

Back to the Woods²

Week 1

September 10, 2023



LIFE CENTER
CHURCH

THE STUMP – Using What Remains

Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven. The messenger shouted, "Cut down the tree and lop off its branches! Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit! Chase the wild animals from its shade and the birds from its branches. But **LEAVE THE STUMP** and roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze. ... While these words were still in his mouth, a voice called down from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you ... until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses."

Daniel 4:13-15a, 31-32a NLT

There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in the entire area. ... One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. "Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan. Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on." Job 1:1-3, 6-7 NLT

THREE THINGS JOB DOES WITH WHAT HE HAS LEFT

1. He WORSHIPS.

Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he shaved his head and fell to the ground to worship. He said, "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave. Then LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. PRAISE the name of the LORD!" Job 1:20-21 NLT

2. He keeps his INTEGRITY.

His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die!" But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from God, and never anything bad?" So, in all this, Job said nothing wrong. Job 2: 9-10 NLT

3. He walks in FAITH.

"God may slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance. ... But as for me, I know my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body is decayed, yet in my body I will see God." Job 13:15-16a, 19:25-26

"A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord." Isaiah 11:1-2

START TALKING:

- What's your favorite camping story?
- What excites you most about Back to the Woods²?
- What impacted you from Sunday's message?

START SHARING:

- Read Daniel 4:10-15
- Pastor Spencer related Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a tree being cut down to our lives. When has your life experienced a "cut down" leaving only a stump of former things? How did you feel in that moment?
- Pastor Spencer said, "What you lost was painful, but what you have left is powerful." On the other side of removal, what was left for you to build on?
- Job's losses were monumental. Job still chose to worship Yahweh, keeping his integrity and walking with faith. How did Job worship through his losses? When worship is toughest in loss, what motivates you to still worship?
- Read Job 2:9-10. How did Job hold onto his integrity? Why is holding onto our spiritual integrity necessary as believers?
- Read Job 13:15. Have you ever felt like everything was working against your faith and trust in God? What did Job say in his similar situation? When you are defeated by experiences and the fight for your faith in God's goodness and purpose is a real, personal battle, what practical steps do you take to not let your faith go, maybe even strengthen it in loss?
- Read Isaiah 11:1-2. This pictures the coming Messiah. How does Isaiah's words encourage us in loss? What promise is found here? Print Isaiah 11:1-2 and post it for a glorious reminder.

What you have left can frustrate the enemy's plan. He cannot thwart God's purpose for you. God plans to use what remains. Do you have any worship, any integrity, any faith left? Even if it's just a "stump", a fragment of before, He's the God of what is left!

*"Your beginning will seem humble,
so prosperous will your future be."* Job 8:7