

# 9/11 – Ten Year Anniversary

## CDOBC

Title: “Enduring Evil”

*September 11, 2011*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help believers endure evil, tragedy and suffering.

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### Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Nursery & Children’s Ministry Needs
- Women of Faith Potluck will be held on Thursday September 15th from 6:00-8:00
  - in Rooms 1 & 2. Ladies, PLEASE RSVP to Michelle by Monday 8/12 (Contact info is in the bulletin) and let her know whether you can attend and what type of dish you will bring?
  - Tickets and Conference Information will be passed out at the Potluck so Please make every effort to attend. Also, IF you attended WOF last year, but are unable to attend this year, please still join us for the Potluck...we would love to have you!
- Courageous movie – Friday 9/30 – See bulletin for details
- Eugene Williams Memorial Service – Tuesday 10:00 a.m. – Adair Funeral Home

### Recognize:

Capt. Tim Knodel – just returned from Middle East deployment

Capt. Tye Graham – moving to CA – Language School – then to China – last Sunday 9/25

Lt. Col. Tom Carlson (Army) – Upcoming 1 year deployment – beginning Jan 2012

Pray for all other men and women serving in the Armed Forces connected to CDOBC – all first responders (police, firefighters)

The events of 9/11 were beyond tragic. On that Tuesday morning ten years ago, the world saw pure evil on display. The events of that morning not only shocked our mind, but they penetrated our hearts. We watched on the television as the horrors played out before our very eyes. Terrorists’ hijacked four airplanes, laden with jet fuel, and turned them into guided missiles that killed 2,977. Among them were civilians from 38 states, the District of Columbia, and over 70 countries. The dead also included 343 firefighters, 60 police officers, and 55 U.S. military personnel.

When evil occurs that leads to such tragedy, it’s bound to change a nation...and it has in countless ways. But an event like this doesn’t

only change a nation; it challenges the people of that nation – their beliefs, their worldview, their whole outlook on life.

For those who follow Christ, the events of 9/11 have prompted many questions...

*Why would God allow this to occur?*

*Were the attacks on 9/11 a judgment from God against our nation?*

*How can I feel safe and secure?*

*Can I worship and trust a God who doesn't prevent a tragedy like this?*

This morning, I hope to address these questions, and in general, look at the issue of suffering and tragedy, and how we as believers in Christ should respond to the evils and tragedies in our world.

To help us, we are going to look at the experience of Job.

Turn to Job 1

I don't know if there is a person apart from Christ, who we read about in Scripture, who experienced greater pain and tragedy both in a sudden moment, and suffered greatly over a long period of time – than Job.

**Read 1:1-5**

**Job's righteous, God-pleasing life** *Job 1:1-5*

Many people have said both publicly and privately that God used the events of 9/11 as a judgment against our nation.

I don't know if that's true. I know that Scripture is clear – God is sovereign, and He is able to use evil acts for good (Gen. 50:20 – also the crucifixion of Christ!). So this is not beyond possibility or even historical precedent. I also know that over the past decades, our nation has turned away from God and from His commands. There were just under 3,000 innocent

people killed on 9/11 – but in our nation alone there are over 3,000 babies murdered in the womb every day. Even though some states have solidified their stance on marriage being for one man and one woman, the culture of our nation continues to accept the legitimacy of the homosexual lifestyle. But more alarming than that is the low view of marriage that seems to occupy the mind and heart of so many Christians who make vows stating “till death do us part”, only to file divorce papers when difficulty enters the marriage. Our nation has also marched toward and embraced secularism and sensuality, which is a rejection of God and His Word, and we have idolized material wealth instead of spiritual wealth. Because of these sins, God would be just if He was to judge us...but I have no way of knowing if 9/11 was a judgment from God on the United States! Apart from the specifics listed in the book of Revelation, I don't know the mind of God or the plans of God when it comes to judging the nations.

It's a fools game if we try and identify or label evil acts and tragedies as God's judgment. Instead, we need to realize that God would be just for judging each one of us here today – right now! We are all sinners, and we deserve His holy, righteous judgment. But God is a loving, merciful, and gracious God – and He's provided us a way to escape His judgment, in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Only by putting our faith in Jesus can we avoid the judgment of God on our life. Jesus took our sin upon Himself – and He took God's judgment upon Himself as a result.

When we look at Job, we see that Job was “blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.” This doesn't mean Job was

sinless, but it means he had faith in God, and that his life was different because of his faith.

So the picture we have in the opening verses of Job is a man who is pursuing God and living in obedience to God.

### **Tragedy strikes Job without warning** *Job 1:13-19*

#### **Read vs. 13-19**

#1 - 1:14-15 – Job loses many servants, and all his oxen (500) and donkeys (500) – attacked by Sabeans

#2 - 1:16 – Job loses more servants, and 7,000 sheep – the “fire of God” (*i.e. Sodom and Gomorrah*)

#3 - 1:17 – Job loses the rest of his servants, and his 3,000 camels – attack by the Chaldeans

#4 - 1:18 – Job loses all his children in a sudden disaster / house collapse

In a matter of moments – in rapid succession, Job’s world falls apart. The Sabeans in vs. 15 as well as the Chaldeans in vs. 17 were pagan idol worshiping nations. They were the enemies of God, and God allowed them to strike at Job with devastating results. The fire that destroyed some of Job’s servants and the 7,000 sheep they were attending seems to be from God. Some commentators believe this was lightning, others that it was more similar to the fire and brimstone cast down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, but whatever it was, it was a sudden disaster, not at the hands of evil men, but from God.

Not only did Job lose all of his possessions, but most importantly, he lost the people in his life. His servants were near and dear to his heart. He treated them with fairness (31:13-15). Most tragically, he lost all of his children. In Job's case, the tragedy was not a judgment against him, because he was living a righteous, God-pleasing life. There was a larger purpose – a divine purpose to the tragedies that befell him, and in the end, God would bless Job with more than he had before (42:10-17).

Even though we struggle with the divine purpose that Job was in the middle of, we can see some things clearly from the account of his experience that we can apply to our life today – especially as we digest the events of ten years ago.

Suffering and tragedy is not always a judgment from God.

In Job's life there was no *earthly* reason for the tragedies, just as in your life, the suffering or tragedies you have endured are difficult to understand *why* they have occurred.

Think of all the tragedies and evil that has impacted our world through its history...

The Black Plague

Ivan IV of Russia (*Ivan the Terrible*)

Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust

Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Earthquakes

The horrors and abuses of the Dark Ages

Pol Pot (*1.7 – 2.5 million in Cambodia died under his rule*)

Josef Stalin (*10-60 million died under his rule*)

Slavery

Pearl Harbor

Tsunamis

## Plane crashes

The list is endless! Are all these things judgments from God – or are they the results of a sinful world and the destruction that sin and Satan has wrought upon God’s perfect creation?

We don’t know. It’s impossible for us to know with any certainty. Think of Joseph...was his misfortune God’s judgment upon him? No...because we’re told in Genesis 50:20 that what was intended and done with evil motives God used for good – to save many lives.

It’s important for us not to identify every evil act or tragedy as a judgment from God. I believe that if we do label them as judgments from God then we are actually putting a veil over the reality of evil and sin in our world. Most of these things are either pure evil, or a result of the corruption that sin has brought into our lives and into creation.

## **Job’s response to tragedy** *Job 1:20-22*

### **Read vs. 20-22**

Notice that faith in God – faith in Christ does not negate sorrow and grief. When he heard that his children were dead, he got up – tore his clothing (*which was a sign of mourning*), shaved his head (*which was another sign of mourning*). They shaved or cut their hair and cut off their beard (sometimes pulling it out by the roots!) to rid themselves of the things that added to their appearance. The idea was to make sure their appearance matched what they felt in their heart. Then, he fell to the ground – bowing down to God. This was more an act of humility to God than an expression of grief and mourning. Where else could Job turn except to the Lord?

Job's response was worship.

This doesn't mean he understood the reasons behind the tragedies. The next 30 chapters detail Job's struggle to understand the *why* – *Why* did God allow these things to enter his life?

When Job worshiped God – when he praised the name of the Lord despite the great loss he just suffered, he not only teaches us a valuable lesson, but he struck Satan a great blow!

*“Job destroyed the suspicion of Satan, that he only feared God for the sake of His gifts, not for His own sake...”* (Biblical Commentary on the

book of Job, by F. Delitzsch, pg. 65)

When we suffer great loss and pain, we tend to ask God why He has allowed us to suffer. But how often, when we suffer great loss and pain, do we ask God why He allowed us to be so prosperous and blessed over the previous years? Leona Williams had to say goodbye to her husband, Eugene, after 65 years of marriage. Certainly an unexpected end to Eugene's life – a tragedy to be sure. Any of you would be greatly encouraged, as I have been this past week, to spend time with Leona and to see her strong faith – despite her great loss. She has questions...but she also knows that God is good...that Eugene is with his Lord and Savior – and that God is just as worthy of her praise today as He was 3 weeks ago. We also talked about focusing on the gift of Eugene's 86 years of life – and their 65 years of marriage, instead of blaming God for how Eugene's life ended.

“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”

How tightly are you holding onto your material possessions?  
How tightly are you holding onto your worldly goods? Job's testimony in vs. 22 tells us that he didn't hold tightly to his wealth. For Job, God was sufficient.

### **Faith sustains you through tragedy.**

Job's faith sustained him in two ways.

First, Job was sustained because he believed in the resurrection, and knew he would see his children in the resurrection (19:25-27). Certainty about the resurrection gives you hope in the midst of tragedy and pain!

Second, Job trusted God, even when God didn't make sense. Now when his three friends showed up and started talking with him, he started to doubt God and question God's fairness because they had bad theology. Bad theology will cause you to doubt and distrust God's goodness to you. Later in the book (chapters 32-37), his friend Elihu spoke to Job and corrected his bad theology, and Job was sustained again.

### **Application**

Be careful in announcing God's judgment.

Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis – these are all referred to as “Acts of God”.

However, these things were not part of the original creation – they are a result of sin. Why don't we call them what they truly are: “Acts of Satan” and “Acts of sin”!

As you endure evil and suffering, worship God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived in Hitler's Germany, and he was a pastor and theologian who suffered greatly at the hands of the Nazis. He was imprisoned in some very harsh conditions, and Hitler had him shot right before the end of the war. Through it all, Dietrich's faith sustained him and enabled him to be a help and example to others. Like Job, he never stopped worshiping the Lord – even as he endured some of the greatest evil the modern world has known.

Allow your faith to sustain you.

For this to happen, you must have faith! You cannot be sustained by what you don't possess!

**A**dmit your sins to God – admit you are a sinner

Rom. 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

**B**elieve that Jesus died on the cross for your sins

Rom. 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

**C**hoose to follow / obey Christ each day

Close in prayer