

THE GIFT OF COMPLAINING
Job 10:1-3, 18-22

WINTRY SPIRITUALITY

I am not fond of winter. Winter is a time for ice, salt trucks, dead batteries, frostbite, seasonal affective disorder, recreation eating.

There is no mention of winter in the Bible before the Fall.

Martin E. Marty says that we need a “wintry spirituality” for times when the warmth and joy is taken away from us.

Wintry books of the Bible: Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Psalms, and Job.

THE TEST OF LOVE

C. S. Lewis wrote after the death of his wife, “Where is God ... Go to him when your need is desperate ... and what do you find? A door slammed in your face ... After that, silence.”

Job in the Spring and Summer:

“He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.”

He is “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”

Job in the Fall and Winter:

The key question of the whole book: “Does Job fear God for nothing?”

First, he loses his livestock, his wealth, his servants, and his children.

Second, he loses his health.

FRIENDS IN WINTER

His wife tells him to “Curse God and die!”

She, too, has lost everything. Now she has to take care of him.

He says, “Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

His friends go to visit him.

“When they saw him ... they could hardly recognize him ...”

“Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights.”

This was their best gift. The gift of silence. The trouble began when they started talking.

The Doctrine of Retribution.

PRACTICE GOD’S PRESENCE

What are we to do when winter hits the human heart?

One thing we can do is to practice God’s presence in moments of “mini-pain.”

Another thing we can do is to learn the art of complaining.

We need to be passionately honest with God and pray with the belief that God will hear and respond to our pleas.

WHO GOD IS

In the end, Job meets God, but God doesn’t answer his question of “why!”

Instead, he shows Job who He is.

He is a God who is extravagantly good, uncontrollably generous, irrationally loving, and creates for no reason at all.

God is saying: “I’m worth it. Don’t give up. The pain will not last forever.”

Job discovers that he was never alone. Not even in winter.

Prayer Concerns: *Burney Biesel, Brian Haslop, Mac Kerr, Anne Miller, Vicki Page, Mildred Sentell, Doris Swafford, Carol Webb, Lucille Alwerdt, Ray Billings, Dorothy Burns, Gene Burns, Patti Chou, Betty Crenshaw, Ed Gatlin, Charles Hamilton, Jean Hansford, Kristi Jackson, Charles Jamison, Rev. Jerry Lynch, Judy Malaquias, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Moody Palmer, Betty Scott, Robert Thole, Marian Wiehle, our troops ...*

Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of **Joy Forrester** who died on Friday, January 6, and to **Kay Fowlkes** and her family on the loss of her uncle, **Kenneth Amick**, who died on Saturday, January 7.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, sometimes we say along with the psalmist, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’” And sometimes we don’t. Sometimes we can’t wait to get up, get dressed, and get here, and sometimes we can’t wait to get out of here. It’s not that we don’t love you, Lord, it’s just that other things are on our minds.

Sometimes it’s spring and summer in our soul and we sing for joy and we can’t wait to tell you about it and thank you for it. But sometimes winter hits the human heart and it’s all we can do to get up in the morning, much less praise you or thank you or even worship you. We know you understand. We just wish we did.

So we are here, Lord. Some of us are ready to sing and praise and listen, and some of us are ready to go back to bed or off to watch the playoffs or out to eat. Meet us where we are. Speak to us words of life in the middle of our wintry moments or our summer like mood. Speak through the distractions and help us catch a glimpse of that for which we are made. Help us see Jesus, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

JOB 10:1-3, 18-22

“I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why thou doest contend against me. Does it seem good to thee to oppress, to despise the work of thy hands and favor the designs of the wicked?”

“Why didst thou bring me forth from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me, and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave. Are not the days of my life few? Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of gloom and deep darkness, the land of gloom and chaos, where light is as darkness.”

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

January 22	<i>A Brand New Life</i>	Mark 1:14-20
January 29	<i>Powerful Preaching</i>	Mark 1:21-28
February 5	<i>Driving Out Demons</i>	Mark 1:29-39
February 12	<i>Running the Race</i>	1 Corinthians 9:24-27
February 19	<i>Yes and No</i>	2 Corinthians 1:18-22
February 26	<i>It’s Good to Be Here</i>	Mark 9:2-9

On the Radio (1450 AM):

January 22	<i>Peace of Mind</i>	John 14:25-27
January 29	<i>Martha Moments</i>	Luke 10:38-42