

Job 25-28

We're coming to the conclusion of round 3 with respect to Job's all out philosophical and theological slugfest with his 3 friends, Job has lost everything, his prosperity, and his posterity, he himself is in horrible health and his friends came to him, sat in silence for 7 days with him, and then Job began to open his mouth and say it'd have been better for me to have never been born than to be subjected unjustly to all of this. And with that the floodgates opened and these 3 guys (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) began to tear unrelentingly into Job with allegations of sin in his life, how he needs to repent *before* God that he might be restored *by* God. Now having read the 1st 2 Ch's of the book we realize that all these things they were saying about him were absolutely out of line, he wasn't in some sort of transgression or sin before God. He was a man of integrity, blameless, feared God and shunned evil, yet these guys just couldn't figure out why if you were right with God; such atrocities would be allowed into your life, therefore Job must be hiding something, there's some sort of secret sin that although *they* can't see it, God is now dealing with him *regarding* it.

Now we've spent several weeks in this particular portion of scripture and we've spoken in the past about the fact that there are all sorts of variables in a given situation. You can't cast a blanket over every unfortunate situation that takes place in someone's life and say, "You must be blowing life, you need to get right with God." As a matter of fact it might be because they *are* right with God that they're going through what they are, because there's a whole spiritual warfare dynamic that takes place in our lives that though we can't see it in front of us, it often times has a very real impact on the circumstances and situation that surrounds us. And that was the case with Job, it wasn't because there was sin in his life that all this was going on, to the contrary he was upright before God, therefore the enemy wanted to destroy his life, get him to blaspheme, to curse God and cease to worship God. Satan had accused Job of being a mercenary, serving God for pay, and in a very real way Satan accused God of having to pay people to worship Him. He said, "Let me get to Job, take away his posterity, take away his prosperity, take away his health, comfort and well being and he'll curse You (God) to Your face."

And so Job was entrusted with this trial, with the audience of Heaven peering in on him, and both the integrity of *man* was at stake (that man would worship God regardless of material gain, or blessing in this life) and the integrity of *God* was at stake. God was being vindicated in that He is worthy of our dedication, consecration, He's worthy of our praise and worship, our allegiance, and all that we are simply for who He is, not what He can give.

How's your life been going lately, perhaps great, maybe there's been great difficulty, trials, tough times, tribulation? If it's a simple matter of sowing and reaping, than repent and get right with God, confess it, be forgiven of it. But it's not always that cut and dry, perhaps you *haven't* done anything wrong, you've been serving God with all your heart, yet turbulent or tragic times have struck your life. What now?

Well, ask God to search your heart, be open to any area of correction, outside of that hold fast to your integrity, continue to serve God, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Know that God will never allow you to undergo more than you can with stand, and in times of temptation He'll always make a way of escape. You might not understand it, you don't have to, Job couldn't put his finger on it, didn't know why this was happening. But what He did know is that God was up to something and that when it was all said and done he wouldn't be bitter, he'd be better.

Remember what he said there in Ch 23? *“He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.”* Job 23:10-12 May God give us such a heart in the midst of *our* tough times, “I don't know what God's doing, or why He's allowing this, but I know I'm committed *to* Him, I refuse to turn away *from* Him, and in the end I'll come forth as gold; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food. How amazing is that?

Well, he continued on to say that regardless of what these guys have been saying, evidence is ample that both the righteous and wicked prosper, and both the righteous and wicked suffer. And in Vs 25 of Ch 24 he says, (read).

So now Bildad responds for the final time. And it's the briefest response in the book, perhaps an indication that Job's reasoning is beginning to break him down.

Something else I would point out is that these guys have confidently asserted what they have based upon the circumstances that surround Job's life. Be careful drawing conclusions based upon what seems to be circumstantial evidence, we don't always know what we think we know when we look at the way a situation appears initially, outwardly, circumstantially.

Vs1-6

Now he's sort of reasoned himself into a corner here. Because he's saying, “God is holy and just, there's nothing pure before Him.” Now if that be true (which it is) than according to Bildad's theology, why isn't he going through the same thing? He's seeking to rebuke Job for saying that he's right in the sight of God, “Job, even the moon and the stars in all their majesty and their vast grandeur and brilliance aren't pure in God's sight, how much less mere man, who is just a maggot, the son of man who is a worm?” Now how can you say that with out simultaneously confessing the fact that *you're* unclean, that *you're* impure before God? And if being unclean and impure brings all this into your life... pray tell, what gives, how are you avoiding it? (You see).

So though what he's saying is true, God is all powerful, He's in control, there is none who escape His view, and all are unclean before Him. It's faulty logic to conclude then that every difficulty, or dilemma in a person's life is a result of God's judgment against them or else we'd *all* be going through the trials of Job, because there are none righteous, no not one. But God is gracious, causes His grace to pour down on both the just and the unjust, isn't willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, and it's the *goodness* of God that leads man to repentance...so though God *does* chastise His own, it's wrong to conclude that whenever unfortunate circumstance befall your life that it's an automatic indicator of sin. Because here's the news flash, that's all of us; sinners.

But I do want to draw attention to his question in Vs 4, (Read). It's a great question, one that probes the heart of all of humanity at some point or another. How can man be righteous before God? How can he be pure who is born of a woman? It's a human impossibility, because the bible is clear that sin is present from the moment of conception. David said in Ps 51:5, "*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.*" Sin is inherent with in our nature and is passed down with out exception to every human being that has Adam as his/her father. Now that only excludes One, there is One who walked the face of this earth as completely human as you and me, yet didn't have Adam as His father therefore didn't inherit the sin nature. He had God as His Father and therefore was perfect and with out sin in His nature. And the bible says, "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" 2 Cor 5:21

Man tries to do all sorts of things to be righteous before God. Repetitive prayers, various works, religious efforts, it's all in vain; a righteous standing before God comes only by faith in Jesus Christ who was in all ways tempted as we're tempted yet with out sin. Yet He willingly died a substitutionary death on your and my behalf, paying the penalty for our sin, God placed our sin upon Him, and now if we'll believe in Him for that, God will place His righteousness upon us. Well Job responds here in Ch 26.

Ch 26

Vs1-4

So Bildad brings up the awesome power and majesty of God and Job is going to address that, but before he does he quickly rebukes Bildad for his absolutely worthless counsel throughout the duration of their time together. And he tells him that he's been no help, no support, unwise in his counsel, and pretty much worthless in his advice.

Now, there are some things we need to learn from this. Because as we reflect back over the time that they've spent together, the things that they've *shared* together "counsel wise" these 3 have failed Job in multiple, multiple ways. 1st of all we don't read anywhere where they once *prayed* for Job, or even offered to.

We don't sense any *compassion* or *sympathy* for Job in what they say or how they say it. They seemed to ignore his tremendous suffering both physically and emotionally. They talked a lot, and listened very little if at all to his perspective, they were defensive, argumentative; they tore him down rather than encourage or build him up. They assumed they knew his problem based upon circumstantial evidence and then persisted in their point of view even when the facts plainly contradicted them, they offered an inappropriate solution to his problems, and they blamed him, rebuked him, and condemned him for expressing his grief and frustration. We do well to think those things through, soak them up, and roll them over in our hearts and minds lest when we're seeking to minister to the down trodden we repeat the same mistakes.

Remember the love and grace of God is healing, logic brings no guarantees, we need to listen, be compassionate and encouraging, we don't have to know all the answers but we can pray for them and point them to Christ who loves them, has given Himself for them, and thoughts of peace and not evil towards them, to give them a future and a hope.

Look at these questions and think of them in the light of how you minister to someone who's hurting, or going through difficult days. "How have you helped him who is with out power?" Job is saying, "I'm weak here, you're not helping, you're not offering anything to strengthen me." We can point people to the sustaining power of the grace of God, the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling them, to be a help to them and for them in time of need (which is constantly, because we always have need of His strengthening and sustaining power and grace in our lives.) "How have you saved the arm that has no strength?" The idea behind that word "saved" meaning to defend or rescue, to help. How have you supported the individual, we think of how Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses in the midst of the battle, they were there *for* him, a support *to* him, Job is saying, "You haven't held up my arms, been a support *to* me, you haven't really been there *for* me. You've in no way protected me, only further persecuted me." Here's a good one, "How have you counseled one who has no wisdom, and how have you declared sound advice to many?" Am I giving that person, those people words of substance, the wisdom of the Word of God, sharing scripture, godly principles and practicalities? Or just offering my opinion, my own limited understanding, biased perspectives and all the rest?

"To *whom* have you uttered words?" In other words, do you even know who it is you're talking to? Have you taken the time to identify with them spent the energy necessary to try to understand them, or do I just deal with a situation with a sense of cold and calloused professionalism?

And perhaps the biggest question, "Whose spirit came from you?" Not all counsel comes from a genuine spirit of godly concern, even when it comes from godly people. There are those who may offer counsel vindictively, or in such a way as to benefit them personally. And sometimes even inadvertently our thoughts are influenced in a manner that's unhealthy and it impacts our counsel.

Remember when James and John wanted to call down fire on the Samaritans because they didn't receive Jesus. And they were all, "Hey do you want us to call down fire upon them just like Elijah did?" Remember what Jesus did? We read, "*He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.'*" Luke 9:55-56 In other words it wasn't the Spirit of God prompting that desire in them, it was their own spirit, being overtaken by emotion and in their zeal to defend Jesus they were willing to destroy men's lives which is just the opposite of what Jesus is all about. Our ministry, our counsel should be marked by the presence and Spirit of the Lord, it should be God's Spirit that comes from us, motivates us, speaks through us to the hurting, those experiencing trials, and tough times, not our own, or for that matter any other influence as well.

Vs5-6

Where it says the dead "tremble" it speaks literally of being pained, or writhing, he's speaking of conscious torment. Bildad had spoken of God's dominion; Job is saying that God has power over all things, life, death, creation in its entirety.

Vs7-14

This is really some pretty amazing scientific insight regarding the reality of this world when you stop to think of the fact that this book is more than likely older than the book of Genesis. In Vs 7 Job says that God hangs the earth on nothing, this was at the time when Greeks thought Atlas held the earth on his shoulders, the Hindu pictured the earth on a giant elephant, an African myth had the earth on the back of a giant turtle, what any of those things stood on I don't know. But guess what science discovered only a few hundred years ago? That the earth is hung on nothing, suspended in space. Yet God declared it somewhere to the tune of 2,000 before Christ, imagine that. Same thing there in Vs 10 speaking of the earth as a sphere, a circular horizon, again it wasn't until what, the 14th- 15th century that science affirmed that the earth is round? There were those who theorized earlier, but the main stream wasn't so certain, ships wouldn't sail anywhere beyond the sight of the coastlines because they didn't want to get out there too far and fall off the face of the earth. Yet the bible has declared it for thousands of years.

How many thousands of gallons of water are held in rain clouds, yet they don't tear, they're not broken? He stirs the sea, and calms the storm, by His Spirit He adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

The conjecture as to what exactly that means ranges from a particular constellation, to the Leviathan, the serpent of the deep that the bible speaks of, or even Satan himself. But the point remains the same, God has total dominion over all creation, and on top of all of that, as absolutely staggering as His creation is; scientifically, the complexity, the radical originality and diversity, Job says, “These are the mere edges of His ways.” Which is to say that all of that only displays but a whisper of who He is, His power, might and majesty. “The thunder of His power who can understand?” His ways, His rationale, His thoughts are so much higher than our own.

“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 bible goes on to declare in that same vein, *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”* 1 Cor 2:9 God is so beyond our comprehension, yet He so loves us, wants to know us, and gave Himself for us.

Ch 27

Vs1-6

Paul the apostle spoke over and over again about the fact that he strove to have a clear and clean conscience before both God and man. And Job is saying here that he’s not going to defile his conscience and tell these that they’re right just so that they can feel justified in their own minds. He’s persuaded that he’ll hold his position till the day he dies. And he’s not going to bend for any man.

Now in one respect I think that’s good, we’re not called to be man pleasers; we need to have a clean conscience before God. But in another respect I think we need to be careful because what we’re going to find is that when God finally speaks up, Job *doesn’t* maintain his position, he’ll get on his face in humble repentance before the throne of God. Now it’s not to say these guys were right, they were radically wrong, but in seeking to convict Job all they did was cause him to rear up in the defensive posture. But he had issues just like the rest of us do. And I think in here is a lesson and that is this. We would do well to let the Holy Spirit, be the Holy Spirit. “What do you mean?” Listen, when I go around pointing out your flaws, trying to make you feel bad about something you do, or what you take part in, where you’ve been, what you’ve done, what’s the net effect generally speaking? You retaliate, seek to justify yourself by pointing out my flaws, show me the short comings of my life, “Who are you to tell me, as if you’re Mr. perfect.

Well what about this, or that, I know you've been apart of the other." But when the *Holy Spirit* speaks to me, when *God* begins to convict me, it's altogether different, I begin to break, I humble myself, I fall on my face and say, "God be merciful to me...a sinner." And it's not that God doesn't speak through us to one another, but I've got to be careful when I begin to point out problems in your life. It can get real "log and spec" syndrome real quick, pray *for* someone, share scripture *with* someone, but we've got to let the Holy Spirit be the Holy Spirit. He's the One Who's been sent to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, not me. He does it right, I don't.

Vs7-8

Jesus made mention of this same principle when He said, "*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" Matt 16:26 What's the hope of the hypocrite, even if he gains the whole world, but loses his soul? If God takes away his life?

Vs9-23

Now because this seems so out of sorts with what Job has said thus far there are those who think this is Zophar's speech. But if you look at it carefully you'll find him using many of the same type descriptions that his 3 friends have been using against him. And most think that Job did this deliberately to warn them to be careful what they declare of *him* lest they declare their own fate. Kind of a "Judge not lest you be judged" type deal. It's not a foreign reality to the scriptures to see people judged in the same manner they sought to judge. Pharaoh demanded all the newborn baby boys of Israel to be drowned, what happened to his entire army? They were drowned. Haman built gallows from which to hang Mordecai only to hang up himself.

There were men who sought to have Daniel destroyed only to wind up in the den themselves, and I'm not "lion." ;0) We spoke Sunday morning about having measured back to us the degree which we measure out, Jesus said it would be so. And besides that, Job never denied the judgment of the wicked, only the debated the timing of it. Let's finish up quickly

Ch 28

Vs1-11

Job is building up to something here, he's speaking about things that are of value, and how man is willing to go to these great lengths, and expend radical labor and discipline to dig deep into the earth to find precious metals and gems. Wood, hay and stubble are all found *on* it, but if you want true treasure you've got to be willing to dig deep *into* it. And yet somewhere in here is a sense of vanity, a sense of irony because man will go to all this trouble, risk life and limb to gain a treasure that's temporal at best. Yet when it comes to eternal issues, seeking after the treasures of God, the irreplaceable invaluable gems of His Word, not many people are willing to really exercise discipline and dig into it, plumb the depths of it.

How many people will seek wisdom as if it's a treasure to be valued more than anything this earth has to offer? But that's exactly what the bible teaches, and the ironic part of it is, is that not everyone has the opportunity to mine for diamonds, or gold. But the offer of wisdom is extended to us all and it's of more value than any of those things. The bible says, "*How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.*" Prov 16:16 But gaining a heart of wisdom demands a lot more from us than simply coming to a bible study on a Sunday or Wednesday, and many aren't willing to pay it's price.

Vs12-19

This section brings up gold 5 xs, silver once, and mentions 7 different precious stones, yet none of them individually, or all of it collectively can purchase wisdom. It's a treasure that's not of this world, it can't be mined from the earth, or discovered in the sea, and the purchase price is beyond us. Yet man doesn't seem to get that, can't discern the value in wisdom.

Vs20-23

There's our 1st clue, wisdom can't be gleaned or gathered simply in life, or in death, God understands its way, and knows it's place. Where is its place? Where is it discovered? Ultimately wisdom is discovered in Christ. The bible says, "*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God-*" 1 Cor 1:30. And again speaking of Christ, "*...in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" Col 2:3

Vs24-28

Underline it, highlight it, memorize it and apply it. "The fear of the Lord is wisdom, to depart from evil is understanding." You reverence the Lord, you respect Him, stand in holy awe of him and wisdom will guide your way. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Prov 1:7). In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death. And a man of understanding departs from evil, stays clear of it, wants nothing to do with it. May God grant us insight into the true value of wisdom, that we might pursue it passionately, diligently, whole heartedly.

Prayer Points: God we know that ultimately wisdom is found in You, in the person of Your Son, so may we pursue You Jesus, passionately, whole heartedly, with all that we are. Help us to hunger after Your Word. May we be compassionate hearers, and uplifting supporters of the down trodden, that You might be able to use us, speak through us, and build up others by the Work of Your Spirit in us.