

## **“WHERE IS GOD WHEN LIFE HURTS?”**

**Job 11-28**

**Living God’s Word—A Walk Through The Bible**

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If I were to ask you, “Where is God,” how would you answer that question? Some would say that God is in heaven or that he is in my heart. Some other people believe that God dwells in church buildings. Yet the Bible says that God is all over the place. David says in Psalm 139 that we cannot escape from God’s presence:

*“Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn and if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me and hold me fast.”*

We’re talking here about what theologians call God’s omnipresence. The omnipresence of God simply means that God is everywhere. There is no point in the universe where God is not. He’s not limited by space; he is not confined to any one location.

Now that is a difficult concept for us to imagine because we are finite creatures with a finite body. How many of you have tried to be in two places at the same time? It’s impossible. Yet it’s no problem with God because God is a Spirit; he can be in many places at the same time.

As we continue our walk this year through the Bible, today we are focusing on the book and the person of Job. You may remember this account of how God allowed this very wealthy and upright man to suffer. Job went through some major testing to his faith and life.

It was in this suffering of course that Job cried out to God. He felt that God had abandoned him and that God no longer cared about him. He wondered if God was punishing him for some sin. Yet when Job was at the point of despair he never gave up on God.

In fact, it was in the midst of all this when Job came to realize that God was with him all the time, even in the midst of his trials. He came to the realization that we need to hold onto God when we face suffering. The truth is that God is all we need; he is always there.

Likewise that is the good news for you and me when we suffer and are tested. The truth is that if you can learn to tune into this presence of God and his Holy Spirit like Job did, it will benefit your life in wonderful ways. Therefore today we will look at four ways that God’s presence can make a big difference when your life hurts.

First of all, the Bible says that when I’m lonely God is my companion. I need to tune in and remind myself that God is my companion. Some of you here today, like Job, may be lonely. It is interesting that we live in a time when there are more people than ever in our world. Yet even with lots of people around there is more loneliness, and lonely people, than ever before.

Now there are several different kinds of loneliness. There's the loneliness of the death of a spouse or friend; there's the loneliness of the business trip; there's the loneliness of a new school; of growing old; of a husband/wife who won't listen to you; of feeling that you are not understood. There is also the loneliness of success—life at the top is often lonely.

So what do you do when you have these times of loneliness? You recognize God's presence; he is our companion. God says in Hebrews 13:5, "*I will never leave you or forsake you.*" Jesus said, "*You are my friends.*" He is a friend who knows more about you than any other friend. God promises that he is always with you.

Secondly, the Bible says that when I'm worried God is my confidence. Isaiah 43:2 says, "*When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through the fire you shall not get burned, and the flame shall not consume you.*"

Some of you, like Job, may be going through a fire; perhaps there may be some difficulty you are not anticipating that is coming this week. None of us can predict the problems we are going to face. Yet the one thing we can be certain of—God is going through it with you; God is with you.

Remember how God told Moses one day that he was going to lead the Children of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. Moses however started making excuses, "God, I can't do that; I'm insecure! I'm nothing! I can't speak!" God, however, gives one answer to his excuses, "I will be with you; my presence will go with you; I will be your confidence."

Thirdly, the Bible says that when I'm tempted God is my counselor. God, like with Job, is ready to help me make it through every temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "*No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so you may be able to endure it.*"

There are several things about this verse. First, it says that temptations are common. We all, like Job, have the same problems and temptations. People often think they are the only ones who feel tempted in certain ways, but they are not. If these are common to all then there must be a common solution. That solution, my friends, is found in God's Word.

Paul's words say that God is with me when I am tempted. When I realize God is right here watching me, this truth is a motivation to resist temptation. When I am aware of God's presence it helps me maintain more control. This is what Job experienced in his suffering; it is what can help us in whatever we face in life.

Fourthly, the Bible says that when I'm discouraged God is my comforter. Psalm 34:18 says, "*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.*" If you are discouraged today one thing I can say with all confidence—God is with you.

God feels your hurt. He knows when you're not making it and when you're frustrated. Some of you are going through some rough times right now and you're ready to give in, give up, throw in

the towel. You're ready to chuck the business, the farm, the marriage, the kids. You don't know if you want to keep on going the direction you are going.

Yet whatever you are going through be assured that God is going through it with you. You are not alone. God is not some impersonal far-off power. He is very personal and he's with you right now. Jesus said in John 14:16, "*And I will ask the Father and he will give you the Advocate, (the Holy Spirit), to be with you forever.*"

No matter what you are going through, my friend, God will go through it with you. When the roof caves in God is with you. He's never too busy to listen. Many of you know very well what I'm talking about. You've been through some deep waters and he's given you the strength and encouragement to go on.

I see all kinds of reactions people have in life. I see reactions to funerals, to health issues, to the crisis that come which nobody can predict or plan. My observation always is I don't know how people make it without God in their life; without a community of faith. Many of course have run from God and aren't making it very well. God is always there to encourage every person.

The key to keep on keeping on like Job did, to overcoming discouragement, is to remember that you walk each day in the presence of God. Yet how do we do that? How do we walk in God's presence? Well the first thing is to invite him into your life if you haven't already done that. God is around you; he is by you; yet he wants to be in you. The starting point is to open your heart to Jesus Christ.

The second way to walk in God's presence is to be quiet. A reality of our world today is that some people never feel God's presence because they're too busy; too much noise. We need to tune into his presence. Thirdly talk to God about everything. You don't need super duper prayers to heaven—God is right with you. Talk to him as a friend.

Fourthly, to walk in the presence of God make sure you develop the habit of praise. Psalm 100:4 says, "*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, enter his courts with praise.*" Nothing helps you tune into God more than learning to worship and praise him. We truly enter his presence when we praise him with all our hearts.

As Job discovered, my friends, a whole new life will open up if you grasp this simple truth that God is always with you. No matter where you find yourself this week, God will be with you—at school, on a tractor, in a business meeting, at a baseball/softball game, in your home. Just remember and say, "The Lord is surely in this place."