

# God Responds

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thanks, Srinage, for leading us in worship today. We're going to return for the last time, sad face, to Job today, the last section if you're visiting with us.

I hope that it will not seem too strange to come in right at the very end, and I hope you'll be able to follow what we have been looking at. I hope what we say will stand on its own also, but we do come to the very last section of what has been both a difficult and challenging and exciting, and I hope revealing, certainly has been revealing for me, study of God in the book of Job.

And I think one of the things we will take from Job, and at the end, we'll just spend a little while at the end just summarising one or two things. But one thing I think we will definitely take is that God will always be much more than we think he is.

We will never truly be able to understand all of God, of course. And I think Job is one of the books that makes that clear to us that Job is, or God that's revealed in Job is mysterious, but he is personal, and he reveals himself that last week or the week before, didn't we, when there's that two aspects of God.

There's the tremendous, and he's mysterious, and he's unattainable at one level to us, and yet he's imminent, and he's close at another level.

[ 1 : 34 ] And that's a great mystery and a great amazing uniqueness about the character of God and who he is. And he is full of surprises. And I think the end of the book ends with some surprises as well, I certainly think so.

And his grace will always be greater than we can imagine. It will always be greater than we can imagine. And so what I hope to do in a short time this morning is try and expose that grace a little bit more and expose God a little bit more in this chapter.

Because he clearly, he certainly surprises some people, if he doesn't surprise us, he certainly surprises some people at the end of the book of Job. And in very real terms, the last few verses of the climax to what we've already learned right through, or have been learning.

And at one level it's a surprise, at another level it's as well. I kind of expected it was going to go this way, because we know what we know thus far. So God surprises us by blasting the good guys. He absolutely blasts the good guys at the end of the book of Job.

You know, in verse 7 he says, after those words he spoke to Eliphaz, who is the kind of the leader of the three comforters who we'd looked at and seen before in the past, who got it all wrong in many ways. And he said, my anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you've not spoken of me, what's right?

[ 3 : 08 ] So despite being good guys, as it were, they haven't spoken of God, what is right? And God at this point finally declares that. He says that. We've been leading up to it, but now he says it. You are moral. These guys are moral. They're decent. They're religious.

They're upright in many ways, particularly as they relate to one another and to other people around them. But they made assumptions and their assumptions were wrong. They made assumptions about God and they made assumptions about Job, both of which were very wrong indeed. And because of that, they displayed a degree of arrogance.

They thought they knew God. They thought they knew morality and the truth and the truth that had been revealed to them thus far. But they simply were overwhelmingly arrogant in taking that and thinking they had the full knowledge that they needed of God and also of Job and probably more significantly his heart. They assumed that they knew what was in Job's heart. They said all along, Job, you're hiding secret sin.

That's why God has brought this calamity in your life and they were wrong. They were absolutely wrong in that and God calls them foolish. He says that they need to be forgiven for their folly. We use that word quite a lot, quite loosely.

But in the Bible it's always quite a strong spiritual term which is used to describe those who don't follow the way of God, who are foolish as opposed to being wise. And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[ 4 : 53 ] So knowing and loving and serving the Lord is wisdom, but they were showing themselves to be foolish. And God is justly angry with them here. My anger burns against you, he says.

He says you've got a system, you've got religious system here, but you don't have a system where the truth has reached your hearts. So you're all and I am all. Well, I was. We're all sitting in rows of a system.

Life's about a system. We're all of systems. But the gospel and the truth must go beyond our theological pews and our theological systems and must reach our hearts.

And so God says to them, you've got the truth, you know all about God or well, at least you think you do, but you need a mediator.

You need someone to come and represent you before me and you need to repent and need to offer sacrifice for your sins because you're not right. You're actually wrong. And it's tremendous. That's a great end to the book. They needed a mediator.

[ 6 : 17 ] They needed to recognize they were wrong. And what's the good thing about this story? Well, they accepted that. They recognized that. And of course, it was Job who was to be the mediator. We'll come on to that in a little minute.

They repented. They did what God asked them to. They repented and they sacrificed and they knew that Job prayed on their behalf and they were humbled before God.

And the great thing is in that as well, God accepted that. God forgave. One of the great things about this last few verses is that we sometimes forget is how much God forgave.

And that God was willing at this point, despite their foolishness, despite their presumption, despite the fact that they thought they knew better than God. And indeed, they thought they were God's representatives in condemning Job. That God forgives them and God accepts them and God renews them into fellowship with them.

So, I guess the reminder for us this morning is the significance of truth in our lives, allowing truth in our lives to reach our heart.

[ 7 : 32 ] And not just to have a system of belief. Not just to have a philosophy of religion or an ABC of the Bible.

And know it biblically or know it intellectually or know it even in our lives morally and ethically. But does the gospel and does Jesus Christ and does the message reach our hearts so that we turn in relationship to God?

That's the really important thing about this book. It teaches us about relationship between God and ourselves and what God wants from us is relationship. He wants us to be dependent on Him as Lord. He wants us to come when we make mistakes and not just stand before Him and argue the toss before the living God.

He wants us to be humbled and He wants us to accept what He says and follow Him. And He loves that. And He wants us to do that. Hugely significant.

We don't want to be living our lives with our own assumptions about God and about others as well. We're very quick to judge others and presume we know their hearts.

[ 8 : 43 ] And in so doing we're also quick to be God's representatives and think we know better than God or think we know what God thinks about other people. And very often I'm sure God is saying to us, look, just slow down. Stop making these judgments.

Stop pretending that you're all seeing and all knowing and omnipotent and just recognize that you may have it wrong. There's that really scary verse in Matthew where Jesus says of people, he says, Lord, Lord, you know, many people will say Lord, Lord, didn't I do lots of great things in your name?

Can I cast out demons in your name? Amazing miracles were done. And he says, depart from me because I didn't know you. Is that a scary verse? That should be a scary verse for church people. It should be a scary verse for people who cry out, Lord, Lord, in their lives.

And Jesus is getting right down to the mat and he says, look, it's significant and important that we bow the knee and that we let Christ into our hearts. That we're humbled, we're repentant and we turn around and see that He will often know much better than us and that there is mystery in our relationship.

So we will cry sometimes not so much Lord, Lord, but my God, my God, why have you not forsaken me?

[ 10 : 04 ] Because we're amazed by His grace and we're amazed that He doesn't turn His back on us and we're amazed that He forgives us again and again and again so that our cry is the opposite of what Jesus cried on the cross because we almost think we should receive His forsakeness because of what we're like.

Maybe that's how they felt here, but were received by God and were forgiven. So He blasts the good guys and then He accepts the outcast. He accepts Job.

Because remember Job's still in the gutter at this point. Job's still rubbing his skin, his skin diseased body, rejected by everyone around him and God accepts him. Twice we're told and always, you know, when the Bible in a short space of time repeats things, it's usually because it's important.

Twice He says, you have not, God says, you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has. And then later on He says, you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has.

Twice God defends Job and twice God says and reminds us all that Job was right. Job is in the gutter and yet he's right and they all thought he was wrong.

[ 11 : 21 ] God surprises everyone there. Hey, well that's what we expected. But Job is right and there's a great turnaround. Job is right. Now is that not slightly contradictory? Have you read that? And if you've read that carefully, you may have read that and thought, well that seems contradictory.

Because God has just spent the last four chapters as we have it here. In a sense, exposing Job's sins and what is, you know, saying things about God that were wrong.

So is Job right or is he wrong? What is it God? Let us know. Is Job right or is he wrong? Well, I think what we can take from this is that God is reminding us that he's looking at the heart here and he recognizes and he's reading between the lines.

And he doesn't say Job is perfect. Remember that? He doesn't say he's perfect. But he knows and he's expressed that he said the wrong words already.

But he said them in the right place. He's gone with his wrong words to the right person. So he's prayed, he may have said wrong things in his prayer and accused God of things he shouldn't have.

[ 12 : 36 ] But he has taken his wrong words and gone to the right place with them. And of course, at the end, after God has spoken, he has repented and admitted he was talking about things he didn't know about.

And he repents in dust and ashes. So when you take that whole package, both the prayers and the agonizing and careless words that sometimes he says, and then when God corrects him, he repents and turns around, then we can see why God says Job has spoken right of me.

Because he's gone to the right place and then he's responded in the right way. It's the whole package we have here. Why is that important? Because we're not robots. That's why.

You're not a Christian robot. You're not a religious robot that is programmed that you can live your life and act correctly at every single point. We're disciples. That is, we're followers of Jesus.

We're learners. Job was a learner, but God could see his heart. And he could see his heart was in the right way, in the right place. And when his sin was exposed, he turned from it and repented of it.

[ 13 : 45 ] And the path of grace for Job and for us is not smooth. So I think the key to God's summary of Job here is that Job was right because he was a man of prayer, wrestling prayer and trust.

And Job, for us, ultimately gave up his trust and his hope in God, even though he had a lot of wobbles and understandably so along the way. So we can recognize and see that God accepts the outcast by saying that he's right.

That's a great encouragement to us. When we make all our mistakes and when God exposes our mistakes through the word, and then we turn away from them.

He loves that. And we turn back to him. But we also see that he accepts the outcast by calling him and giving him a task as his servant.

In verse 8 he says, Now, therefore, take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering. And my servant Job again twice shall pray for you. So Job, you know, who was just in the gutter and who was struggling with suffering and pain and loss and everything that went with it, is anointed as a mediator now.

[ 15 : 06 ] He becomes a mediator. This Job who longed earlier, remember we looked at that earlier in the book. He longed for someone to mediate for him before God. Now, he becomes a mediator himself pointing forward to the great mediator, Jesus Christ.

And he's given here dignity and usefulness where he felt useless and exposed and broken before.

And he's given this great challenge of being a representative of God to pray for his three friends as a servant of God. And there's no time today, sadly, but there's fantastic analogy and anticipation of Jesus here, isn't there?

A greater redeemer, one who doesn't die, one who is sinless, one who doesn't need to repent, and one who stands in her place and pleads her cause. You know, Isaiah 42 through to the great suffering servant passages talks about, this is my servant.

And Jesus is the servant of God who comes to do God's will and to die in the cross. They'll speak about that tonight. Please pray about tonight. Please pray that the message of the gospel will touch hearts in whom God is already working.

[ 16 : 22 ] So we find that Job is a servant and he has given this great job to intercede on behalf of his three friends. Isn't that great? Isn't that a great thing to do?

Isn't God wise and amazing in doing that? And we'll see in a little minute why that's great as well. And of course, it's also great because God does send an intercessor on our behalf, a mediator on our behalf, the Lord Jesus Christ, not for just Job and not for his three friends, but for us, for you and me.

So we take this Old Testament message with all its difficulty and challenge, and we can see long before Jesus came that God was preparing the way for a redeemer, an interceder, a mediator who would ultimately replace anything else that was there.

Sacrifice included, high priests included, job included. So Job becomes God's servant, wonderful pointing, anticipatory pointing forward to Jesus.

And also Job has a happy ending. That's the third surprise in many ways. Or it's more the surprise or a definition regarding the fact that Job has been accepted by God that he has a really happy ending.

[ 17 : 55 ] The last section is quite difficult in many ways for us, but we see that he gets double what he's had before and his life becomes fully blessed beyond any expectation.

And it's a strange little passage, isn't it? We find that he has a new acceptance. He's accepted again by his friends. He's accepted by his family again. They come back.

He receives wealth, long life. Not so much reward as just an outpouring, an outstanding outpouring of God's grace in his life. His experience is real and I believe it is real. I think he did receive these things.

Job is a real character. It's a historical character. We've moved even in this last section from poetry to prose because the prose is more historical and it tells us exactly what happened at the end of the account.

And clearly this is what happened to him. But I think while it is a real experience, it's also a fairly unique experience because all that's happening to Job is pointing forward and it's speaking symbolically as well of the life of faith.

[ 19 : 05 ] And so here we have a picture of the end of the story for the person and the life of faith. And it's the end of our story as well. Now, there's no way we can see that everyone's life now is going to end up with a kind of blessing that Job received.

It's not that everyone now goes through a period of suffering and then is guaranteed a great and happy and overflowing blessing in this life. That simply isn't the case either biblically or through our own experience.

But what it reminds us of is that this is the end of Job's story and we have an end to our story as believers which is also great.

And this end prefigures the end of our story. So whatever struggling and battling and suffering and difficulties we're going through, we can know that this truth is reflective of the truth of knowing the blessing of God eternally in the new heavens and the new earth.

A place of physical blessing, of physical joy, of physical peace, of physical wholeness, of physical restoration, great place, a great future.

[ 20 : 19 ] So there's this dynamic that is pointed to here that's revealed more clearly other places in the Bible that this isn't all there is.

That when you become old and wizened, that that's not all there is. That as we're growing older, it's not depressing for us as Christians because we can be renewed inwardly day by day but we've got a great future to look forward to.

That this isn't all there is and people are living like this is all there is. And they're panicking as they get older and as they're less able to enjoy this being all there is.

But for the Christian it's not like that. The best is still to come. However good or ever difficult this life is, the best is still to come. And Job's story points to that.

So Job, God surprises us here. But also I think Grace surprises us in the story. It's a very old book, probably the oldest book in the Old Testament in terms of when it was written.

[ 21 : 25 ] And yet it's filled with grace. It's filled with God's grace and grace surprises here in a few different ways. I'm going to finish with this. First we're surprised by Grace in Job's response.

Now I wonder if Job has been, by this stage has been shown behind the scenes. So he knows a little bit of what went on between God and Satan at the very beginning. Possibly that enabled him to see things differently.

But we don't know. What we do know is his heart is transformed by meeting with God in this amazing way. And the great thing about that is it affects his life, okay? He meets with God.

He knows he's accepted and forgiven by God as he repents and turns to God. And that affects his life. For him right at the beginning of the Old Testament, grace is not cheap.

Okay? Oh, yeah. Later on he gets all these blessings. But before he gets his blessing, he's asked by God to do something very great. He's asked to forgive his friends, to pray for them.

[ 22 : 29 ] And that's amazing that he does that. And he does. He clearly does. Grace for him, he's been forgiven. He's been accepted. And so the natural outworking of that is he forgives his friends.

His friends. After all they've said, miserable comforters are you all. Earlier on he says, when he's at his lowest, they're not giving him any comfort or any help or any warmth or acceptance.

They keep telling him he's wrong. And yet he forgives them. And he forgives his family. It's quite interesting here that his family, I think they come crawling back a little bit to him.

You know, with gifts, they realise that they've got it all wrong. They had rejected him. They'd abandoned him. Imagine that. Imagine your family. Your loved ones just abandoning you and rejecting you because they thought you were wrong.

And they thought you were under God's judgment. And they were told here that all his brothers and sisters who had known him before ate bread with him in his house. They showed him sympathy and comforted him. What would we get stuffed?

[ 23 : 39 ] You weren't with me when I was going through my darkness and now you're giving me gifts and wanting to come and eat with me. Take a hike. That's what we would naturally think, wouldn't it? If we'd been badly treated.

We badly treat others in return. But grace isn't like that. Because grace recognises that God didn't tell us to take a hike. When we go back to him for repentance again and again and again when we let him down.

He doesn't say on your way. He forgives us because of his grace and his goodness. And so we respond in the same way as the job. No bitterness.

Didn't spend the rest of his life thinking, what was that all about? He goes on and he continues to work and he stewards what he has and he builds up his business again. And he gets married in his family.

We don't know how he gets married, but he's more family anyway. And he gives them, he does something radical. Whether he is or the Holy Spirit, but he names the girls, the names of the girls are recorded and none of the guys are.

[ 24 : 43 ] And that's unusual in the kind of society and culture that he came from. And more than that, they're giving an equal inheritance for the guys. That is completely unusual.

They share in the inheritance. Again, it's pointing forward to God's grace being for all. And the names, I think loosely, the names that are given, which are difficult to pronounce, mean peace, fragrance and beauty.

So no one suffered like Job. No one went through what Job went through in his life. And yet when he turns, when he sees God's bigger and greater purposes and God's grace and forgiveness and is able to forgive, it's as if his life is full of gratitude.

He's not, you know, bitter Christians, kind of ugly Christians. Christians are always complaining about everything and about God and about their fellow Christians and about church and about the minister, about everything.

They're angry, bitter, unpleasant Christians. Is that because grace isn't really touching our hearts when we're like that? Where Job is different, he's full of gr...

[ 25 : 54 ] In a sense, from a human point of view, there's every reason to grumble for the rest of his life about what had gone through, but he didn't. He was full of gratitude and he called his girls these beautiful names because it's how he felt.

And the devil isn't even given the time of day at the end here. It's if he doesn't exist. And it's like that whole period was for him a bad nightmare that he's come out of.

And it's come out of him much, much more aware of who God is and what God has done for him. So grace surprises us here in Job's response. And I think grace should continue to surprise us because why?

Because we're learners, because we're disciples. And because we should never take amazing grace and think, hey, that's just old hat. I know about amazing grace. Just give me something else, give me something deeper than amazing grace.

Give me more theology. There's no more theology. There are no two words that are more theological in the whole universe than amazing grace. And if that doesn't touch us, then we haven't been touched at all.

[ 27 : 00 ] And if our system is a system, then it hasn't reached our hearts. And amazing grace should still continue to surprise us. We should be surprised by the response of Job here.

Because I think our natural inclination is to be more like Job's comforters than Job. Certainly my natural inclination is to be much more like the comforters. It's much more like what our hearts are like.

Not allowing grace to seep into our soul. Cheap grace. Yeah, yeah, it's wonderful. Yeah, I'm great. I'm forgiven. I'm going to heaven. But man, you're asking me to forgive that person? No way.

But when we see God, we do see things differently. And so in a grace-filled community, which we are aiming to be by God's strength and by the Holy Spirit, then it's a place where we forgive one another.

I don't care how much you know about the Bible. But, well, I do. It's a bad thing for a minister to say. But what I mean is I don't care how much you know about the Bible if you can't forgive the person you're sitting next to.

[ 28 : 11 ] Because it's cheap grace then. And it's worthless. And people see through it. People can wander anywhere in the world and see cheap grace. But the grace of the living God is grace.

Because we've been forgiven, we forgive others, and we don't spend our time judging what other people's hearts are like. Which is what the three friends of Job did.

This, if we are a Christ-centered people, and a Christ-centered community, is a place where forgiveness, can I say it? Rules. Forgiveness must rule in this church, in this community, in our city groups, in our relationships, in all that we do, in our leadership.

Forgiveness rules, why are we? Because we're a bunch of wretched failures, that's why. And sometimes what we like doing is we compare our failure as not as bad as the other person's failure.

So we don't forgive them, and we feel good about ourselves. That's not how it ought to be. It's a place of forgiveness. It's a place where restoration rules, the whole of Job, is about restoration.

[ 29 : 14 ] As we work through it. Restored relationships between God and humanity, and between humanity itself. And so should it be with us. If we're a grace-filled church, it's a place of rest.

It's also a place of prayer. Individually and corporately. We're a Job congregation. We're Job individuals. Why did God say Job was right?

Why? Because even though He said wrong things, He went the right place with it. He wrestled with God. He prayed. And if we are prayerless, we are useless.

In our hearts. I don't mean that in terms of trying to work any favour with God, but I'm saying we're losing sight of everything. We're to be a people who are wrestling with God, and knowing that relationship, and that restoration, and that repentance, and that turning to Him.

What does turning to God mean? It means going back to Him. Relating to Him. Speaking to Him. And thanking Him. Glorifying Him because of who He is. If we're a grace-filled church, we'd be generous.

[ 30 : 17 ] And we should be full of gratitude. Striving for beauty, individually and collectively. Because Job, it was beautiful what Job experienced in his last days. And he called his kids that, and he helped him, and it reminded him.

We should be dealing with rage, and bitterness, and complaint, and being wronged. And we should deal with it in a job-like way. When we're wronged, what do we do? When you're wronged, what do you do?

What do I do when we're wronged? Work through that. Spend a few minutes on your own today, and ask about your own. And not ask about anyone else's heart. Ask about your own heart. When you're wronged in a Christian context, what do you do?

How do you deal with it? Do you deal with it in grace-like job? Or are we like the comforters of Job, full of grumbles and ultimately getting things wrong before him?

From the person of Job we learn amazing grace. And lastly, very briefly, within that we learn also from the whole book of Job as we conclude here. We come to an end. I'm sad we've come to an end.

[ 31 : 18 ] I've loved this study. It's been hard work, but it's been great. And we're coming now to the end of the book of Job. One or two grace-filled lessons I think we take from it.

One is, again, I repeat that grace is restorative. It's amazing that God comes in salvation to bring us together.

Satan divides. Remember that. Curse God and die, he says. That's what he wants us to do. Ignore God. Reject God. Don't believe in God. There's all kinds of things Satan will do to separate us from God.

The Gospel of Christ, the ABC of grace, and the right to the Z of grace, is that God restores. So when you think of your life, think of it very simply.

In every way, think about it simply. In terms of reacting to what's happening. And your reaction to what's happening. Does this separate me? Am I being separated from God here? Or can I see God working to restore me to bring him closer to me?

[ 32 : 21 ] Because it's Satan who will separate and ask us to curse God and die. God's work is restorative. But also I think we learn clearly from this that the life of faith is a battle.



It is a battle. You know, the suffering here, the job goes through. It's indicative of what the Christian life, if we come to Christ and think it's all going to be balloons and parties, then we simply have not got truth from Scripture.

In Luke chapter 22, verse 31, Jesus says something that he could have said equally to Job. If I can find it.

Simon, Simon, behold Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat. But I have prayed for you, the intercessor, that your faith may not fail and when you have turned against, strengthen your brothers.

The life of faith is a battle. You know, the closest disciple to Jesus or one of them knew that, Peter. There's that unseen spiritual warfare. That's what Job's about and we're going on the New Year to look at Ephesians and that speaks even more about that.

[ 33 : 33 ] God, within that is sovereign. God has won the victory in Jesus, in Christ himself. But there will be for us, as there was for Christ's suffering and rejection and pain.

But we need to recognize that we have spiritual malevolent forces who want us to curse God and die in our lives.

But the victory is in Jesus Christ and we wear the armor of God and are protected by it. It's a great encouragement. You look at the armor of God, it's all about prayer as well.

A lot of it and the word. And lastly and very briefly, our story also. I've said lastly about six times, I hate doing that, sorry. Because you'll get excited. I think it's the end, lastly again.

Our story has a good ending. It's similar to Job's but better. And I think the end of the book of Job is at the end for a reason.

[ 34 : 35 ] I think it does point forward to our end. You know, it's going to be exponentially better than anything we could ever dream of. You know, 1 Corinthians 2 verse 9 says, however, as it was written, no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

I can't explain it because I can't understand it. And I can't conceive of how great it is. I've never seen it and I've never heard it. But what Job experienced and what he was given points a little bit towards it.

There is blessing, it's restorative, it's fruitful, it's happy, it's celebratory, it's physical, it's long lasting, it's eternal, it's a future full of peace and forgiveness and beauty.

So much so that I think this life and some of the sufferings we've gone through will be like a bad nightmare that has passed.

It will have passed. And it will just be almost just as it were forgotten. While there's joy and greatness in it too. And that should have as buzzing with excitement that that is what lies ahead for us.

[ 35 : 54 ] That for everyone else in the philosophical thinking of the world, everything else is about being young and about the best years of your life, being your youth and you just get old and decrepit and then you die.

But that isn't the reality for the Christian. The Christian is we're looking forward to something better. But it must be as we have put our trust in the mediator, Jesus Christ.

That's not an option for us. Unless we put our trust in the one who has walked through the valley of the shadow of death himself in our place and has taken our pain and our suffering and our sin and our rebellion against God and has restored us and we have trusted that and we live for him and we serve him as Lord.

And so that invitation goes out today again, not just that you like, that you know about God, but that you entrust your heart to him as your Lord and Saviour is the one to whom you're accountable, your judge, the judge who went into the dock in your place and who you grasp and hold of as Redeemer and who wants to give you and to live you, to live your life the way he created you to live it in repentance and faith, in relationship with him.

Amen. May God bless our study and job. Let's pray. Father God, we ask and pray that you would take your truth and apply it to our own hearts, that you would bring people who might be spiritually in darkness today and to light dead spiritually or no relationship with you. May they cry out to you in repentance and faith and turn to you, as repentance is simply that and may they come and know your grace and your forgiveness and your wholeness and your victory in their lives.

[ 37 : 46 ] Bless us all. Keep us from meaninglessness, keep us from living in the deceit of darkness, keep us from living out cheap grace where we want to hoard it all for ourselves as some kind of insurance policy.

Lord, but we are unwilling to be forgiving and magnanimous and generous and open and loving and free from bitterness in our own lives. How easy it is for us to grab hold of these things, to justify our own position like Job's three friends and forgive us when our natural inclination is outworked in that way and help us to learn from them and learn from their forgiveness, their humility and humbling before God and also Job and help us, we pray, to know you, not just to know about you.

We ask that and ask it all in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.