



Sermon, Sunday October 27, 2024 “Job’s Confession and Our Confession”

SCRIPTURE: Job 38:1-7 ¹ Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Gird up your loins like a man; I will question you, and you shall declare to me. ⁴ “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

Introduction: The Story of Job

Today is the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost. Have you heard the theological term theodicy? Theodicy is a term that arose from an awareness of the problem of extreme human suffering for which the cause is unknown. In the world we live in, there are children who are born with serious disabilities. And there are people who become victims of violence without any reason while walking down the street. Additionally, some people become disabled due to natural disasters or various accidents. Furthermore, the wars taking place in the world today sacrifice not only soldiers but also countless women and children. Likewise, pain for which we do not know the reason is common in human life. In this situation, can we be sure that God is an almighty being who is just and full of love? The Book of Job in the Old Testament is the Biblical story that answers these questions.

According to Job 1:1, Job was **‘a blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.’** Job has seven sons and three daughters. According to the Book of Job, he was a wealthy man and the greatest man in the East. He was also thorough in the religious education of his children.

But one day, he suddenly lost his children and all his property. He went through a very painful time because of his skin disease and was criticized and abandoned by his wife. The reason his wife criticized Job was because Job did not admit his mistakes and repent, but still did not blame God.

Later, Job repeats the argument he had with his wife with his three friends and Elihu. Those who attack Job have two main logics. First, the reason for the disaster that befall Job was because he sinned. So, Job must repent to God. Second, the difficulties Job is experiencing are spiritual training, so he must endure them.

However, even during a situation so painful that Job says, ‘I would have been better off dead,’ he does not accept the advice of his friends and insists to the end that he is honorable.

In the end, Job's story has a happy ending. However, the core of Job's story is not the outcome, but Job's confession at the last moment leading to a happy ending. In Job 42:5-6, Job confesses as follows: **‘My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.’**

This verse explains why Job repented. The reason is that Job had only heard the Lord with his ears, but now he was able to see Him with his eyes. The word **‘my eyes have seen you’** in this verse refers to a deeper level of enlightenment. So what led Job to change his mind?

Body: God’s question and Job’s confession

The reason why Job changed his mind is found in Job chapters 38-41. Today’s text is the preface. God comes to Job, who is ridiculed by people, is in loneliness, and is in despair. God asks Job to answer his



questions. God's question about Job continues until the end of Chapter 41 of the Book of Job. In today's text, God asks Job, **'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? (v.4); Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? (v.5), On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone? (v.6)'**

These verses reflect the ancient Jewish view of the universe. They thought the universe was made up of three layers: sky, earth, and underground. Modern people today may laugh at the ancients' view of the universe, but that does not mean that modern people are smarter than the ancients in understanding the fundamental secrets.

To believe in God means to feel and live this mystery in our lives. To understand this better, let me tell you, my story. If I hadn't come to the United States in 2011 to study, you and I would never have met. I would not have met you if I had not accepted an appointment to the Iowa annual conference after studying theology at GTU in Berkeley, California. I came from a country called Korea across the Pacific Ocean, and from California in the western United States to Iowa in the central United States. And you are currently attending church for your own reasons. All these events and reasons come together, and we are worshiping together today.

I believe that our life of faith together as members of the same worship community is an event full of secrets. However, there are people among us who feel how precious we are to each other in this amazing event, and there are people who live without feeling it.

This is why, in today's text, Job continues to receive the question **"Do you know?"** from God. In other words, God is asking Job whether we have ever seriously thought about the ultimate mystery of the world.

Job eventually realizes his ignorance and confesses in chapter 42, verse 3, **'Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.'**

A person who, like Job, realizes how limited human wisdom is, has no choice but to be humble. Job feels ashamed of judging right and wrong without knowing the origin of life. This is the core of the experience of God. And it is the core of Christian spirituality.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Job's repentance arose not from the advice of friends who claimed to be wise, but from a glimpse of his experience of the mystery of God.

Foe me, I learned from the Bible that the ultimate mystery of the world is Jesus Christ. **Colossians 1:27 says: 'To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.'**

The reason Jesus Christ is the ultimate mystery is because through him God's revelation was fully revealed to the world. Of course, not everyone recognizes Jesus Christ as the revelation of God. To those who do not believe in God, Jesus is simply the founder and prophet of Christianity. However, for us Christians, Jesus is the Word of God itself. Jesus is of the same essence as God. Do you think so too?

2 Corinthians 4:6 says: **"For God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."**

Conclusion: What is our confession to the Lord?

I mentioned earlier that Job confessed his ignorance and repented of the fact that he did not know the ultimate depth of the universe and the world. However, Christians take a step forward and move towards God, who creates, leads, and completes the world.



Last Monday, my wife and I took a walk through a park full of trees with beautifully colored autumn leaves. The nature I saw with my own eyes was truly beautiful. However, Christians are people who not only praise the external beauty of nature, but also praise God who created it.

Additionally, Christians are people who have completely entrusted their lives to God, who created the world. The reason we can completely entrust our lives to God is because God is the one who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. This is our faith.

To those who ask what meaning this faith has in your life, I answer: I do not believe that life is determined by worldly standards. So even if I am unfortunate according to the world's standards, it may be very difficult for me, but I will not completely break down. Because I believe and am confident that Jesus Christ is always with me. What do you confess about 'Lord'? Does it resemble Job in today's text? Or do you resemble the people of the world who do not know the Lord? I hope that you will abundantly experience the mystery of life that the Lord gives you every day of your life. **Amen!**

