



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 14, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

Ash Wednesday

First Lesson/Sermon Text: [Job 40:1, 2; 42:1-6](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 51a CW

Second Lesson: [Revelation 3:1-3](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 12:13-21](#)

God on Trial "Accusations"

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

In this series, we are going to be looking at **God on Trial**. You can think about all the different situations of a court room. We are going to look at misconceptions. We are going to look at truth. We are going to look at how people accuse different people. Today we look at **accusations**.

Have you ever been accused of something? Think about a time where you know you did something wrong and then you were actually accused of that thing. When you feel that someone finally found out, it's pretty devastating. But what if you are accused of something that you didn't do? Maybe think of kids in the classroom and the Valentine's Day candy is handed out. A piece was there and then it's gone. Maybe you accuse the person next to you. What if you're the person that gets accused of taking that candy? It doesn't feel good, especially being accused of something that you didn't do.

What happens when you are accused of something? We know that accusations are powerful and accusations are damaging. They are damaging to relationships because when someone accuses you of something, it means they don't trust you. They think that you've done something to harm them. Think about in marriage or friendships when you are accused of doing something horrible, like lying, cheating, or sharing gossip. Accusations are harmful. They are damaging and powerful. Accusations can bring down powerful people and derail people who are ascending into politics or into positions of power. It can bring down world leaders and destroy marriages and people and their jobs.

If there was someone who knew about accusations, it was a man named "Job." I'm sure you've heard a little bit about Job. His story, the [Book of Job](#), is one of the oldest books in the Bible. His suffering is certainly legendary. We know what happened where he lost all his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his camels, and he lost all those people who were watching over those animals. They think there were more than 10,000 casualties. What else did he lose? He lost his income. He lost his life savings, his retirement fund. Everything that helps him to earn a living was gone in an instant. But worse than that, what happened? He had seven sons and three daughters and as the news was coming in about this horrible thing that happened to all his possessions, we hear of what happened to his children. As they were eating together, the house collapsed and they were killed. He lost not only all his possessions but his children.

What would you do at that time? Would you get angry and curse God? What did Job do? Job tore his robe, shaved his head in mourning, but then he fell to the ground and he worshiped. He worshiped his God with these words in Job 1: ***"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised."*** [\(Job 1:21\)](#) He was devastated in what happened yet Scripture tells us: ***In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*** [\(Job 1:22\)](#)

But we know it doesn't end there. Next we see that he gets painful boils all over his body, from his head to his feet. Can you imagine going through that pain and suffering of losing everything and then having the physical pain and suffering? You can't sleep and you're filled with utter sadness and wondering, what's next. He would maybe ease some of the pain by using pottery to scrape at the boils. In this misery, what advice does his wife give? She says, ***"Curse God and die!"*** [\(Job 2:9\)](#) But still Job did not. He said, ***"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"*** [\(Job 2:10\)](#)

You might know what it's like to experience a situation, not nearly like Job but something similar where worse gets worse and bad gets bad and things pile on top of each other. Maybe it's a financial problem that just keeps getting worse and then, once that happens, something else happens. This health issue upon that health issue. This relationship issue upon that relationship issue. A loss of a loved one on top of the other things you're dealing with. It just seems like it wouldn't end. What is our response? What should we do?

We'll see what Job's friends wanted him to do. They came and they gave him some advice, but first they did maybe the best thing that they could do. They just sat in silence with him. Sometimes that's just what we need, some comfort and someone to be there with us in our trouble. But once they opened up their mouths, then problems started.

The world, just like Job's wife, wants us to accuse God and then also accuse ourselves and say that we must have done something wrong. This is what Job's friends then say.

As Job was going through these difficulties, they said Job must have done something to deserve this because God wouldn't bring these things upon a righteous person. "What sin are you hiding? You must be deserving of this. Why should we accuse God and accuse ourselves?" They were saying that God was bringing this upon Job because of what he had done. But we see that Job responds and says, "If I have sinned, what have I done to you who have seen everything we do? Why have you made me your target? Have I become a burden to you?" He finally is crying out to God and saying "Why?" As the world was encouraging him to accuse God, he finally did.

The world is not the only one who wants us to accuse God though. We want to say that things are unjust. Things happen that we don't deserve. We look at the world and the world says "It's not fair! The world is not fair and if there was a fair and righteous God, then there would be no problems. There wouldn't be evil in the world." The world wants to accuse God, but there is one who wants us to accuse God even more. The devil does. The devil wants us to accuse God. What is his name? The devil, his name means "accuser." He wants you to accuse God for what is happening, but more than that, just like Job's friends, he wants to accuse YOU and say "You've done too much. You deserve this." It's either accusing God of what He has done or for us to fall into despair.

When did the devil begin with having us accuse God? Think back to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, what was Adam's first response to God? "The woman YOU put here with me, she gave me the fruit and I ate of it. It's your fault, God. You put this temptation here. You put this woman here who caused me to fall into sin." We know that the devil's purpose is to get us to accuse God and to doubt His love and to want nothing to do with God and to say "God doesn't love you;" then to fall into sin and disobey Him and continue to separate ourselves from Him.

We are going to hear similar accusations throughout the weeks as we go forward. We are going to hear how people accuse God and accuse the Son of God, from Caiaphas, to Herod, to Pilate, to the crowds that are going to shout out at Jesus and accuse Him of many different things. But today, we need to be reminded (on Ash Wednesday) that it's not just them or the world that puts God on trial. It's not just the devil who is getting us to do it. It's also us. We do put God on trial. Even though we may not be shouting it out all the time, are we asking "Lord, why? Why would you let this happen to me? Why would you take my loved one at this time? Why would you bring this sickness and disease? Lord, I don't deserve this! What have I done to deserve this? And for this thing to happen again and again! Lord, just take this away!" We accuse God of being unjust and unfair to us.

We have to see it's not just the world, not just the devil, but it's also us, in our sinful nature, that cries out to God and accuses Him of wronging us. Just like Job, who for so long was faithful and didn't accuse God, but finally he did cry out, saying "God, it's not fair!" The truth is though, as we cry out and put God (who is just and right) on trial, who

is the person that is really on trial? Is God putting us on trial? We are the ones who are guilty.

When God responds to Job in Chapter 40, he says these words. ***“Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!”*** In the Service Folder, you see some of the responses that he continues to talk about. He says, “Were you around when I created the universe? Can you control the seas? Can you do all the amazing things that I did?” He talks about all the amazing things of Creation and how He sustains this world. He says “You’re just a man.” And He is God. He tells Job “You’ve gone too far.” And just like Job, we need to be brought to our senses.

Job responds in [Chapter 42](#) with these words. ***“Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. I repent in dust and ashes.”*** The Lord put Job in his place, and we know it’s a good thing to lead him to repentance. We need to be led to repentance as well, so we realize that when we accuse God, we’ve got it backwards. What makes us think that we know better than God when He knows more than us? He is the God who has all things in His hands and He has a plan for us and is watching over all things. If He looks at us without Christ, what does He see? He sees someone who deserves to stand on trial and who would be condemned. We need to be reminded of this, of our repentance, to repent and confess our sins.

God does this through many different means—being in church and hearing the Law and the Gospel, the reminder that we fall short. Every time we meet, we confess those things and hear the words of forgiveness. Hopefully in school you hear about this and are reminded of the Law and Gospel; hopefully among friends and family, if you have Christian friends who can call you to repentance and remind you of God’s forgiveness. God gives us His Word, as we study and see our need to repent so that we can hear those words of forgiveness. To repent though and to change our ways; to know that we *have* sinned and those sins hurt us and our relationship with God and with others.

But through Job’s words, we also hear of that great forgiveness that we have. We know that we all have sinned and that we accuse God. But as Job was speaking in the middle of the book, he gives these important words that are at the heart of the Easter season that we are going to get to after Lent. These words that say ***“I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God...”*** [\(Job 19:25-26\)](#) So in the midst of his suffering and the difficulties, what does he cling to? He clings to his Redeemer. Even though his flesh was in pain and that so much had been taken away, he rejoiced in the Savior. We know the name of that Redeemer. He was looking forward to a redeemer. He believed that God would send a Messiah, a Savior. And we know that Savior is Jesus.

As we go forward in the Lenten season, what will we see? We’ll see this man who will be on trial. We’ll see that the accused Jesus suffered for the world, including you and me.

What will they do to this Jesus? As He is betrayed by His closest friends and arrested, we're going to see that He is going to be put on trial and there will be false testimony given, lies about Him. They are going to strike Him and beat Him, mock Him and put Him in a robe and even though He was a King, they will make fun of that. We are going to see that even though He was humiliated and laughed at, He is going to go away from that courtroom victorious. He will stand, taking all of that, even though He was innocent and perfect and accused of so many things. He did that all for you. He did not sin. And He did not cry out and accuse or blame God. He suffered for you. And He suffered for you so that when you suffer and face those accusations and call out to God, you know that you are forgiven. Christ was perfect in your place.

Remember that God has what is best in store for you, even if, like Job, it seems like all may be lost or there is no hope. God has a certain future in store for you. He will bring blessings to you in this life. It doesn't always mean it's easy or the blessings we always think about or want. But He knows what is best. And He has the power to beat Satan and his accusations against you. There truly is no need to despair. There is no need to accuse God. And like Job, we say "We don't need to understand. We have no place to speak and understand because God is a God who loves us and is greater and loved us so much, He sent a Savior, a Redeemer, who will take us to be with Him forever." Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.