

I would like to begin this sermon with Shepard’s Prayer. That is not a mistake – I do not mean the “Shepherd’s Prayer.” Shepard’s Prayer is named after Alan B. Shepard, Jr., the first American in space. On this Independence Day weekend, it’s worth noting his ship was called *Freedom 7*. As the first American in space, Shepard appropriately felt like he had a lot riding on his shoulders. His prayer? “Dear Lord, please don’t let me screw this up.”

And so that’s my prayer, too. I continue to be impressed by the pastoral leadership here at Woodside, in addition to the high quality of the preaching. I am an ordained Presbyterian minister, and I have pastored two congregations. I now serve in a “validated ministry” meaning I am in ministry, just not in a congregational context. And it is an absolute joy to be worshipping here at Woodside, listening and learning from Doug, Gloria and Greg. It is an honor and joy to call them my pastors. And now I am asked to preach. On Job.

“Dear Lord, please don’t let me screw this up.”

I have greatly enjoyed leading the Sunday morning 9 a.m. Growth Group as we have gone through *The Story*. I appreciate how the Bible is being presented as a single, long narrative (because it is). And I recognize how, in the interest of time, it is necessary to gloss over certain sections of Scripture; here it is the Wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) that was minimized. So I was greatly excited when Doug shared a vision for a summer sermon series that went all Paul Harvey on us – sharing “the rest of the story.” So let’s go.

To orient you on where we’re going to go today, here is a high level overview.

1. Evil is real, and exists in the world
2. God’s Upper Story perspective is greater than our Lower Story view
3. So what do we do, now?

And first, we’ll need to start with some... heresy!

I would like to introduce you to Marcion of Sinope. Born in Turkey he was raised in Rome, and lived from 85 AD to 160 AD. This means that he met first generation Christians – people who had personally seen and met Jesus! Now here was Marcion’s take on things. The Old Testament God is a God of wrath. And this New Testament God is a God of Love (hooray, Jesus!). And the Bible is really confusing; and Marcion is going to simplify things. These four Gospels, telling things from slightly different perspectives, are going to be streamlined into ONE Gospel. And Marcion really liked Paul – to the extent of ignoring all the other parts of the New Testament. So Marcion wants only ten of Paul’s letters. And that’s Marcion’s Bible – one condensed Gospel, ten letters of Paul – no Old Testament. So how did the Church respond?

“NO!”

So remember, the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. And if the God of the New Testament is a God of Love (as is so beautifully demonstrated in 1 John 4), then the Old Testament God is a God of Love. And I’d like to introduce a concept known as “the Singular Harmony of Scripture.” As we are seeing in *The Story*, there is a narrative arc that runs consistently throughout Scripture. This is one of the reasons why I believe, and believe so passionately that Scripture is True. The entire narrative is interconnected. And so a word of warning - today we are going to cover a tremendous amount of ground. Please keep your hands and legs inside your seats at all times. There will be a lot of Scripture references. And I commend to you the Woodside App and website – it will have a full transcript of the sermon (and all the references).

### **Evil Exists in this World**

Some have said when studying Scripture, it is best to do it with the Bible in one hand, and the newspaper in the other. This makes sense. One needs to engage the Word with the world. And I would suggest another faithful alternative is to study Scripture with the Bible in one hand, and

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*Entertainment Weekly* in the other. I love pop culture – movies, music, books; I think it serves as a mirror that at time can better reflect our own situation, and give us a better perspective.

Evil exists in this world, and I think Disney had it right.



Pop culture strikes back. This is the marketing campaign for “Maleficent” – you’ll see what it says. Hatred. Revenge. There is evil in this world.<sup>1</sup>

So when it comes to confronting new words, or interpreting Scripture, one tool that I find very helpful is a Bible dictionary. My favorite go to resource is the *NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible*. It is about 550 pages, paperback, and will easily fit into a bag as a very portable resource. And it is very reasonably priced at \$10.49 at Christian Book Distributors.

So what word are we going to look up? Well first, we need to “Do the ‘Brew” – that is, translate some Hebrew.

שָׂטָן

Remember that Hebrew is read from right to left. So the right most letter, a *shin* is a S. The middle letter, *tov*, is a T, and the final letter, on the left, is *noon* [pronounced “noon”], or an N. And what makes Hebrew so much fun to read is the diacritical markings below the letters are the vowels. So this is an “a”. So what does this spell? SaTaN. And there you go – the Hebrew word for Satan is... Satan.

Our *NIV Compact Dictionary of the Bible* defines “Satan” - The chief of the fallen spirits, the grand adversary of God and humanity. Without the article, the Hebrew word is used in a general sense to denote someone who is an opponent, an adversary. This is the context in Matthew’s Gospel as follows:

Matthew 16: 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” With the definite article prefixed [“The Satan”], it is a proper noun, designating Satan as a personality.

Now Evil does exist in this world. And this passage, for me, is one of the most chilling in all of Scripture. Sure, LEGOs make everything better (thank you TheBrickTestament.com<sup>2</sup>!), and it is still chilling:

<sup>1</sup>The Disney Wiki, “Maleficent Poster” [http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/File:Maleficent\\_There\\_Is\\_Evil\\_In\\_This\\_World\\_Hatred\\_Revenge\\_Poster.jpg](http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/File:Maleficent_There_Is_Evil_In_This_World_Hatred_Revenge_Poster.jpg); accessed July 2, 2015.

<sup>2</sup>The Brick Testament, “God Makes Wager with Satan” [http://thebricktestament.com/job/god\\_makes\\_wager\\_with\\_satan/jb01\\_07.html](http://thebricktestament.com/job/god_makes_wager_with_satan/jb01_07.html); accessed July 2, 2015.



God asks Satan where Satan has come from, and Satan responds “roaming about t the earth, going here and there.” This should strike fear in everyone’s heart. Evil exists, and it is going about the earth.

And the very good news is that we are equipped to respond – while we go about the earth. When Jesus was asked about the two greatest commandments he responded first with Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Pay attention to the where and the when of how we should prepare and respond:

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9** <sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Notice that we are meant to meditate on the commandments of God while *we* roam about; when we are at home and when we are away. And for the “when” – notice how we are to reflect when we lie down and when we get up – the last thing at the end of the day, and the first thing at the start of the new day.

We continue to be equipped in the Great Commission – the final section of Matthew’s Gospel. Here it is written:

**Matthew 28:16-20** <sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This “go” is often translated as an indicative – that is a command. Go! Halt! Stop! [And when someone says Stop! I am unsure if I am supposed to collaborate and listen, or if it’s in the name of love.] Now there is a better way to translate “go” – for in the original Greek text it is not an indicative, it is a participle – ongoing action. A better translation would be “while you are going.” Or, “while you are going, make disciples of all nations.”

There’s another resource I’d like to share, and it’s by C.S. Lewis. You might know him from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and he was an English professor at Oxford. He was an atheist who converted to Christianity. In 1943 he gave a series of radio lectures that were then turned into a book. It was a fine, basic introduction to Christian theology – what it means to be a Christian. The title, “Mere Christianity” was his goal of writing “a standard of plain, central Christianity.” Lewis

believed, as do I, that life is a series of small choices. Listen to this larger passage in light of our reading of Job:

“People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, ‘If you keep a lot of rules I’ll reward you, and if you don’t I’ll do the other thing.’ I do not think that is the best way of looking at it. I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature... Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other.” [Book III, Ch. 4]

Lewis concludes that these small moments have a tremendous impact:

“Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance. The smallest good act today is the capture of a strategic point from which, a few months later, you may be able to go on to victories you never dreamed of. An apparently trivial indulgence in lust or anger today is the loss of a ridge or railway line or bridgehead from which the enemy may launch an attack otherwise impossible.” [Book III, Ch. 9]<sup>3</sup>

Evil exists, we are equipped to fight it. And life is a series of small choices, which have a tremendous impact.

Something else to consider. If the Bible is true – then the Bible is true. All of it! I was having lunch with a colleague at the Board, who commented that I was a logical, rational person [painfully true], and did I believe in what the Bible wrote about miracles and demons? Mid-bite I instantly responded “absolutely.” And then continuing the conversation (when my mouth was not full), I said that I believed, without hesitation or reservation, that God became human in Christ, who was crucified, dead and resurrected – forever breaking the power of sin and death. To me, this is the “big thing” in Scripture. This is the biggest thing, ever. So if this is included in the Bible, then how could one not believe in the other bits – like miracles and demons? If the Bible is true, then all of it is true.

And Evil exists. This was true then, and it is true now. Here are some Biblical contexts:

**Jesus and the parable of the sower, Matthew 13:18-19**<sup>18</sup> “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

**Jesus and the parable of the weeds, Matthew 13:37-38**<sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil.

**Acts 10:38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

**1 Thess 2:18-20**<sup>18</sup> For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way. <sup>19</sup> For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup> Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

Notice how Paul writes to the present, tangible reality of evil – “Satan blocked our way.”

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<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, quoted in “The Question of God”, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/ownwords/mere2.html>; accessed July 2, 2015.

And though evil can, at times, be more easily identified, it can be difficult to explain. And there is NO direct connection between sin and punishment. Listen to the definitive words of Jesus: **Luke 13:3-5** [Jesus addressing the disciples] <sup>3</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Clearly Jesus is speaking to repentance and turning away from sin (he spoke about that from time to time). And Jesus says that those who died in an accident were not “more guilty.”

So where are we now? We recognize that evil exists. And what does this have to do with Job? Well, with Job there is a bit of a “chicken and egg problem” – as in, which came first? In the prologue the Upper Story conversation is between the Lord and Satan. Satan suggests because Job is prosperous, then he is pious – take away the prosperity and the piety goes, too<sup>4</sup>. And the Lord suggests that Job is pious, this has nothing to do with his prosperity. Furthermore, later in the book, we’ll see Job’s “friends” suggest a strong connection between sin and suffering; Job is suffering, clearly he has sinned.

And what’s the answer? The answer is...

Ultimately unknown. We are encountering what has been referred to as “the impenetrable mystery of divine wisdom.”<sup>5</sup> And that does not mean that we need to stop there. We can probe a bit further. We can recognize that God’s Upper Story perspective is greater than our Lower Story view. Let’s take a look at another example from another resource that was cited here, two weeks ago, in the Father’s Day sermon – specifically Lee Stroble’s *The Case for Faith*.<sup>6</sup>

“Okay, then, imagine a bear in a trap and a hunter who, out of sympathy, wants to liberate him. He tries to win the bear’s confidence, but he can’t do it, so he has to shoot the bear full of drugs. The bear, however, thinks this is an attack and that the hunter is trying to kill him. The bear doesn’t realize this is being done out of compassion.

“Then, in order to get the bear out of the trap, the hunter has to push him further into the trap to release the tension on the spring. If the bear were semiconscious at that point, he would even be more convinced that the hunter was his enemy who was out to cause him suffering and pain. But the bear would be wrong. He reaches this incorrect conclusion because the bear is not a human being.

“How can anyone be certain that’s not an analogy between us and God? I believe God does the same to us sometimes, and we can’t understand why God does it any more that the bear can understand the motivations of the hunter. As the bear could have trusted the hunter, so we can trust God.”

There is another resource that we can and should use, and this a study bible.

When it comes time to study the Bible, the best resource to use is a “study Bible.” This is a Bible that has a helpful commentary written by reputable scholars. At Princeton Seminary we used the *New Interpreter’s Study Bible*<sup>7</sup>. And at Woodside a copy of the *NIV Study Bible*<sup>8</sup> is distributed to new members. Both are helpful. Here is the main point of a commentary about Job:

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<sup>4</sup> For a more technical discussion, I recommend Alan Cooper, “Reading and Misreading the Prologue to Job”, *Journal of Study of the Old Testament* 46 (1990), 67-79.

<sup>5</sup> For further study, see Martin Shields, “Malevolent or Mysterious? God’s Character in the Prologue of Job” *Tyndale Bulletin* 61.2 (2010), pp. 255-270.

<sup>6</sup> Lee Stroble, *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), pg. 32.

<sup>7</sup> *New Interpreter’s Study Bible*; Walter Harrison, ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006).

“The text presents the Lord as having faith in Job, and by implication, all humanity. This deity trusts that humans can have sincere faith; they do not behave morally just to get a reward. God is sure that Job will not lose faith nor behave immorally when his life becomes difficult.”<sup>9</sup>

God is for Job, and God is for us. Let’s take a look at few examples of Scripture that speaks clearly to God being “for us.” And while you hear these Old Testament texts, ask yourself, “Is this a God of wrath, or a God of love?”

**2 Samuel 14:14** <sup>14</sup> Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.

**Ezekiel 18:21-23** <sup>21</sup> “But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. <sup>22</sup> None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. <sup>23</sup> Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”

**Haggai 2:4-5** <sup>4</sup> But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the Lord. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup> ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’

Clearly God is for us, in love.

And God is with us. In Jesus Christ, God broke into time and became flesh. Listen to this soaring commentary with the beginning of John’s Gospel:

**John 1:1-5, 14** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

If God became flesh in Christ, then God has personally experienced what it means to be human. God knows joy, sorrow, heartache, and grief.

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<sup>9</sup> The larger quote, worth reading, is as follows:

“This is the eternal question of divine justice: why do bad things happen to good people? The implicit answer (or theodicy) for this question in the opening chapters of Job is extremely disturbing... [These scenes] debunk the simplistic notion of “you reap what you sow.” but it also opposes Israel’s notion of a compassionate God who does not want to see anyone suffer.”

While it is impossible to ignore the distressing aspects of this portrayal of God, another message can also be gleaned from this story. It is obvious... that God expects to be proved correct in asserting that Job’s faith is not contingent upon divine blessing. The text presents the Lord as having faith in Job, and by implication, all humanity. This deity trusts that humans can have sincere faith; they do not behave morally just to get a reward. God is sure that Job will not lose faith nor behave immorally when his life becomes difficult. While the means of proving this point are severe, the end result is that God was right about Job.”

Lisa Davidson, “Commentary on Job: The Portrayal of God in Job” in *New Interpreter’s Study Bible* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2003), pg. 748.

So here's something to consider. What if... what if when we suffer, God suffers too? Or what if God suffers from our actions? For these reflections I am grateful for the great work of Terry Fretheim's *The Suffering of God*<sup>10</sup>, which puts forth many of these questions.

#### God Grieves With and For Us

**Isaiah 63:7-10**<sup>7</sup> I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which the Lord is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us — yes, the many good things the Lord has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

<sup>8</sup> The Lord said, “Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me”; and so the Lord became their Savior.

<sup>9</sup> In all their distress the Lord too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In the Lord's love and mercy the Lord redeemed them; the Lord lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

<sup>10</sup> Yet they rebelled and grieved the Lord's Holy Spirit.

#### God's Suffering Is Not New

**Genesis 6: 5-6**<sup>5</sup> The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. <sup>6</sup> The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. God has been mourning since the morning of creation.

#### What If God Is Not Angry – Just Sad

**Isaiah 54:9-10**<sup>9</sup> “To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. <sup>10</sup> Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

#### God Is Pained

**Isaiah 1:1-2**<sup>1</sup> The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

<sup>2</sup> Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth! For the Lord has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. <sup>3</sup> The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

How pained God is that the beloved of God's soul has a love which is fickle, which does not return the love so lavishly extended.

#### God's Judgment Is Followed by Compassion

**Isaiah 54:7-8**<sup>7</sup> “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. <sup>8</sup> In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer.

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<sup>10</sup> Terence Fretheim, *The Suffering of God* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1984). One of my greater joys was a dinner with Terry and his wife Faith in March 2014 in Minneapolis, Minn. I was the “plus one” of my friend the Rev. Natalie Gessert at the house of Michael and Katherine Chan. Terry taught at Luther for many years, Michael is new to the faculty, and Natalie was friends with Michael when they were both in the MDiv program at Luther Seminary. What does this have to do with Job? Nothing. I had dinner with Terry and Faith Fretheim, and it was awesome.

### God Weeps

**Jeremiah 8:18-9:1** <sup>18</sup> You who are my Comforter in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.

<sup>19</sup> Listen to the cry of my people from a land far away: “Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King no longer there?”

“Why have they aroused my anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols?”

<sup>20</sup> “The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.”

<sup>21</sup> Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me. <sup>22</sup> Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?

<sup>9:1</sup> Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.

### God of the Old Testament Is a God of Love

**Exodus 33:6-7a** <sup>6</sup> And Lord passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

This is how God describes God’s self!

### And The God of the New Testament Is a God of Love

**James 5:10-12** <sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

So let us revisit where we’ve been:

- Evil exists
- Suffering exists, too
- God’s Upper Story perspective is greater than our Lower Story view
- God is for us, and God suffers, too

So what do we do? We do more ‘Brew.

עֲבַד

This word is pronounced ‘*a-bad*. And you really have to get that phlegm-in-the-back-of-the-throat for the full effect. And this was the moment of clarity when I was studying Hebrew in Seminary<sup>11</sup>. I had to cradle the back of my head to stop my head from exploding. Three verses, and focus on the underlined word.

**Exodus 5:18** Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks.”

**Exodus 6:5** Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

**Exodus 8:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, “This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

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<sup>11</sup> All ordained Presbyterian teaching elders learn the original languages of the Bible, Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament, to be able to go straight to the texts and draw our own conclusions.

Woodside Church  
July 5, 2015

“Two Sides of the Same Coin”

Job 1:1, 5-2:10

Raymond Bonwell

Now this word, ‘ahad – it means both work and worship! It’s the same word! The. Same. Word.  
There is this false expectation that because God has led us out of Egypt and into a land of freedom,  
that we are able to do *whatever* we want. And that’s simply not true we need to decide if we will work  
for the world or worship the Word.

Modern day prophets still sing to this!

“Might like to wear cotton, might like to wear silk

Might like to drink whiskey, might like to drink milk

You might like to eat caviar, you might like to eat bread

You may be sleeping on the floor, sleeping in a king-sized bed.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed

You're gonna have to serve somebody,

It may be the devil or it may be the Lord

But you're gonna have to serve somebody.”

Pop culture – anyone? Bob Dylan - *Gotta Serve Somebody* on “Slow Train Coming” (Columbia, 1979).  
He won a Grammy for that song.

So what do we do? Even MORE ‘Brew! Again, please pay attention to the underline words.

בָּרַךְ

**Job 1:9-10** <sup>10</sup> You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread  
throughout the land.<sup>11</sup> But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he  
will surely curse you to your face.”

It’s the same word! The. Same. Word. Bless / curse. They’re two sides to the same coin!

So what do we do? How do we respond? Yes, evil exists. And I trust in a God of love whose  
Upper Story perspective is greater than my Lower Story view. I do believe this is a win / win. Heads  
we win; tails we win.

- You can believe in a God who describes God’s self as “abounding in steadfast love”
- You can believe in a God who knows first hand the trials and tribulations of life on  
earth, through the gift of God’s Son – our Savior
- You can believe in a God who keeps giving, of God’s own Spirit as a vanguard, an  
intercessor, a protector.

And I’ll tell you what I believe: “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the  
Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 27:13)

And you too can believe in this.

Will you please pray with me?