

Weekly Lift #16

28th July, 2020.

A little extra bible in your week



Things too wonderful for me to know...

What is God's plan? For me? For the world? For my family, friends, work, church?

What is it?

Why is this happening?

Where is God at times like this?

These are big questions about our big God.

The book of Job is one of those books which is both humbling and quizzical. Job suffers greatly and God allows it to happen. But why?

His friends had some poor advice. They advise him that he must have done something wrong. That he must have displeased God. That he must be suffering because of his sinfulness. But this is not the case for Job. In fact, it is most often not the case! We suffer in a world that is crumbling around us. We suffer because the world is in decay. But we suffer as we wait for restoration – the promised land of heaven.

In all his questioning of God, Job finally responds to God in chapter 42:

The Job replied to the Lord:

"I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?'

Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

You said 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'

My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:1-6

Job questioned God about his suffering. But he also assumed that he would gain an answer. In these verses he admits to realising two things:

1. He spoke of things he did not understand.

Who can understand the plans of God? You? Me? We have his Word in the Bible, but not everything is clear, simply because we cannot understand the depth of God's wisdom and plans for us and his world. This is a gentle rebuke for us, not to assume that we would know better than God, but also a gentle encouragement that God does have plans, and they are wonderful, whether we understand them or not.

2. Job was told to listen. And he did.

This is when he stopped just hearing "of" God, but began to "see" him. Job began to see who God truly was. He is the all powerful, all knowing, ever present, sovereign King of all things. And he actually wants us to listen to him and "see" him clearly.

This is why God sent Jesus. So we could see him clearly. So we could see his plans clearly. So we could see his love clearly, and his great desire to rescue people from sin. In all things, God's plan is to bring people into a relationship with him through Jesus.

How will that happen in day to day life? I don't always know. Either do you. It's nice when we do see "how and why". But it can also be nice when we don't see or understand and therefore need to trust him even more. This is a gift. A painful gift, but a gift – to be driven to deeper trust.

Job drew even closer to God through his struggles. God did restore him, and this is certainly not always promised to us on this earth. But it is promised to us beyond this earth – the promise of heaven is the real end promise for those who trust in Jesus. And it is absolutely clear.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. John 3:16.

Day to day, God's plans are often not clear to you and me. But they are wonderful. But we also need to be reminded, amidst our busy lives, to listen to him. To pray and read his Word. To learn from the Scriptures. To gather together when we can and encourage each other to listen.

Perhaps this is a time where you are wondering about God's plans for you, or for his world. Maybe you are frustrated. Maybe you are even driven to a bit of impatience or perhaps even anger over the uncertainty of life at the moment. Job helps us to remember that God's plans are often beyond our understanding. But they are wonderful.

Who would have thought that a man crucified on a cross could ever be a wonderful thing?

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, your plans for me are sometimes unclear to me. Help me to trust you and your ways. Help me to remember that you are good and your plans are wonderful. Help me to take time in my life to listen to you. And in my deepest frustrations, and grief, and sadness, be kind to me and help me.
Amen.

God bless.

Bruce Stanley

www.stphils.org.au