THE PROBLEM AND POWER OF PAIN
WEEK 2 • DAILY BRIEFING 1 • BLESSING-BASED LOYALTY

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

This week follows Sunday's sermon, "A War Without Answers," from the book of Job. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I do not want my loyalty to You to depend on You giving me good things or keeping bad things at bay. When the blessings stop and the trial comes, keep my eyes on the Cross, where You already proved Your love for me and Your power to do what You say. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

On Sunday we looked at Job, a man who lost almost everything he had in a matter of days. Behind the scenes, Satan had made an accusation against him. His claim was that Job only loved God because God kept blessing him. Here is today's idea in one sentence: if your loyalty to God depends on His blessings, it will walk away when the blessings stop, but loyalty built on the Cross stays.

Most people would never say it out loud, but plenty of people treat God like a vending machine. They put in good behavior and church attendance, and they expect a comfortable life to come out. When it works, faith feels easy. Then the bad diagnosis comes or a prayer goes unanswered, and it starts to seem reasonable to doubt God. The thought goes something like, "If He won't give me what I want, why should I stay loyal to Him?" That question deserves an honest answer, because it is the exact question Satan raised about Job.

Here is what you need to know about the story. Job lived in a land called Uz, and the Bible describes him as "blameless and upright." In the opening chapters, the Bible pulls back the curtain on a scene in heaven that Job never saw. Satan, whose title in Hebrew means "the Accuser," stands before God and accuses Job twice. The first accusation targets Job's possessions and family, and the second targets his health. Both times, Satan can only operate within the limits God sets.

Today's second passage comes from Habakkuk, a prophet who lived about six hundred years before Jesus. God told him that the Babylonian army was coming to invade his country (Habakkuk 1:6). For a nation that lived off its farms, an invading army meant ruined crops and empty barns. Habakkuk wrote today's passage knowing those losses were coming, not after they were over.

So where does loyalty that survives loss come from? It does not come from pretending the losses do not hurt. It comes from looking at what God has already done. God is fighting a global and eternal war, and you will not always see what He is doing in your life. But you can always see the Cross. The goal for today is to let the Cross interpret your circumstances instead of letting your circumstances interpret God's care.

READ & MEDITATE

Job 1:9–11

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? [10]Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. [11]But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

Job 2:4–5

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. [5]But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.”

Habakkuk 3:17–18

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, [18]yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

As you read, notice what Satan expects Job to do when the blessings are gone, and what Habakkuk decides to do when the blessings are gone.

REFLECT

Answer these honestly. This is between you and God, and nobody else needs to see what you write.

Satan’s first accusation starts with a question.

1. Fill in the blank from Job 1:9: “Does Job fear God for no _____?”

According to Satan, why does Job really follow God?

Satan’s claim is that Job’s loyalty was purchased. Take away the benefits, and the loyalty goes with it.

When the first attack on Job’s family and finances did not work, Satan went after Job’s body.

2. According to Job 2:4–5, what does Satan believe a person will give up in order to save himself?

If someone watched how you responded to your hardest season, would they say your loyalty was tied to God or to God’s blessings?

Habakkuk lists almost everything a farmer in his day depended on to survive.

3. Fill in the blank from Habakkuk 3:18: “yet I will _____ in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”

If Habakkuk’s joy is not attached to his crops and herds, what is it attached to?

Paul wrote Romans to a young church in the capital of a pagan empire, just a few years before the emperor Nero turned on Christians. In chapter 8 he reasons from what God has already given to what God will give.

4. What does Romans 8:32 say about God?

If God already gave His own Son for you, what does that tell you about His future intentions toward you when your present circumstances seem to say otherwise?

This is why the Cross matters so much when life falls apart. Your circumstances change week to week, but the Cross already happened, and it already proved how much God cares for you.

Most people do not walk away from God all at once. They quietly renegotiate the terms.

5. What blessing in your life would most tempt you to walk away from God if He took it?

What would it look like to let the Cross interpret that loss instead of letting the loss interpret God's care?

Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite Romans 8:18 from memory.