

Coach House Church BEACONS

SUMMER RAIN

13TH OCTOBER 2021

A few weeks ago we celebrated together as a church. The occasion was the anniversary of our founding as a church way back in 1952. We had a bring and share lunch after the Sunday morning service and we were able to sit outside. The sun shone brightly, it was warm and dry, and we felt blessed.

The following day the contrast could not have been more marked. It was cold and wet and windy. Thoroughly miserable. I remember that Autumn had truly arrived. I guess I shouldn't have been too surprised that, at the end of September, it was going colder, after all this is what is supposed to happen at this time of year.

I started to think about the summer months, reminiscing fondly about the warmer weather, the lighter evenings and time that we spent outdoors. Then I realised that, actually, Summer wasn't really all that good. Yes we had some nice weather but we had also had a fair amount of rain as well. There were plenty of days when we could not enjoy being outside, these days were not as enjoyable as they would have been on a sunny day.

This reminded me of a line from a song "Even in the Summer, a little bit of rain must fall"

Now in the picture we are getting here "Summer" represents the best times in our lives. A time of peace, happiness and contentment. The "Rain" represents a time when something bad happens, maybe an illness, an unexpected loss, or an unpleasant incident.

When we meet Jesus for the first time we commence our Summer. Meeting with Jesus will always be the best time in our lives. The joy we feel is immeasurable and as we continue to walk with Jesus we might begin to feel invincible. We forget that

"Even in the Summer, a little bit of rain must fall". We forget that difficult times might be just around the corner.

There is a story in the Bible about a man whose Summer was interrupted by quite a lot of rain. This man was called Job. Job lived a very very long time ago, probably around 3 or 400 years after Noah came off the ark. The story of Job is quite a lengthy one and is contained in the book that bears his name.

In summary Job was a very wealthy man. In chapter 1 of the book it says "There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless – a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned 7000 Sheep, 3000 Camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkey. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest man in that entire area"

The most important point from this is that Job "Feared God"

Job lived before Jesus so he wasn't able to know who Jesus was by name, but later in the book we read Job saying "Even now my witness is in heaven, my advocate is there on high" The statement that Job feared God tells us that Job was fully aware of what God expected of him. Job was willing to put God's needs before his own. Job was willing to worship God no matter what the cost to him personally. Because of this devotion to God we read in a later verse the words of God himself who declares Job to be "The finest man in all the earth"

Job was definitely in the Summer of his life, but then in the next part of the story the rain starts. Job suffers four disasters in very quick succession. First raiders steal all his oxen and donkeys, killing all the farmhands, then fire comes down from heaven and kills all his sheep and shepherds, then a third servant comes with news that raiders have stolen all his camels, and then lastly and worst of all he hears that all his children have died in a storm.

Now I can imagine that Job was quite distressed by this. Satan, who was the instigator of all this trouble, might have thought that this would be enough to get Job to blame God for what had happened, but Satan had not considered just how well prepared Job was. You see all Job's sacrifices and prayers had prepared his heart for just such a day. Job's response to what had happened was simple "Praise the name of the Lord" he said, and the bible adds that "in all of this Job did not sin by blaming God"

I think that we all know of someone who has suffered a financial or material loss. Perhaps not as much as Job lost but then, to the person suffering the loss the grief may still be as great. Some of us will also know of someone who has lost close family, this can be a terrible experience and often affects people for the rest of their lives.

I have heard of many instances where people who are not Christians have suffered loss and in so many of these cases I have heard that person blaming God for what happened. Exactly the opposite of what Job did.

Bad thought all this was, unfortunately Job's suffering was not yet over. Job started to suffer from blisters, boils and cracked itching skin. Now the one person who had thus far escaped the disasters was Job's wife and she had some advice for Job "Curse God and die" she suggested. Sometimes those closest to us give us the worst advice. Job's answer was this "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?"

It was at this point in the story that 3 of Job's friends turn up and most of the rest of the book is taken up with lengthy theological debates between Job and these friends. In all of the debate Job never wavers in his understanding of God. His friends sought to convince Job that the misfortune he had suffered was his own fault. Job knew that this was not so and by maintaining his faith in God he was in fact witnessing to the three friends. Towards the end of the story God himself joins the conversation. After speaking with Job God turned His attention to the three friends "I am angry with you" He said "Take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves" "My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has"

The last part of the story tells us that God restored Job's fortunes and gave him more children. God accepted the prayer for Job's three friends, perhaps we could say in today's language that they were "saved". And this happened because Job's behaviour was consistent with what he said, acting as a powerful testimony to all those who saw it.

I think we should also note that despite this restoration Job still needed consoling. Even though he knew that God would bring him through, even though he knew that his redeemer, Jesus, would eventually come for him, he still had the very

human feelings of grief and upset. These feelings were not wrong, and never will be. It is OK to grieve for a loss, and it is OK to have your friends console you.

The rain had stopped and Job's Summer continued.

It is very easy, when we are going through difficult times, to forget about God. It is easy to forget what God has done for us, and it is easy to forget the words of God which we have in our bibles.

If you look out of your window and see that it is raining, I don't know of anybody who thinks that it is going to rain for ever. However far off it might seem to be, we all know that there will be another sunny day sooner or later.

So it is with our lives. If we do need to go through a rainy season, always remember that the rain does not last for ever.

And more importantly, getting through the rainy season is only possible if you let Jesus help you.

Father, help us to have enough faith to stand firm in the rainy season, and please shorten the days until the sunshine returns. Forgive us if we think or say the wrong things and lead us worship you as we ought
Amen



Coach House Church

222 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2QN
leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604
Registered charity in England and Wales - 1194822



Steve Adshead
Treasurer // Trustee
stevea@coachhousechurch.org