

Week 23

1 Samuel cont'd / שמואל א / She mu el

Sunday, Mar 27

1 Samuel 18 – When Good Situations Go Bad

For Reflection: One would think being in the will of God would spare you a king's hatred and the king's spears.¹ Yet, at the same time we are told twice that "the LORD was with David" (12, 14). *How have you experienced the complicated care of God? Who or what is your king Saul?*

Lagniappe: 1 Corinthians 10:13²

Monday, Mar 28

1 Samuel 20³ – Choosing Sides

For Reflection: David trusts the son of the man who is trying to kill him. *Who do you trust?* Jonathan makes covenant with David his family enemy. *When have you chosen what is right over family interests? Who is your Jonathan?*

Lagniappe: Matthew 10:37 – Yikes

Tuesday, Mar 29

1 Samuel 24 – Mercy and Trust

For Reflection: David spares Saul twice.⁴ So what we read here and in chapter 26 reflects consistency of character. *When do you choose revenge? When do you choose forgiveness?* Forgiveness trusts God to judge. It is a spiritual discipline of trust, like tithing or sabbath keeping.

Lagniappe: Matthew 18:21-22

Job / אִיּוֹב / iy-yob

Not many folks are breaking down the door to read the book of Job. We all know it is about suffering and talk about suffering - not a favorite subject for most. I do find that as people age, and experience more pain, they find themselves drawn to Job. Whatever your age you will find Job takes you into the deep water of life's questions. It is a powerful poem that dares to approach the deep themes of suffering /loss, human faithfulness, and divine providence.

¹ Saul made multiple attempts to kill David (18:10-11, 19:9-10, 19:15-16, 19:18-24)

² Temptation and trial are the same word in Greek NRSV prefers trial, most others prefer temptation. Knowing this broadens the scope of this verse quite a bit.

³ This chapter begins David's fugitive years that last til the end of this book.

⁴ Chapters 24 and 26

The structure of Job is plain to see if your reading all of it, but we aren't so here it is...

Chapters 1 & 2	Prologue 1-2
Chapters 3-14	First Cycle: Job/Eliphaz/Job Bildad/Job Zophar/Job
Chapters 15-21	Second Cycle: Eliphaz/Job Bildad/Job Zophar/Job
Chapters 22-27	Third Cycle: Eliphaz/Job Bildad/Job
Chapter 28	Poem on Wisdom
Chapters 29-31	Job's concluding comments
Chapters 32 – 37	Elihu's Four Speeches
Chapters 38-42:6	The LORD answers or questions Job (Job's brief 2 responses)
Chapter 42:7-12	Epilogue

The epilogue makes it clear that God thinks little of the three friend's theology of suffering/justice.

We will only read 4 chapters – which feels so very incomplete. You won't even get to read one whole cycle of speeches, or a speech from each of those present. However, you can remedy that with a little unprescribed reading. If you wanted to know more I would read a whole cycle (The second cycle is only 6 chapters), and one of Elihu's monologues as a lagniappe (Connie really likes chapter 36, specifically 36:16 in the NIV – He is wooing you!!!!).

Wednesday, Mar 30 Job 1-2 – Setting the Stage

For Reflection: Three characters introduced: The Lord, Satan,⁵ and Job 1:9 is the question with which the book wrestles. Job answers the question in 2:9-10. Job's suffering is complete. Take a moment to consider what he has lost in these two chapters. *What are your three biggest personal losses? Besides going all-John-Wayne on us, and trying to pretend they are no big deal, what do you do with them? As the therapists say, "Are you dealing with them and how?"*

Lagniappe: John 5:6

Thursday, Mar 31 Job 3 – A Picture of Depression in the Context of Faith

For Reflection: Job curses the day of his birth. *Under what circumstances do you allow yourself to enter the valley of grief? How do you grieve? Does it help? To be clear, grieving or mourning is essential to health, so if your way isn't helping you might ask others, who you respect, what they do.*

Lagniappe: Romans 12:15

Friday, Apr 1 Job 19 – Faith in the Face of Despair

⁵ הַשָּׂטָן ha-satan – in Hebrew which translates as The Accuser - (ha= the & satan = accuser)

For Reflection: In verses 1-22 Job expresses his horror at God's treatment of him⁶, yet in verses 23-27 he expresses faith, hope and expectation! *Who stands by your side, pleads your case before God?*

Lagniappe: 1 Timothy 2:5

Saturday, Apr 2

Job 38, 40:1-5, 42: The Potter Speaks to the Clay

For Reflection: A lot of people just wish God would speak to them, I am not sure I am so anxious for that conversation. *What would you ask God? What would God ask you?*

Lagniappe: Isaiah 29:16

⁶ Verse 7 is classic the word violence in Hebrew is **חַמָּס** = *hamas*. *Hamas*, ironically, is the name of a particular organization in the West Bank and Gaza strip. It is said to be an Acronym, and I am sure it is, but in Hebrew *Hamas* means violence or wrong, and in Arabic it means zeal. Interesting Trivia.