain that Job's faith cannot be broken, but allows Satan to try as long as he does not physically hurt Job. (v. 12)

Satan did every unbelievable thing to kill Job's oxen and donkeys. He burned Job's sheep, his camels were stolen in a raid. While Job's children were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest son's house, a strong wind destroyed the house killing all ten of them. "At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.' In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." (v. 20-22)

Later in the story, Satan afflicts Job with sores all over his skin. Apparently his wife had had enough, she said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!" ¹⁰He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble? At the time, there was no social media but the news of Job's loss spread. Three of his friends came to visit. They knew he was suffering, but could not believe their eyes. Having no words to console him, they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights - no one spoke. Later when they began to talk, they each shared their evaluation of the cause for his suffering but never reached a solid conclusion.

I have read this book several times and have wondered why. I have even wondered why God would allow Satan to cause such suffering to come to someone who was righteous and blameless. I have realized that this is not an appropriate question for me to ask, but truthfully I have wondered. As human beings, our perspective and understanding has limited. God is holy and omnipotent. We are dependent on Him - it is not the other way around.

As we live out our days of Coronavirus, we may wonder why - that's normal. We should not curse God for this affliction. We should not be angry at Him for the inconvenience. We must trust Him through the uncertainty. If we are out of work for a while, think of it as more time to study His word - and use the time to do so. If you are reading this post and want to gain a better understanding of how I can say these things when so much bad stuff is happening, send me a message so we can chat one-on-one. Remember, Paul tells us in Romans, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) In all things...we only know some things, we must trust God through that which we do not know. AMEN!