

Sermon Title: "Answer Me!"

June 20th, 2021 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Job 38; Mark 4



Theme:

What's in it for me?

Sermon Text:

Grace and Peace to you from our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A few years ago, and I was about to take my X-Ray recertification test, I got a phone call from my boss asking me my location. I guess he forgot about the testing, but that's neither here nor there. He told me that one of my officers needed to discuss with me his "medical issues." When I returned from the testing, I found out that my employee had tested positive for marijuana on a random drug test the day before. TSA has zero-tolerance for drug use, and even though it has since been decriminalized by the State, it's still an illegal drug as far as the Federal Government is concerned. I had to sit with the officer, a former police officer in Guam, while the expedited disciplinary investigation was initiated. Basically, they were awaiting confirmation of the test results. Once the results were confirmed, the officer would be terminated. I asked him, "What were you thinking? You know how the agency feels about this! You know what's going to happen." "Yes, I know. As a cop, I busted a lot of people for possession, distribution, and being under the influence of marijuana." "Then why did you do it?" "I don't know. My wife had glaucoma and I had to show her how to do it."

"I don't know," seems to be a pretty common answer when we get caught doing something stupid and we have to "face the music." If it is a teenager, I can almost understand it as the portion of the brain that deals with reasoning and consequences are still being rewired and that doesn't usually complete until age 25. So, when they say, "I don't know," they may not, but where does this come from? It looks like this is Biblical, going back to the oldest book of the Bible, Job.

If you don't know the whole story, Satan makes a bet with God that he can trip Job up if his family and fortune are wiped out, and God permits it. Then some of Job's so-called friends show up and they too try to get Job to blame God for his misfortune. While Job doesn't curse

God, he is pretty harsh in his criticism and complaining. Then God appears out of the whirlwind (a foreshadowing of Elijah being taken up into heaven) and gives Job and his “friends” a good old-fashioned butt-chewing, like a Good Father sometimes does to a foolish child.

¹Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

²Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

³Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

⁴Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

⁵Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

⁶On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone,

⁷when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

⁸Or who shut in the sea with doors

when it burst out from the womb,

⁹when I made clouds its garment

and thick darkness its swaddling band,

¹⁰and prescribed limits for it

and set bars and doors,

¹¹and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stayed?’”

I can only imagine how foolish Job felt at that moment. I mean, how do you respond to the Lord Almighty? I can just hear Job, “Uh... Uh...” Job doesn’t really have an answer, does he? No Southwest Airlines get away fare for him. And while Job’s “friends” get an even greater rebuke, this passage tells us quite a bit about who our Father is, namely that He was not only responsible for the creation of our whole world, stars, and sea, but that He had an active hand in doing it. God set up the rules of the natural world, and only He can set them aside.

I also love how this passage foreshadows Jesus. Look at verse six. Who laid the cornerstone? God did. Remember from Psalm 118:22-23, “The stone that the builders rejected has become it’s cornerstone.” It wasn’t just the Pharisees and Sadducees that rejected Jesus.

The Father rejected Jesus on that Cross so that we might be redeemed, and the Bible's oldest book is pointing to it.

Continuing on in verses 8-11,

*⁸“Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb,
⁹when I made clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
¹⁰and prescribed limits for it
and set bars and doors,
¹¹and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stayed’?”*

Now what does that sound like? Looking at our Gospel for today:

*³⁵On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to them, “**Let us go across to the other side.**” ³⁶And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. ³⁷And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “**Peace! Be still!**” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, “**Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?**” ⁴¹And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”*

Notice what Jesus is doing here. He is doing something that God told Job that only he could do, therefore Jesus is demonstrating that He is God. He acts surprised that His Disciples have not yet figured it out yet. You see, Mark has a familiar pattern of Jesus doing something to demonstrate that He is God, and then making a statement alluding to that fact. To the public, those statements are more vague, but to the Disciples, Jesus is much clearer. Even then, the Disciples are slow to pick up on this.

So, what do these passages mean for us? What is God telling us? Know this, we are all kind of like Job and that confused teenager who doesn't have all the answers. We often do stupid things without fully grasping the results or the end game. We don't have all of the answers. Sin makes us do stupid things, think stupid thoughts, and makes us look back and say,

“What was I thinking?” We don’t have all of the answers, and we don’t have to. We have a Father who loves us so much that He would forsake His own Son in order to redeem us from our ignorance and sin. We have a Son who is so powerful He can still the storms of our lives and bring us peace and restoration. And we have an advocate who speaks for us when we can’t.

This is who God is, and He’s been telling us who He is from the beginning. God is saying to you, “I created you in my own image. I created a place for you to grow and thrive. At the proper time, I will bring you home to a place I have prepared for you. You are part of my plan. You always have been. You always will be.”

At the end of Job, God restores Job. He once again has a family and fortune. God also places further limits on Satan; God will no longer permit Satan to tempt us in the same manner as Job. Yes, we are still tempted by Satan today, but it is a far cry to what Job endured. Even so, Job remained faithful. We too, remained faithful through our recent trials and tribulations. Know this, we have a God that puts limits on what we have to endure here, and He will lead us out of those trials. Know that we will come out of those trials stronger than ever, and closer to God. Jesus rose from the dead, and so will we. He is coming for us, and He will restore us too.

In Jesus name,

Amen.

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