

Lesson 32 - “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

Job

Purpose: To help us develop strength to face adversity by trusting the Lord, building their testimonies of him, and maintaining personal integrity.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>



Last Week's Lesson Challenge

Latter-day scripture (the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants) does not contain the types of poetic books that are included in the Old Testament. Therefore, Latter-day Saints are generally unfamiliar with the peace that can be found in reading the Books of Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

Our challenge this week is to spend time reading from these books and seeing if they can help us better understand God, Jesus Christ and His Gospel, particularly how to apply it better in our daily lives.

Would anyone like to share their thoughts about reading Proverbs and Ecclesiastes this past week?

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Each day, tragedy and suffering may come into people's lives. Loved ones die or are permanently harmed by disease, accident, or natural disaster. How could God allow these things to happen? How could they happen even to those who serve the Lord diligently? Does God cause all of this suffering, sorrow, and death?

In addressing these kinds of questions, President Spencer W. Kimball said **“Answer if you can. I cannot, for though I know God has a major role in our lives, I do not know how much he causes to happen and how much he merely permits. Whatever the answer to this question, there is another I feel sure about.**

“Could the Lord have prevented these tragedies? The answer is, Yes. The Lord is omnipotent, with all power to control our lives, save us pain, prevent all accidents, drive all planes and cars, feed us, protect us, save us from labor, effort, sickness, even from death, if he will. But he will not” (Faith Precedes the Miracle [1972], 96).

Why won't the Lord protect and save us from all of the adversities and opposition of life's experiences? Would doing so strengthen or weaken us?

The book of Job deals with difficult questions. Job tells the story of a righteous man who suffered greatly. How he dealt with his adversity and what he learned from his experiences can teach us important lessons about our suffering and the sorrows of those around us. The Lord used the story of Job to teach the Prophet Joseph Smith about tribulation at a time when the Prophet was in Liberty Jail and wondered why he was suffering. As you read Job, consider what you learn about Heavenly Father's plan and what purpose suffering has in that plan.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-student-study-guide/the-book-of-job?lang=eng>

Is Job History or Story? - One question with which many readers grapple is whether the book of Job history or story? Personally, I am not persuaded that the answer to this question makes much decisive difference for the interpretation of the text. My own way of dealing with the question, however, is to adopt a compromise position. In the absence of clear pronouncements by scripture or Church leaders to the contrary, I accept the fact of Job's existence. At the same time, I recognize that the text bears the marks of evident literary fashioning. It has, for instance, a definite three-part structure consisting of prose prologue, poetic dialogues, and prose epilogue. A prose frame thus encloses poetic dialogues. Its central poetic dialogues, moreover, are further neatly divided into three cycles of speeches, alternating between Job and each of his three comforters. I cannot conceive of these long, formal passages of poetry being transcribed verbatim from actual conversations. They are clearly literary constructions.

Modern scholars classify the book of Job as wisdom literature, in concert with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Bible. Unlike prophetic and historical biblical texts, wisdom texts are less concerned with the unfolding history of a covenant people through time than they are with the timeless truths of the individual's relationship to moral and religious principles. In short, Job seems not to lay the same claim to historicity as do, say, the great patriarchs or Israel's kings and prophets; in addition, the text bears the marks of a historical genre or literary type known as wisdom literature.

So, too, do most allusions to Job by Church leaders have regarded him as a real person. Granting this, however, still an element of cautious restraint is called for in extending this conclusion to the entire book of Job. Allusions to Job by the Brethren do not necessarily mean that every aspect of the text must be taken as literally historical. The LDS Bible Dictionary seems to provide exactly the right focus on the book of Job by remaining silent about historical questions, by ignoring the prose prologue and epilogue altogether, and by concentrating on the profound questions raised and answers provided in the central poetic dialogues. Perhaps the Bible Dictionary should guide our attention as well, which perhaps for too long has been occupied with the text's historicity rather than with the larger question of its meaning.

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/sperry-symposium-classics-old-testament/hast-thou-considered-my-servant-job>

Book of Job Summary - The book of Job is narrative history. Its author is unknown yet it is possible that Job himself wrote it. It is possible that Job is the oldest of any book of the Bible written approximately 2100-1800 B.C. Key personalities of this book include Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite.

In Job, we see a man who God allows to be directly attacked by Satan. He is an example of faithfulness as he loses everything important to him yet remains faithful to God. Its purpose is to illustrate God's sovereignty and Job's faithfulness during a time of great suffering.

In chapters 1-3, God tests Job's faithfulness through allowing Satan to attack him. God told Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand" (1:12). Through Job's trials, all is lost including his health, his wife even tells him to curse God and commit suicide, but he remains strong and faithful, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (1:22).

From chapters 4-37, Job's friends give him plenty of bad advice, in rounds of discussion. They mistakenly blame his sufferings on his personal sins rather than God testing and growing Job. One of them was half-correct in that God wanted to humble him, but this was only a part of God's test.

In chapters 38-42, God speaks to Job and restores him. God knows that Job has received incorrect guidance from his friends, "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" God fittingly declares that humans do not know everything. Then He humbles Job by asking a series of questions that could never be answered by anyone other than Almighty God; for example, "Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this". God then brings him to an understanding that believers don't always know what God is doing in their lives.

In the end, Job answers God by saying, "I have declared that which I did not understand". God then blessed Job with twice as much as he had before his trials began.

<https://biblehub.com/summary/job/1.htm>

The most well known verses from the Book of Job are found in [Chapter 19:23-27](#). In the midst of great loss and suffering, Job, who is being assailed by his friends who blame try to convince Job that he alone is responsible for his suffering, stands firm in his belief in Jesus Christ, his redeemer.

23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Adversity in life is an essential element of our growth in this life. We took on mortal bodies and came to Earth to be tried and tested. Often it seems as some experience more adversity than is fair regardless of their faithfulness, their love of God or their love of humankind.

There are many statements made over the years by Church leaders about both weathering and overcoming adversity. During the April 2014 General Conference, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, gave an address titled “Grateful in Any Circumstances”. President Uchtdorf outlined several things we can do in the face of adversity to better weather and grow from the difficulties we face.

“Over the years, I have had the sacred opportunity to meet with many people whose sorrows seem to reach the very depths of their soul. In these moments, I have listened to my beloved brothers and sisters and grieved with them over their burdens. I have pondered what to say to them, and I have struggled to know how to comfort and support them in their trials.

Often their grief is caused by what seems to them as an ending. Some are facing the end of a cherished relationship, such as the death of a loved one or estrangement from a family member. Others feel they are facing the end of hope—the hope of being married or bearing children or overcoming an illness. Others may be facing the end of their faith, as confusing and conflicting voices in the world tempt them to question, even abandon, what they once knew to be true.

Sooner or later, I believe that all of us experience times when the very fabric of our world tears at the seams, leaving us feeling alone, frustrated, and adrift. It can happen to anyone. No one is immune.”

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

We Can Be Grateful - Everyone's situation is different, and the details of each life are unique. Nevertheless, I have learned that there is something that would take away the bitterness that may come into our lives. There is one thing we can do to make life sweeter, more joyful, even glorious. We can be grateful!

It might sound contrary to the wisdom of the world to suggest that one who is burdened with sorrow should give thanks to God. But those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude can find a purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding.

Why does God command us to be grateful? All of His commandments are given to make blessings available to us. Commandments are opportunities to exercise our agency and to receive blessings. Our loving Heavenly Father knows that choosing to develop a spirit of gratitude will bring us true joy and great happiness.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

Being Grateful for Things - Some might say, “What do I have to be grateful for when my world is falling apart?”

Perhaps focusing on what we are grateful for is the wrong approach. It is difficult to develop a spirit of gratitude if our thankfulness is only proportional to the number of blessings we can count. True, it is important to frequently “count our blessings” —and anyone who has tried this knows there are many—but I don’t believe the Lord expects us to be less thankful in times of trial than in times of abundance and ease. In fact, most of the scriptural references do not speak of gratitude for things but rather suggest an overall spirit or attitude of gratitude.

It is easy to be grateful for things when life seems to be going our way. But what then of those times when what we wish for seems to be far out of reach?

Could I suggest that we see gratitude as a disposition, a way of life that stands independent of our current situation? In other words, I’m suggesting that instead of being thankful for things, we focus on being thankful in our circumstances—whatever they may be.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

Being Grateful in Our Circumstances - My dear brothers and sisters, the choice is ours. We can choose to limit our gratitude, based on the blessings we feel we lack. Or we can choose to be like Nephi, whose grateful heart never faltered. When his brothers tied him up on the ship—which he had built to take them to the promised land—his ankles and wrists were so sore “they had swollen exceedingly,” and a violent storm threatened to swallow him up in the depths of the sea. “Nevertheless,” Nephi said, “I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; and I did not murmur against the Lord because of mine afflictions.”

We can choose to be like Job, who seemed to have everything but then lost it all. Yet Job responded by saying, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return ... : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

We can choose to be like the Mormon pioneers, who maintained a spirit of gratitude during their slow and painful trek toward the Great Salt Lake, even singing and dancing and glorying in the goodness of God. Many of us would have been inclined to withdraw, complain, and agonize about the difficulty of the journey.

We can choose to be like the Prophet Joseph Smith, who, while a prisoner in miserable conditions in Liberty Jail, penned these inspired words: “Dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.”

We can choose to be grateful, no matter what.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

Gratitude as an Act of Faith - Being grateful in our circumstances is an act of faith in God. It requires that we trust God and hope for things we may not see but which are true. By being grateful, we follow the example of our beloved Savior, who said, “Not my will, but thine, be done.”

True gratitude is an expression of hope and testimony. It comes from acknowledging that we do not always understand the trials of life but trusting that one day we will.

In any circumstance, our sense of gratitude is nourished by the many and sacred truths we do know: that our Father has given His children the great plan of happiness; that through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can live forever with our loved ones; that in the end, we will have glorious, perfect, and immortal bodies, unburdened by sickness or disability; and that our tears of sadness and loss will be replaced with an abundance of happiness and joy, “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.”

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

Those Who Are Grateful Will Be Made Glorious - Brothers and sisters, have we not reason to be filled with gratitude, regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves?

Do we need any greater reason to let our hearts “be full of thanks unto God”? “Have we not great reason to rejoice?”

How blessed we are if we recognize God’s handiwork in the marvelous tapestry of life. Gratitude to our Father in Heaven broadens our perception and clears our vision. It inspires humility and fosters empathy toward our fellowmen and all of God’s creation. Gratitude is a catalyst to all Christlike attributes! A thankful heart is the parent of all virtues.

The Lord has given us His promise that those “who [receive] all things with thankfulness shall be made glorious; and the things of this earth shall be added unto [them], even an hundred fold, yea, more.”¹⁷

May we “live in thanksgiving daily”—especially during the seemingly unexplainable endings that are part of mortality. May we allow our souls to expand in thankfulness toward our merciful Heavenly Father. May we ever and constantly raise our voices and show by word and deed our gratitude to our Father in Heaven and to His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/grateful-in-any-circumstances?lang=eng>

It's easy to feel as though life with adversity is something we wish to avoid. No one enjoys times of adversity. No one goes out of their way to bring adversity upon themselves, their family, their friends or their community.

Adversity is a part of this life. It's as much a part of life as happiness and joy are. Adversity can teach us how to be humble and how to lean upon the Lord for direction and redemption. Adversity can also teach us fear, anger and hate against God when we question God's wisdom in allowing bad things to happen to good people.

The lesson of Job is that it is possible to continue in faith in the Lord when adversity tries to rob us of things, of health, of love and sometimes, of life. The lesson of Job is found in Job 19:2-27 where Job stands tall before all that has plagued him and swears his unwavering allegiance to Jehovah.

23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

What does it take to be grateful in adversity? Is it even possible to be grateful in adversity? It is possible to be grateful in adversity, it takes great faith that Jesus Christ loves us and will always be there to pick us up when we fall.

This week consider adversity in your life, in your family's life and in the lives of those around you. What do you have to do to be grateful at a time when most things, like Job's friends, suggest that you give up and curse God?