

March 20, 2016  
Sermon for Palm Sunday  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Job 42:7–9

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Job 42:7–9 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. <sup>8</sup> Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” <sup>9</sup> So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job’s prayer.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

In 1882, a New York City businessman named Joseph Richardson owned a narrow strip of land. It was 5 feet wide and 104 feet long. Another businessman, Hyman Sarnar, owned a normal-sized lot adjacent to Richardson's skinny one.

Sarnar wanted to build an apartment that fronted the avenue and offered Richardson \$1,000 for the slender plot. Richardson was offended by the amount and demanded \$5,000. Sarnar refused and Richardson called Sarnar a tightwad and slammed the door on him.

Sarnar assumed the land would remain vacant and instructed the architect to design the apartment building with windows overlooking the avenue.

When Richardson saw the finished building, he resolved to block the view. No one was going to enjoy a free view over his lot.

So Joseph Richardson built a house. Five feet wide and 104 feet long and four stories high. The house was so narrow that only one person at a time could use the staircase. The largest table in any room was 18 inches wide.

A heavysset newspaper reporter once got stuck in the stairwell and after two tenants were unsuccessful in pushing him free, he got out only by stripping down to his undergarments.

People called the building "The Spite House."

The Spite House was torn down in 1915, which is odd—very odd. Because I distinctly remember spending a few nights there some time ago. And, if memory serves me, I think I saw some of you squeezing through the hallways too.

The spite house is a lonely house isn't it? There's only space enough for one person. And people who live in the spite house are reduced to one goal: make someone miserable. And they usually do.

Who do you think is that person is?                      Themselves.

We're in a sermon series on Job. And if anybody had a reason to live in the spite house, with large amounts of animosity and resentment, it was Job.

At the top of the list was his wife. Job had lost everything. But then his wife said, "Curse God and die." If Job doesn't already feel abandoned, you know he does the minute his wife tells him to pull the plug and be done with it.

Then, there was Eliphaz, the "good friend" who says in Job 4:7 that the upright never perish and in Job 4:8 that those who sow trouble reap it. Both verses imply that Job is getting from God exactly what he deserves.

Add Bildad, another friend, to the list because he says in Job 8:4, "Your children sinned against God, so he gave them over to the hand of their transgression." For Bildad the only explanation for the tragic death of Job's children is because they sinned against God. And then there is Zophar the Zealot. He adopts, like the others, an aloof, stoic attitude toward Job's suffering and grief.

These people never address God and never pray for Job. And in Job 11:6 they all agree that it is surprising that Job doesn't even suffer more!

What Job needs to do is stop claiming that he is righteous in God's sight and, instead, repent.

There are few experiences in life that are more painful than being rejected by friends and family members who should understand and sympathize with us. We wouldn't be shocked if Job decided to build a spite house and live in it the rest of his life. But, wonder of wonders, in our text from Job 42:8 God says, "My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly."

In Job 42:7–8, Job is called "servant" four times—four times! What does God's servant do? He intercedes for his enemies.

He blesses those who cursed him. He doesn't return evil for evil. Though Job is still a broken man, still scraping his boils with pieces of broken pottery, he refuses to unleash weapons of revenge.

You understand, don't you? That all of this foreshadows and previews the greatest act of forgiveness. If anybody—and I mean anybody—had a reason to live in a spite house with large amounts of animosity and resentment, it was . . . Jesus.

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Blessed is He who come in the name of the Lord!, Hosanna in the highest! But then the Gospel was read, and what did we see right away? Palm Sunday became the Sunday of the Passion!

Those that could have been at the top of Jesus' hit list were the chief priests and scribes. They had paid Judas to betray the Master, sent temple soldiers to arrest Christ in Gethsemane, brought his case before Pilate, and stirred up the crowd to demand that Jesus be crucified.

And then there were the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees were the first to actively plot to kill Jesus. And when the Savior cleansed the temple, the Sadducees joined in the plan to murder Christ, at any cost.

And don't forget the Roman soldiers. They brutally beat Jesus at Gabbatha.

Then they placed a crown of thorns on His head; blindfolded him and struck him in the face with their fists; spit upon him, railed against him and finally, with three nails, the Roman soldiers crucified Him.

Add to the list Pontus Pilate who had found Jesus innocent. Yet, because of Jewish pressure the Roman governor sentenced Jesus to crucifixion and then publically washed his hands. What a crass, political, double-faced act of betrayal!

That's quite a list, wouldn't you agree? But it's not complete. There are other notorious sinners that Christ could have, should have, had huge amounts of spite toward.

And who are those people? Brace yourselves. You and I are on the list too.

Our sins sent Jesus to the cross—our corruption, our pride, and our pettiness.

The soldiers hoist Jesus up on the upright portion of the cross, probably already nailed to the cross piece. The cross may have swayed forward with the added weight, until it is secured with wedges at the bottom to hold it steady as another nail pierced his feet. Then the soldiers get their bonus pay as they gamble to decide who will get the Savior's garments.

At that point, what does Jesus say? Does he cut loose with a profane laden tirade about how unfair this all is?

No...He speaks Words of forgiveness: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Who is the "them"?

The chief priests and scribes; the Pharisees and Sadducees; the Roman soldiers; Pontus Pilate; ... you and me.

God's servant intercedes for His enemies. He blesses those who cursed Him. He doesn't return evil for evil. Jesus is a broken man. He hangs in pain and misery. Yet He still refuses to unleash His weapons of revenge. Jesus refused to live in the spite house.

How about you?

Oh, I know. It's so easy to hold on to raw anger and bitter resentment. I know. I know. You were treated like trash. She left you when you needed her the most. They let you down in the most crucial moment of your life.

You can flee, fight, or forgive. Some choose to flee: to get out of the relationship and start again elsewhere, though they are often surprised when things go sour, again.

Others fight. Houses become combat zones, and offices become boxing rings, and tension becomes a way of life.

Still others...some... choose to forgive.

Where do they get that power, that ability? In the Words of Jesus, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Because they have been forgiven they choose to forgive.

Does that make forgiveness easy? No.

Quick? Seldom.

Painless? Never.

But stay the course. You'll spend less time in the spite house and more time in the grace house. And as one who has walked the hallways of both, I can guarantee that you're going to love the space of grace.

Walk in the grace of Jesus, the grace of your forgiveness, and then in joy and thanksgiving, forgive as you have been forgiven.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

### **Sermon Outline**

“Job: Blessed Be the Name of the Lord”

On Earth Is Not His Equal!

Job 41:20–34

- I. Leviathan is linked with death.
- II. Leviathan is a deceiving serpent.
- III. Leviathan is a deadly, brutal, and vicious dragon.

