

Job 11-14

Perhaps you recall that our time together came to a close last week on an upstroke, a high crescendo as Job was just elated, absolutely ecstatic, and abounding with glee regarding his lot in life, the point to which he'd been brought. :0) J/K

Job is suffering *immensely* and he doesn't understand *why specifically*, or for that matter he has no idea even *generally* as to why this "hell" has literally broke loose in his life. He didn't have the advantage of the heavenly perspective; he didn't have the insights of Ch's 1 and 2 to get him through. He didn't know that God had entrusted him with this trial to silence Satan and vindicate His *integrity*. To demonstrate that man would love God, stay committed *to* God though there be no profit in it for him *personally*. But that to the contrary man would love God, entrust himself *to* God even if it seemed to make for or bring to his life a *penalty*. Job doesn't know what's going on; he doesn't understand why this is happening to him. But here's the deal, it had to be that way. Because had God come to him and spoken to him saying, "Job, Satan, the adversary, the great accuser of the brethren is up here accusing you of serving Me only because of the blessing that you've received *from* Me. So I'm going to allow him to harass you and your family to the point of total devastation, he's going to kill your kids, he's going to take all your money, and he's going to bring *you* to the brink of an incredibly miserable death. But in the end I'll give you back double what you had to begin with so you just hang in there." Had God come to him and shared that insight with him, though it would've been tough, Job could've endured to the end with out even flinching, but what does that prove?

God entrusted him with a trial, with tribulation above and beyond measure, and he couldn't see it, didn't understand it, but God was using it, and continues to use it to this day in the magnifying and glorifying of Himself. And so to with you, so to with me, when tragic times visit our lives, when we're going through a trial and we don't understand why, can't connect the dots or see any rationale *in* it, or reason *for* it. We don't know but that God hasn't entrusted us with that opportunity to vindicate His integrity, to bring glory to Him *personally* because we trust in Him whole *heartedly*, even when in reality we just don't understand "Why?" Remember Satan came to God and told Him that Job was only serving God for the money, for the blessing, for the reward. Well, there's a double edge on that sword because on the one side he's saying, "Job is in it for self centered reasons, He's not serving You because he simply loves You, or wants to bring honor *to* You, he's in it for the payoff." And in a little bit more subtle backhanded way he's saying, "You're apparently unworthy of worship Yourself, You have to pay people before they'll commit to You, You're buying off Your worshipers." So God allowed Job to be placed in this predicament, and Job will ultimately win this *battle*, proving man's love for God and loyalty *to* God simply because He's God, worthy of all that we are. But as for now he's being *bludgeoned*, beaten down mercilessly, and he's crying out for deliverance passionately, "God just show mercy, or at least kill me, just take my life from me, lets get this over with."

And Job has been discussing his plight there on the ash heap in the city dump (which is where he's been reduced to finding himself) with 3 of his "friends," so far we've heard from 2 of them. And tonight ends round one in this 3 round bout between Job and in reality what's proven to be a "troublesome trio." These guys aren't offering Job any love, just lectures, no compassion just criticism. And Zophar (who is who we hear from tonight) is certainly the harshest "Zophar."

Since he speaks last, most believe he's the youngest of the 3 that are there with Job, and his speech here in round one is the shortest of the 3. But what it lacks in length it makes up for in animosity, the name "Zophar" means "sparrow." And this guy is definitely a bird brain when it comes to sympathy, radically intelligent no doubt, but clueless in the realm of comfort.

Job has just answered Bildad, and has stated once again that he'd rather have not even been born if God had just created him to suffer, and so we read.

Vs1-3

Translation: "Job, you talk too much, and all this nonsense coming out of your mouth is deserving *not of reassurance* but *rebuke*." And again I'd just restate the fact that these guys are hung up legally on the words coming from Job's mouth, rather than ministering *lovingly* to the cry that's coming from Job's heart. There's a Chinese proverb that says, "Though conversing face to face, their hearts have a thousand miles between them." And that's exactly what we have happening here. It's been said that, "*Information* is giving out, *communication* is getting through." And we do well to remember that, information and communication are 2 different things. Here we have all kinds of information being given out, but there's no communication, no one is getting through, all of Job's friends are just spewing on him, they're friends of misery, what he needs is ministry. The bible says, "*A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.*" Prov 18:2 And as I said earlier from an intellectual standpoint these guys are giants. But as it pertains to understanding Job's plight, his position, they're being foolish, instruments in the hands of the enemy really, just continually pressing on him in a negative way.

Vs4-6

What wonderful counsel... "Job, God has killed all your kids (which we know God didn't do that, but from his perspective), He's taken all your wealth, He's absolutely destroyed your health, and here's the reality, you're getting less than you deserve for your iniquity!" Next time someone comes to you who's absolutely devastated, despising of life, try issuing these words, "Well, you're such a rank sinner you ought to be thankful it isn't worse, because by my calculations you haven't got 1/2 what you deserve." Man that'll just keep em' coming back.

Now God has already opened His lips concerning Job, but was what He had to say *against* him? No, it was very much for him, as a matter of fact God said that there was none like him on the face of the earth, upright, a man of integrity, one who feared God and shunned evil, but Zophar is claiming to be on the inside here, to have the “secrets” of wisdom, so he tells Job that the fact is that God’s being merciful to him in only giving him what he’s gotten so far because he deserves way more.

And again you’ve got to be careful with guys like this, those people who always think they have the inside scoop from God as to the reality of a given situation. At times that may be true, but often times its not, and they’ll come across with an attitude that’s non-wavering and unapologetic which in reality is nothing more than arrogance, it’s prideful, and it’s uncalled for. We’re called to deal with one another in a spirit genuine of humility and tenderness. Jesus said, “*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am (arrogant and in your face?) gentle and lowly in heart,*” Matt 11:29 Zophar is being anything but gentle and lowly in heart.

But in a sense, there in Vs 6, he’s speaking the truth. In Christ God does exact from us far less than our iniquities deserve. What we deserve is His wrath poured out in full strength *presently, unrelentingly* and then separation from Him *eternally*. But as the psalmist said, “*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.*” Ps 103:10-14

So what we have here is another proper interpretation of a godly principle with improper application to the situation at hand.

Vs7-9

Now here’s another truth, you can’t search out and discover the deep things of God. God isn’t discovered as if He’s “the final frontier” and so you’re going on a journey like unto Columbus but you’re not seeking to discover a new world but the deep things of God. But that’ll be a futile forging because we don’t discover Him, He reveals Himself to us. And what He doesn’t wish to reveal, we can never discover. You see all that we have written out for us in the Word of God isn’t things that men discovered about God, they’re things that God has revealed of Himself to man.

Zophar is saying, “Can you search out the deep things of God, the height, the depth, the width of who He is?” There’s no way, God said through Isaiah, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” says the LORD. ‘*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*” Isa 55:8-9 The point being that we’re just not going to know the fullness of who God is apart from Him revealing Himself to us, and even at that there are dimensions to God that even if He revealed them to us, our finite minds couldn’t comprehend them.

It'd be like teaching nuclear physics to your dog, it's just not going to compute. And with all this talk about searching out the vast dimensions of the wisdom of God and knowing the mind of God, it's too bad that that Zophar wasn't concerned about understanding the vast dimensions of the love of God. Remember Paul's prayer, his plea before God for the Ephesians? "...*that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*" Eph 3:16-19 Zophar is concerned with wisdom, and that's noble, absolutely, but what does the bible say? "...*though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.*" 1 Cor 13:2 There is a more excellent way, doesn't mean we need to walk around blind to reality, we need wisdom from God, but it needs to be centered on and pivoting *around* love.

I'm not going to understand everything about the wisdom of God, or the ways of God, I don't know why certain things happen the way they do, but if I'm secure in the *love* of God. Certain in my understanding of the fact that He *loves* me, is *for* me and not *against* me, has thoughts of peace and not evil *towards* me, than I'll endure. If I think I have to understand everything I'll never make it, because I can't understand the fullness of who God is. But if I can just get a grip on the love of Jesus Christ not just in principle, but it was fleshed out in the practical there on the cross, I can lean *on* that, draw strength *from* that in my day of difficulty, whenever I'm in need, God's love will carry me through when His ways, I don't understand.

Vs10-12

The short of this is that he's calling Job a hopeless idiot. Great friend eh?

Vs13-20

Now what has Job been saying his hope is? That God would just take his life right? What's the implication then? That Job must be wicked, in Vs 11 he accused him of being deceitful, he may've pulled one over them but God sees right through it. So they're all saying the same thing in different ways, if you're right in the sight of God He'll prosper you, if you're a low down rotten sinner, He'll punish you. You're (Job) being punished, you must be a sinner. Which naturally places them in a position above Job because they're doing alright, so their condescending in their attitude towards him.

Ch 12

Vs 1-2

Job is about as fed up as they come with these guys, and so now he issues this sarcastic remark. And in essence what he says here is, “You’re the men, and when you die wisdom is going to die with you, I don’t know how this world is going to make it with out you.” They think they’ve got all the answers and have the whole thing figured out, and so Job is all, “I don’t know how I’d make with out you guys here to offer your incredible insights.” And sarcasm can actually be a powerful instrument if it’s employed in a right on way, because it can lighten the harshness of a comment while still communicating an effective point. Jesus used sarcasm when the Pharisees were noting that He ate with tax collectors, notorious sinners and all. And we read that, *“He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”* Matt 9:12-13 Was He saying that they were in fact righteous and with out the need of a Savior? No, He was being sarcastic, “Hey guys, you may be doing fine, but there are those who actually are able to recognize their need, so you go on about your business and I’ll minister healing to those who understand their need.” Paul the apostle was a frequent wielder of sarcasm, remember when he was writing to the Galatians regarding the people that was telling them that they had to be circumcised if they wanted to be made righteous? And he said, “If getting rid of a little bit of skin makes your righteous, than why stop there? Just tell them to go ahead and castrate themselves and then they’ll really be right on!”

The problem with us is that we rarely employ sarcasm in a way that actually provokes, or challenges people to right on godly activity or understanding. But we too often use it to tear people down, belittle them, or have a laugh at the expense of hurting someone else, and that’s un-cool, it’s sin. Job rebukes these guys with an element of sarcasm. “You think you’re the only one’s that have clue, what’s this world going to do with out you?”

Vs3-6

You might note Vs 5. He says, “If everything is going good in your life, it’s awful easy to castigate, and find fault in the lives that are dealing with difficulty.” We start thinking, “Man I wonder where they went wrong because God’s really dealing with them.” And sometimes God does deal with us, chasten us when necessary, but that’s not always the case. God doesn’t just bless the righteous and punish the wicked, that’s faulty logic. Job says, “Or else the tents of robbers wouldn’t prosper!” Crime lords, drug dealers, thieves, those who have no fear of God, if God were as black and white as prospering the righteous while punishing the wicked what do you do with that? Asaph was confronted with the same dilemma in Ps 73. He said, *“And they say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?’ Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.”* Ps 73:11-14 “Why do I in seeking to lead a life pleasing to God suffer wrong, when those who don’t care about God seem so footloose and fancy free?”

But he carried on, “*If I had said, ‘I will speak thus,’ Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me -- Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.*” Ps 73:15-19 Hey says, “When I finally went to church I was reminded of the eternal perspective.” You see ultimately God *will* punish the wicked, and prosper the righteous, your reward will last all eternity, but as for the here and now we live in a fallen world, and things aren’t always fair. Sometimes the *reason* you’re penalized is because *you are* godly. That was Job’s situation, he loved the Lord, so trouble came to him.

Vs7-12

Most people seem to believe that Vs 12 is actually a reference to God, “Wisdom is with the Aged, or the Ancient One, and understanding with the One who lives long.” And that would make sense seeing as how he’s rebuking them for their apparent lack of wisdom even though they’re older men and he’s speaking of God in the current context and continues to as we move on.

But you might underline Vs 10, each breath that we breathe is a gift from God, He holds the breath of all of mankind in His hand. Acts 17 tells us, “*He gives to all life, breath, and all things.*” Acts 17:25. And again “*...for in Him we live and move and have our being,*” Acts 17:28. And how tragic it is that so much of mankind uses the very breath that God gives them to curse and blaspheme Him, the bible says, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” God help us to use the breath that He gives us to offer Him praise and thanksgiving, rather than issuing bitterness towards our brother, or sister in Christ, or our wife, or parents or children.

Vs13-25

In all this Job is simply pointing out the sovereignty of God, that He has a purpose and a plan, He’s the One in control and we can’t in anyway thwart that. Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has become His counselor? Oh, many have tried, but nevertheless His counsel is what stands.

Ch 13

Vs1-4

“I don’t even want to talk to you about this anymore, you’re all forgers of lies, worthless physicians.” Unable to diagnose the problem accurately, and they’re *sure* not prescribing any remedy. So he says he’d just rather talk to God about it.

Vs5

You've heard it over and over, "Better to be silent and thought of as a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." That's what Job is saying here, "You guys should just be quiet, let silence be your wisdom." The proverbs tell us, "*Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.*" Prov 17:28

Vs6-12

I love that Vs, "Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes, Your defenses are defenses of clay." He says, "Would you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?" The bible says, "*In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*" Prov 10:19 These guys are talking all this stuff, standing in their own minds to represent God, and they don't even know what they're talking about, they're forging lies and speaking deceitfully. The bible talks about, "Woe to those who say, 'Thus says the Lord,' when the Lord hasn't spoken." All these people, pastors and preachers talking about how God's got a wonderful program going on but if you don't send in your money God's going to go bankrupt, speaking deceitfully for God. As if God depends on me, does He use people? Sure, does He coerce, beg, or make merchandise of people, absolutely not. God can get His agenda accomplished just fine with out me.

Vs13-19

He's prepared to present His case before God. But before we pick up the pace here we have to draw attention to Vs 15. The great declaration of faith by Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Is Job struggling? Sure, does he falter in his faith from time to time? You bet, welcome to humanity, but here's his heart, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Often times we hear of people saying, "If you had enough faith you'd be healed!" And they speak of great faith bringing healing. But I think a greater question is, "Do I have enough faith to not be healed?"

Will I continue to trust Him in the midst of troublesome, turbulent times? It's ez to praise God when things are going my way, but how about when they're not? Yet will I trust Him? What an incredible display of faith in the life of Job.

Vs20-28

Ch 14

Vs1-6

The idea here is that life is but a vapor, it fades like a flower, flees like a shadow, so why pay attention to a worm like me? "You've pre-appointed my time, my dwelling, the borders that I can't transgress, so why bother with me anymore? Just look away that I might rest like a hired man having worked my day, I'm ready to be released." Notice Vs 4, Job here speaking of the intrinsic sin nature, "Am I being punished for simply being who I am, who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean? No one!" My mom was a sinner, my dad was a sinner, how can I not be born in sin? I can't change who I am intrinsically.

Now he begins to speak of his hopelessness.

Vs7-12

Now we have to remember that Job doesn't teach doctrine on life after death, what happens when we die, or any of that. God will rebuke Job later on for thinking he understands what happens when a man dies. We know that in Christ, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." That's what the bible says.

Vs13-17

He's saying that rather than cleanse him, God is sealing up his iniquity against him.

Vs18-22

Well once again on that happy note, our time comes to a close. But listen I want to point out 1 thing. Vs 14, Job is asking the deep seated question that abides in the heart of all of mankind. What happens when I die? "If a man dies, shall he live again?" And though the OT points to life after death, and we know that innate with in the heart of man is the intuitive knowledge that the soul is eternal, but still there was a bit of ambiguity concerning what happens to a man when he dies in the OT. "If a man dies, shall he live again?" Jesus came along and took away all ambiguity, answered the questions with stunning and emphatic clarity when He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."* John 11:25-26 Then came the all important, pivotal question, *"Do you believe this?"* If a man dies shall he live again? Here's the great news, in Christ we never die, this life simply opens the door into the eternal presence of the Living God, full of Grace, and compassion, slow to anger, abounding in mercy.

Prayer Points:

God we're thankful for Your mercy, for the promise of everlasting life in Christ, thanks for taking away the ambiguity, and speaking to us with resounding clarity in the person of Your Son as to the living hope to which we've been called. And Lord even when we don't understand, help us to trust in You, we recognize that You're a sovereign and holy God and You're not here to be at our beck and call, but Lord we're here to be at Yours. May we submit our lives to You willfully and with total abandon, thanks for Your Word.