

“There once was a man in the land of Uz  
whose name was Job.

That man was blameless and upright,  
one who feared God  
and turned away from evil.”<sup>1</sup>

But evil did not turn away from him.

No matter how blameless he was;  
no matter how he turned away from evil  
and toward God,  
well... bad things still happen to good people.

And Job wasn't just good,  
he was blameless and upright.  
Job was as good as the come.

Nearly as good as my grandma.

And so when the sky started falling,  
and it fell right down on top of him,  
well, he had a legitimate complaint:

Why?  
Why would these terrible things happen?  
And more to the point,  
why would they happen to me?

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<sup>1</sup> Job 1:1

Except Job didn't complain.  
He held firm,  
    blameless and upright.  
He had given thanks for his blessings when they came,  
he would accept these curses too.

    Incredulous,  
    his wife asked him,  
"Do you still persist in your integrity?  
    Curse God, and die!"<sup>2</sup>

Which is where I would have been too.  
Grumbling and complaining,  
wondering and screaming my own curses,  
    right back.

    But "in all this,  
    Job did not sin with his lips."

And for a long time,  
    Job did not sin with his lips.  
    His friends came and sat down with him,  
    and they were no friends at all,  
    reassuring him,  
    not of God's love  
    and God's presence with him,  
but insisting instead,  
    that Job's sins  
    must be equal to the curses all around him.

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<sup>2</sup> Job 2:9

Death  
and famine  
and bodily sores,  
    a blessed life  
        in short order  
            become wretched.

For so long  
    Job said nothing,  
        nothing except this,  
            “Naked I came from my mother’s womb,  
            and naked I will depart.  
The Lord gave  
and the Lord has taken away;  
    may the name of the Lord be praised.”<sup>3</sup>

Last week we finally heard Job reach his breaking point.  
    These terrible friends are too much,  
    these loathsome sores are too much,  
    these heartbreaks are too much.

    But none of this  
        is finally why Job cried out to God,  
    none of this  
        is finally why Job charged God with wrongdoing,  
            why Job demanded  
                that God make an accounting before him.

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<sup>3</sup> Job 1:21 NIV

Job had accepted his blessings,  
Job accepted too these curses.

What Job could not accept  
was God's silence;

what broke Job  
was not Satan's punishments,  
but God's absence.

"Then Job answered:

    'Today also my complaint is bitter;  
        his hand is heavy despite my groaning.  
Oh, that I knew where I might find him,  
    that I might come even to his dwelling!

        ...If I go forward,  
            he is not there;  
        or backward,  
            I cannot perceive him;  
on the left he hides,  
        and I cannot behold him;  
I turn to the right,  
        but I cannot see him."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Job 23: 1 and 15

When is the last time you felt like that?  
When is the last time you thought to yourself,  
“no matter where I turn,  
God is not there.”???

It has happened to us all;  
to the best of us,  
the worst of us,  
and all of us in between.

Maybe you felt that way  
when you realized  
how much destruction can happen during a hurricane,  
when you realized  
just how random a natural disaster can be.

Maybe you felt that way  
when you were confronted,  
yet again,  
with the violence which seems to pervade our society,  
a violence we,  
for some reason,  
feel helpless to stop.

Or the refugees from Syria,  
or the fact that some war  
always seems to be around the corner  
somewhere.

Or maybe when bad things happen to good people.

“Oh that I knew where I might find the Lord,  
that I might come even to his dwelling!  
...I go forward,  
he is not there;  
or backward,  
and I cannot perceive him.”

Where is God in the midst of all that?

But in our deepest place,  
our complaints,  
our fears,  
like Job,  
they are not a list of world-wide problems.

The anxieties we face in the dark of the night,  
they contain our own secret list of worries.

“Will my children turn out alright,  
or am I doing it all wrong?  
What will happen to my parents,  
when they can no longer care for themselves?  
What job should I take;  
what job should I leave behind?  
When will grief ever end;  
when will the pain of loss subside?  
What should I be when I grow up?”

These questions will plague each and every one of us,  
at some point or another.

Where is God in the midst of such questions?  
Why does it feel like God is absent,  
just when our list of questions begins to grow?

“Today my complaint is bitter.”  
And if not today,  
then yesterday  
or tomorrow.

Our complaints rise,  
like Job’s they swirl about us,  
consuming us,  
driving us this way and that.

Perhaps we will be as patient as Job,  
or perhaps we will demand answers right away.

But either way,  
our worries  
and our terrors,  
our heartbreak  
and our loss,  
they will rise  
**until they become a whirlwind.**

The same whirlwind that Job heard today.

The list of questions and complaints rises,  
rises until our voices are one with Job's

“God has made my heart faint;  
the Almighty has terrified me.”

What happens then?  
What are we left with?

**We are left with the whirlwind.**

The same whirlwind  
that Job heard today.

“And the Lord answered Job,  
out of the whirlwind.”

Out your whirlwind,

God will come and answer.