

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

What does it mean to “redeem” someone?

To redeem someone means to pay a ransom price to set them free.

In biblical days, if someone was sold into slavery they could be redeemed by either:

- 1) paying off their debt, or
- 2) offering another person as a slave who was of greater value

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price.

Romans 6:22 (NIV)

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

If Christ has paid the price for our freedom, what are all the implications that you can think of as to his right to determine the course of your life in the following areas?

- Your career
- Your relationships
- Your health
- Your money

Does his right to direct our lives as he sees fit, create any tensions for you?

The story of Job brings the tension of God’s right to handle our lives as he sees fit, to a climactic tension.

Read Job 1:1-19

If this happened to you, how would you react to God?

What characteristics of God would you be inclined to challenge?

Job's Response:

Job 1:20-22 (NIV)

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said: "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."

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Why do you think Job was able to respond in such a way after these intense tragedies?

What truths is he holding on to?

The fact that Job fell to the ground and worshipped reveals that he still viewed God as holy, and that his life was still centred on God. He did not understand why things happened the way that they did, but he had a strong relationship with God which brought him through that trial.

Job understands that everything he has comes from God. Everything is a gift which may come and which may go at any time. Just because his family and livelihood were taken away, it did not change what he understood about the nature and sovereignty of God.

Read Job 2:1-8

Job's personal health is now attacked by Satan, under God's sovereign oversight.

What is the basic premise Satan is arguing?

Satan is arguing that men will only be faithful to God in the good times while he is blessing them. Satan believes that once you remove the ideal circumstances from someone's life, they will turn against God proving that he was never really their God in the first place. It was always just about them and their happiness.

Job's Response:

Job 2:9-10 (NIV)

His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

How might Job have been tempted to sin in what he said?

Job might have been tempted to curse God and renounce his relationship with him. In other words, he could have declared that God was only worthy to be worshipped if he served Job in ways he expected. This was Satan's precise challenge.

Satan was stressing that Job only worshipped God for the benefits of health and wealth that he received from God. Take those away, and Job would no longer be loyal to God. Satan's original sin was to become discontent with the position God assigned him and, in pride, revolted. Satan is trying to prompt Job to join him in his denouncement of God.

What truth does Job cling to that keeps him from falling?

God is sovereign! If we only accept good things from God, then we are essentially "using" God for our own purposes. Job understands that God is worthy to be worshipped regardless of our personal experiences, as drastic and sorrowful as they may be.

Job's three friends come to grieve with him, but instead they end up frustrating him with their claims as to why he is suffering.

Job 4:7-9 (NIV)

Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?

⁸ As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. ⁹ At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

What is the premise on which Job's three friends are operating?

God blesses the righteous and brings punishment on the wicked in this world.

They are implying that Job and his children must have some sin in their lives causing them to deserve the treatment they received. This is how they understood the justice of God to be at work. They are arguing that **YOU GET WHAT YOU DESERVE**.

What do you think about this line of reasoning? Do you agree or disagree?**Job 42:7-8 (NIV)**

After the Lord had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. ⁸ So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has."

Did Job's loss and illness have anything at all to do with his lack of faith or some hidden sin in his life? What was the cause of Job's suffering?

Job's suffering never had anything to do with his sin; it had everything to do with his righteousness. It is, unknowingly to him, based on a spiritual confrontation between God and Satan. Satan is attacking Job because God held him up as an example of righteousness and Satan claimed that Job was only faithful to God because of how he was blessed by God. To prove Satan wrong, God allows Satan to remove all blessing from Job's life.

How do you feel about God's decision to let Satan destroy Job's life in such a way?

How do you reconcile this with the holiness, justice, and love of God?

As Job struggled with trying to understand the cause of all his suffering, he defended himself before God by challenging the justice of God. God responds...

Job 38:1-11 (NIV)

Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm. He said: ² "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? ³ Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. ⁵ Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? ⁶ On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-- ⁷ while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? ⁸ "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, ⁹ when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, ¹⁰ when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, ¹¹ when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'?"

(This is just a small example of a huge barrage of questions with which God assaults Job – Job 38-41)

What was God's response to Job's challenge of his justice?

God is essentially saying, "Job, you accuse me of not understanding life and justice. What do you really understand about life, Job? What do understand about the intrinsic ways life should operate? What do you understand about perfection? You essentially know nothing about the nature of life and how things should take place and yet you stand there to accuse and judge me, the creator of all things."

Job's Response:**Job 40:3-5 (NIV)**

Then Job answered the Lord: ⁴ "I am unworthy--how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth.
⁵ I spoke once, but I have no answer-- twice, but I will say no more."

Job 42:1-6 (NIV)

Then Job replied to the Lord: ² "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. ³ You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. ⁶ Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

What changed in Job's perspective? What realization did he come to that caused him to humble himself and approach God in awe and a worshipful manner?

God knew why Job was suffering and allowed it to continue for his divine purposes. Though Job did not understand those purposes, how did God want Job to continue to relate to him through the experience?

God still desired that Job would be faithful in the midst of his suffering. This was the whole point of the challenge. God wanted to reveal to us and the satanic realm that true faith sustains RELATIONSHIP regardless of one's circumstances.

Why did God allow Satan to act in such a way toward his faithful child?

God never does explain his reasons for allowing Job to suffer in this way. However, there are a few reasons that are readily apparent:

1) God is exalting faithfulness

Those of the angelic realm, who rebelled against God, did so because they were discontent with their position before God. Job's life is a complete contrast against the angels who rebelled, and ultimately sends them a message of condemnation.

In spite of his suffering, though confused and upset, Job does not curse God or walk away from him. The very fact that Job is allowed to suffer for righteousness is an incredible statement of God's deep respect and love for him. Job would have never suffered in such a way if it were not for his righteous life.

2) Job needed a deeper understanding of God

Job came to the realization that he simply did not understand the scope of God's sovereignty. God never does explain to Job why he suffered, Job could never have understood it even if he had; we do not completely understand it. Job didn't need to **know WHY** – he needed to **know God**. In the midst of his suffering he needed to trust that God was still in control, God was still just, and that

God's ways were perfect and simply beyond his understanding. Job also needed to know that God loved him in the midst of his suffering.

In the same way, God the Father loved Jesus in the midst of his suffering yet he still called for him to endure it.

3) We need to learn to trust God in the midst of our suffering

Christians throughout the ages have had to suffer deeply, and every time there is suffering there is always the compelling desire to yell out to God, "Why?" God never tells us why; he simply states it will be a fact of life in this world. He knows it is happening and he permits it to take place for his sovereign purposes which go beyond our comprehension. Job is a message to us that we will experience suffering for reasons we cannot comprehend. We will not always understand WHY God allows us to suffer - it may be part of condemnation of the angels, it may be because we need to learn to trust him, it may be because we simply live in an evil world. Whatever the case, our response to suffering will reveal what we truly understand about God in ways that blessing never can.

What do you think this statement means?

"How we go through suffering is an indication of our belief about redemption?"

If we have been purchased by Jesus Christ, then we have handed our lives over to God to do with as he wishes. Submission is not something we do "in order" to get what we want or even to be effective in ministry. Submission is the surrender of our lives to the one who purchased us, trusting he has a sovereign plan he is working out through us.

As we go through suffering, yet maintain a strong faith in God, we acknowledge that our faith is not based on our circumstances, but on a confidence that God holds our future in his hands.

We proclaim that we have died to self and entrust our lives to the One who understands the big picture. We proclaim our confidence that he will accomplish his purposes through us, even through the worst of circumstances.

Luke 22:41-44 (NIV)

He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

What are the most powerful words of this passage?

If we truly believe that Jesus has authority in and over our lives, how does that change how we should view our circumstances?

How should we react to God at times when we discover he is letting us suffer?

What does it truly mean to trust God to be “God” in our lives?

Not my will, but yours be done!