

Job Chapter 1

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[0 : 00] Welcome to all of you this evening. Lovely to welcome visitors amongst us as well. And we praise God that we can come together to seek His face and to rejoice in His faithfulness to us. I wonder if you'd turn with me in the book of Psalms to Psalm 139. I'm going to read the first 12 verses of this Psalm. It goes through the 24 verses, but we'll just read the first 12 by way of introduction, by way of warming our hearts to worship, to consider the God that we come to delight in and rejoice in. So Psalm 139, just listen and I'll read the first 12 verses. Follow, if you can, with me in your Bibles. This is a Psalm of David.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue, you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me, even the darkness will not be dark to you. The night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. A wonderful comfort it is to us to know that the God in whom we've put our trust and faith is a God who knows us completely and the God who keeps us perfectly and watches over us. Even when we feel that we are going through dark, dark times, as David says there, even there the darkness will not be dark to you.

Come to the Lord in prayer. Perhaps as we've done in the past, from time to time, let's have an open time of prayer. I'll lead briefly and then if two or three others would like to also bring their praise, thanksgiving to the Lord in prayer. Please lead us as you are able. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you that we come to the God who knows all things. We thank you that we come to the God who does all things well. We pray that even now as we seek your face and draw near to you in worship and praise, draw near to us, meet with us, deal with us according to our needs, deal with us according to our sins and our failings, according, Lord, to our weaknesses, our struggles, our trials.

[3 : 21] Come, Lord, God of all grace, and minister to us, we pray, that we may rejoice in you and give you the glory and praise that you rightly deserve, and that in the week ahead we may go forward in the strength you provide. For we ask these things, O Lord, through Jesus your Son. Amen.

Amen. I wonder if we can turn in God's Word in our Bibles to Job and chapter 1. Job and chapter 1. We're going to read the whole of the chapter together and pick up particularly on just the last few verses. So Job and chapter 1 beginning at verse 1. If you've got one of the church Bibles, then that's page 509.

509 and reading from verse 1 of chapter 1 to the end of that chapter. In the land of Uz, there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright. He feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the peoples of the East.

[4 : 51] His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified.

Early in the morning, he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. This was Job's regular custom.

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, where have you come from? Satan answered the Lord, from roaming throughout the earth, going to and fro on it.

Then the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him. He is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.

Does Job fear God for nothing? Satan replied, have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You've blessed the work of his hands, so his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

[5 : 57] But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has. He will surely curse you to your face. The Lord said to Satan, very well.

Everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger. Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, the oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabaeans attacked and made off with them.

They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, the fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you.

While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, the Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you.

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house.

[7 : 21] It collapsed on them, and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you. At this Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head.

He fell on the ground in worship and said, naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall 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. So let's have that chapter, Job chapter 1, open, if we can, in our Bibles.

I don't know who your heroes are. When I was a little boy, a young boy, then there were heroes like John Wayne, and people on the screen, people, movie stars, those sort of people.

But when you become a Christian, of course, your heroes change, particularly as you read church history and read about the amazing things that God did through various men and women in all sorts of times and ages.

[8 : 29] And we, all of us, I'm sure, have been touched by the testimony of those sort of people. When the writer to the Hebrews was putting together his sort of list of heroes in chapter 11, and then he mentions, of course, people throughout the Old Testament age, and even beyond that as well, we think.

People like Daniel and David and others as well. But there was all sorts of people in that list.

There's people who were kings, slaves, prostitutes, judges.

But strangely enough, there was no Job. And if I was going to write a list of Old Testament heroes, then certainly Job would be there. Of course, he's immortalized even in the English language, isn't he?

Having the patience of Job. But really, of course, it's the faith of Job, which is that which is illuminated, particularly when we read through this book.

And I would encourage you to read through Job from time to time. It is an incredible book. And there's lots of little snippets, wonderful, blessed truths that come out through it.

[9 : 38] But, of course, it is a story of suffering, a story of hardship, a story of loss. And the reason why I would put Job into this book, for no other reason than for what we read from his mouth in chapter 1, verses 21.

Naked I came from my mother's womb. Naked I shall depart or return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

And I prefer this, blessed be the name of the Lord. I know the NIV has put, name of the Lord be praised, and that's right. But blessed be the name of the Lord. It, to me, is one of the greatest declarations of faith in the Scriptures.

One of the greatest declarations of faith in human history. And it's so great because, of course, of the situation in which it is spoken. Faith in the midst of the most terrible loss.

The terrible situation. How on earth could Job say those words? Blessed be the name of the Lord, except for his faith. We've read the troubles that he had about his livestock being stolen or killed.

[10:53] His servants being taken or killed. Those three incidents which seem to be escalating in intensity. And then, of course, verses 18 and 19.

Surely the greatest and most painful time of his life. When he's told that all of his ten children are killed. In one fell swoop.

They say that trouble comes in threes. Well, of course, for Job it came in fours. And that was just the first day. We go on from chapter 2 and read of the other struggles and discomfort and pain.

And yet, in response, his response to this is, yes, he grieves. That's why we have verse 20 tearing his robe and shoving his head. Those signs and symbols of deep, deep grief.

But we have this act of worship, we're told, where he particularly says, the Lord gave the Lord take away. May the name of the Lord be praised.

[11:55] And he's not saying it in some sarcastic way. I'm sure you've heard people or some way when things are difficult, sort of looking to heaven and blasphemous to say, thank you, God.

There's none of that sarcasm in that way.

Neither does he speak it with angry lips. Thank you, God, for this. Again, because he is angry with God. Nor does he say it insincerely.

Well, of course, that's what you should say as a Christian when suffering comes. You should bless the Lord. So I'm doing it dutifully, but my heart is not in it. No, when he said these things, when he blessed the Lord, he meant it from his heart of hearts.

He meant it sincerely. He meant it with true gratitude and worship. Now, how could he do that?

Well, we said it's faith. It's his faith that gave him that ability, gave him that enabling, as it were, to say, blessed is the name of the Lord in such a circumstance and situation.

But, of course, the question is, what did he believe? Because faith is not simply something which is a feeling, as it were. It's not simply a floaty sort of attitude.

[13:07] It's something which is solid and based upon belief, based upon certain beliefs about God. And it's those beliefs about God that were the foundation for his faith from which he could speak those words of worship, blessed be the name of the Lord.

And we have his statement of faith here in the first part of the verse. Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.

He repeats that again later on in that chapter when he endures additional suffering, this time to his health. And we wouldn't even like to begin to think of how there in verse 7 he was afflicted with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

His wife turns to him and says to him, basically, why don't you just kill yourself? Life is not worth living. This is an awful thing. Why don't you just curse God and die?

But his response is the same thing. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.

[14:24] The comment that the biographer of Job's life has to say on both those occasions in this, verse 22 of chapter 1, And again, in the end of verse 10, in all this of chapter 2, Job did not sin in what he said.

I doubt there's anything missing, really, in the sufferings of Job. When we think about what he lost and what he went through, this is a comprehensive list.

Not just his family did he lose, not just his servants, not just his livestock. But there's a great list of things that he lost there, even his very health itself, so that he was at this point of terrible physical pain.

I think that if we were to, any one of us, even here this evening, could write our own list of troubles and losses through our lives, perhaps just recently or in the past, we could put down what things and trials and struggles and pains and losses we've had, and they could be in all sorts of ways.

On our list almost certainly would be the loss of loved ones, whether that be immediate family or friends, as Job did here, those over whom we have grieved, just as Job grieved over the loss that

he had.

[15 : 45] There probably will be times as well when we've suffered financial loss through an accident or through redundancy or unemployment. In some other way, we've lost the power to make our own finances, to care for and provide for our family, and in some way we felt that our livelihood was in jeopardy.

Financial loss when there's been very little in the bank account. All of us, I'm sure, at some point have known a measure of ill health, of sickness, not just, if I can put it this way, the groans of old age, but those debilitating and painful conditions that have plagued our bodies, whether they be from catching some cold or flu or something of an accident, or whatever it may be, we've known the pain of physical suffering.

And I think it's probable that all of us, in some measure or another, have known what it is to be lonely. Here is Job. Maybe this may be the sorest affliction.

Not only that he loses his family, but even his wife turns away from him. There's that sense of rejection. And as we go on later, his three friends, his three comforters, ultimately turn against him and accuse him of wrongdoing, that he hadn't done anything wrong at all.

He is dishonoured. He is shamed. He is consistently alone. I'm sure that all of us, in some measure, in some way, for some of us, very, very real, some very, very painful, others in smaller measure, we've all known something on this, and we certainly shall, in the lives that we live, yet know more suffering, more sorrow, because life is made up of tribulation.

[17 : 33] But let me ask you a very personal question. Without being too pointed, I want you to think about how you reacted in those times of loss.

How did you respond? What was your initial reaction? Probably like Job, it was grief, yes. But was your second response to worship God and say, blessed be the name of the Lord.

And if you did say that, did you mean it with all your heart? Or did you do it simply because that was the duty that you thought that you should fulfil?

I have to be honest with you and say to you that rarely have I, in times of loss, responded in the way that Job did. Rarely have I immediately responded with worship.

In God's goodness and faithfulness and patience, over time, I have been able to, on some occasions, do that. But I can say, quite honestly, to you, dear friends, that even in my heart today, there are things that still grieve me, things that I find it very hard to, and almost impossible to say with faith, blessed be the name of the Lord, because of that.

[18 : 52] I'm not saying that because I want to stand up as some example to you. Far from it. I want us to recognise that, dear friends, this is something we all struggle with. This is something that we all can understand.

But is it something to do with my statement of faith? Is it because of what I believe, that I'm unable to do that in all circumstances? I'm sure that all of us can say, as part of our statement of faith, blessed be the name of the Lord when he gives.

We take it for granted, don't we, that that is how we will respond. We don't always do it immediately, because often we're caught up with the enjoyment of the moment, or the delight of the thing that's coming to our lives, whether it be the birth of a child, whether it be a blessing financially, whether it be a new doorway opened, and provisioned in that way.

But we all recognise, and all can say, the Lord has given, and the Lord gives. That's a wonderful thing. But it's much more difficult, isn't it, to say, blessed be the name of the Lord when he takes. Is it because in my actual theology, in my understanding of God, I do believe that he gives, but I don't believe that he takes.

[20 : 11] So let's look at this foundation for Job's worship. Let's look at these, his statement of faith, as it were, and seek to understand it a little more. And hopefully, by God's grace, be enabled, by him to be more, like Job, in blessing the Lord, in all things.

Well, let's start with that easy one. I've already mentioned, the Lord gave. Well, as I say, that's something we can all say. Blessed be the name of the Lord too. But what does Job mean, when he says, the Lord gave?

The Lord gave. Well, we just go back, just a line, to see, naked I came from my mother's womb. In other words, I came into the world with nothing. Everything I have, God has given to me.

Everything that I have, comes from him. Job recognized, and rejoiced in the fact, that God was a gracious, generous giver. Something that the Bible constantly proclaims.

James, in his letter, reminds the believers there, every good and perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. Every, good gift.

[21 : 19] So whatever we possess, dear friends, is given from God. But it's more than that. Everything that we are, is a gift from God. Further than we imagine, it means that everything we are is God.

Have you been given a good brain? So that you did well at school, that you attained well at university, in education, so that you secured a very good job. That brain was given to you by God. Thank him for it. Have you been given physical health, so that you have been able to be strong, and to be able to keep on working, through your life, up to your pension age, and maybe even beyond, and you still have physical health, and strength.

Dear friends, that is a wonderful gift of God. It's not something that we can boast in, though often that's how the world does it, doesn't it? It exalts the intelligent, but never gives glory to God. It exalts the healthy, and those who manage to live to a great old age, but it never gives glory to God. Perhaps we've been given very practical abilities, to mend things, and repair things, and create things, artistically, or musically, or in ordinary ways.

[22 : 32] That too is the Lord's gracious gift. How often do I praise him, for the gifts he's given me? And you may say, well I've got no gifts, and I have to say to you, yes you have, whoever you are, because scripture tells us, that he gives gifts to men, and he's given gifts to you, whatever they may be.

It may be compassion, it may be love, it may be service, it may be a teachable spirit, it may be gentleness, it may be any number of things, but dear friends, who you are, is who God made you. He's gifted you. Let's give him thanks for that. And Job here was a man, remember what it said about Job, quite astonishing, the end of verse 3 of chapter 1, he was the greatest man, among all the people of the east.

That's astonishing, isn't it? And what they mean by that of course, is that he was a man who really, was on top of the world. He had all these possessions, all these servants, all these flocks, all these herds.

He was the most respected, and honored man, in his community. And yeah, I believe, that God, sorry, Job here, and through his life, constantly, rejoiced in the fact, that this was God's gift to him.

[23 : 51] I don't believe, and we see it, because he's a blameless man, we're told, who feared God, that every day, he gave thanks to God, for all that he'd given him. That he never took the glory, to himself.

He never, as it were, ponced around, with people saying, look at me, look at what I've done, what a great man am I. I'm Job, and you should, be all in awe of me.

If we are to be people, if we are to be people, who bless the Lord, in all times and circumstances, we have to begin, with blessing him, for what he gives us.

There's that little song, isn't there, count your blessings, name them one by one, and you'll be surprised, at what the Lord has done. And again, and over, and as believers, dear friends, as believers, think about it, if God did nothing else, in your life, if he never provided, a roof over your head, if he never provided, food or clothing, if he never provided, a family, or health and strength, if he gave you, nothing else but salvation, then you dear friends, would have all eternity, to thank God for it.

And so would I. But he's given so much more, hasn't he? Are we practicing, thankfulness? Or do we find ourselves, as is the common want, of the human heart, always wishing we had more, always wishing we were someone else, always desiring, that there was just, this thing added to our lives, or that thing, or this answer to prayer, or are we actually practicing, true thankfulness?

[25 : 31] Is that my statement of faith? That I believe, everything I am, everything I have, has been given to me, by God, out of his free, loving grace.

That's the first pillar, as it were, of this foundation, of Job, that was able to say, blessed be the name of the Lord. But then of course, we come to the second foundation. This is the one that is, hard.

This is the one, that really, hits home. The Lord has taken away. Now on the face of it, when we read of course, this book of Job, we read about what's happened in the heavenlies, as Satan has been there, and spoken with God, we might be tempted to say, well on the face of it of course, it's the devil.

The devil has taken these things away from God. It's not right, and I did hear, many, many years ago, something that greatly distressed me, a preacher standing up, and saying just that, it wasn't the Lord, who took these things away from, it was the devil.

And we shouldn't be blaming God, or saying that God did it. No, the Lord has taken away. As Christians, we can often, or sometimes we can say, whenever difficulty comes, whenever hardship comes, we can accuse the devil, say, well it's only the devil, who's doing this, you know.

[26 : 58] But we can't say that, when we read scripture, the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Now we've got to tread, so carefully here. We've got to be so careful, certainly the devil is real, certainly the devil is opposed, to the people of God, certainly the devil is hostile, and our enemy, and certainly his hand is in, this suffering of Job, without a doubt.

And when we read, through the New Testament, we see how Satan, and his cohorts, bring misery, and suffering, to the lives of people, and we see in Ephesians 6, how we're engaged, as Christians, in a battle, and a struggle, against these things, and against these powers.

But ultimately, what we must see here, and what we must be careful, and say, let us not go beyond, the realms of scripture, but let us go, to where the scripture takes us, and what it says.

It tells us here, that Satan is, on the end of a lead, or the American would say, a leash. There is, there are limits set by God, by which Satan cannot cross.

He says to him there, in verse 12, everything he has in his power, sorry, everything he has, is in your power, but on the man himself, do not lay a finger. And later on, when Satan comes back, and again, seeks to show that, Job will just, give up on God.

[28 : 20] He says again, stretch out your hand, and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely, curse you to the face, says Satan. But the Lord says, he's in your hands, but you must spare his life.

It's a mystery, isn't it? We don't fully understand, or comprehend. But the reality is this, that Satan cannot do anything, apart from the very will, of God.

It's a mystery. We don't understand why. We don't understand how. But we do know this, that incredibly and amazingly, even through the schemes, and the works of the devil, God fulfills his purposes.

We only have to look at the cross, to see that most clearly. For as Peter preaches, on the day of Pentecost, he says, you with the hands, with evil men, took and crucified the Lord.

This is just as God had predestined. This is God's will, that he should suffer and die. It doesn't excuse evil. It doesn't excuse the Sabaeans, or the Chaldeans, for what they did.

[29 : 23] It doesn't mean that everything they did, in their evil, was right, and good, and pleasing to God. But it does mean this, God is bigger, and God is over all, and God is involved.

And we're dipping our toes, aren't we, into the very deep waters, of the hidden wisdom of God. We know that he is sovereign, and Lord over all, and that means he's even sovereign, and Lord over Satan.

God is not the author of wickedness. God is not the one, who brings evil. That's why we read, at the end of chapter one, Job did not sin, by charging God, with wrongdoing.

But our lives are not, in the hands of chance, or luck, or fate, and neither are our hands, simply, sorry, neither are our lives, simply in the hands, of human beings, or people.

Ultimately, Job's foundation for faith, is that the Lord, brought this loss, into his life. to Job, faithfully, and factually, declares, the Lord has taken away.

[30 : 38] This is not just, the only place in scripture, where we find, these truths declared. In one Samuel, Hannah, you remember the mother, of Samuel herself, as she sings praises to God, a woman who the Lord, we're told, made barren, says this, the Lord brings death, and makes alive.

The Lord sends poverty, and wealth. He humbles, and he exalts. It's hard for us to grasp, isn't it? It's hard for us to grasp, because of course, we are people, however great our brains are, they are peace eyes, in comparison, with the Lord our God.

We cannot grasp, the infinite wisdom, and reason, and purpose of God. We cannot understand, all his ways. But we can, trust him.

Because what we know of him, is that he's faithful. What we know of him, is that he is good. And one thing, we mustn't do, dear friends.

But one of the things, sadly, as Christians, sometimes we think, that this means, if God is sovereign, and he's in control, that means sometimes, that when these things happen, we should

simply, put on a smiling face, and not be sad.

[31 : 53] But Job grieved. He grieved. He shaved his head. He grieved. What about our Lord Jesus Christ, our supreme example? He wept, on more than one occasion, at the graveside of Lazarus, as he wept over Jerusalem, and its sin.

Didn't our Lord Jesus, understand, that God is the God, who gives and takes away? Was he deficient, in his theology, in his belief system? Of course, he wasn't. He understood, the goodness of God, and the sovereignty of God, and he trusted him, yet he still wept.

It's right, and proper, for us to grieve, when loss, and pain, and suffering, come into our lives, and yet, it is also, right, and good, for us to worship God, at the same time.

We know so very little, dear friends. We know so much, but what we do know, is comforting to us. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord, be praised, blessed be the name of the Lord.

How could he say that? How could he say, the blessed be the name of the Lord, because the Lord has taken away? Because, just as he believed, and as we believe, God gives, because he loves us, and because he is good, so he believed, that God takes, because he loves us, and he is good.

[33 : 28] There's not two gods, or a God with a split personality. There is one God, and everything he does, he does wisely, and lovingly, and for our good.

So, Job, in his faith, was able to say, I know that God gives, because he is good, and I know that he takes, because he is good. He gives to bless, he takes to bless.

Apostle Paul was a man, who experienced more than his fair share, of suffering and heartache. You can read about it, in 2 Corinthians 11, and it's 12. And he says this, as he gets to the, middle of chapter 12, of 2 Corinthians, in order, to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

Three times, I pleaded with the Lord, to take it away, from me. Paul recognized, in the midst of that, most painful experience, an experience, which brought him, to his knees, so that he begged, begged God, to take it away.

Notice what he says, it was given to me. And three times he prayed, were the prayers of Paul, ineffectual? Were they without faith?

[34 : 51] Were they from a sinful heart? Three times, the Lord said, no. And yet, Paul understood, that this was for his good, because at the beginning, he says, in order to keep me, from being conceited, in order to keep me, from falling into sin, in order to keep me, from spoiling my testimony, from dishonoring God, from having a wrong spirit, within me, God gave, and take, and took.

This is why, Job blessed, the name of the Lord, because he's certain, that all that God, has taken from him, was only because, of God's love for him, and because of God's desire, to do him good. Again, we just can't, comprehend that, can we? It just cannot, get it into our heads, I certainly can't. God was actually, blessing him, by taking these precious people, and belongings away, and so he, in response, blesses God.

Your Lord has given, the Lord has taken away. Can I use this, very poor illustration? Imagine that you are, someone who has, a daughter, and your daughter, comes to you one day, and she says, I've met, the man that I love, and I want to marry him.

My immediate feelings are, I'm losing my child, I'm losing her, no longer will she be, in my home, no longer will I see her, every day, no longer will I share, my life with her, she's being taken, from me, by this man.

[36 : 39] I hate, the son-in-law. Well I hope, none of you say that. Of course not. There's that mixture, of a sense, yes of loss, but there's gain as well. I'm going to gain another child, a son-in-law, and perhaps, by God's grace, I shall gain grandchildren as well.

Loss, producing gain. Our God always does, what is best for our souls, He always does, what is good, and therefore we should bless Him, and praise Him, daily, and eternally, for His giving, and for His taking.

When we see Him, as who He truly is, when we recognize Him, as this God, then we can bless Him, and praise Him, day by day.

Yes, we're walking by faith. We don't understand everything. We don't see, what God's purposes are. We cannot fully comprehend, why, these things have happened, and these things have been lost.

But one day we will. One day we shall understand. One day we shall see. Remember Paul's words, we'll close with these, in 1 Corinthians 13.

[38 : 10] When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now I see only a reflection, as in a mirror, or I see in a mirror, darkly.

Then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. Let's pray together.

You are so great.

And you are so good. You are so faithful. And you are so perfect. O Lord, we bow in worship of you. We say again, as we did with the hymn at the very beginning, we cannot tell. We do not know. We cannot see.

[39 : 21] But O Lord, you can. And you do. We thank you that our lives are not left in our hands for us to steer left or right, for us to, as it were, give and take.

For Lord, we would never, ever do it your way. We thank you that our lives and all that we are and all that we have, like Job, are in your hands to do with as you will for our good.

And we pray that you would help us. Help us to be able to worship you and to be able to say with all our hearts, the name of the Lord, be praised.

Help us particularly, Lord, with those things that still cause us sorrow and grief. Help us particularly with those losses that still are like a thorn in our sides.

Help us, O Lord, to be able to rejoice in your words. My grace is sufficient for you. Make us, O Lord, those who receive of your comfort and make us those men and women of faith that our lives may point to the reality of the goodness of God.

[40 : 39] Help us in this week again, we pray. Lord, help us to follow Jesus by faith until the day we see him in sight.

Amen. Amen.