

Is That Unfair?

Intro:

1. We raise each of our kids differently - because they are each different.
2. Why do some believers appear to have it so good while others seem to always be suffering?
 - a. Is God playing favorites?
 - b. Is God unfair?
3. The Lord may play by different rules for non-believers - but we do have glimpses in the Bible how God works in the lives of His children.

John 21:15-23

4. God deals with each of our lives differently & uniquely for at least 3 reasons.

I. To Serve God as First Priority of Your Life

A. The degree of your service measures the extent of your love!

1. The 1st encounter - **v15**.

a. The question:

1. **Love** (ἀγαπάω) = give by focusing on the need.
2. **Know** (οἶδα) = know by observation.
3. **Love** (φιλέω) = give by focusing on the person.

b. Therefore:

1. **Feed** (βόσκομαι) = hand feed with tender care.
2. **Lambs** (ἀρνίον) = individual lambs.

2. The 2nd encounter - **v16**.

a. The question:

1. **Love** (ἀγαπάω) = give by focusing on the need.
2. **Know** (οἶδα) = know by observation.
3. **Love** (φιλέω) = give by focusing on the person.

b. Therefore:

1. **Take care** (ποιμαίνω) = be a shepherd.
2. **Sheep** (πρόβατον) = this is plural, so - the flock of sheep!

3. The 3rd encounter - **v17**.

a. The question:

1. **Love** (φιλέω) = give by focusing on the person.
2. **Know** (γινώσκω) = know from personal experience.
3. **Love** (φιλέω) = give by focusing on the person.

b. Therefore:

1. **Feed** (βόσκομαι) = hand feed with tender care.
2. **Sheep** (πρόβατον) = this is plural, so - the flock of sheep.

4. How deep do you love the Lord? It is measured by how much you are willing to do for Him!

B. Treating us differently doesn't mean God is unfair.

1. Peter - his death would be violent - **v18-19**.

a. **Dress** (ζωννύω) = to tie a belt around you.

b. 1st example: he would tie his cloak with a belt around his waist & then go wherever he wanted to go.

c. 2nd example: someone else would tie a belt around his arms & lead him around against his will.

b. Tradition says Peter was arrested by Nero (67 AD), put in prison & then crucified upside down in the arena.

2. **v21-23** - Don't ever compare how God deals with you with how God deals with another believer!
 - a. John - his life would be long. The rumor was he wouldn't die but experience the 2nd Coming.
 - b. This was a false rumor - **v23**.
 - c. The point is that the reason for a believer's existence is to glorify God in their life & in their death! Paul said, **For to me, to live is Christ & to die is gain.** - Phil 1:21.

II. To Present Lord Jesus as God in Flesh

- A. The Man Born Blind. Jn 9:1-5 - **As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."**
- B. Sickness does not appear to be the natural result of sin.
 1. Some sickness is directly caused by sin - sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse.
 2. Some sickness is indirectly caused by sin - some cancers.
 3. But not all sickness is related to sin as they believed at that time.
- C. He was blind all those years in order to be the recipient of the Lord's healing.
 1. **v32** - This had never happened before - it was a true miracle.
 2. No one could ever explain this away. Same as the healing of the man at the Beautiful Gate (**Act 3**).
 3. Only God Himself could do something like this!

III. To Showcase Your Faith to the Heavenly Hosts

- A. Eph 2:10 - **For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**
 1. **Workmanship** (ποίημα) = that which is created, a masterpiece.
 2. Your purpose is to do good to honor your creator!
- B. Job.
 1. Job was blessed by God with riches, possessions & a close loving family.
 2. **1:1 & 8** - **He fears God & shuns evil.**
 3. **1:11** - Satan's challenge - if God took all his possessions away, Job would curse Him.
 4. **1:12** - Satan was allowed to take everything, but not to touch Job.
 5. **2:6** - Then - Satan was allowed to do anything to Job, but not kill him.
 6. For 37 chapters Job & his friends wrestle with the problem of trials.
 7. The final verdict of the Book of Job - God has the right to allow anything He wants to happen to us without question!
 8. What is absolutely incredible to me is, in spite of God's complete sovereignty over us & everything else, He would be willing to personally pay the price for your sin on the cross!
- C. The lessons we can learn from Job.
 1. **Heb 12:1** - **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**
 2. Just like Job, you are on display before the heavenly hosts.
 3. God takes pride in showing off your faith to them!
- D. God tailor makes your lives to build your character.
 1. God is powerful enough to control your experiences in spite of the choices you make.
 2. The theme of the Book of I Peter is that it is expected that the Christian will suffer trials.
 3. That's okay - because all these things are designed to work out for your benefit (**Rom 8:28**)

So the next time you have a persecution complex because you are going through a trial & another brother or sister is not suffering, don't question God's fairness. Just remember that this life is just a proving ground for developing your faith. God is molding your character to make you into a lovely vessel for His purposes.