

THE BIBLICAL WILD

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Biblical Wild, we will be exploring books of poetry and wisdom. Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. The book of Job explores some of the most difficult of human experiences. Experiences not only of suffering, but of suffering that seems to be arbitrary. It's suffering that seems to come to a person who is doing everything right. A person who is leading a charmed life, and who seems completely blessed by God, but instead finds a whole series of torments and sufferings beginning to plague him. Because of the focus that the book of Job has on human suffering it has universal appeal. Appeal because all of us have suffered at different moments in our lives, and it has had such appeal that in fact it has been a book of the Bible that has been referenced by psychologists, by poets, by novelists and sociologists, all who find great meaning in the book of Job, as they try to unpack and understand the meaning of our lives, and the meaning of our very existence. The story that is outlined in Job begins with Job who is a pious, upright and righteous man who seems to have everything going for him. He's got great riches, a wonderful family, all is right in his world. And this captures the attention of the divine realm, and there's a conversation in the heaven's that is asking a question: "why is this upright and righteous man so pious, and what might be do if he were to suffer unimaginable events?" and thus is launches a kind of divine experiment. So at the end of this prose section we see that Job, whose been introduced as the upright and righteous man begins to experience varying levels of and deepening levels of suffering. In my own family we have noticed something that is hard to explain. It seems that when one child has something good happen to him, it's not very long before something bad happens to one of the other kids. It's as if there's some kind of cosmic karma going on. Of course karma is not a part of the teaching of our own Christian tradition. So we wonder why is it that repeatedly we experience this series of good things and bad things, and yet we're the same family throughout all of it, a family trying to be the best that we can be. It causes us to ask basic questions about why does this stuff happen, and why doesn't it happen for one person but it happens for another. The book of Job is an opportunity for each and every one of us to take the time to reflect on our own lives, and the lives of those around us. Find meaning and find understanding about why certain things occur. Now I'm going to spill a little bit of the story and rush to the end and that is in the end we discover that there is not really an answer to that question. Sometimes, bad stuff just seems to happen. And Job is inviting us into a transformed kind of life. A life that looks at the suffering or the bad things happening to us and rather than wishing them away, enter into the suffering and discover how our lives can be transformed. As you go through this week, I invite you to consider these two questions:

WEEK XXVII: Job 10-27 / Psalm 149-4

From Psalm 3. Let us pray.

But you, O Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy hill. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan and this is the Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness. Throughout this month on the

1. What is the real source of your faith and strength?

2. What most challenges your faith?

May God bless you, and I will see you again next week on the Biblical Wild.