



March 7, 2022

In Your Presence Is Fullness of Joy

I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, "Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?" Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. (Job 42:2-3)

God's first words to Job were not words of comfort, empathy, or encouragement, and certainly not an apology for letting it all happen. No, God's first words were in the form of a question: "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2). This is followed by what is essentially a command to keep quiet, listen carefully, and be prepared to respond: "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me" (Job 38:3). So that is how the conversation began, with God saying, "My friend, you don't really understand what you are talking about. So I need you to pay close attention to what I am about to say."

After two chapters of withering questioning that revealed the limitations of Job's understanding, God posed another question and request: "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it" (Job 40:2). So Job did answer, with these words: "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further" (vv. 4-5). The word vile is an old English term that has come to mean something different from what it once did. Vile now has the idea of something evil or despicable, but this is not what the Hebrew word *qalal* means. A better word would be insignificant or unworthy. Job had been humbled to the point of being speechless. He realized the foolishness of everything he had said, and he simply responded, "I have spoken but I will not answer. I will go no further." God continued to question Job, who then responds in our opening passage above (Job 42:2-3).

Keep in mind that God did not say that Job was wrong in what he said, but that he did not understand what he was saying. We are often like this—correct in what we say, without understanding its meaning or significance. Teachers know what it is like to have a student who has the right answer, but does not have the foggiest idea of what he is saying. As Job came to this realization, he said to the Lord, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (vv. 5-6).

We must live through things like Job did, and become desperate as Job was. What made the difference for Job was that he hung in there and his faith of desperation carried him to the point where God showed up and Job could say, "I've heard about you, but now I've seen you." It was an undeniable experience of God, and it changed his life. His vision of God was now so great that he realized what had happened to him didn't matter. That is the deep faith of sufficiency. In this new place of faith in God, Job said, "I repent." How did he repent? He stopped pressing his case with God. He stopped trying to get God to make everything right. Having seen God, he let go of desperation.

Reflect: *He saw that whatever needed to be taken care of would be taken care of. Job saw the greatness of God, and in that vision he was able to rest in the all-sufficiency of Yahweh. This is why we need to live in clear view of the cross. When we realize that Christ went willingly to the cross on our behalf, trusting in the greatness of his Father, it casts a transformative light on our own sufferings. That's what Job saw. Job beheld the greatness of God.*

(Q) As we look at what Christ did for us on the cross and keep that at the center of our vision of how we understand God and His world, how do the many things that will bother us, or even matter come into their proper perspective?