



### Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



### Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

**emmanuelchurchbillericay**

01277 632120      emmanueloffice@billericaychurches.org  
www.emmanuel-church.info      @EmmanuelCM12

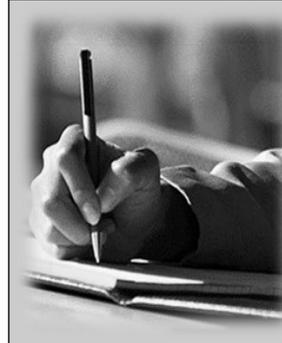


### HG154 Who Cares When ... I'm Suffering A Loss?

Job 1:13-22; 2:7-10 & 38:4-11

Home Group Study Notes

5 November 2017 - Revd Paul A. Carr



**PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



### Welcome (10 mins) Ice Breaker

If you had to lose one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?



### Looking Upwards (10 mins) Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



## HG154 *Who Cares When ... I'm Suffering A Loss?*

Job 1:13-22; 2:7-10 & 38:4-11

Home Group Sermon

5 November 2017 - Revd Paul A. Carr

### Introduction

Have you ever witnessed a train crash? Now, I'm not talking about a train that runs on tracks. I'm talking about those classic moments in our lives when things get so bad, that the best way to describe the moment is simply to call it what it is ... a train crash in our life. Have any of you ever had one of those? Dumb question, I know! We all have - you might well be experiencing one at this moment. If you're not, or you haven't, I can pretty much guarantee, no matter how well things may be going right now, one is sure to come your way sometime in the future.

I hate to be a 'prophet of doom' but that's the reality of living our lives in this world. You don't need me to tell you that, do you? However, what you may not know very well, is how to deal with those crashes in life in a biblical way - and that's what we're going to be thinking about this morning as we continue our series 'Who Cares When ...' as we think about: 'Who cares when I'm suffering a loss?'

When I was thinking about this topic I was wondering what a definition of 'loss' might be and came across it being described in this way: *Any major reduction in a person's resources, whether personal, material, or symbolic, to which the person was emotionally attached.* The Oxford dictionary describes it like this: *The feeling of grief after losing someone or something of value.* Loss comes in many different forms:

**Relationship losses:** You may have experienced loss as a result of divorce or separation, estrangement from other family members or getting married.. It may be that you're mourning the loss of a loved one. Today is All Saints Day, the day we remember those whom we've loved and lost - don't forget our Annual Memorial Service takes place at Christ Church today at 3.00.

**Role losses:** You may have experienced loss because you are getting married or because your children have left home (empty nest). Or maybe your loss comes from aging or a chronic illness.

**Functional losses:** You may have experienced a loss as a result of surgery. You may suffer from depression or losing your sight or hearing.

**Financial losses:** You may have experienced loss of income or employment or promotion through downsizing or redundancy. You may have had losses as a result of crime or a fire. Perhaps you have had financial loss because of gambling or other addictions.

**Major changes losses:** You may have experienced loss because of moving home or changing jobs and/or school. Perhaps you have experienced stressful or traumatic events or your loving pet has died.

4. Share the best, and the worst, piece of advice you've received from another Christian - anonymously of course!

5. Out of the five principles Paul raised in his talk about how Job responded to his losses, which one has been the easiest one for you to follow in the past? Which one has been a struggle?

6. When others are grieving, we're often tempted to relate a story of how we've experienced a similar grief. However, comparing our grief with someone else's never comforts, even if the loss was similar (e.g. the loss of a grandparent), we all experience loss differently. Describe how you would help someone in their grief if you followed Romans 12:15?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. We tend to believe that grieving a loss shows that we are weak. But sadness is not weakness. In fact, many of our problems result from not allowing ourselves to grieve. Discuss in your group if you've suffered a loss in the past that you have not yet grieved over. Can you identify why?

2. Read Psalm 23:4 and Matthew 5:4. What do these verses say about when we're in darkness during a time of loss? Discuss what's difficult about the command and blessing in these verses.

3. We often think we are alone in our struggles, but what does the Lord promise in Psalm 34:18? Discuss in your group how a loss you have suffered can help you get closer to God.

**Hard to define losses:** You may have experienced a loss of a dream or a goal or that you have lost your hopes for the future. Perhaps you are experiencing loss of self-esteem or self-image. I'm sure you could think of many more types of loss to add to my list.

### The Example of Job

If you had to describe one person in the Bible who endured pain, suffering, and loss in truly biblical proportions, most of you would mention Job. But rather than look at what he experienced (you can read all 42 chapters for yourself) I'm going to focus on how he dealt with the tragedy and difficulty he encountered in his life. Hopefully, as we look at his decisions and actions, we can be better equipped to survive a life/train crash when one comes along.

Job was a righteous man who loved God and lived his life to please God. One day, when Satan and God were having a conversation, Satan argued that Job was only faithful because he had everything and was greatly blessed and that we wouldn't be faithful if these things were taken from him. So God allowed Satan to test Job to demonstrate that he really was a faithful man of God who wouldn't turn his back on Him when the going got tough and no matter how hard life became. The only proviso was that Satan couldn't take Job's life. It's an amazing story because Job lost everything, and I mean everything.

Can you imagine the torment that Job was going through? He lost everything. He lost all of his livestock, and all of his servants, even his family, his children. Everything that made him wealthy and everything that fulfilled him in his life was gone. Most of us have suffered tragedy and loss in our lives - but few of us have lost everything. So, what principles can we learn from the life of Job about surviving a loss?

### 1. Don't lose your faith in God (Job 1:20)

Was Job happy about what was happening to him. Of course he wasn't. He tore his robe and shaved his head as a symbol of his utter hurt and agony but he still worshipped God. How hard must that have been? And yet, we must seek to do the same thing in our lives. No matter what happens to us, no matter how difficult life becomes, we must never stop praising and loving our Lord.

The answer to suffering is very complex. Theologians and philosophers have struggled for 2,000 years and no one's come up with a complete answer. But what the cross tells us is this: God is not sitting in a deckchair in heaven watching all the suffering down here. No, he has come into our world to suffer for us, and he now suffers alongside us.

Canadian soldier, Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire was part of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, and he watched the genocide there in 1994. And because he had only a small number of officers, he was unable to stop it. After it, he wrote a book called *Shake Hands with the Devil*. He wrote this: *'I know that there is a God, because in Rwanda I shook hands with the devil. I've seen him. I've smelled him. I've touched him. I know the devil exists. And therefore I know that there's a God.'*

Remember, God sees the 'big picture' when we don't. We can only see a 'snapshot' of our life. We cannot know the mind of God and we must trust God in that. But we must be careful not to allow ourselves to become devoured by bitterness. People often like to take the credit for themselves when things go well, but God is the first one they blame when tragedy strikes. We must be careful where we place the blame for our situation. Be careful who you blame. In fact, it's probably best not to lay any blame at all.

## 2. Keep praying (Job 1:20-21)

Job lost everything. And what was his response? His response was similar to the widow in 2 Kings 4 that Dan spoke about a few weeks ago. Job still worshipped God. In fact, he lay down on the ground and prayed. And it wasn't just any prayer. It wasn't, "Oh God, make this all go away. Make it all right. Make my children come back to me. Make my life better." No, he acknowledged that God was truly in control. God gave, and God took away ... and that's just the way it was. Job's in shock, he's devastated and in total disbelief.

But he goes to his study, falls on his knees, and begins to pray to God, the source of his strength. The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:6-7 (our church text for 2012): "*Don't be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God, and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*"

When your life crashes, you need to pray. Now, it's okay if you don't know exactly what to say. Sometimes you hurt so badly that you really don't know what to say. And that's okay because Jesus is there to take up the slack and pray for you. Sometimes, our first reaction to tragedy is to withdraw from God. Whatever you do, don't cut off your personal communication with God.

## 3. Maintain your trust in God (Job 1:22)

As Job struggled with his pain and suffering, He never lost his trust in God. He never lost his faith. He never lashed out against God. He didn't shake his fist to heaven and scream at God. He was humble, and he held tightly to his faith. How hard is that? It is so difficult! Because when we crash and burn in life, we want to blame someone. We want to scream at God. And if things are truly bad enough, Satan gets in our ear and begins to whisper, "You know, if God was really there, and if He really loved you, He wouldn't have let this happen..." And sadly, people begin to doubt the faithfulness of God ... even well-intentioned Christian people. Remember that you do not have a single thing that was not given to you by God. Every day, every moment, and every relationship is a gift from God.

American pastor Rick Warren's son, Matthew, struggled with mental illness and on Easter Sunday 2013 he shot and killed himself ending a 27 year struggle. Rick's first sermon at his Saddleback church, four months later, was a hugely emotional affair. Together they faced the question tens of thousands of Christians were asking: How are they - two of the world's most famous Christians - able to hope in God in the midst of their despair? He and his wife Kay spoke honestly about their spiritual struggles with Matthew's mental illness.

"For 27 years, I prayed every day of my life for God to heal my son's mental illness. It was the No. 1 prayer of my life," Rick preached. "It just didn't make sense why this prayer was not being answered." Kay spoke of how she couldn't even read certain Scripture passages about hope for months after Matthew's death. What parent's heart doesn't break at the thought of such struggle and grief? But did the Warrens lose their faith? No. They echoed the words of Job 1:21 when he said: 'The Lord gives and takes away.' And they sang, as will often do: "My heart will choose to say, Lord blessed be your name." At the end, Rick reminded everyone that heaven is coming and there is hope for the future and said something which has stayed with me since: "***God wants to take your greatest loss and turn it into your greatest life message.***"

## 4. Beware of bad advice (Job 2:7-10)

When we are dealing with a crash in life, we need to be aware of bad advice. Job was given some bad advice and, of all people, it came from his wife! OK. She'd lost everything too but her response was very different to Job's. She looked at him, sitting there scraping the pus from his sores, languishing in filth. She lashes out: "You still believe in this God of yours! What an idiot! You just need to curse God and die!"

Have any of you ever received some bad spiritual advice? You need to be really careful about getting your spiritual guidance and advice from the God Channel or the Internet. But you don't even have to go far to get bad spiritual advice. Even people close to you can give some really stupid advice. Bad advice can come from anyone, it can even come from a respected Christian. I'm always suspicious when people say to me: God told me to tell you this! Be sure to check your sources. Be discerning and careful about accepting spiritual advice.

## 5. Wait on the Lord. He remains in control (Job 38:4-11)

In these few verses, God uses powerful images and words to demonstrate who He is and how vast His power is. He laid the foundations of the earth, poured out the seas and set the clouds in the sky! He is God. He has always been in control, and He always will be! So, if you're caught up in one of life's crashes, you need to wait on the Lord, because He has not left you. He is still in control. You might not be able to see or understand what is going on in your life, but God is in control.

James 5:10-11. *Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about.*

But do you know what that means to you and to me? If you are trusting in Jesus: ***You are no longer a slave to fear you are a child of God*** (Romans 8:15). It may be bad right now. You might think that life, as you know it, is over. You may not be able to see any hope on the other side. But there is hope. There is joy. There is peace. And there is victory in Jesus! Jesus will not leave you. He will not forsake you. No matter how bad things may seem, He will always be with you.

## Conclusion

We have come to expect tragedy, heartache and difficult times in our lives. Getting through life's losses often requires grieving. But it's worth remembering a few points about grief: 1) Loss is unavoidable but grief is a choice; 2) Grief is healthy; 3) God grieves with us; 4) Grief is healed in community; 5) Grief takes time. We know that even those of us who follow God faithfully are not immune to life's losses. But the real test of our faith is found in how we deal with the hard times in our lives. In the midst of what you are experiencing, or will do so in the future, remember:

*God understands us* (Psalm 142:1-3); *God gives us peace* (John 14:27)  
*God holds us* (Isaiah 41:13); *God is with us* (Joshua 1:9)

***"God wants to take your greatest loss and turn it into your greatest life message."***  
Rick Warren

## Emmanuel Text for 2017

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

## 2 Chronicles 7:14