

PREFACE

*“Pastor brought out the context of Job, that he was a man of the East and a Gentile. It is therefore mind boggling that Job and his three friends, even Elihu, should know the doctrines of the grace of God so comprehensively: God’s attributes, His creation, His redemption and the power of resurrection, and also the doctrine concerning the total depravity of man. And how on earth did this book find its way into being canonised as the Holy Scriptures? Who brought the Gospel to them? Who taught them these doctrines? Why were they able to understand so well when the Jews till this day are still having a veil upon their heart, and unable to understand the truth, though they are custodians of it? Pastor’s thought-provoking questions made the book of Job more appealing to me. Surely, God’s hand is behind it. It is He Who created and preserved this book for us. There is so much to learn from this book. Pastor showed us that this book is very doctrinal, pastoral and filled with both the objective and subjective aspects of the Gospel. When you consider the depths of it, you can’t help but be convinced that it is indeed an integral part of the inspired Word of God, because mortal men with finite wisdom can never utter these things! It is very difficult to understand the book of Job. It is very complex, different people were talking, and it is not easy to follow what they were saying, let alone grasp the points that they wanted to make. It is not difficult to know that Job was a troubled man, but to know pastorally the depths of his sorrow is totally another thing. So I thank God for the spiritual insights afforded by pastor to show us the billows of grief that encompassed Job. Pastor showed us that the disquietness within Job, his depression, the bitterness of his soul is like Psalm 42. Job was very perplexed over the severe afflictions that came upon him for he had done nothing wrong. Also he conscientiously did everything right by fearing God and eschewing evil. Then why did such things befall him? And he had no one to confide to. His wife told him to curse God and die. **His three good friends were miserable comforters that added salt to his wounds.** And God seemed to be silent towards him, not only for a moment, but for a prolonged period. Not only he was mentally and emotionally at pain, he was physically at pain too, being plagued with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. **The pain was so acute that he wanted to die. I could empathize with Job somewhat because I am also reeling in sufferings. It is under pastor’s ministry that I am urged to be more upright to consider honestly the frowning providence in my life, and not just be content with having food on my table and a roof over my head. My heart is at pain and there is no rest in my soul because I see God has spread dung on my face and confounded many of my doings. Quite often I secretly desire God to take away my life quickly but save my soul because I do not want to go through the painful process of bearing the yoke of the heavy hand of God.** Through the message today, I felt pastor guided us to appreciate the sufferings in life, to understand why God allows us to go through sufferings. It is because it is necessary to prepare our hearts to meet our Redeemer. It is true, experimentally, that sufferings and failures humble me a lot. They continually peel off my self-righteousness and convince me more and more that there is nothing good in me, but rather I am stupid and helpless, and even the best of my abilities is tainted with flaws; I need God’s help even to go from here to there. Today, I am made to appreciate the value of the Psalms, and why it was placed after the book of Job. For when we know not what to pray, when we have groanings that are hard to be uttered, the psalms give us the words to come before God. Thank God for the Psalms. Thank pastor for showing us the preciousness of the irreplaceable psalms and for directing the brethren to metricate the psalms as our songs as we sojourn in this dangerous journey heavenward. Today, pastor also showed us the importance of God’s Word, and we should count it more than our necessary food, and more precious than gold, like Job did. For without the understanding of God’s Word, we can never appreciate our sufferings rightly. We may end up responding like Job’s wife to curse God and die. We may also end up like the Jews who become cynical and question the existence of God. Hence I appreciate the role of Elihu whom pastor said was the harbinger to direct Job to lift himself out of his despondence and look up to God. **Thank God for the Elihu in our days in the person of our pastor.** It is he who makes sense to us the dealings of God in our lives through the exposition of the Holy Scriptures and encourages us to emulate the patience of Job and other godly patriarchs to wait upon God. We are directed to appreciate His deliverances from all our troubles. **Without pastor to handle us with bit and bridle, especially through the application of the law in his preaching, we would have easily truncated the preparatory work and gone out of the way long ago. Lastly, thank pastor for bringing across the sharpness and clarity that while we say the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, ultimately Christ must reveal Himself to us. We may be brought low by sufferings, even to repent in dust and ashes like Job did, but God must accept our repentance, just like He did to Job. Pastor showed us that Job was justified when God accepted him and his prayers, and delivered him from his captivity (Job 42:10).** Salvation is all of God, we should not put our trust in our endurance and waiting. Thank pastor for granting us clarity in this aspect.” Response of Zipporah Lee to pastor’s exegesis of the book of Job, Albin, Teaneck, NJ, USA; 20 May 2018 AD*