

Faith-N-Focus : E-quip Your Faith

Adult Bible Studies

"Healings, Part One"

Zion Assembly Church of God – Sunday School Services

Writer: Todd D. McDonald

Introduction

“Job’s Recovery”

Perhaps no other narrative in the Bible inspires faith like the life of Job. To summarize his life’s story, he had it all, he lost it all, but in the end, he gained everything. His experience from start to finish is a remarkable story of unwavering faith in God, especially in the face of suffering. The incredible trials of his faith and his ultimate victory inspire us with hope when facing the greatest of challenges. In today’s lesson, *Job’s Recovery*, we will consider the necessity of keeping the faith when everything around us literally falls apart.

Key Verse

“In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly” (Job 1:22).

Lesson Summary

The Bible explains that Job was “a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil” (Job 1:1, 8). He understood that God is holy, and therefore he followed after holiness and desired to please the Lord. In addition to his personal piety, his dedication and faithfulness as a man of God are evident by his continual offerings on behalf of his sons and daughters (1:4-5). Thus, Job functioned as a priest interceding with God for his whole family. Moreover, he was extremely prosperous, making him “the greatest of all the men of the east” (v. 3). In every sense of the word, Job was successful: spiritually, personally, and financially. Indeed, he was a godly man of great influence and prominence among the people in the land of Uz. Clearly then, not because of anything he was doing wrong but rather because he was doing everything right, Satan desired to destroy this blessed man of God (vv. 9-12). After Satan attacked him, Job literally lost everything he possessed, including his sons and daughters (vv. 13-19). He was broken by this experience and completely humbled before the Lord, yet through it all, he maintained his integrity and faith in God (vv. 20-22; 2:3). Could his situation have become any worse? Up to that point, all that he held dear was taken away, but Job himself was unscathed (1:12). The Accuser then challenged the Lord, saying, “Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face” (2:5). The Lord gave Job into the hand of Satan – the only thing Satan could not touch was his life (v. 6). When the Devil struck Job with sores all over his body, head to toe, his wife did not comfort him and support his faith. Instead, watching him suffer, she spoke foolishly and tempted him to “curse God, and die” (vv. 9-10). Likewise, when his three friends arrived – Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite – they provided little comfort and no lasting support. After mourning with Job for seven days (vv. 11-13), these “friends” spoke to Job unjustly regarding God’s hand in his circumstances (42:7). Certainly, Job’s condition was pitiful. He was a man of God who lost all that he possessed: his wealth, his children, and his health. He was emotionally broken (3:1-3) with no man to comfort him. Essentially, Job was left with nothing but his faith in God. Yet in the end, all that Job needed was his faith in God. When all was said and done, Job came to realize the greatness of a holy God, and he understood that God’s ways are so much greater than man’s limited knowledge and temporary circumstances (42:3; Ro. 11:33-36). Job finally said, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (42:5-6). Through it all, Job humbled himself, and in the end, God delivered him (vv. 7-10). Job fully recovered, not because he was wealthy, or did good works, or was influential among the people, but simply because God is faithful and Job persevered in his faith (1 Co. 10:13; Ja. 1:3). He believed and trusted the Lord to the finish, no matter what (Ja. 5:11).

Scripture Study

Job, a successful man – Job. 1:1-5, 8

The trail of Job’s faith – Job 1:9-22; 2:3-6

When no one understands – Job 2:9-13; 3:1-3; 42:7

Job’s humility and healing – Job 42:3; Ro. 11:33-36; Job 42:5-10; Ja. 1:3; 5:11; 1 Co. 10:13

Conclusion

True, real faith perseveres and endures to the finish (2 Ti. 4:7). When everything around him said, “Give up,” Job held on and trusted the Lord. Was it easy? Of course not! But through all of his questions, frustrations, and insecurities, he believed God, and by faith he fully recovered. Like Job, we must hold on to our faith in God, even when our circumstances appear hopeless, because our hope is never in our physical circumstances, but our hope is in the Lord our healer (Ex. 15:26; Ps. 103:3).

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“Hannah’s Cry”

Introduction

Hannah’s Cry is a lesson that demonstrates how adverse conditions can actually work for our good when we have the faith to believe and trust in God. Trials can either make us bitter or make us better. The outcome depends on our spirit (attitude) and perspective. We should always believe that God is working in our lives, even in the hardest situations, in order to bring us to “an expected end” (Je. 29:11).

Key Verse

“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore” (1 Sa. 1:10).

Lesson Summary

Today’s study is the backdrop and setting of one of Israel’s greatest leaders, Samuel, who was a priest, prophet, and judge in Israel (1 Sa. 2:18; 3:19-21; 7:9, 15-17). The story of Samuel begins with a woman named Hannah. She was loved and favored by her husband, Elkanah; but she was barren and had no children because the Lord had closed her womb (1 Sa. 1:1-5). Did this mean that God was against her? In the eyes of some, Hannah was despised (vv. 6-7), but in the eyes of the Lord, she was highly favored. Although her husband dearly loved her and gave her preferential treatment in his household, his love could not change her adversity or satisfy her deep longing and need for a son (vv. 5-8). Her affliction produced emptiness and sorrow in her heart; and her grief brought her to a place of brokenness and humility before the Lord. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Ja. 5:10). The Lord closed her womb, but he did so with purpose. He allowed her sorrow to bring her to a place of desperation in order to use Hannah. God needed a yielded vessel to accomplish his divine will. Because of her affliction, Hannah “was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore” (1 Sa. 1:10). She reached the point that she was selfless in her petition. Her desire for a son was no longer merely to satisfy her need, but she became willing to surrender her child to the service of the Lord (v. 11). “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Ro. 8:28). She came to the place where she had a sorrowful spirit and poured out her soul in prayer, expressing her abundant grief to the Lord (vv. 15-16). Then God heard her cry and gave her a son, whom she named Samuel (vv. 17, 19-20). The psalmist David exclaimed, “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry” (Ps. 34:15). What did the Lord want from Hannah? – Complete surrender to his will and purpose. God had something much greater in mind than giving a son to a sorrowful woman – this child would be forever “lent to the Lord.” God fully intended to raise up a courageous leader in the house of Israel – a leader completely dedicated to serving the Lord and performing the word of the Lord (vv. 24-28). But it took barrenness (v. 5), adversity (v. 6), sorrow, weeping (vv. 7, 8, 10), and affliction (v. 11) to bring forth God’s will through Hannah. The answer to her cry meant so much more than becoming a mother. Her selfless supplication and healing ultimately brought about deliverance for God’s people, for Samuel eventually led Israel to victory over the Philistines (1 Sa. 7:3-4, 8-15).

Scripture Study

Hannah’s barren condition – 1 Sa. 1:1-8

Her affliction and petition – Ja. 5:10; 1 Sa. 1:10-11, 15-16; Ro. 8:28

The answer to her prayer – 1 Sa. 1:17, 19-20, 24-28; 7:3-4, 8-15

Conclusion

The story of Hannah inspires every believer to face adversity with courage and faith, knowing that God is our healer. Hannah could have become a miserable, bitter woman without faith and hope. But instead, she cried out to God with all of her heart. Amazingly, the prayer of one woman changed the course of Israel. God took her need and did something remarkable through Hannah. Out of her deep despair, she prayed, and God healed her body. Through her healing, she then became the mother of one of the most influential spiritual leaders in the history of the church.

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Introduction

“Naaman the Leper”

Healing depends on both faith and obedience. Why? If we truly desire to be healed, then we must receive healing on God’s terms, not ours. That is, we must not only exercise faith in God, but also submit to his will. Therefore, resistance to the will of God can actually stand in the way of our being healed. To receive healing from the Lord, we should be submissive and obedient to God’s word.

Key Verse

“Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (2 Ki. 5:14).

Lesson Summary

Naaman was the general of Syria’s great army. He was a respected, honorable, and valiant leader. Because of his military accomplishments he was highly favored by the king of Syria. Although he was notably successful, he nevertheless had a plague of leprosy, an incurable skin disease (2 Ki. 5:1). In Israel, since leprosy was not treatable, the disease was controlled and contained by isolation until an individual was cleansed (or healed) from the disease. The priests of God functioned somewhat like doctors, determining what was a true leprosy according to the law of God, and pronouncing when an individual was unclean or clean (Le. 13:1-46). Naaman’s wife had a servant, a young maid who was a captive from Israel (2 Ki. 5:2). She spoke to Naaman’s wife about the prophet Elisha, saying, “Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy” (v. 3). When the king of Syria heard this good news, he sent Naaman with a letter unto the king of Israel, requiring that he should be healed. The prophet Elisha called for Naaman to come to him, but when Naaman arrived at his house, the prophet did not come out to greet him (Le. 13:45-46). Instead, he sent word that he should go to the Jordan river, wash in the river seven times, and be healed. [Note: Compare Elisha’s instructions with the requirements of the law for cleansing in Leviticus 14:1-20.] Being a high-ranking and important official in Syria, Naaman was angry because Elisha did not come out to him in person and pray an elaborate prayer over him. He was expecting the prophet to do something demonstrative and miraculous. But instead, the prophet sent a messenger specifying God’s requirements for Naaman: 1) Go and wash yourself; 2) You must wash in the Jordan; and 3) You must wash seven times. Naaman considered these requirements to be unreasonable, and, at first, he was unwilling to do them. The more he talked about it, the more irritated he became – “Why should I wash in the Jordan; why not wash in the rivers of Damascus?” He left Elisha’s house outraged. God actually asked very little of Naaman, yet he allowed pride to stand in the way of his obedience and his healing. His servants exercised greater wisdom in convincing him to lay aside his foolish pride and obey the words of the prophet. Naaman then went to the Jordan, washed seven times, and was cleansed from his leprosy (vv. 4-14). Interestingly, scholars typically trace the origin of the word “Jordan” to the Hebrew verb, “yarad,” meaning “to descend” (R. Laird Harris, Ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1, Moody Press, 1980, p. 402.) Naaman had to descend. His spirit had to come down and be humbled. He had to become willing and submissive to God in order to be healed. He dipped seven times in the Jordan River. He came up the first time, but nothing happened. Then the second, third, and fourth, but still nothing changed. Each time he went down and came back up, did Naaman consider what he was doing? He was no longer the man in charge, but he yielded his will to the will of God. He followed the specific instructions of God’s prophet, washed in the inferior waters of Jordan, and humbled his prideful spirit (Ja. 4:10; 1 Pe. 5:6-7). He obeyed, and when Naaman came up the seventh time, he was completely healed.

Scripture Study

Naaman’s disease – 2 Ki. 5:1; Le. 13:1-46

The cure – 2 Ki. 5:2-10; Le. 14:1-20

Humility and obedience – 2 Ki. 5:11-14; Ja. 4:10; 1 Pe. 5:6-7

Conclusion

Desiring to be healed and the willingness to be healed are not precisely the same. Since healing depends on God’s terms, we must be willing to submit ourselves to the will of God in order to receive our healing from him. An individual can actually desire healing but not desire the will of God in his life. Such resistance stands in the way of healing. We should have the faith to submit ourselves to Jesus Christ and obey the word of God in order to be healed.

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“Hezekiah’s Healing”

Introduction

Truly, we do not always understand what God is doing in our lives and exactly why he is doing it; but we can be fully assured that God completely understands us even when we do not understand ourselves. He knows our sorrow and interprets the meaning of our tears. In today’s lesson, we will see the results of crying out to God in faith.

Key Verse

“I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore” (2 Ki. 20:3).

Lesson Summary

“In Adam all die” (1 Co. 15:22) – every human being is mortal and eventually experiences death (Ro. 5:12). But no child of God should want to depart this life before his appointed time (Ec. 3:1-2). Although we have an eternal home awaiting us, God has a temporal purpose and service for each individual (1 Co. 12:18). We should therefore desire to live out our lives to the fullest extent and accomplish all that we can do for the Lord, while we have the strength and the opportunity to serve (Ph. 1:23-24). Certainly, we should not desire to finish our course in this world, until God is completely finished with us (2 Ti. 4:5-7). As children of God, we should seek to live out God’s purpose in our lives. Hezekiah reigned as king over Judah for twenty-nine years. His father, Ahaz, had been a corrupt leader, following the wickedness of the kings of Israel, and even making a sacrifice of his son (2 Ki. 16:1-4). However, Hezekiah was a spiritual reformer, following righteousness and turning the nation back to the Lord. He found favor with God. In fact, the Bible acclaims him as the greatest of the kings of Judah because he trusted the Lord and kept God’s commandments (2 Ki. 18:1-8). Nevertheless, Hezekiah became severely sick and faced imminent death. The Scriptures described his illness in terms of a boil in his body (20:7). Perhaps, he had some type of cancer. The prophet Isaiah told him to get his house in order because he was going to die (20:1). Reasonably, the king could have accepted his “hopeless” condition and prepared himself for death, for the prophet came to him, saying, “Thus saith the Lord” (v. 1). After all, how does one contend with God? Yet Hezekiah appealed to the mercy of the Lord; “then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord” (v. 2). He believed the word of the Lord and understood the gravity of the moment, but he also believed that God was able to change his dire circumstances. He did not argue with God or contest the will of God. Instead, Hezekiah wept and prayed, reminding the Lord that he had served faithfully over Judah (v. 3). Hezekiah felt desperate, for everything seemed to be quickly coming to an end. He immediately cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard his despairing cry (vv. 4-5). Because Hezekiah believed in God’s power to heal and called on the name of the Lord in tears, his circumstances miraculously changed (v. 6). Had he accepted his original prognosis, his life would have been cut short. But he came boldly to God, obtained mercy, and found grace for his need (He. 4:16). Truly, our high priest can “be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (He. 4:15). Because of his faithfulness, Hezekiah stood out as the greatest of the kings. Through faith and humility, he recovered and continued to reign over Judah for another fifteen years.

Scripture Study

Living God’s purpose – 1 Co. 15:22; Ro. 5:12; Ec. 3:1-2; 1 Co. 12:18; Ph. 1:23-24; 2 Ti. 4:5-7

Hezekiah’s life – 2 Ki. 16:1-4; 18:1-8

Facing death with faith – 2 Ki. 20:1-7; He. 4:15-16

Conclusion

The Lord is ever mindful of our needs (Mt. 6:8). He hears our prayers and sees our tears (2 Ki. 20:5). Certainly, none of us are sovereign. We do not always know the will of God in our lives in every situation. Therefore, we should appeal to the mercy of the Lord, even when faced with inevitable death. When we cry out to God in faith and humility, we can be sure that he will answer according to his divine will and purpose for our lives.