

“God Showed Up!”

A sermon by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for FUMC Grand Junction, Sunday, Oct. 3, 2021

This sermon can be listened to on the FUMCGJ
website: <https://www.fumcgj.org/sermons/>

Scripture Text:

Job 38:1-7, 34-41; 40:1-5 [NRSV]

(*including Clip from *Forest Gump*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyEmNIYL6qE>, 0:00 – 0:32*)

OPENING

(*Let the folks sit in silence for a few moments with
the Scripture reading.*)

We only gave you a glimpse into the fury of the storm
out of which God addressed Job. This went on for two
full chapters!

And when you and I are sure that with Job’s humble
response, “I put my hand over my mouth”, God will
relent, we continue reading and find to our horror that
God doesn’t back off. He continues to taunt Job and
push him for a response for another two chapters!

It isn’t until verse 7 of Chapter 42 that God leaves Job
in peace to repent of his arrogance and begins setting
the record straight. But...we get ahead of ourselves.

SERMON THOUGHTS

I said in the first sermon in this series that there were
several important lessons that come to us from the
book of Job. We’ve covered at least two so far:

1. The importance of recognizing *genre* when it

comes to reading, understanding, interpreting, and
applying Scripture in our lives. The book of Job
is “Wisdom Literature”, the task of which is to
cause us to explore the theological claims we
make as we live in the messiness of life.

2. What Rabbi Harold Kushner observed in his
classic book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good
People* [Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to
Good People* (New York: Anchor Books, 1981) Among
other powerful insights there, Rabbi Kushner
wrote:

“Forced to choose between a good God who is
not totally powerful or a powerful God who is
not totally good, the author of the book of Job
chooses to believe in God’s goodness.” [*Ibid.*,
49]

Today, I’d like to suggest that there are two additional
lessons that the author of the book of Job would have
us take away from the drama in this part of his story:

A. There is only one God, and Job is not him. In fact,
none of us is – and that’s probably the most
important lesson we can take from this. There are
just some things we cannot know, explain, predict,
even influence much less control.

At first, this doesn’t seem very pastoral,
compassionate, or caring. But I have to say, the
more I read of God’s confrontation with Job, the
more I appreciate the brilliance of this piece of
Biblical literature. One of the kindest things God
can do for us to remind us that He is God and that
we are not. Jesus put it this way, “Blessed are those

who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). (*The kingdom of heaven won’t be forced... “warrior” mentality is inconsistent with the Gospel...we are to be Jesus’ witnesses, not prosecutors... Expound briefly on this.*)

Being “poor in spirit” means to be deeply aware of our need for God. Said another way, it is this simple confession: *God is God, and I am not.*

And if God is an infinitely good God, the way the best of Christian Biblical theology understands God, then the realization that *God is God, and I am not* may be the most freeing realization I may ever make. It releases me from all pretense and falsehood and allows me to live fully into my humanity, a humanity fully dependent upon God. Hallelujah!

- B. God does not owe us an explanation or a justification or a reason for the way things are. In fact, what I came to accept in my time in the ashes was that I wouldn’t accept God’s rationale for some things no matter what reason God shared with me. I don’t possess the capacity to fathom the infinite nature of God and God’s ways in creation.

This shouldn’t be all that surprising. It’s all there in two simple verses from Isaiah 55:8-9 –

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

And if that’s true, then by definition, I must accept that there are some things I will not understand until I see God face-to-face. It took awhile and some very deep pain to get there, but I can say, “I’m OK with that” now.

With Job, I can throw myself on God’s infinite mercy and grace with the understanding that God’s love is the most important thing in life, and nothing can separate me from it (Rom. 8:38-39). Thanks be to God! Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION: Transition to Communion

♪ “Celtic Communion”

Prayer Concerns for the Week

Our prayer concerns can be found on the second page of the 11 AM Worship Order: Go to the Church’s webpage (***Yancey** to do this live*), fumcgj.org, click on the “Worship” tab along the menu bar at the top of the homepage and then click on the link labeled “Order of Worship”. Please pray for:

- Sandy Nesbitt
- Dick Mantlo and family
- For our District Churches (1 every week) – This week: FUMC in Cortez, CO and led by Rev. Jean Schwien with Associate Pastor Norman Mark.