

**Misery – Job 3:1-26**  
**James Muldoon - Carey Baptist Church – 11 May 2008**

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Five times in Chapter 3, Job asks, “Why?” We’ve seen in Job 1 and 2 that he was a conspicuously good man. And God allows Satan to afflict him to prove that he is good enough to be loved for his own sake, not for what he gives. Job suffers terribly, but he does not curse God. He responds with faith.

A week later, things have got to Job. He starts wondering what on earth is going on. Like him, many of God’s people, when they find themselves in furnace conditions, ask questions, dark questions, terrifying questions, accusing questions. That happens in Job 3:

- **v1-10.** Notice what Job does and does not do. He does curse the day of his birth; but he does not curse God. He does pour out the violence of his grief-stricken heart; but he does not blame God. Still Job keeps his integrity. But he has lost all desire to live. He dare not look forward because the future is misery. All he can do is look back in desperation, wishing he could change the past, wishing he could erase the past and so render himself non-existent. Have you ever felt like that? It’s misery.
- **v11-19.** Job moves from cursing the day he was born to asking questions. “Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not die the moment I came from the womb? Why didn’t I die?!” he asks. He longs for the grave where he will be at peace. It’s misery.
- **v20-26.** Job is still asking why. And he ends with a moan. **v26** in the Hebrew produces a terrible staccato effect: **“No peace! No quietness! No rest! Turmoil comes!”** It’s misery.

Here are three questions about Job’s misery.

**❶ How does faith affect our misery?**

In Chapters 1 and 2, it looks as if Job’s faith has completely triumphed over his troubles. We might be tempted to draw a lesson which goes like this: “There’s Job. He suffered. He trusted. We should be like him. Faith triumphs over misery!” But then we come to Job 3. All of a sudden it’s all, **“Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul?” (v20).** So what’s happened? Has Job lost his faith? Is the Job of Chapter 3 a paler, weaker version of the man we met in Chapters 1 and 2? Just how does faith affect our misery?

In **v4** and **v23**, Job mentions God. **v23** in particular shows that Job does not doubt God’s existence. He does not doubt God’s control over everything. But he does find himself utterly bewildered about what God’s purposes might be. Job’s struggles, then, are the struggles of a believer. In later chapters we’ll find him wrestling with God and wanting answers from God and speaking boldly to God. But all the while, his struggles are the struggles of a man whose heart is going out to God. Job’s faith, then, is clinging on. Yes, there are doubts. Yes, there are questions. Yes, there is bewilderment. But his faith is clinging on.

When you suffer, your faith will not necessarily give you a complete sense of peace and serenity at all times, an immunity to sorrow (though God does give us great peace). But it will cling on, even when it does not fully understand. That’s why it’s so important that you keep your faith fresh and lively in those times when you’re not suffering. The more your faith is put to work now, the better it will cling on then. So when did you last do something which actually required faith for you to do it? And if you have no faith, come to Jesus Christ, repenting of your sin, trusting in him. You need to have faith in the Lord.

## ② Is it OK to pour out your misery?

Some would condemn Job in the strongest terms for what he says in Job 3. How dare he wish he had never been born? How dare he wish he were dead? How dare he say such strong things? If a Christian friend of yours who was suffering spoke Job's words to you, what would you say to him? And, more significantly, what would you think?

**Job 42:7** shows that it was OK for Job to say these things. There the Lord is not saying that every word Job has spoken is right. But he is saying that the general thrust of Job's words has been right. So Job is justified in speaking the way he does.

Likewise, God does not blame us: if we vent our feelings; if we cry; if we unload our emotional pain; if we confess our loss of hope; if we share our sense of futility; if we ask for answers to tough questions. Nor does he blame us if we pour out our sorrows in his direction. Actually, he loves it when his children prove their dependence upon him by coming to him as their Father. It is OK to tell him the passion of your breaking heart. Self-control, after all, is not putting a check on all feelings – or at least on the display of all feelings. It's not Stoicism.

Of course, there's an even better example of this than Job, isn't there? Read **Matthew 26:36-46** later. And see that it's OK to pour out your misery.

How do you feel at the moment? Is your heart breaking? Are you overwhelmed by some agonising situation in your life? Are you bleeding inside? Then tell the Lord about it. Pour out your misery to him. Don't curse him, but do be open with him. It's OK to pour out your misery.

## ③ Where is God in our misery?

C S Lewis once wrote that when you really need God and cry out to him, it sometimes seems that all you get is "a door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside". Where is God in our misery? Where is God when it hurts?

Job does not doubt God's existence or power. It's his purposes which puzzle him. And as the Book of Job goes on, there's a mounting sense of frustration within him. He keeps on crying out. He keeps on asking for answers. He keeps on pleading with the Lord for help. And what does God answer? For chapter after chapter, nothing. A door slammed in his face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside.

And that is sometimes how it seems to us. Sometimes the suffering goes on, the sorrow increases, the misery grows. And there seems to be nothing from heaven, nothing at all.

At such times, remember a man upon a cross. Remember the words, "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" (**Matthew 27:46**). There are no words to describe the intensity of the love between God the Father and God the Son (and, of course, God the Holy Spirit). But those words express the truth that God the Father turned His back upon God the Son made man. It couldn't happen to the God who is love. But it did.

Job, of course, knew nothing of this. But we live this side of Calvary. And it's Calvary above all else which tells us where God is in our misery. It points us, as ever, to Jesus Christ.