

God speaks in surprising ways

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind. (v. 1)

Job was a good man, healthy and wealthy and full of faith. As his tragic story unfolds, he suffers from a debilitating disease, along with experiencing the sudden death of his children. Though devastated, he remains faithful to God as he utters the famous words “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (1:21). Job’s wife and friends do not understand how Job keeps his faith amid so many troubles. God finally responds to Job’s urgent prayers by speaking through a whirlwind, a perfect symbol of God’s mysterious will unfolding when reasons for hope do not readily appear.

As summer begins in the northern hemisphere, weather can be unpredictable—not unlike the seasons of our lives. Will balmy days outnumber the times when rains fall and winds blow? May we be reminded that God still speaks to us in surprising ways. Even when God’s word appears out of a whirlwind—in the sky or in life—our faith empowers our hope that God’s love will in some way be revealed.

**God of wisdom, empower us with faith that endures
in every season of our lives. Amen.**

Prayer concern: Counselors

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; Job 29:1-20; Acts 20:1-16

The cries of the faithful

**Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he brought them out from their distress. (v. 28)**

When we gather in worship, we often use words handed down for generations, perhaps mixed with newly composed hymns and prayers that blend the old with the new. Sometimes we even explore the variety of languages we share as a global church. Our worship leaders, our prayer partners, and even our children can help us experience many patterns of prayer available to people of faith.

Today we also acknowledge the prayers that erupt from the depths of our souls as our words are mixed with sighs and groans that express our fear and desperation. The apostle Paul reminds us (see Romans 8:26) that often we do not know how to pray, but the Spirit intercedes for us. When we are desperate or confused, and all we can muster is a humble cry or fragments of a song, we give thanks for God's promise to hear us and bring us out of distress. Even if we find our prayers released in the silence of meditation, it is enough, because God hears, and God does not abandon us.

**Accept our prayers, Faithful One, especially when
our words are not enough. Amen.**

Prayer concern: First responders

Job 29:21 – 30:15; Acts 21:1-16

We are more than we seem

[We are treated] as poor, yet making many rich. (v. 10)

We should never make hasty judgments about the ministries people are best suited for. Our assumptions are often based on their education, financial status, or physical appearance. These are not the only things that equip us to serve others.

I know of a church custodian, a gifted mechanic who could fix anything. Everyone thought that this was all God expected of him. One day he learned that a church elder had a medical emergency. When the pastor could not be reached, the custodian rushed to the hospital. He showed compassion and patience as he listened and prayed for God to draw near. When the pastor finally arrived, the elder couldn't stop talking about the custodian's ministry. Before long everyone saw the custodian in a new light, and they asked him to lead the visitation team. This custodian was much more than they imagined; besides a talented janitor, he was a man of faith who helped many others renew their trust in the healing love of Jesus.

O God, you call me in many ways. Make me ready to do your will. Amen.

Prayer concern: Visitation ministry teams

Psalms 107:1-3, 23-32; Job 37:1-13; Luke 21:25-28