

Coming Out Gold - The Test!

Scripture used: [Job 1:1-5 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon kicked off a special sermon series that takes us all the way to Easter Sunday. The series is titled *Coming Out Gold*, a reference to [Job 23:10 \(NLT\)](#) when Job describes how God's tests help purify him and his faith. This theme of testing is very important during this season, when our church is collectively fasting and praying. By giving up favorite foods and activities, we create space to deepen our relationship with God. Each day is a test that purifies our faith until it's like gold!

KEY POINTS

- 1) **The origin of the Book of Job is mysterious.** We don't know who wrote it, who the audience was, or even when exactly it was written. The best guess of historians is that it's very old, probably dating to the time of the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac. We also aren't sure if the story is supposed to be a parable--like the stories told by Jesus--or the historical account of a man named Job.
- 2) **The message of the Book of Job is powerful.** Each of us has suffered, is suffering, and will suffer. Often this suffering makes no sense, and we are tempted to blame God. The story of Job shows us another perspective. God intends for us to come out of every difficult situation even stronger than we were before. It's our faith in Him that allows us to triumph even when things seem hopeless.
- 3) **The structure of the book of Job offers several insights.** The story starts with the prologue, which offers a "split screen view". We learn about Job and how wonderful he is, and then learn about the conversation between God and Satan that triggers everything: losing his wife and children; losing his wealth; and being struck with painful boils.
 - a. **Job is blessed.** His life is essentially perfect as the story begins. He has an ideal family of 10 children, enormous wealth, and a great reputation.
 - b. **Job is righteous.** He is blameless and upright. He fears God and shuns evil. He prays all the time for himself and his children, even when they haven't done anything wrong!
 - c. **Being blessed does not equal being righteous, and vice versa.** It's tempting to think that if we serve God faithfully, then we will be blessed in this world. But this expectation isn't realistic. Jesus suffered terribly, and we are His followers. It's more likely that we will be persecuted than blessed!
 - d. **Keep the faith when you're being tested.** The story of Job didn't end with him sick and alone. And the story of Jesus didn't end with Him dying on the cross. These are stories of triumph! Even the worst trials on this Earth cannot undermine God's plan for the world, and for each of us. That is a part of Paul's reminder to us in [Romans 8:28 \(NLT\)](#), when he declares that "everything [will] work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose."

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - God wants us to have a mature faith. This means focusing on Him, not His blessings. Ask yourself "Do I love God because of who He is, or because of the blessings that I receive?" Be honest with yourself, and share with the group if you feel comfortable enough.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - When God bragged about Job, He knew Satan would want to test Him. God was starting to examine the maturity of Job's faith. This process strengthened Job, even though it was painful. Every Christian goes through the same types of tests. Jesus Himself ended up on the cross. But He triumphed, and so can we! Identify at least one way you're being tested right now. Talk about how this can strengthen you as a person, and as a follower of Jesus.
- 3) **DO** - This is our [season of fasting and prayer](#) at NBCC. We fast to create space for God, and we fill that space by praying. We pray for direction, for strength, for interventions, for a breakthrough, and for the start of new seasons in our lives. Commit to 15 minutes per day between now and Easter Sunday. Read the Bible each day, asking yourself two things:
 - a. "What is this scripture communicating from me to God?"
 - b. "What is this scripture communicating from God to me?"
 - c. Take these insights and lift them up to God in prayer to finish each 15 minute prayer session.
 - d. Say out loud to God: "God, I want you not just Your blessings!"