

The Fifth Sunday After Pentecost
July 1, 2012
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Pastor Chip Wilke

Job 38:1-11

Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone--while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt'?"

“Why?” This question has to be the most frequently asked question in the world. From the time we begin to speak until we draw our last breath our curious, inquisitive, and sometimes troubled hearts and minds want to know: “why?” My parents tell me that when I was young I really liked asking why questions. “Mom, why are cows black and white?” “Dad, why are all these roads so curvy if we learned in school the shortest distance between two points is a straight line?” Yes, those are questions I actually asked! Now having children of my own with one in particular who likes to ask questions I understand why my questions got a little tiresome. I also realize why there were times my parents gave me the answer I least liked to hear – “because I said so.” Sometimes parents will just say “because I said so” to avoid the question or because they don’t know the answer to the question. But there are other times when parents have every right to give that answer. When the authority of parents is being questioned by their children “because I said so” is enough.

Dear friends in Christ: if anyone has the right to answer all of our why questions with a “because I said so,” isn’t it our God? Today, we learn the Lord does not owe us answers and He will not give us the answers to all our questions “why.” Instead the Lord reminds us His wisdom and power is superior. We cannot and should not expect God to answer to us. We will answer to Him. As our Lord speaks to Job, I pray we are encouraged to: **Trust our Almighty Lord When He says: “Because I said So.”**

If there is a person we might think would have any right to ask God why it would be Job. The Lord calls this believer Job “*blameless and upright, a man who fears God & shuns evil.*” When God allows Job’s flocks, fields, servants and even his children to all be suddenly taken from him in a single day, Job replies. “*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.*” When God allows Job’s skin to be infected with boils and painful sores from head to toe, and when even his wife tells him give up, curse God and die, Job still does not sin in what he says. Instead, Job says to his wife: “*You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?*” When friends are of no help, when they falsely accuse Job of some great sin as the cause of his suffering, Job boldly confesses: “*I know that my Redeemer lives...and in my flesh I will see God.*”

We read this story of Job, witness his great faith, and we almost ask it for him: “Why God?” This is the question that begins to enter Job’s heart. Job starts to ask God for answers. **“I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.” (13)** Again he says: **“I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would find out what he would answer me, and consider what he would say.” (23)** He pleads, **“Let the Almighty answer me!”**

Now, here in our text, the Lord answers Job. It is an answer that grabs our attention! In a way it is a really big because I said so! God answers Job out of a storm - a whirlwind saying: **“Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?”** God wants to know how Job could question Him or consider God’s ways to be unjust when Job is unaware & ignorant of all the facts. God says Job’s words are **“without knowledge.”**

God continues: **“Brace yourself like a man.”** Literally, these words say **“gird up your loins like a man.”** In ancient times, men needed to tie up their long flowing garments with a sash or belt before some physical activity such as in warfare or an athletic contest. God is saying to Job, **“If you want to challenge me...If you want a contest...Gird up your loins like a man....Get ready to Go”** God says **“You have it all wrong here buddy.”** **“I will question you, and you will answer me.”** God is not the one on trial. On the contrary, Job must give an account to God. God is holy. Job is a sinner. God is the judge and jury. Job will stand before God to be judged. We cannot call the Lord to account for His actions, instead the Lord calls us to account for ours.

Isn’t this a reminder that not only Job, but we also need to hear when we start to question God because we don’t understand why certain things happen? **“Why am I not as popular as the other kids? Why did I have to lose that job I really enjoyed? Why cancer? Why do I suffer while the wicked seem to prosper? Why am I aging in a way I can’t do the things others my age can? Why?”** Can we think of times in our lives we have wondered, maybe even out loud, what God was doing and we wanted to know why. God’s answer to Job reminds us to be careful about pointing and shaking our puny fingers at Him. Do we really want to take our God to task about what is fair or unfair? Do we think it is wise to call the Almighty into question? Do we believe God owes it to us to answer our whys? Perhaps the next verses will help us answer those questions.

While our text only covers a few of them, there are now three chapters of questions God asks Job. These are questions Job cannot answer. These are questions reminding us how God is so great and how we are so small. These are questions that remind us how wise and awesome and beyond our understanding is our Lord Almighty. God asks Job: **“Were you there when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone--while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy”** God says to Job: **“If you think I need to answer to you then surely you understand how this world was created. You must have been there when I put all the stars in their places. You must know then Job how I created everything out of nothing and formed the mountains, land, and seas. As I set everything in place Job you must have heard the angels rejoicing over what was being done. You understand all this, right Job?”**

God continues to ask Job: **“Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb...when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place,**

when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt.' "Job, if you want some answers from me then first let Me see your power over the mighty oceans. Who controls them? Who set their limits?" God asks. Man is no match for the sea's power as our Gospel lesson this morning shows the disciples' helplessness in the storm. But God controls it with a single word! If man does not stand a chance against God's creation then certainly man is no match for the Creator! What answer could Job give to such questions? What answer can we give? If we want to question if we could control things, including our own lives, better than God, then we need to answer God's questions.

God is reminding Job and us that sometimes we need to just let God be God. Sometimes God tells us things happen and are the way they are: "*Because I said So.*" Not even faithful Job gets an answer to his why, because what God really wanted was Job's faith. He wanted to teach Job that he could put His trust in the Lord Almighty even in his suffering. God wants to teach us the same.

So when our hearts and minds are troubled and filled with whys, can we? Is it enough to hear God tell us: "*You need to let me be God and trust me just because I said so?*" It is interesting to note the name for God Almighty that is used here to speak out of the storm. For 35 chapters previously the name for God Almighty or just God was used and only once was the name used which is now used here - the LORD – the God of free and faithful love – the God who is faithful to His promises. It is the Lord who takes Job to task – the Lord who will keep every single promise He made to Job to the very end. The Lord had not forsaken Job or stopped loving him. He did not give Job more than he could bear. The Lord used Job's loss and suffering for his good. The Lord provided Job a Savior just as He said. Job learned to trust the Lord Almighty and this Savior from sin even more.

So what about us? It is also the Lord who speaks to us out of the storm to say because I said so. I pray we learn to trust our Lord even more. For the Lord Almighty has done so much more to declare His love for us by just saying so. He already showed us so – in a manger – in a life of our Savior God taking the form of a servant – in suffering unparalleled – in a cross – in a death that should have been ours – in an empty grave – in a promised heaven and a love that will endure forever. The Lord does not just say so, but He shows us so by providing sinners like you and I forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The Lord Almighty, in sending us Jesus, has already answered all of the really big why questions. The Lord may not tell us everything we want to know, but He gives us everything we need to know – right here in His Word! We know now that everything, yes everything that happens to us is because God loves us and wants us with Him in heaven. So let God be God. Put all your trust in the Lord Almighty. Take comfort that He knows and will do what is best. Rejoice that our lives are safely in His Almighty hands. When God doesn't explain to us right now the why, but instead tells us we need to listen to Him and trust Him because He says so, I pray we simply reply: "Amen."

