

April 5/6, 2017
Job 38:1-11

Midweek Lent 5
A Good Pilot

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Lenten King. Amen.

A good pilot knows how to get people safely through the storm. I invite you to wrap your head and your heart around this idea. *A good pilot knows how to get people safely through the storm.*

Have you ever been on a plane where there was a storm brewing and the flight attendant gets on the loud speaker and says, "People. The flight is about to get bumpy. For your own safety, please take your seats." Sometimes people listen to the flight attendant and sometimes they don't. On one particular American Airlines flight they weren't listening. The next voice this particular flight heard was the pilot saying, "This is the pilot speaking. Let's be very clear about our responsibilities. My job is to get you safely through the storm. Your job is to sit down and buckle up!" Or perhaps you've been on a cruise and you are passing through a storm. The Carnival cruise in March 2010 was a chance to get away and relax and enjoy one last true vacation before I would graduate and join the real world. It was anything but relaxing on one of the cruising days. We encountered a low pressure system and the captain of the ship came over the loud speaker and told the passengers. "This is going to be a bumpy day on the sea. My job is to get you safely through the storm. Please be aware of your other passengers."

What's true about a good pilot or even captain is all the more true of our God. Our God knows how to get his people safely through the storm. Isn't that the message of the Bible? Isn't that *the* message of the Bible? God doing whatever it takes to get his people safely through life's unpredictable, ferocious, and hellish storms. For Abraham and Sarah it was a storm called infertility. For Moses it was a storm called slavery and then another storm called 40 years in the desert. For David it was Mr. Storm called Goliath. For the disciples it was a deadly storm on the Sea of Galilee. For Job—*for Job*—it was a Category 5 kind of storm or using another rating an F5 type of storm because Job lost everything—literally.

And God is silent in Job's storm. For 35 *chapters* God doesn't say a word. For 35 *chapters* Job cries out. And for 35 *chapters* Bildad, Zophar, Eliphaz, and Elihu consternate, deliberate, and pontificate. But God? He says nothing – until Job 38:1. And then what do we learn? We learn that God is a good Pilot—God is a grand Pilot—who knows how to get people safely through the storm and all the way...home.

And that's Good News! That's *really good news*! Because we're all in some kind of storm. Right? What's yours? Are you raising teenagers? Did you get cut from the team? Did you lose the love of your life? Are finances tight? What about your health? Is old age getting the best of you? Maybe your like Abraham and Sarah and face infertility? Maybe your lonely, depressed, anxious or there is another storm going on in life?

Maybe you have a secret storm—which is the worst kind of storm because we feel all alone. It's a secret storm because we're ashamed and embarrassed that I don't tell a soul. Perhaps our secret storm is a sin or another silent pain.

Job's storm, though, was anything but a secret storm! By now we know that **Job** repeatedly **wants an explanation** from God. For 35 chapters Job puts on a full-court press and insists that God give him an explanation. **Instead God gives a revelation.** Here it is!

Job 38:1: “Then the Lord **answered Job in** the storm.” “Answered”—after 35 chapters the Lord finally speaks! But there’s more! The Lord is *in* the storm! Get it? God isn’t above the storm or below the storm or beside the storm. No! The Lord is *In* it. He is *in* the storm with Job! Job is not alone! *And neither are you.* What does God say in the storm?

We can see it in the outline of Job 38-41. **God’s control over the universe in chapter 38. God’s Control over animals in chapter 39. God’s control over Behemoth and Leviathan in chapters 40-41.** God says, “Job, my job is to get you safely through the storm. Job, your job is to sit down and buckle up!”

“Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2) Job doesn’t respond. “Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.” (Job 38:3). Job keeps quiet. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much.” (Job 38:4). Job says nothing. “What supports its foundations and who laid its cornerstone, as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” (Job 38:6-7).

Beginning in chapter 38 and continuing to the end of chapter 41, God takes Job on a tour of the universe and along the way he asks Job 70 questions...yes *70 questions*. What’s the point? God is a good Pilot who **knows how to get his people safely through the storm.**

In Job’s tour he learns that God created the sun. Why, the sun’s diameter is 109 times larger than the earth. The sun’s volume could contain a million earths. And God also created the Milky Way, which is just one galaxy and it alone measures 104,000 Light-years across and contains over 100 billion stars. Remember the speed of light? 186,000 miles a second. And God has created hundreds of billions of other galaxies in the universe.

“Can you see it, Job?” God asks, “Can you rejoice in it all as I do? The morning stars sing for joy because of who I am and what I do—can you rejoice in it too? Can you see how carefully I’ve put it all together? Can you grasp the immensity of what I’ve created? Can you match my power, my ability to watch over and my control of all this? Job, *can you fly this airplane or guide this ship safely through the storm?* What do you say, Job?”

“Then Job answered the Lord: ‘I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more.’” (Job 40:3-5). “Then Job replied to the Lord: ‘I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted.’” (Job 42:1-2). With a red face and a sheepish grin, Job takes a seat and buckles up.

Job has been the water boy telling Ricky Rubio how to dribble a basketball. Job has been the bat boy telling Joe Mauer how to hit a baseball. Job has been the caddie telling world’s number one Dustin Johnson how to use a nine iron. *Job has been the passenger telling the pilot how fly the plane.*

Have you seen the bumper sticker that reads, “God is my co-pilot?” I have! Co-pilot? Really? That could have been on Job’s car! But now Job resigns as copilot. Job takes a seat and buckles up! I invite you to do the same. And why do that? Why not keep jockeying for absolute control of the plane?

Because there was another time when God was *in* the **storm**. God wasn’t above it, below it, or beside the storm. NO. God was *in* the **storm**. 2 Corinthians 5 tells us: “God was *in* Christ reconciling the world to himself.” What does that look like? Here it is. God, in the storm. And God, again, speaks in the

storm. Listen. Can you hear him? “Father, forgive them for they know what they do.” “Today you will be with me in paradise.” “I thirst.” “It is finished!”

Are you hurting? He hurt. Are you bleeding. He bled. Do you feel like your gasping for air? He gasped for air. Are you crying? He cried. Is your heart breaking? His heart was absolutely broken. What’s all that mean? It means you are not alone in the storm. *You are and you were never alone in your storm! God has been with you!*

To the father who holds a rose taken from his son’s coffin, he speaks. To the couple with the barren womb and the fervent prayers, he speaks. To any person who has tried to see God through shattered glass, he speaks. Listen! Listen! Listen! Can you hear him? “I love you. I love you, with an everlasting love...now and forevermore!”

What should we do when we’re in a storm—a massive, life-threatening Category 5 or in the path of a destructive and terrifying F5 Job-like-kind-of-a-storm? When it looks as though everything is going to get wiped off the map? Should we freak out? Have our 19th nervous breakdown? Do something you’ll regret the rest of your life? NO! NO! NO! and NO! Sit down. Buckle up. Take a deep breath. Relax. Breathe some more. And trust the Pilot to get you safely through the storm and take you all the way...*home*.

In Jesus Name. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.