BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!
Part 14: The PROBLEM of LOSS

INTRO: Begin with a statement: *"Loss is often the single most important catalyst God uses to grow us in maturity."* Yet, loss is never easy or fun, like giving birth (result is worth it usually). Loss should sharpen our spiritual senses, not numb, and accelerate our growth, not stunt it. Like other experiences in life (school, marriage, temptation, etc.), you can *just live* through it or you can choose to *learn* from it. Swindoll . . . A look at loss through the life of Job.

I. LOSS IS A FACT OF LIFE

A. Loss is a given fact of life. It is a universal happening. Common to everyone—believers & unbelieving, young and old, rich or poor - none is exempt. We are a fallen race in a fallen place. Loss is something we all go and live through. Plays no favorites.

B. Loss falls into two (2) major categories:

1. Loss of PEOPLE - This can be caused by death, divorce, or distance.
2. Loss of POSSESSIONS - This loss can be caused by fire, flood, tornado, burglary. Even seeing a lifelong dream die, or loss of a job, or loss of health, or business failure that drained lifetime savings. The losses between these categories are different, but the pain is just as real and intense. Jesus knew about loss (father, Lazarus).

II. LOSS COMES IN MANY FORMS (Look at Job)

Job is someone we need to meet. He is a classic study. He is hit with incredible losses, yet, he learned from and grew through them. Hopefully, we can learn some things from Job.

A. WHAT JOB HAD: People & possessions (1:1-5). He had *spiritual* wealth (v.1), *family* wealth (v.2, 4-5), *material* wealth (v.3a), and *social* wealth (v.3b). What an inventory! "There was no one on earth like him" (v.8). "He was the greatest man among all the people" (v.3c). Personal character, spiritual maturity, material wealth, godly reputation. Probably not always this way - trials of marriage & raising 10 kids, building successful business, and growing in his walk with God.

B. WHAT JOB LOST (1:13-19)

He lost it all - people and possessions. Plus he lost his own personal health (2:1-8). All was gone in an instant w/o warning and through no fault of his own. The one thing he kept, his wife, he'd been better to have lost (2:9; 19:17).

C. HOW JOB RESPONDED (1:20-22; 2:10b) - How we respond is critical. Heaven, hell, and earth are watching to see.

1. *Common* response is shock, panic, denial, anger, betrayal, disillusionment; then later depression, resentment, bitterness. Commonly, most live in the "*Why* zone" which is always a downward cycle. Job never knew why until heaven. This was Mrs. Job's response (2:9-10). Her shock turned to anger and bitterness. She had taken God's gifts and made them her rights (right to big family, money, prestige). She wanted her husband to share her bitterness. Job had some advice for her 2:10.
2. *Rare* response is acceptance that brings growth. These people live in the "Who/What zone." *Who* is in control and *what* can I learn? This is where hope begins. Look at Job's response. What Job did::
   (1) 20a he *wept* (as did Jesus over Lazarus) Ok to grieve
   (2) v.20b he *worshipped*. How could he? never took ownership of his blessings (1:21); saw he was a steward, who brought nothing in ("naked I came"), and take nothing out ("naked I depart"). All he had was a gift. God is free to give and take as He chooses. God is sovereign & can allow what He chooses. Job never blamed God (1:22; 2:10b). Instead, he blessed God!
   (3) 2:8, 13 he *waited* patiently on God whom he trusted (13:15; 19:25-27). While he waited he learned about himself (I am sinful) and his God (He is sovereign). Read 42:1-6.

III. LOSS OFFERS MANY LESSONS

A. Even a godly life will be marked by times of loss (23:10-17).

B. God will be there in my times of loss (23:3-10; Heb. 13:5).

C. We can grow from our losses. Don't just go and live through them (42:2,5). You can become richer, deeper, fuller, & riper.

D. What is loss now often becomes gain later (Job 42:12). See Isa. 43:2; 45:3; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17-18; 1 Pet. 5:1,10. Between "suffering" & "glory" is "grace"! God's goal is never to pamper us, but to perfect us.

ILLUS: Jigsaw puzzle - Keep looking at the whole picture, not just the pieces. He promised to never leave or forsake us & to see us through.

Quote by Jerry Sitzer "A Grace Disguised"

POEM:"Life's Weaving"

CONC: Loss is painful. Many not here today because made common response (mad at God). Yet, it is the single catalyst God uses to grow us. But, the greatest loss of all is losing Jesus. Paul said, "Whatever things were gain to me, I count as loss for the joy of knowing Christ' (Phil. 3:7-8).