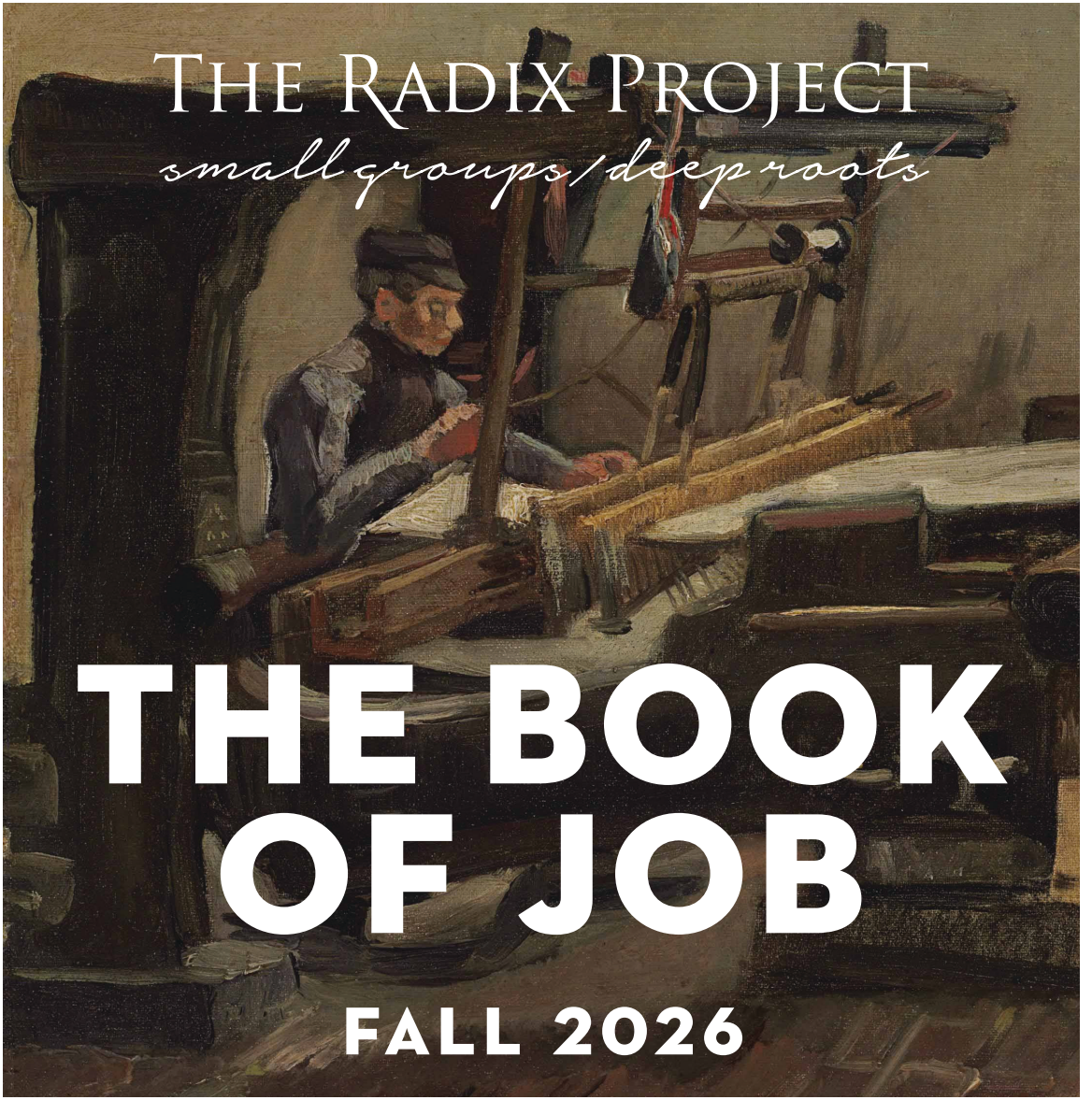


The Radix Project

small groups / deep roots

THE BOOK OF JOB

FALL 2026

Saint Mark's
Episcopal Cathedral



My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.
— Job 7:6

Cover Art: Vincent van Gogh, *Weaver Facing Right*, Nuenen, February 1884. Public domain.

THE RADIX PROJECT

saintmarks.org/radix

Since early 2020, Radix has offered the opportunity for small groups to meet over the course of six weeks to share stories, study scripture, and pray for one another.

A Radix group is a cohort of people who gather to get to know one another against the backdrop of shared stories, scripture, and prayer. This is not a working group; there is no task to be accomplished. It is about knowing one another, and being known, as we are known by God. And that is the root of spiritual transformation.

The name for this communal effort, *radix,* is the Latin word for "root." Jesus modeled small group relationships in his life and ministry, and the early Church was structured around small groups who worshipped, prayed, and cared for one another. Those are our roots, and in our time, when so many pressures of modern life leave us feeling alone and isolated, Christian community offers us a tangible way of entering into relationships rooted in trust and mutuality.

The root word, *radix,* also gives rise to a word we hear a lot these days—radical. A radical is not one who goes their separate way, doing their own thing. A radical is one who is so well-grounded with deep roots that they are able to stretch out to the fringes of existence and offer us all a different way of being in the world. We speak of radical hospitality or radical welcome because we claim our deep roots of this life in Christ, and we are willing to claim a radical vision for our lives and for the world.

We don't always agree, politically or theologically, and we have different life experiences—but we care for one another, we pray for one another, and the blush of life is fuller because of these relationships. It is our hope that as you reflect on these stories, you might discover how God's graceful activity is revealed in your own life as well, and in the lives of your group members. ◆

THE RADIX PROJECT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wendy Claire Barrie
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Please feel free to contact *radix@saintmarks.org* if you have any questions or concerns along the way. Thank you for your participation.

OVERVIEW FOR SMALL GROUPS

Small groups are designed to gather people of faith in settings that foster trust so that our relationships with God and one another are strengthened. When we meet each other for earnest conversation, sharing, and prayer, we deepen the bonds of affection by which we learn how to love ourselves, each other, and God more fully. In this way, small groups are intentional about providing space for prayerful support and accountability, guided by the One we know as Jesus.

For our purposes in the Radix Project, we have created a process for guiding 6–10 people in their season together, designed as six 90-minute sessions, with a plenary gathering before the first session. Each small group gathering is structured to open with prayer, to have time for check-in, scripture reading and reflection, sharing of stories, and check-out with prayer.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

SESSION 1:
JOB 1:6-22 .....October 22–27, 2026

SESSION 2:
JOB 9:25-35..... October 29–November 3, 2026

SESSION 3:
JOB 19: 23-27..... November 5–10, 2026

SESSION 4:
JOB 5:6-16, 21:7-16 .....November 12–17, 2026

SESSION 5:
JOB 38: 1–18.....November 19–24, 2026

SESSION 6:
JOB 42 ..... November 26–December 1, 2026*

**Please note that Thursday November 26 is Thanksgiving Day so Thursday groups will reschedule. Sunday through Tuesday groups may meet November 29 through December 1.*

RADIX 17
THE BOOK OF JOB

The Victorian essayist Thomas Carlyle called the book of Job "one of the grandest things ever written with the pen." It is, he says, "our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem—man's destiny, and God's ways with him here on this earth."

The churchy word for this problem of how we reconcile the belief in a good and loving God in the face of human suffering and evil is *theodicy*, from the Greek, *theos*, meaning God, and *dikē*, meaning trial or judgement. Job is the only book of the Bible dedicated to this subject—why bad things happen to good people. It's among the oldest of the Hebrew scriptures, likely dating to the 6th century BCE. In fact, the book of Job shares a great deal with the "Babylonian Theodicy," inscribed on a clay tablet, which dates to at least 1000 BCE. How can such an ancient text still speak to us?

Perhaps its enduring wisdom isn't despite the lack of a satisfying answer to the question of human suffering and divine justice, but because of it. Maybe what we really need from God isn't answers. In his grief and pain, Job turns to God with confusion, anger, despair, hope, and reverence. God does not answer Job's questions. God comes to Job, is in intimate relationship with Job. God shows up and remains present.

In *The Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person* (2012), Rabbi Harold Kushner draws a connection between Job and the author of the 23rd Psalm: "When all is going smoothly in his life, surrounded by green pastures and still waters, the psalmist talks about God, referring to God as He. But when he finds himself for the first time in the valley of the shadow of death and discovers that God has not abandoned him, only then does he say for the first time, 'for Thou art with me.'"

Our hope for Radix 17 groups is that as you grow together over the next six weeks in your connections with each other and deepen your understanding of the book of Job, you will be emboldened to ask the hard questions, to bring all your emotions, and to remain in relationship with God, our rock and our redeemer.

—Canon Wendy Claire Barrie



ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

To foster trust, it is essential to establish group norms, a shared set of expectations for these sessions, ensuring everyone agrees on how they will spend this time together. Plan to revisit these norms as needed. Here are some aspects of relational group culture that all group members should discuss before they begin their work.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- What is allowed to be shared outside the group?
- What may be shared on social media?

RESPECT AND MUTUALITY

- Let others finish without being interrupted.
- Resist the temptation to problem-solve.
- Mutual respect is essential.
- Give everyone a chance to speak.

LOGISTICS

- What are expectations about beginning and ending on time?
- ...about informing others of an expected absence?

ATTENDANCE

- Be punctual.
- Commit to regular attendance and participation.

PREPARATION

- What, if anything, are group members expected to do to prepare for their meetings?

COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

- What is the expectation about how the group members will pray for each other during this six-week period?

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking.

Practice using the technology ahead of the meeting, and ask for help as needed. Zoom resources are available at *support.zoom.us*

FLOW OF THE SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Consistent weekly meetings are crucial for the flourishing of small groups, allowing participants to know what to expect. While the facilitator guides and encourages the group, everyone shares responsibility for staying on track. The following format is suggested for all 90-minute Radix group sessions:

GATHER AND OPEN IN PRAYER . . . . . .10 minutes

CHECK-IN QUESTION . . . . . .10 minutes

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION . . . . . .15 minutes

DISCUSSION . . . . . .20 minutes

CREATIVE CONNECTION CONVERSATION . . .15 minutes

LOOK AHEAD AND PRAYER REQUESTS . . . . .10 minutes

CLOSING PRAYER/WORSHIP . . . . . .10 minutes

IDEAS FOR CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

Pick one for each week.

1. Make up a humorous curse without profanity. Extra points if it's outlandish!
2. What one question would you most want to ask God?
3. Do you agree that "misery loves company" or would you rather hide from the world?
4. What's the most helpful thing someone has done for you when you've been grieving or laid low?
5. Where have you seen God's goodness this week?
6. What words (from scripture or poetry or …?) give you comfort and hope?
7. What does true or divine justice look like or feel like?
8. What's your pettiest grievance?
9. Where have you experienced the transcendence of God or the wonder of creation?
10. When do you feel closest to God/the Holy?
11. What's the difference between being blessed and being lucky?
12. How do you want the story that's told about your life to end?

OPENING PRAYER

Leading prayer is a responsibility that is meant to be shared among the group—it's not just for the facilitator. Decide how your group will share taking turns with opening and closing prayers. Prayers may be extemporaneous, or from a rich variety of sources, including those suggested here:

- Thanksgivings, BCP, p. 836–841
- Daily Devotions, BCP, p. 137–140
- Compline, BCP, p. 127
- A brief hymn, chant, or Taizé prayer
- A poem that connects to a theme in the scripture selection
- The Book of Common Prayer Online
  bcponline.org
- The New Zealand Prayer Book Online
  anglicanprayerbook.nz
- The Work of the People
  theworkofthepeople.com/visual-liturgy
  theworkofthepeople.com/be-still

CLOSING PRAYERS & CHECK-OUT

- The closing prayer is an opportunity for each member of the group to reflect on the time together, to name what they learned, and to ask the group to hold them in prayer with special intention for something in this time spent together, or something in their personal lives or foir something in the lives of those they hold dear. The important thing is that the prayers of the group gather up those intentions as the meeting comes to an end, AND that each person commits to holding those prayers through the week, until you meet again.

In addition to including a prayer from one of the resources on the previous page, consider the following:

- The group may choose to go around and allow each person to pray for the person sitting to their right, with the facilitator opening and closing.
- Alternatively, after the intentions are named, sit in silent prayer, centered on God's mercy and presence.

SCRIPTURE STUDY GUIDE



WEEK 1

SCRIPTURE *Job 1:6-22*

One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and the accuser also came among them. The Lord said to the accuser, "Where have you come from?" The accuser answered the Lord, "From going to and fro on the earth and from walking up and down on it." The Lord said to the accuser, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil."

Then the accuser answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." The Lord said to the accuser, "Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!" So the accuser went out from the presence of the Lord.

One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother's house, a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell on them and carried them off and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "The Chaldeans

formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you."

Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing. ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. We always start with this question: What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What do you wonder about in this passage?
2. Consider the character of Satan, "the accuser," in this passage. Why is he among the heavenly beings? And what do you make of his dialog with the Lord: do you find it funny, shocking, offensive, insightful… all or none of these? Why?
3. Now consider the character of the Lord. Why does God agree to Satan's wager? What thoughts, feelings, and wonderings does it bring up for you, especially about the nature of God?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In the space of a few sentences, the author shows Job experiencing trauma upon trauma, losing everything he owns and almost everyone he loves. Yet his immediate, surprising response is to worship God. What is your first instinct in a crisis—to turn towards God, or away from God? Why do you think that is?
2. Job's initial grief is dramatic, overtaking his body, mind, and soul. Think about how you express grief and share something about it if you are comfortable. What has changed over time in your grief responses, and why?
3. Think about where you notice suffering these days, in your personal life, in our community, in the larger world. What are the spiritual tools that allow you to respond to the suffering you witness? How have you seen our Saint Mark's community respond to suffering, and how can we expand and improve our response?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Jules Bastien-Lepage (1 November 1848 – 10 December 1884) was a French painter whose work was closely associated with Naturalism and is credited with paving the way for Impressionism.

1. What do you notice in this painting?
2. How does the style of painting affect your understanding of Job's suffering?



Job by Jules Bastien-Lepage (1876). Oil on canvas.

WEEK 2

SCRIPTURE *Job 9:25-35*

My days are swifter than a runner;
they flee away; they see no good.
They go by like skiffs of reed,
like an eagle swooping on the prey.
If I say, 'I will forget my complaint;
I will put off my sad countenance and be of good cheer,'
I become afraid of all my suffering,
for I know you will not hold me innocent.
I shall be condemned;
why then do I labor in vain?
If I wash myself with soap
and cleanse my hands with lye,
yet you will plunge me into filth,
and my own clothes will abhor me.
For he is not a mortal, as I am, that I might answer him,
that we should come to trial together.
There is no mediator between us,
who might lay his hand on us both.
If he would take his rod away from me
and not let dread of him terrify me,
then I would speak without fear of him,
for I know I am not what I am thought to be. ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What do you wonder about in this passage?
2. As readers, we have inside information that Job does not possess. We know from the opening of the ook of Job that God has singled out Job for praise— "Have you noticed my servant Job?" Furthermore, when challenged, God allows the accuser to afflict Job with the loss of family, wealth, and health to prove Job's character and integrity. But from Job's perspective, it looks and feels very much like God has it out for him! He knows that he does not deserve any of the bad things that have happened to him. Within this broader context, how and how much of Job's questioning calls into question God's justice?
3. Imagine how, from Job's perspective, he been tried for a crime he did not commit. He was falsely charged, sentenced, and punished. He knows he's innocent. Here's the big question: how can the supreme Judge be unjust?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Job speaks of how his days "flee away", passing swiftly—which contrasts with his previous complaint (in chapter 7:4) "When I lie down I say, 'When will I rise?' But the night is long, and I am full of tossing until dawn." Describe your own experience with the seeming paradox of days that "flee" too swiftly and nights that seem unendurably long. How does this align (or not) with your own sense of time and seasons of life?

2. Much of the resonating power and timeless quality of this poetry comes from Job's vivid and aching expression of our universal experience of suffering and loss. How Job processes what happens to him—the wounds that smart, the anguish that grapples to find words, and the hard questions that surface—are familiar to us at some point in our lives. Think of a time when you may have been in sympathy with Job, thinking that God just doesn't "get me", just doesn't understand what my life is like. What have you wanted God to know about the experience of being mortal?
3. The crux of Job's argument hinges on Job's declaration in verse 33 that "there is no mediator between us". We know that the process of mediation is essential for the resolution of conflicts—think of the roles of intercessor, peacemaker, liaison, negotiator, ambassador, bridge, and advocate. Describe a situation in which you mediated between conflicting parties or, one in which the mediation process helped to bring about a good resolution. How might you connect this with your own faith journey?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Frank Shepard Fairey (born February 15, 1970) is an American contemporary graphic designer, and illustrator who emerged from the skateboarding scene. His work became more widely known in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, specifically his Barack Obama "Hope" poster. The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston calls him one of today's best known and most influential street artists. His work is included in the collections at The Smithsonian, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

1. What do you notice at first glance?
2. After studying the art for a few moments, which themes of justice stand out to you, and why?



Uplift Justice by Frank Shepard Fairey

WEEK 3

SCRIPTURE *Job 19: 23-27*

O THAT my words were written down! O that they were inscribed in a book! O that with an iron pen and with lead they were engraved on a rock forever! For I know that my vindicator lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me! ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What do you wonder about in this passage?
2. In this passage, Job declares that he feels crushed by God's silence in the midst of his suffering and despair. And yet, in these well-known verses, he proclaims that he knows that his Redeemer still lives. This verse is also often heard at funerals. How might this verse promote healing in those who grieve?
3. The book of Job is one of suffering and grief, and yet there are proclamations of good news. What qualities feel redemptive or relatable in the character of Job? Which qualities do you wrestle with in his character?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Job holds the tension of being deeply angry with God while still maintaining awareness of the goodness of God, even though he cannot see God. Where have you noticed this duality in your own life, in our community, and our world at large?
2. In this passage, we see our suffering protagonist, Job, maintaining faith and declaring the truth of God despite immense grief. Tell about a time in your own life when you held faith in a living Redeemer despite deep uncertainty.
3. Who comes to mind when you think of the qualities of our protagonist, Job – suffering and angry, yet able to proclaim that there is still goodness? This could be someone you have known personally, an historical figure, or a character in literature or film.

NOTES

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

The following are lyrics from the song *Sweet Liberty* by Isa Ma, featuring American Gospel/Soul singer and songwriter Liz Vice. It was written in 2021 during social uprise and cries for racial justice in America. The themes of the song are social unity and finding love despite immense suffering. If you have time in your group, listen to the song together on YouTube: youtu.be/FfZNsOaZqYs.

Sweet Liberty



Looking for our better angels
Calling for our ancestors and
Every voice that's gone before me
Help us now

Land of the free built all these prisons
In God we trust but serve our demons
Give us the strength to change this system
Help us now

Chorus:
Sweet liberty's coming
I can hear the people singing
Mmm, freedom
We won't let our voice be silenced

Where'd you learn so much hate?
Where'd you feel your body break?
Come on tear the root right up
Resist the hate, persist in love

I know we saw the rainbow sign
Do we need the fire next time
The power's with the people now
I have faith *Chorus*

We can change
We can change the world
But the change starts in me
We can love one another
But not until I love me
We can see all the people free
When our hearts are free and
Put your faith in love
Put your faith in love *Chorus*

Yeah, we can change
We can change the world
But the change starts in me (Oh, we can love)
We can love one another (Yeah)
But not until I love me (Not until I love me)
We can see all the people free
When our hearts are free and
Put your faith in love
Put your faith in love (Yeah) *Chorus* ◆

1. The song touches on unity despite deep communal suffering. What themes in this song are echoed in the Book of Job?
2. Which stanza most impacts you? Why? What connections in the excerpt from Job do you find in this stanza?

WEEK 4

SCRIPTURE *Job 5:6-16*

For misery does not come from the earth, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, but humans are born to trouble just as sparks fly upward. "As for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause. He does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number. He gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields; he sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. He takes the wise in their own craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end. They meet with darkness in the daytime and grope at noonday as in the night. But he saves the needy from the sword of their mouth, from the hand of the mighty. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth. ◆

Job 21:7-16

Why do the wicked live on, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? Their children are established in their presence and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, and no rod of God is upon them. Their bull breeds without fail; their cow calves and never miscarries. They send out their little ones like a flock, and their children dance around. They sing to the tambourine and the lyre and rejoice to the sound of the pipe. They spend their days in prosperity, and in peace they go down to Sheol. They say to God, 'Leave us alone! We do not desire to know your ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him?' Is not their prosperity indeed their own achievement? The plans of the wicked are repugnant to me. ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What words or phrases stand out to you or resonate with you? What questions do you have about these passages?
2. What feelings come up for you when you read these passages side by side?
3. How do these passages align or conflict with your idea of the nature of God?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What parallels can you draw from these two passages to our current times?
2. It is sometimes tempting to cherry-pick Bible verses to support a personal position or agenda. How could these passages be used in that way? Conversely, how can they be interpreted to encompass our shared human condition?
3. What does justice look like? Have you ever cried out to God, wondering about injustice? What was that conversation like, and how did it affect your connection to God?

NOTES

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

"57: for when you are tired of broken systems" from *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days* by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie (Convergent Books, 2023)

> Oh God, I am done with broken systems
> that break the very people
> they are meant to serve.
>
> Harness this anger!
> Channel it into worthy action and show me
> what is mine to fix and what boundaries to patrol
> to keep goodness in and evil out.
>
> Blessed are we who are appalled
> that brute ignorance can so easily dominate
> over decency, honesty, and integrity.
>
> Blessed are we, who choose not to look away
> from systems that dehumanize, deceive, defame,
> and distort.
> We who recognize that thoughts and prayers
> are not enough.
> We who stand with truth over expediency,
> principle over politics,
> community over competition.
>
> Oh God, how blessed are we who cry out to you:
> Empower us to see and name what is broken,
> what is ours to restore.
>
> Guide us to find coherent
> and beautiful alternatives
> that foster life, hope, and peace.
> Help us to use our gifts with one another in unity.
>
> Blessed are we who choose to live in anticipation,
> our eyes scanning the horizon
> for signs of your kingdom—
> heaven come down—
> as we wait. Oh God, I am done with broken systems

that break the very people
they are meant to serve.

Harness this anger!
Channel it into worthy action and show me
what is mine to fix and what boundaries to patrol
to keep goodness in and evil out.

Blessed are we who are appalled
that brute ignorance can so easily dominate
over decency, honesty, and integrity.

Blessed are we, who choose not to look away
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Empower us to see and name what is broken,
what is ours to restore.

Guide us to find coherent
and beautiful alternatives
that foster life, hope, and peace.
Help us to use our gifts with one another in unity.

Blessed are we who choose to live in anticipation,
our eyes scanning the horizon
for signs of your kingdom—
heaven come down—
as we wait.

1. What feelings are brought up as you read this piece? Does it read as a poem, a prayer, or a blessing to you?
2. How does it relate to the scriptures for this week?

WEEK 5

SCRIPTURE *Job 38: 1–18*

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:
"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
Gird up your loins like a man;
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone
when the morning stars sang together
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

"Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb,
when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
and prescribed bounds for it,
and set bars and doors,
and said, 'Thus far shall you come and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stopped'?

"Have you commanded the morning since your days began
and caused the dawn to know its place,
so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth,
and the wicked be shaken out of it?
It is changed like clay under the seal,
and it is dyed like a garment.
Light is withheld from the wicked,

and their uplifted arm is broken.

"Have you entered into the springs of the sea
or walked in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been revealed to you,
or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth?
Declare, if you know all this. ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What words or phrases stand out to you or resonate with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. After Job and his friends try to make sense of Job's suffering, God reminds them that human beings can't possibly understand the Creator's ways. What is your reaction to God's response?
3. In Chapter 38, the language suddenly shifts from prose to poetry. What does the poetic "voice" of God reveal to you about God's nature and relationship to humans?

NOTES

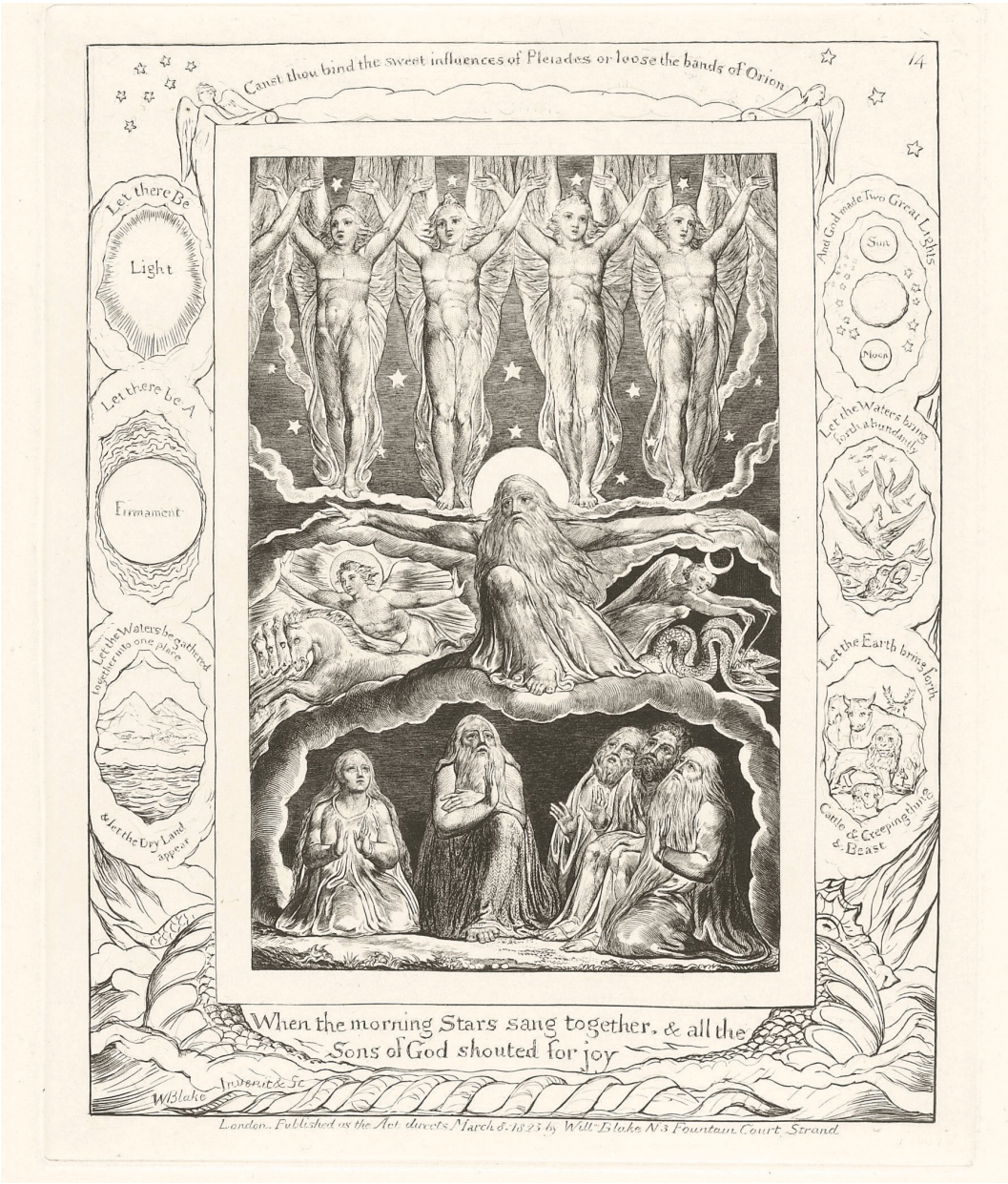
GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In Romans 8:28, Paul says, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God..." Compare this view with that of Job. How do you square this idea of Paul's with suffering in your own life, or in the lives of those you love?
2. In this chapter, we see one response to Job's travails— "You aren't God." How do you honestly engage with and offer comfort to a friend who is questioning the reason for their suffering?
3. God declares God's transcendence in an intimate moment with Job. How do you deepen your connection to a God who is intimate, cosmic, and sometimes inscrutable?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

William Blake's *Illustrations of the Book of Job* primarily refers to a series of twenty-two engraved prints illustrating the Book of Job. (There were also two sets of watercolors.) They are considered Blake's greatest masterpieces in the medium of engraving and were a rare commercial and critical success. The Book of Job was an important influence upon Blake's writings and art; he apparently identified with Job, as he felt unrecognized and impoverished during his lifetime.

1. Where does your eye go first? Why do you think this part of Blake's very detailed engraving caught your attention?
2. God is pictured with his arms outstretched. What associations do you make with this posture? What do you notice about how Blake sees the earthly and heavenly realms?
3. The border does not appear in Blake's watercolors. What does the border add to the engraving?



When the morning Stars sang together, & all the Sons of God shouted for joy by William Blake(1825). Engraving.

WEEK 6

SCRIPTURE *Job 42*

Then Job answered the Lord:
"I know that you can do all things
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me that I did not know.
'Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you declare to me.'
I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;
therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes."

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done." So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer.

And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he had prayed for his friends, and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then there came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and they ate bread with him in his house; they showed him sympathy and comforted

him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a gold ring. The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years and saw his children and his children's children, four generations. And Job died, old and full of days. ◆

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. When Job tells God, "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;" what do you imagine has deepened in Job's understanding of God?
3. In the book of Job's conclusion, Job's three daughters get more attention than his seven sons. Job's daughters are celebrated for their beauty, we learn their names (wild names translated as Dove, Cinnamon, and Eye Shadow), and in a complete break from ancient patriarchal Jewish norms, they receive an inheritance along with their brothers. Considering the arc of Job's story, do you interpret this as significant? Why or why not?

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How has Job been transformed by his trials and suffering? What might this reveal about the reality of suffering? What might this say about God in relation to suffering?
2. God blessed the latter-days of Job's life with twice as much as he had before. Even so, this doesn't mean Job forgot the loved ones he lost in tragedy. How do we make space for God's blessings and newness of life even as we grieve and honor what we have lost?
3. In Job 1:9, the Accuser asks God if Job's fear (love and respect) of God is based on Job's comfortable life rather than "for nothing." In "speaking "what is right" (Job 42:7), how has Job learned to fear (love and respect) God "for nothing?" How do we cultivate love for God that is not based on expectation or transaction, but grounded only in the transformative power of relationship with God?

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Of Jewish ancestry and Russian and French heritage, Marc Chagall (1887-1985) depicts Job in his series, *Drawings for the Bible*. In this image, Job is praying for his friends (Job 42).

1. Commentary on this work mentions that green is the color of hope and confidence. What do you make of Chagall's use of that color for this point in Job's story?
2. What thoughts or feelings does this image evoke in you?



Job Praying by Marc Chagall (1960). Lithograph.

NOTES

RADIX TEMPLATE

Is there another scripture selection that your group would prefer to discuss? Use this template!

SCRIPTURE

Please name the scripture chapter and verse. Use the NRSV or NRSVue as the primary translation. If you would like to use a different translation, please also include the NRSV version and note the name of the alternate translation.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Questions in this section relate primarily to the content or context of the scripture passage and are intended for individuals to reflect on in advance of the group meeting.

1. *We always start with this question:* What word or phrase stands out to you or resonates with you? What questions do you have about this passage?
2. Your question here
3. Your question here

DISCUSSION

These are open-ended questions that are designed to generate discussion among participants that connects to their personal experience.

1. Your question here
2. Your question here
3. Your question here

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Select a piece of artwork, poetry, or song that connects to the passage. Provide the name and dates of the artist, along with the year the work was created, if known.

Provide no more than two questions for reflection.



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