

## “Jobian”

If you know me, you know that I like words. I like ones that you can find in the dictionary, and I like to make up some of my own when there just doesn't seem to be one that adequately expresses the point I'm trying to make. I call these words, “Wigetisms.” “Jobian” is one such *Wigetism*. Here's how it came about.

Until 2008 I had always led a comparatively easy life. I really only knew about suffering from books and the lives of true sufferers that I knew. That all changed pretty quickly. Like Job in the Bible I met suffering in a hurry. It happened so quickly that many of my friends asked me, “*Have you read the book of Job lately?*” (Actually I had been camping around the book for some time. When I began to experience the pileup of pain for myself, Job's book began to be a special source of encouragement to me.) I think what sets Job apart from other sufferers in the Bible is the pileup of pains he experienced in such a brief period of time. Though my difficulties really haven't been in the same league as Job's, my friends and I started using the term “Jobian” to describe what I was going through.

Don Miller wrote, “*Job – the oldest book of the Bible is a book about suffering, and it reads as though God is saying to the world, ‘Before we get started, there's this one thing I have to tell you. Things are going to get bad.’ It's as though God starts off his message to the world by explaining there are painful realities in life we cannot and will never understand... Life is hard, and there is pain, great pain in life, and yet the answer to this pain or the cure for this pain is not given in explanation; rather, God offers to this pain, or this life experience, Himself. Not steps, not an understanding, not a philosophy, but Himself.*”

Job is a book not so much about a man and his trials, but in my opinion, it's a book about *God*. In it we learn stuff about God and his character. It's not really stuff you can make bullet points out of and lift the list up to God and hold him hostage to what he says about himself. The way I look at it, God is not a slave to his own system. It's not like he *has* to do this thing or that thing because of what he set up in his world. I heard a preacher on the radio just today who said that God was “predictable.” Giving this man the benefit of the doubt, I think he meant to say that he's “faithful,” and therefore we can count on him. I believe *that* for sure. But “*predictable*”? I don't think so.

It's hard for us to live with mystery, enigma, or paradox. We say that God is “wonder-ful” but we're not so comfortable with “wonder” itself. To the modern mind everything has to be nailed down and have a clear explanation – a precise definition. It has to fit a pattern. Problem is, God doesn't fit our patterns or definitions. Accepting the ambiguity of God's ways is huge part of a life of faith.

The book of Job is sort of a long read with lots of interesting aspects, but let's skip right to the conclusion. It's there in the end of the book that God shows up and interrogates Job about his whereabouts during creation. And then the book sort of just ends. He doesn't put action steps in bullet points for Job. He doesn't really reveal a plan or an answer, He just reveals *himself*.

He does give a great speech. And what would you expect to be in it? What I expected was answers to Job's questions about his suffering. I found that what God *doesn't* say is as telling as what he does. He doesn't even mention Job's suffering (or any suffering for that matter). He doesn't answer any of

Job's questions or defend himself. He doesn't apologize for being silent, he doesn't explain much of anything really.

So, what does he do? He just comes! He shows up. Job has an encounter with God without an explanation from God. And frankly, I'll take one *encounter* over a thousand *explanations* pretty much any day. I might not end up with tidy answers to all my problems. I may still have messes in my life, but I'll have *God*. To me, faith doesn't mean that we have God all figured out, it means we can live with him *without* having him figured out. I can *desire* answers and even ask for them, but I don't *deserve* one, nor do I *demand* one. If I'm going to have "Jobian" trials, I hope, at the same time to have some Jobian experiences with God.