

I wanted to go to my tent and kill myself. But I couldn't. We had lost everything. We had no tent. We didn't even have a knife that I could use to slash my miserable throat.

A few months ago, my husband and I were the richest people within hundreds of miles. We had more sheep, camels, oxen and donkeys than we could keep track of. In our world, wealth was measured in livestock, not gold. We were fabulously wealthy.

But not just wealthy in livestock, but in family. We had three daughters and seven sons. Every family member loved one another. Every family member was healthy. Every family member worshiped God.

Then...gone. Everything, gone. My husband and I lost everything. My husband continued to faithfully worship God. Through it all, I admit that I grieved with all my heart, but I followed my husband's example and worshiped God. Well, I tried to worship through my tears and doubts.

People that once feared us, now jeered at us. People who were jealous of us, now laughed at our distress and poverty. People who were once our friends, abandoned us. There was no way it could get worse. And then it did.

My husband broke out in the most painful sores imaginable all over his body. I mean from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. He could not sleep, he could not find any comfortable position to sit or lie down. When he tried to eat or use the bathroom, he screamed in agony and pain. Living torture.

The man I loved more than my own life...suffering. I wanted him to die so he could have relief. I begged him to curse God in hopes that God would take his life. And take it all away. After all, if God punished him like this when Job was righteous, surely he would kill him when he wasn't righteous. I begged... begged.

No. Job would have none of that. He just said, "You are talking foolishly. Should we just accept the good from God, and not trouble?" He still refused to accuse God. He did not sin in his response.

Day after day, Job sat in the dust and ashes, and scraped his sores with broken pieces of pottery that we found on the ground. It seemed to me that the more he scraped, the worse his sores got. But it gave him something to do while he contemplated on what had happened to us.

Before I continue the book of *Job*, let me acknowledge that I mostly drop out of the story from here. It is mentioned once more that I am alive, and I am an important, although unnamed, person at the end of the book. However, what I am about to tell you about myself is conjecture based on a few clues in the book of *Job*.

As much as Job suffered for what happened to him, I know he suffered more because the same disasters had happened to me. He loved me more than he loved himself. It broke his heart to know my heart was broken.

In spite of all the disasters that had happened, Job and I loved and trusted each other deeply. Together we tried to understand why things had turned out the way they had. We had deep discussions... whenever Job could talk through his pain.

Had one of us sinned so badly that God was punishing us? We were sure that we had not. But we also had to admit that we had not been righteous enough for God to have previously been so generous with us. Perhaps behavior was not the complete basis for how God treated people? But if that was not the basis, what was it? We could not fathom what it could be.

Perhaps one of our children had sinned badly, but we could not believe that God would punish us for someone else's actions, even if it was one of our children.

In the end, we were baffled. We realized we did not have nearly enough information about God to understand what was going on. And we had no idea how to get more information about him. We so wished we could talk to God and ask him about himself? How would that have been? A couple of beggars in a garbage dump talking face -to-face with God Almighty.

Now, back to the book of *Job*... from a distance, a large dust cloud. Slowly moving our way. Not a dust devil. Eventually we saw a large retinue moving our way. Moving toward our garbage dump on purpose.

From a long way away, I began to recognize former friends of ours riding on camels with their servants behind. I ran to them and stopped them as far away as possible. I did not want for my husband to be completely humiliated or them to be embarrassed.

They explained how they had heard about our troubles and came to see what they could do. They asked where Job was, I pointed to him. They could hardly recognize him. They were so sad that they wept, tore their robes, and sprinkled dust on their heads. Soon, they looked almost like my husband.

Leaving the servants at a distance, we walked to Job. I walked away, and they sat on the ground with him. For the next seven days and nights none of them said a word, because Job's suffering was so intense. Once a day, their servants brought a little food and water, but even then they did not speak.

Can you even begin to comprehend having three friends who love and treasure you that much? They traveled from a far distance, and rather than seeking rest for themselves, they did all they could to be sensitive to Job. It was a demonstration of respect and love that astounded all of us who saw it.

I believe they would have sat in silence another week, but my husband broke the silence to speak. Through his cracked lips and parched throat, the words, barely recognizable. And they were not words of welcome to these precious friends. No, he cursed the day he was born.

I understand you modern people have a phrase to use when you threaten or warn somebody... "She will wish she had never been born." Well, that phrase probably came from my husband's curse. He wished he had never been born. Never married. Never had children. Never known God.

He wished that day had never existed. And if it did exist, that he had died at birth. That no mother had been there to nourish him. Then in his death, he would be asleep and at rest with the formerly wealthy of the world.

At death, even the wicked and slaves enjoy their rest. All are free from their earthly burdens. Job says he yearns to be dead, but death will not come for him. His life consists of moans, and groans. He has no peace, no quietness, no rest. What he fears has come upon him.

I couldn't bear it anymore. I break down, inside and out. My husband is a broken man, and I can take no more. Then, I find that my husband is NOT a broken man, and I can take a LOT more.