



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
July 27, 2021
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



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Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

I believe, one of the greatest encouragements can be for us – especially as we are wrestling with uncertainties, losses, grief or any types of despair – that there is a Divine Person who is greater than us and our problems.

Those of you who read or heard this past Sunday’s message can recall Apostle Paul’s words: “[**God**] **is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine**” (Ephesians 3:20) The question is: do we have an experience of a God who “**is able**” and also willing to guide, strengthen and help us in our time of need? And what happens when we pray, but receive no answer? I was sad to hear that many have given up on God and their faith because they prayed and their wish hadn’t come true, and life often turns out to be ‘unfair’.

Probably most of you are familiar with the story of Job, who “**was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.**” (Job 1:1) He had everything that a human can desire: a nice big family, wealth, and honor in his community. God still let Satan to take everything from him, with one exception: “**The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”**” (Job 2:6)

We can learn from the Book of Job, that the life of this “upright” man turned into hell. Job was afflicted “**with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.**” (Job 2:7) His wife, the closest person who was supposed to stand by him “*in sickness and in health*” told him: “**Curse God and die!**” (Job 2:9) When his three best friends came to visit and comfort him, “**they could hardly recognize him**” (Job 2:12) After sitting together in a long silence, Job burst out: “**Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?**” (Job 3:11)

But behind the scenes, the Almighty haven’t forgotten about his “servant Job”. As he struggled in prayer amidst his pain, the Lord God talked to him. In chapter 42 we can learn: “**After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.**” (Job 42:10)

Job’s story gives us affirmation that despite of suffering and unfairness of life, the Almighty is still the Sovereign God of this universe and our lives. It encourages us not to give up calling on to God’s name as we cope with challenging situations on our life journey. So let us remember Paul’s urging: “**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**” (Philippians 4:6) Because God’s promise has been true throughout the millennia: “**The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.**” (Psalm 145:18)

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



God's Power on Display

What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?

Job 38:24

READ Hosea 14

It was a lightning storm, and my six-year-old daughter and I were on the floor watching the dazzling display through the glass door. She kept repeating, "Wow! God is so big." I felt the same way. It was obvious to both of us how small we were, and how powerful God must be. Lines from the book of Job flashed through my mind, "What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?" (Job 38:24).

Job needed to be reminded of God's power (vv. 34–41). His life had fallen apart. His children were dead. He was broke. He was sick. His friends offered no empathy. His wife encouraged him to abandon his faith (2:9). Eventually, Job asked God, "Why?" (ch. 24) and He responded out of a storm (ch. 38).

God reminded Job of His control over the physical attributes of the world (ch. 38). This comforted him and he responded, "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you" (42:5). In other words, "Now I get it, God! I see that you don't fit into my box."

When life falls apart, sometimes the most comforting thing we can do is to lie on the floor and watch the lightning—to be reminded that the God who created the world is big enough and loving enough to take care of us too. We may even start singing our favorite worship songs that tell of the might and greatness of our God. – By 戴丹尔

REFLECT & PRAY

God, help me see how big You are and to stop trying to fit You into small boxes. Help me to trust that if You're big enough to create and control lightning, You're big enough to help me through life's challenges. Amen.

When was the last time you saw God's power on display? What went through your mind as you witnessed His bigness?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The structure of Job 38:1–42:6 helps readers see that we're dealing with a specific literary unit. God's voice dominates; Job does very little speaking (see 40:3–5; 42:1–6). In chapters 38–39, Job gets bombarded with multiple questions. The first set concerns *inanimate* created order (38:4–38). These scenes are stunning and cast the Almighty in the role as the grand designer of all majestic and wonderful things in this world. The next set of queries (38:39–39:30) deals with the *animate* created order. These creatures come into view: the lion, raven, mountain goat, wild donkey, wild ox, ostrich, horse, hawk, and eagle. God is at work in creation! – By **Arthur Jackson**

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