

Goodness a Choice Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time Monday, October 1, 2018 **Jb 1:6-22;** Lk 9:46-50 St. Therese of the Child Jesus, virgin and Doctor of the Church (Everyone suffers to some degree, but some people use that as an excuse to be bad and others don't.)

Today we are beginning the reading of **the Book of Job**, which is very lovely story. It **belongs to the kind of literature called wisdom. It is reflecting on basic issues like good and evil, especially as good and evil plays a role in everyone's life.**

Now Satan is a figure here in the story. **The role of Satan is to express the warped thinking** that often occurs in human minds and in human thoughts. It goes like this: God-fearing people, good holy **people, are God-fearing and good and holy only because God has blessed them.** Whereas people who are not holy or not God-fearing or not good are not good because God hasn't been good to them and they rightly resent their condition, so that anger and resentment is perfectly natural and appropriate. And out of this comes all the evil in the world, so really everything in the world is ultimately God's fault. **Evil people are only evil because God has not been good to them.** That's basically the thinking here, the warped thinking that Satan is expressing. And God however believes in goodness in itself, and he believes—actually God believes in Job. **It's not just Job believes in God, but God believes in Job. And he believes that even if everything goes against him, he will remain what he has always been,** a holy man, a man who praises God, a man who acknowledges his own humility. So that's the test. **This is setting up this test to see whether God is right or Satan is right.**

Now if God is right in the story, then we cannot blame God for evil in the world because even a person who is tried, who suffers, can still be good. It's a choice that that person makes. **Goodness ultimately then is a human choice, and God blesses everyone, but only some people bless God back. Everyone suffers to some degree, but some people use that as an excuse to be bad and others don't.** So that's really the whole meaning of the book. It's about how we live and why we live the way we live. It's showing in a dramatic sort of way that people really are free. We are free to be good. We are free to love God. We are free to be holy if we choose to.