



**HISTORIC ST. JAMES AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
222 NORTH ROMAN STREET  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70112  
Telephone: 504.586.8381 Facsimile: 504.586.8993

**THE REVEREND JONATHAN C. AUGUSTINE, J.D., M.Div., PASTOR**

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**November 15, 2017**

**“Giving God Thanks, in the Midst of Circumstances!: Part II”**

## **I Prayer**

## **II Series Recap and Background Information**

During last week’s Pastor’s Bible Study, we began a series focused on dealing with grief, especially during the holidays, called **“Giving God Thanks, in the Midst of Circumstances.”** We talked about the statistical reality that people’s depression increases during the holiday season. Moreover, with November’s observance of Daylight Savings Time—causing darkness to come earlier in the day while also imposing psychological feelings of loneliness and anxiety (especially as financial and family pressures mount during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Seasons). The reality is that during this time of year, people often find themselves in “the midst of circumstances.” The question, therefore, becomes how do we give God thanks and find happiness, in spite of circumstances? We answered the question last week, with the Apostle Paul.

Last week, in looking at parts of *Second Corinthians*, a letter Paul wrote in response to criticisms and insults he received from the church he founded at Corinth, while he was away in Macedonia, we focused on Paul’s “circumstances.” He used them, described as the “thorn in his flesh,” to grow closer to God and give God thanks and praise, in spite of his circumstances. See, generally, *2 Corinthians* 11 & 12. Although Paul’s feelings were hurt; although he was called to be a “preacher,” but didn’t have the gift to speak well; and although he was required to often appear before people, but was apparently not what some might consider “attractive,” Paul found happiness in the midst of his circumstances. This week, in building on the foundational example of Paul, in *2 Corinthians*, we now examine Job, and parts of the book bearing his name, to see how he gave God thanks, “in the midst of his circumstances.”

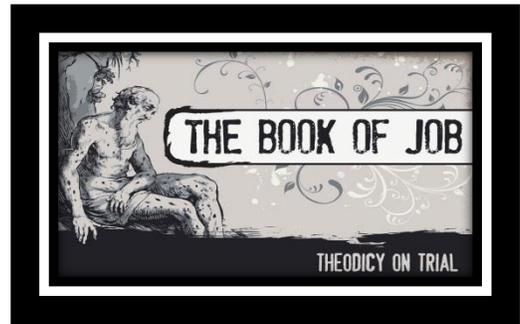
### 1. What Was Paul’s Thorn?

- Severe earaches/headaches, Tertullian
- Epilepsy, Klaushner
- Recurrent Malaria, Ramsey
- Adversaries of the Word, Chrysostom
- Fleshly Temptation, Calvin
- An Inflammation Of The Eye, McGarvey
- Blasphemous Thoughts Of The Devil, Lightfoot
- Stuttering Speech
- Poor Eyesight (Galatians 4:13 – 15; 6:11)
- Persecution

see how he gave God thanks, “in the midst of his circumstances.”

The *Book of Job* is amazing. It is believed that *Job*’s unknown author wrote it at some point between the reign of King Solomon and the Babylon Exile. ***Job* looks very seriously at a classic question we all must face in life, “Do we lose faith when good people suffer?”** In chapter 1, the author uses symbolism to introduce us to a “good man.” Job is presented a blameless, while enjoying a prosperous life. Several symbols are used to suggest Job has an almost perfect life (*e.g., the author gives him 7-sons and 3-daughters, for 10-children . . . brief explanation*). As we move to chapter 2, Job continues to praise God, “in the midst of circumstances,” even as his wife suggests that he curse God and die, in the midst of his health challenges.

By the time we get to chapter 40, Job’s faith is challenged and Job is weak. In chapter 40, God responds to Job. The message God teaches is not to question God, because we can’t begin to understand God. Instead, no matter what circumstances seem like, we should always trust God! God is firm with Job, offering an example of the beasts he created (Behemoth, 40:15) to show that God does what God does and God protects God’s creations, including humans, like Job and like us, “in the midst of circumstances.” By chapter 42 (1-6), Job is remorseful and ashamed that he ever doubted God. In the midst of his circumstances, Job was taught that God is always in control. Because of that, he again gave God praise. **The Book of Job, therefore, gives us another biblical example of why we should find happiness in God’s love, “in the midst of circumstances.”**



**III Foundational Text: Job 1-2:10; 40, and 42:1-6 (NIV) (read out loud)**

**IV Breaking Down the Text and Applying it to Our Lives**

- In chapter 1, after we’re introduced to Job as a “blameless and upright” person, who appears to be living an almost perfect life, do you see the author’s use of sudden change to show how Job’s good fortunate dramatically and suddenly changed (“While he was still speaking. . .”)? Can you please describe experiences in your life where something sudden happened and your fortunate seemed to change (*e.g.*, losses during Hurricane Katrina? Suddenly losing a job? Learning about the transition of a loved one?) Was it hard for you to do as Job did and maintain your faith?
- In chapter 2 (1-10), we see Job suffering with heath challenges, on top of all his other sudden losses? Have you had heath challenges, while having to deal with other things, too? In the midst of your struggle, has anyone you trusted (like Job’s wife in the story), done something that caused you to doubt? Were you able to be strong?
- By the time we find Job in chapter 40, he’s really been through it and his faith is low! Have you been through a period where you felt low and desperate and your faith became low, too? Did God show-up? (*true story: Alonza Robertson in New York*).
- In chapter 40, God was obviously angry, but took the time to explain? Does *Job* teach us anything about trusting God? How does chapter 40 make you feel?
- In looking at chapter 42 (1-6), Job is like “WOW! How could I ever have doubted?” Have you had a similar experience? How does this make you feel—knowing that God is ALWAYS there—as we prepare to deal with the holidays?

**VI Comments and/or Questions**

**VII Closing Prayer**