

Let it Shine!

Try to familiarise yourselves with the Book of Job

‘Why do bad things happen to good people?’ It is a question that has troubled people throughout the centuries and still does today. The book of Job deals with just that question. Why does God allow us to suffer if he really loves us and we are faithful to him? Job teaches us that suffering may be caused by many things and not because God is angry with us or that we are being punished for wrong doings but that faith, patience and perseverance will win through in the end.

We do not know who wrote the Book of Job - some say Moses – some say Solomon but it certainly has a place in the Old Testament and is inspired by God. Job was a real man who actually lived on this earth. Job was a good, family man who had respect for God's original marriage law, only had one wife and they had a large family. Job was a rich man who owned many sheep, camels and oxen. He was also a very good man; he was ‘blameless and upright, feared God and shunned evil’.

It seems as though God is showing his strength over Satan and using Job as a pawn in their battle. Throughout his life Job loses all his children, all his possessions and his health is seriously harmed. His wife and his 3 closest friends all think he has done wrong and that he is being punished for it. Job did not know why he was suffering but he never lost his faith in God or wavered from praising the Lord.

In modern language we often hear that when people are suffering, dealing with difficult problems or may be having mental health issues, they are ‘in a dark place’. There were many times that Job was ‘in a dark place’. He did not understand why but he remained strong and patient. He looked toward the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’. That light is always there. It may be a realisation from within, a chance encounter with a friend, something said in a church service or a sudden answer to a question asked long ago. But it will come. The psalmist in Psalm 43, when asking God “Why must I go on suffering?” continues by asking for his ‘light and truth to lead him’. God's light is always there. In Psalm 119 we read ‘Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path’. In Isaiah Chapter 60, when talking about the future glory of Jerusalem, Isaiah says “The glory of the Lord is shining on you. The brightness of his presence will be with you”. That presence continues today. This month it is not **our** light but God's light that we want to shine in our darkness. Lent may be thought of as a ‘dark place’ when we remember Jesus in the wilderness struggling with the temptations of Satan. He remained focused, resisted evil and came out a better person for it – better prepared to face what lay ahead.

If we are one of those people ‘in a dark place’ let us be reminded of the words of Isaiah Chapter 60 v 20 “Your days of grief will come to an end. I, the Lord, will be your eternal light”.

For Discussion

1. Has anyone close to you been through ‘dark times’? How has your faith enabled you to help them through?
2. Do you feel that **you** have been in a dark place at any time? Did your faith help you and enable the light in you to shine through?

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