

**JOB 14:1-5**  
**YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED.**

*In the name + of Jesus.*

If the patriarch Job complains in our lesson, who can blame him? You might recall the story of Job who had been a filthy rich man. God had blessed Job with a wife and ten children, with an abundance of flocks and herds, and with many servants to help him care for his estate. Job was a faithful servant of the Lord, even making sacrifices to atone for his children in case they had sinned.

But Satan mocked Job's faithfulness. **"Does Job fear God for nothing?"** Satan challenged God. **"Stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."** (Job 1:9,11) God granted Satan permission to rob Job of all his blessings, and in one day Job lost his flocks, his herds, his servants, and all ten of his children. **In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.** (Job 1:22)

Satan mocked Job's faithfulness again. He told God, **"A man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."** (Job 2:4,5) Again, the Lord granted Satan permission to smite Job, though God drew the line at Job's life. **So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.** (Job 2:7) Though Satan mocked Job's faithfulness, Job did not renounce his faith in the Lord.

Now, Job's case is certainly extreme, but it is not unique. In a world that has been cursed by God because of man's sin, we feel the consequences of sin throughout our lives. Sometimes, the pain and the grief seem unbearable. We suffer the loss of property and possessions. Families are ripped apart by divorce. Reputations take a beating from slander and gossip. We tearfully watch as family and friends pass away. And while we do not suffer all of these things on the same day, it is no less painful stretched out over time. Job's assessment of life is correct: **"Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."** (Job 14:1)

Every loss we endure reminds us that we will not endure either. No matter how vibrant you may be today, it will not last. **(Man) springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.** (Job 14:2) Death and judgment are very real. Your days are numbered, though you do not know their number. For some, death is imminent. For others, it comes unexpectedly. And whether we take solace that someone enjoyed many years on this earth or lament that someone's life was cut short, all who die feel that their time was too short. The only ones who seek the grave are people who think that the grave is the only escape from the world's troubles. Despair claims them before death does, and they go from momentary troubles to eternal torment.

**Man's days are determined; (the Lord has) decreed the number of his months and (has) set limits he cannot exceed.** (Job 14:5) Your days are numbered, and you can't change it. Nor does anyone escape the judgment that follows death. In fact, death is part of that judgment. No one's death certificate reads: "Cause of death: Sin," but that is why people die. **Death came to all men, because all sinned.** (Romans 5:12) Sin has

destroyed everything. Sin is the reason you suffer loss, endure pain, feel shame, have regret, are gripped with fear, and face judgment. Sin has made you unclean and impure. Now, only that which is clean, pure, and holy may enter heaven because that is where God dwells. Nothing sinful can stand in his presence. And that is why you dread death and judgment. You fear the verdict of damnation because you know that you have earned it.

Your days are numbered. But before you began your days, God chose to act for you. Before any days had begun – already from eternity – God decided to redeem you. So, when the time had fully come, he who is eternal entered our time. Jesus, too, was a man born of woman, with a life of few days and full of trouble. Jesus suffered all kinds of loss. Jesus' family was embarrassed by him. His friends forsook him in his darkest hour. His enemies worked vigorously to destroy his reputation with trap questions, false accusations, and blatant lies. But Jesus' greatest troubles came from your sins.

Jesus was numbered with the transgressors. To be more accurate, Jesus was numbered **as all** the transgressors. He became man to suffer and die for all man. He who is pure took up our sins and made himself impure and unclean. Therefore, he had to be banished from his Father's presence. He was forsaken and despised, rejected and condemned – in your place, for your sins. The Righteous for the unrighteous; the Innocent for the guilty. Jesus' holy sacrifice has appeased the Father. He has atoned for your sin. You are pardoned of all guilt.

Job had asked, **“Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!” (Job 14:4)** That is why God does not expect you to get yourself right. You cannot fix yourself. Instead, you are cleansed by Jesus Christ who is pure and holy. Your righteousness comes from Jesus. **The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies you of all sin. (1 John 1:7)** You were washed in the blood of Christ which has made you unblemished and blameless before God. And you are fed with the body and blood of Christ to keep you free from guilt. For this reason, you are now numbered among the saints. Your verdict has already been given to you. You are forgiven. And since you have been made pure in the blood of Christ, there is no reason for God to banish you from his presence. You will dwell with the Lord in heaven.

Even as saints in God's kingdom, however, Job's words still ring true. You are not without troubles. Your life here will still seem like a fleeting shadow. Man's days are determined. Your days are numbered. But since you know that your future is heaven and your days will be eternal, that is not a threat. You have nothing to fear.

Yes, we will have hardships and troubles. But your losses and your pains and your sufferings are temporary. That is because your days are numbered. Your life is in the hands of God who loves you. He assures you that, not only are your days numbered, but the very hairs on your head are numbered. Yes, the Lord care for you and continues to watch over you, even when you are suffering the troubles common to man.

So do not be overwhelmed by your troubles. They highlight that you are weak and frail. That is okay because God is your strength and your hope. And God pleads with you, **“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.” (Psalm 50:15)** Your heavenly Father cares for you, so pray to him. When your life is falling apart and you suffer loss, remember that God's promises never fall apart, and his mercy cannot be lost. Your hope lives with Jesus, who lives and reigns forever. So do not be afraid, and do not lose hope. Not even death can take his promises away.

Your days are numbered, and that is just fine. No matter how many days God gives you, they are God's gifts to you. They are days in which God grants you love, forgiveness, and blessings. They are days through which God comforts, sustains, and strengthens you. And even when your days on earth end, your life does not. You have been purified in the blood of Christ; therefore, you shall dwell in God's presence forever – free from loss, pain, shame, fear, regret, or any other hardship. And in heaven, neither your days nor your blessings will be numbered. For, in God's presence, your days, your blessings, and your joys will be endless.

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**