



REFLECTIONS

April 10, 2016

**Yet man is born to trouble
as surely as sparks fly upward.**

Job 5:7

Trouble

The piercing lights of an ambulance flashed through the front windows of our home signaling trouble at our neighbor's house. It was not the first time emergency services had been called for him. We called them once when he experienced a seizure in our dining room. So we were aware of his health issues, and though concerned, we were not surprised by his need for help.

Trouble strikes us all in this life. Lost jobs, broken relationships, injuries, illness, death of loved ones all fall on the list of common troubles that pass through our lives. Trouble comes uninvited and usually unexpected though Jesus told us it would. Still we pray for God's blessing of a trouble-free life. It's difficult to envision, but trouble can be a blessing too.

Take the story of Job. With all the suffering he endured, how can Job's troubles be a blessing? We know the whole story now, but Job and his friends didn't understand how God was working in his life back then. God selected Job to teach Satan a lesson. He put Job's life, faith and integrity on full display as an example of trusting God. No argument could break his faith. Through Job's trouble, God taught Satan a lesson.

Who can know the workings of God? His ways are not our ways as the Bible tells us. He stands above all things and in control of all things, even trouble. God didn't cause trouble for Job; but He did allow it. Just as God allowed his servant Job to endure the severest of trouble, Job was blessed to have been chosen to serve God's purpose. As James tells us, "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*" (James 1:2-4)

Job was a blessed man, chosen by God to face trouble. Through him, God placed human perseverance and unwavering faith in full display; but to do it, Job endured unimaginable trouble. His example established a standard for us all. But more than that, Job's story set a standard for faith in God, and belief in his holiness and power.

Perhaps our neighbor is also blessed in ways we can't yet understand. The emergency that night turned out to be minor, only a little assistance was required. The next day we saw him out and about as if nothing had happened at all. Job's story ended that way too. God blessed him with a new and loving family, restored his prosperity, and renewed his health. The blessing that began with trouble...

Well, it ended in pure joy.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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