

Seeing trial and suffering through different lens 3-21-2019
(An outline of a sermon/ bible reading summary & application)

Job Chapters 1-19

Before I take a long flight like foreign travel, I usually check several things. Two of the items I check are the eye mask for sleeping in the plane and a backup eyeglass. When I put on my eye mask, the world would be totally dark and that is the purpose. I also need to check my backup eyeglass and make sure it has the perfect lens and not an old one because that old one is out-of-focus.

When Job suddenly had so many terrible things happened to him, he tried to find answers. He can't see any reason. This is like when you are having an eye mask in the plane. If you want to get up like go to eat meal or to the restroom, you need to take off the mask. In my case, need to put on the perfect eyeglass also. What do you think Job should do?

Book of Job is an Old Testament book. It is somewhere in the middle of the Old Testament but the time period it covered is likely very early. It might even be one of the first sets of Bible book. It used sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys to represent wealth. We are going to examine the 3 characters in the book (God, Job and Job's friends) and see how each one see through different kind of lens.

1) God see the whole situation with His clear lens

- a. God's eyes are the perfect lenses. God considered Job as the one that can handle the trial as the war is happening at the highest level between Satan and God (Job 1:8). Job on earth with limited knowledge can not see that. Similarly, God see the perfect time and situation for us to face a trial but we often don't see that. That is why we need to see it through God's clear lens. **We can conquer through him in trials and suffering because He knows better.** In Romans 8:35, it stated that we can have trouble, hardship, persecution, etc. but we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Rom. 8:37).
- b. God see us as His precious children. **He loves us. Nothing can separate us from God's love** (Rom. 8:38). We should pray to God and ask for help when we are in trouble because He cares for us (I Peter 5:6-7)

2) Job focused on his problems in a magnifying lens

It is very difficult when we are in hardship. The situation of Job is unbearable for nearly all of us. However, Job was concentrated on his problem and used a magnifying glass to examine the situation. In many cases, we shall focus on other things besides our immediate suffering or trouble in order to give us a better prospective. We can also find ways to serve others such as those that are in a similar situation or suffering due to other causes. We need to focus on God and the meaning of life with a wider lens in order to see a bigger picture. The complete situation will become clearer as you are not focusing on your immediate suffering or trouble. Plus more pain when you think about the pain.

Have you spill a drink when you are too focused on a movie or cellphone when you are in the plane? Overly focus will make you lose sight of the surrounding and what's really happening.

3) His friend see the situation with an unfocused lens

Job's three friends did well in the beginning (Job 2:11-13). They traveled to visit him when they heard Job's situation. They cried together and sat with Job for 7 days and nights. It is very good to sympathize with other by mourning and staying with the one in trouble. However, they began to take the wrong action of criticizing Job due to they were having unfocused lens (Job 11:14, 13:3, 16:1, 19:3, etc.) They can't see the true situation. We should avoid giving judgment when you try to sympathize with others.

Each one of us will face a situation where you don't understand why you have to suffer especially due to some unexpected natural phenomenon. It can be sudden loss of wealth, sickness or disease, lost of love one, etc. At that time, we shall try to **see it in God's perspective**. He loves us and He has his time and reason. We shall **avoid focusing on the misery**, and try to focus on other things such as helping others. Third, **accept your friends' and relatives' sympathy, and understanding it is only their perspectives. Seek God in prayer for comfort and peace, and have faith.** If you are like me, all you need is to remember the airplane situation by taking off the eye mask and put on my new eyeglass (God's perfect lens) when you are in a terrible situation like Job's.