

I. My Notes ... WWC message 2/7

II. Series: The Problem with Pain

- Title: Can You Hear Him?
- Text: Job 3-7; 1 Samuel 1
- Quote: In the secular view, suffering is never seen as a meaningful part of life but only as an interruption. Tim Keller (Pastor, Author)

III. Introduction

- There are seasons in life when pain becomes so loud it drowns out everything else. You can be surrounded by people, surrounded by Scripture, surrounded by truth — and still feel like you're standing alone in a storm no one else can hear.
Most of us don't wrestle with the existence of God. We wrestle with the silence of God. We wrestle with the gap between what we believe and what we feel. We wrestle with the noise of our own questions. We wrestle with the voices around us that don't always help.
- Philip Yancey tells a story in *Where Is God When It Hurts?* that captures this so well. He writes about a young man who suffered a catastrophic injury that left him paralyzed. After the accident, people flooded him with advice — some well-meaning, some deeply hurtful. They told him to “stay positive,” to “claim healing,” to “look on the bright side.” Others tried to explain why God allowed it, as if pain needed a lecture more than it needed love.
- But the young man said the most painful part wasn't the injury.
It was the isolation.
It was the feeling that no one understood what he was going through. It was the noise of other people's opinions drowning out the quiet hope he was trying to hold onto. And then something changed.
- A friend came and simply sat with him. No advice. No explanations. No pressure to “be strong.” Just presence. Just listening. Just compassion. And he said that for the first time since the accident, he felt the presence of God again — not because the pain disappeared, but because someone finally stopped talking long enough to hear him.
- That's where we find Job after his devastation. That is where we find Hannah. And that's where many of us find ourselves. Pain has a voice. People have a voice. And sometimes those voices get so loud that God feels silent.
But what if God isn't silent?
What if we've just been surrounded by too much noise to hear Him?
- Today's message is about learning to recognize the difference — learning to hear God again in the middle of the noise, learning to trust that He listens even

when others don't, and learning that honest lament is not weak faith but listening faith.

- Let's step into Job's story — and Hannah's — and discover what it means to have Faith That Listens.

IV. **Pain has a Voice** (Job 3)

- Pain doesn't stay quiet forever. Even the strongest faith eventually finds its voice. And when it does, it rarely sounds polished, poetic, or pretty.
- Job sits in silence for seven days — not because he's strong, but because he's stunned.
- Grief has a way of stealing your breath before it steals your words. But eventually, the dam breaks. And when Job finally speaks, what comes out is not a testimony — it's a torrent.
- He doesn't offer a memory verse ... He doesn't offer a worship song ... He doesn't offer a theological explanation ... He offers honesty.
- Job curses the day he was born. He questions the meaning of his life. He wonders why God allowed him to live long enough to suffer this deeply.
- And Scripture doesn't edit any of it.
- It is important to understand that ***Pain has a voice — and the Bible lets it speak.*** The reason understanding this is important because many of us were raised to believe the opposite. We were taught to silence our pain with positivity. To hide our questions behind clichés. To pretend we're "blessed and highly favored" even when our world is falling apart.
- But Job shows us something different: God would rather hear an honest cry than a dishonest praise.
- Pain speaks in different tones ...
- Pain speaks in questions. "Why is this happening?" ... "Where are You, God?" ... "How long will this last?" ... These aren't signs of weak faith — they're signs of wounded faith. And wounded faith is still faith.
- Pain speaks in confusion. Job is unable to make sense of his suffering. He can't reconcile what he knows about God with what he feels from God. And many of us live in that same tension.
- Pain speaks in longing. Job longs for relief, for answers, for God to show up. Pain often sounds like desire — the desire for things to be different, healed, restored.
- Pain speaks honestly. Job doesn't pretend. He doesn't perform. He doesn't polish his prayers. He simply opens his heart and lets the truth come out.
- And here's the beautiful part: God doesn't rebuke Job for his honesty. Not once. Not ever.
- God rebukes Job's friends — but He never rebukes Job's lament.
- Why? Because pain that is spoken honestly is not rebellion — it's relationship. It's the cry of a child who still believes someone is listening.

- Pain has a voice. And God is not afraid of it.
- Some of the most faithful prayers in Scripture are the most painful ones:
 - “How long, O Lord?” (Psalm 13)
 - “My God, why have You forsaken me?” (Psalm 22)
 - “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” (Mark 14:34)
 - “I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord.” (1 Samuel 1:15)
- These aren’t the prayers of people who have lost faith. These are the prayers of people who are fighting to hold onto it.
- This is where our faith journey has taken us – to look straight at pain and not be shaken.
- Pain speaks. Not with answers, but with honesty. Not with solutions, but with surrender. Not with explanations, but with expression. And God listens.
- Job teaches us that the first step toward hearing God again is letting pain speak.

V. **Understand This**

- Too often do we view the story of Job in a simplistic manner: Job is righteous, Satan sends tribulations, Job’s friends say harsh things, Job is justified in the end because he endured. Though this is a crude (and not completely accurate) outline of the story, it leaves out so many of the crucial details that are needed to fully understand the character of Job and what he was going through. Job did not have an easy time enduring his pain and suffering. Job even said some things that he probably shouldn’t have.

VI. **People Have a Voice – It Isn’t Always Helpful (Job 4-5)**

- Job’s friends start well. They sit with him in silence for seven days. But when they finally open their mouths, their words wound more than they help. They speak out of self-righteousness, not compassion. They assume they know what God is doing. They assume Job must have caused his own suffering. They assume their theology is more accurate than Job’s experience.
- And people today still do the same thing.
- Some people respond to your pain the way Job’s friends did.
- Not because they’re cruel, but because they’re uncomfortable.
- They need the world to make sense, so they try to explain your suffering instead of entering it.
 - “You just need more faith.”
 - “Maybe God is teaching you a lesson.”
 - “If you’d made better choices, this wouldn’t have happened.”
- They offer answers because silence scares them. They offer certainty because mystery threatens them. They offer corrections because compassion costs more. But their words wound.

- And Job isn't the only one who experienced this. Hannah did too.
- In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah stands in the temple, praying through tears. Scripture says she was "pouring out her soul before the Lord." Her pain was honest. Her lament was raw. Her prayer was unfiltered.
- And Eli—the priest—misreads her completely. He assumes she's drunk. He assumes her brokenness is a behavior problem. He assumes her tears are a sign of disorder, not devotion.
- Hannah's husband doesn't understand her either. He loves her, but he doesn't get her pain. He tries to comfort her with words that only deepen the ache:
" Why are you weeping? Am I not enough for you? "
- He personalizes her pain instead of entering it. He makes it about his discomfort instead of her heartbreak.
- And people today still respond this way. Some people respond to your pain the way Hannah's husband did.
- They love you — but they don't understand you.
- So, they minimize what they can't fix.
 - "Why are you still upset?"
 - "Other people have it worse."
 - "You should be over this by now."
- Not because they don't care — but because they don't know how to carry what you're carrying.
- Here's the truth both Job and Hannah teach us:
- People often speak from their own discomfort, not your reality. People misread pain. People rush to explain what they don't understand. People minimize what makes them uncomfortable.
- But God never does. God is not like Job's friends. God is not like Hannah's husband.
- God never misreads your pain. God never rushes to explain it away. God never minimizes what breaks your heart.
- People may misunderstand your pain, but God never does. People may speak from fear or pride, but God speaks from compassion. People may get tired of your tears, but God bottles every one of them.
- This is why honest lament is not a failure of faith — it is the language of faith under pressure.

VII. **God has a Voice – Even if You Can't Hear it** (Job 6-7)

- Job turns away from his friends and begins speaking directly to God. His words are raw. His questions are sharp. His emotions are unfiltered. He's not hearing anything back, and that silence feels like abandonment.
- But silence is not absence.

- Job doesn't know it yet, but God is closer than he feels. God is listening more deeply than Job realizes. God is preparing to speak — not with explanations, but with revelation.
- This is where many of us live. We pray and feel nothing. We worship and feel empty. We read Scripture and don't understand or see how it fits in the present circumstance. We cry out and hear nothing.
- And we assume the silence means God has stepped away. But the silence of God is not the stillness of God. The quiet of God is not the absence of God. The hiddenness of God is not the abandonment of God.
- God is often doing His deepest work in His quietest moments.
- Job's experience teaches us several truths about God's voice in seasons of pain:
God's silence is not punishment — it's preparation.
- Job thinks God is ignoring him. But God is preparing to reveal Himself in a way Job has never experienced before. Sometimes God's silence is the soil where His truth takes root and grows. Sometimes God is quiet because He's leading us into a deeper kind of faith — a faith that trusts His heart when we can't trace His hand.
- God's voice is often softer than the noise around us. Job's friends are loud. His pain is loud. His confusion is loud.
- God's voice is not competing with the noise — He is waiting for the noise to settle, for a time that you will be able to listen.
- God often speaks in whispers, not shouts. In nudges, not neon signs. In quiet mercies, not dramatic miracles.
- The problem isn't that God isn't speaking. The problem is that the noise around us is louder than the voice within us.
- God listens before He speaks. It is obvious that Job feels unheard. But God is listening to every word. God listens to Job's lament, his questions, his confusion, and his anger. The Lord God listens to it all before He responds.
- This is the pattern of Scripture:
 - In Exodus, God says, "I have heard the cry of My people." (Exodus 3)
 - In the Psalms, God is described as the One who bends down to listen. (Psalm 116)
 - In Romans 8, the Spirit intercedes when we have no words left. (Romans 8:26).
 - Throughout the Gospels, Jesus hears the cries of the blind, the broken, the desperate.
- God is not silent because He is distant. God is silent because He is listening. God speaks in ways we don't always recognize.
- Job wants answers. God gives presence. Job wants explanations. God gives revelation. Job wants reasons. God gives relationship.

- When God finally speaks in Job 38, He doesn't explain the suffering — He reveals His sovereignty. He reveals His wisdom. He reveals His nearness.
- Sometimes God's voice doesn't sound like the answer we wanted, but it becomes the answer we needed.

VIII. **How Do We Listen for God in Seasons of Pain?**

- This is where the message becomes deeply practical. Job teaches us. Hannah teaches us. Jesus in Gethsemane teaches us.
- Here are the practices of faith that listens:
- Scripture before explanations. Before you try to interpret your pain, let God speak into it. Let His Word be the first voice you hear, not the last.
- Presence before answers. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is sit quietly before God. Not performing. Not pretending. Just being.
- Prayer that is honest, not polished. God doesn't need your best words. He wants your real ones.
- Community that listens more than it lectures. Find people who sit with you like Job's friends should have. Find people who hear you like Eli didn't. Find people who carry your pain instead of correcting it.
- Watch for God's subtle movements, not dramatic ones. God often speaks in whispers, not earthquakes. In nudges, not neon signs. In quiet mercies, not loud miracles.
- Listening faith is not passive. Listening faith is attentive. Listening faith is expectant. Listening faith is honest.

IX. **Let's Land Here – God May Be Quiet, but He Isn't Still**

- One of the passages that speaks deeply to me is **Psalm 46:10** - "*Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth.*" (**ESV**). The Lord God is telling David, He is telling us, to stop and focus on the connection with Him. When we do that, He is praised and His glory is evident for all to see.
- The biggest part of communication is listening. It is there that understanding happens. Listening and stillness go hand in hand.
- Job's suffering teaches us that God's silence is not a sign of His absence — it's an invitation to trust Him in a deeper way. Hannah's desperation teaches us that God hears even the prayers we can't articulate.
- Jesus in Gethsemane teaches us that God meets us in our anguish, not after it. And the Spirit teaches us that when we have no words left, He prays for us with groanings too deep for words.
- God has a voice — even when we can't hear it yet. And God is speaking — even when pain is speaking louder.
- Wherever you are today — confused, hurting, waiting — God is here, and He is listening.

- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always