



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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February 5, 2012

Epiphany 5

Sermon Text: [Job 7:1-7](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Job 7:1-7](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 103](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 8:28-30](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 1:29-39](#)

Out of the Depths I Cry to You

I am weak, but you are mighty
I am in need, but you are my Savior

My oldest daughter enjoys photography and she got a free subscription to a magazine that's all about photography when she was in college. It still shows up at the house and it makes its way into the reading room from time to time. I happened to be paging through it one day. There was an ad in this magazine for photo retouching software. It had a before picture and an after picture. It was amazing what this photo image touch up stuff could do.

This person was obviously some kind of model or something like that, but before the touch up, the face had skin that looked like skin you would see on the street. It wasn't terrible but by the time they got done retouching it up, the face was glowing so much, I think you could have roasted a marshmallow over it. It just didn't look real. You never see anybody that really looks like that.

Think about how often things are kind of touched up to make them look better. At times we don't want to admit the scars that we have. We don't want to admit the hurts that we have. We kind of want to touch them up and cover them up and not let anyone else see them. What do they say, the winners write the history and the history always makes the winners look good, right? Have you ever noticed when you read Scripture that God doesn't do that in the Bible? When he tells us the stories of his people, we see his people, warts and all. He hasn't retouched up anything, has he?

When you look at the life of Noah, look at how we marvel at how he did what God said. Did you ever read the couple chapters after the flood? Ever? Do you see how warped and twisted Noah and his family were? God doesn't cover it up. God doesn't touch it up. God knows who we are and where we live and what we go through and he writes about these things so that we'll take the time to read it so we can learn and grow and we can get closer to him and get through these times that we are all going to face.

These words I just read to you from the Book of Job, you aren't finding them in any Hallmark greeting card, are you? They were painful. They were hard. Here is a guy going through tough times. He looks at life and he sees no more purpose for it. He is suffering. On top of it, he had three friends show up to give him some advice. Those three friends might just as well told him "Why don't you just drink some cleaner." Their advice was awful. It was pathetic. Yet their advice is often imitated.

It's not hard to see when you read the Book of Job why he was in the depths. What might be amazing to see, especially when you read these seven verses of Job 7, is the fact that Job still cried out to God when he was in the depths. We talk about the patience of Job, but if you read what God recorded for us, God shows us when his patience ran out. God shows us when he shakes his fist at God and says, "God, you're not fair! God, if you'd only come down here, I'd accuse you and you wouldn't be able to defend yourself for what you've done to me!" Not exactly words that flow out of faith, are they?

Job sees his need. There is still that recognition that God is the only one that can meet the need. Job sees his weakness. And he sees that God is mighty and can handle that weakness. But there are times when that's not real evident in what he says.

You are probably familiar with the story of the first couple of chapters of Job and how he was one of the wealthiest men around at that time. He was blessed with a large family. The family was thriving. The devil says to God, "Let me at him." God says, "Okay, just don't touch him." He loses his wealth in one day. He loses his family. He says, "The Lord gave. The Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised."

Then Satan comes to God and says, "You haven't let me touch him. Anybody can be faithful when they haven't been touched." Then he's wracked with those painful sores from head to toe. It's kind of interesting, I don't know what this says, but Satan chose to leave one family member with him. That was his wife who told him "Curse God and die." She didn't exactly give the best advice possible, did she?

Then these three friends show up in the chapters immediately before what I read to you. They give Job this advice. "Job, God is punishing you because you must have committed some sin. You must have done something that you don't recognize you have done. You have to look at your life and figure out what you did that God is so mad at and that God is punishing you so severely for." Job protested that he had not done anything that he had not repented of and he walked in righteousness with God. That's how the Bible describes him. Yet, even righteous people suffer because we live in a sinful world. Job learned that lesson the hard way.

He was affected by all these difficulties and now he was at the point, after listening to his wife, after listening to his friends, after enduring this physical pain and this torment of his soul, he cries out from the depths. But part of his cries are not cries that come from faith. We see him, warts and all. He says, "You know what? My life is terrible. I'm in pain all the time. I lie down at night and I can't wait to get to the end of the day so I can lie down. Then I lie down at night and I can't wait for the morning to come because I can't sleep. I just wish it would all end." Here's a man in need. Here's a man that's full of weakness.

It's kind of interesting when you read commentaries on the Book of Job to see people do handstands and cartwheels to show that what Job is saying isn't what he really felt.

I think it's what he felt. I think he was a sinner who lived under God's grace because he believed in the promise of the Savior, but at times his sinful nature still won some of the battles.

Do you know what that's like? Do you know what it's like to want to do what is right before God and please God and serve God and yet the sinful nature wins some battles? His losses showed up in what was recorded for us. He sat down and recorded them all for us. I think he lived about 2,000 B.C.; 4,000 years later, you and I can learn from them. To me that's an act of faith that he was willing to describe his weaknesses so that you and I could learn from it.

Even in his despair and even in his agony, even in his pain, he still cries out to the Lord. Sometimes he's upset with the Lord, but he still turns to the Lord. That's important for us to learn. Job shows us just how weak and how needy we can become. If you don't know that, you're too full of yourself. If you don't understand just how weak and needy you are as a sinful human being, get over yourself. Like we talked about in Bible class this morning, sometimes even Christians don't understand the severity of the Law. Sometimes Christians act as though "I came to church. I put in my time. Now God, you owe me something. God, I got to church, so you have to make my life better because I did this for you." Coming to worship is not about something you're doing for God. Does God in heaven need you to praise him? Does God in heaven become more of a divine all-powerful all-loving God because you sang a song out of tune? I don't think so. Get over yourself.

God is God and God is love and you come here because he loves you in spite of who you are. You aren't earning his love. He showers his love on us before we were born. He loved us perfectly and sent his Son to live and die to take away all of our foolish ideas that creep into our minds because of our sinful nature. He took them all away. Then he lays out before us what he wants us to do, and we're still like Job and say, "No, God, we know better." We aren't all that different than Job. We know better. "God, you shouldn't have let this in my life. God, you should have told us to do that as a command. God, we're all about us. We don't need to learn how to go reach out to the lost. The hell with them. We got the Savior. We don't need to learn how to share." None of us would ever say that, right? But very often our actions scream it.

We are weak. We are needy. We don't understand God's purpose for us. We don't understand why God allows the things that he does into our lives. So at times we think, as weak and needy individuals, we know better than God. That's when we need friends that are better than Job's friends. We need friends to point us back to our Savior and the promises he has made. We need our friends to point us back to the power of God, the power of God to help us through everything in life, the love of God that takes away our sin, the love of God that assures us of heaven. We need someone to point us to those powers, to that love, not to say, "Well, you must have done something, or you just don't believe enough. Believe a little more." We need to point people to the source of things, God's love for us in Christ. And that sustains us.

It doesn't mean we aren't going to have moments of weakness where we are going to sin. We know that. We know we are all sinners who are struggling against sin. But when we cry out of the depths, we need to focus on God and his perfect love.

Then we are moved to an action, the action to believe, to trust, to know that no matter what we are facing, God's love for us is greater, God's love for us is stronger, God's love for us is more perfect than any difficulty we face. That's a reminder we are going to need time and time and time and time again because we are sinners. Then we need that reminder that not only do we put our trust in God, but then we live for God. We don't accuse one another and do the things Job's friends did. We admonish one another in love, then we lead one another to Christ and the strength that only the Gospel can give. The only way out of the depths is up. The only thing that is up above us is the love of God in Christ. If only we'd take the time to be equipped to know it. If only we'd take the time to share it.