

## Message from Robin+

Much has been said about the patience of Job. The book about his life is often understood as an exploration of the question of theodicy -- that is, how God can be declared just in the light of innocent suffering. In the absence of answers, Job has been held up as a model of quiet faithfulness. Job's life was tragic, and he searched his faith for answers. He had friends who thought they had all the answers (they did not) and he wrestled with them and with God, pleading his case that he had always been faithful, had lived a good life. But his good life disappeared, to be replaced by suffering and loss.

Last week I went to the beach. It's where I go to wrestle with God, and if I am honest, it's where I go to wrestle with opinions of others and my own conflicting thoughts. The ocean and sand are reminders to me of God's power, far greater than my own. When I meditate on the ocean waves and watch the cloud formations that are ever changing, peace and conviction come over me that I cannot describe. And I recall the words God spoke to Job after his somewhat self-righteous defense of his good life.

Here's a portion of what God said to Job,

*Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?*

*"Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?— when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'? Job 38:1-11*

For the Hebrew people, the sea was a metaphor for chaos. In Genesis God created the earth out of the chaos of the waters. Perhaps we are like Job, upset with God and wondering where God is in all of the chaos going on around us. Perhaps we are people of faith like Job, but are assuming we have more privilege than others because of our faith; assuming that some people deserve more of God's favor than others by virtue of their faith or their skin color or their income level. Perhaps we don't even recognize that we are sometimes a bit self-righteous and that even in our goodness we can still be racist in ways we do not yet comprehend.

I thought about all these things last week as I sat beside the great chaos of the ocean, delighting in God's power displayed in the white foam of the waves and the black clouds providing beautiful contrast, and I prayed that God would bring order out of the chaos happening in our world right now. I prayed that God would calm the chaos inside of me and stop the proud waves of white privilege in my own heart.