

Job 34-35

Unfortunately being “Spirit led” doesn’t make us “bullet proof.” I’d like to think that as long as I’m living my life seeking to be sensitive *to* and led *by* the Spirit that I’ll never make a mistake, that I’ll never say something that’s inappropriate, out of line, or of the flesh. But as we all know such is not the case, just because I’m being led of the Spirit *generally* doesn’t mean that everything that comes out of my mouth *specifically* is going to be right on the money. There are times that (though it’s not my intention) I’ll say *something*, or accuse *someone*, or direct *somebody* in a way that’s incorrect.

I suppose none are more intimately aware of the reality of such a thing being a distinct possibility than the apostle Peter. Perhaps you recall the situation; “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” Jesus said to His disciples that day in the region of Caesarea Philippi as He was there ministering *to* them, and speaking *with* them. “Some say John the Baptist, other’s say Elijah, other’s Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” That was the pulse of the people at that time in Jesus day, that was the buzz about the streets as to who people thought that Jesus was. Jesus looks at them and says, “But who do you say that I am?” Which is such an essential question, because what other’s think of Jesus is in a sense irrelevant, what’s critical is what do *I* think of Jesus, who do *you* say that He is? And we read there in Matt’s gospel that, “*Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’*” Matt 16:16 “*Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.’*” Matt 16:17 In other words, like we spoke Sunday morning, revelation as to the character and knowledge of God can’t come through brain power or human intellect. The personal awareness of Jesus as the Christ doesn’t come through the common rationale of man. You don’t add it up, put 2 and 2 together and draw your conclusion, the natural man doesn’t receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. So Jesus is commending Peter saying, “Good Job Peter, you’ve heard from the Spirit, been sensitive *to* the Spirit, are being led *by* the Spirit in your understanding and conclusion in the matter.” And so from that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. And so Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” Peter was saying, “Now remember Lord, I’m sensitive *to* the Spirit, hear *from* the Spirit, am led *by* the Spirit, this isn’t going to happen, and You need to quit talking like this.” And we read that Jesus turned to Peter and said, “*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*” Matt 16: 23

So that with in a moment’s time he went from being inspired by the Spirit in one breath, to speaking Satanic words in the next. And it’s sorta scary to think that we can go from being led *by* the Spirit, sensitive *to* the Spirit, hearing *from* the Spirit in one moment, to being mindful and giving mouth (though subtle they may be) to Satanic words in the next.

But something happens when we get to feeling our wheaties, we start feeling pretty good about ourselves, we're walking *in* the Spirit, speaking words *by* the Spirit, ministering to people *through* the Spirit, and it can happen in an instant, it happens so subtly, we never seen it coming... pride eeks its way in there, we start thinking we can do no wrong, say no wrong, we're bullet proof. Yet the bible is clear, "*In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*" Prov 10:19 We so often just don't know when to shut up.

Well, we've been hearing from Elihu, this young man who's entered into the equation of the scene in Job's life. And so far he's been doing real well, his motivation for speaking to Job hasn't been condemnation, but he's been seeking to give Job a godly exhortation. To trust in the Lord, not to come *against* the Lord in his own righteousness, he's told Job that pain has more than one purpose, that it's not always punitive, but that it may be preventative. God is keeping you from going *there*, or being apart of *that*. Perhaps the unbeliever seems to get away with certain things, you try it and you get busted. That's because God loves you and is seeking to prevent you from going down a certain path that would lead ultimately to your demise and destruction, but because He loves you he would spare you from going down that direction that leads you to the pit. Look at Vs 29-30 of Ch 33 (read)

And though he'll still give an overall acceptable exhortation, it wouldn't have been a bad thing for him to have stopped right there. But it seems like he gets to feeling his wheaties right about now, this young guy who has the express attention of these "older" and "wiser" men. And so he continues to confidently call on them to listen to him, and even though they never asked, he continues to answer, notice.

Vs1-3

Now at the end of Ch 32 he said that he wouldn't flatter anyone in his speech, yet here he is saying, "Hear me out you who are wise." Which in my estimation seems to be more than a simple statement (though I suppose it could be) but it seems to me to be one of 3 things, none of which are really healthy; he's either flattering them (perhaps to keep them tuned into what he's saying). Or he's being sarcastic as if to say if they were so wise this issue would've been resolved long ago, and if they had knowledge they wouldn't be in a place where they were unable to minister adequately and appropriately to Job. *Or* he's inflating his own ego in that they're older than he is, "wiser" than he is (according to their culture) and yet they need to be listening to him that they might learn something. And even though it's just a "passing tone" of sorts, he just issues that exhortation in passing, it just kinda makes you go, "What did he mean by that?" Because I can't see where it was a real healthy statement, it seems more to be loaded in some way and for some reason.

But he says there in Vs 3 (read) And this is kind of a neat picturesque kind of a phrase, (and he's borrowing the phrase from Job who said this in Ch 12) but he's calling on them to discern the things he's saying, to see whether or not they be acceptable, or true. And this is good because the bible tells us that we're not to simply believe everything we hear just because it's delivered in a flowery/formidable kind of way.

John said, “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” 1 John 4:1 Just because something shows up in the news or on some tabloid somewhere that doesn’t make it true, and we do well to investigate the facts before we just assume upon a certain situation. Nor should we just assume something is true because a guy behind a pulpit made the statement. Be an individual investigator, like the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily to find out whether the things that they were being taught by Paul were true. (Acts 17) Elihu welcomes scrutiny, asks for the accountability (and that’s good) he’s got nothing to hide; he’s dealing as openly and honestly as he can. (Doesn’t mean everything he shares is accurate, but he’s not dealing deceitfully purposefully with malicious intent).

Vs4-9

Now again Job didn’t exactly say what he’s accusing him of here in Vs 9. And we spoke about this last week, its bad enough to have the right information and make a wrong implication.

But here his *information* isn’t even right, Job *did* say things to the effect of he was righteous, that he hadn’t sinned and that God was piercing him through with arrows and all of that. But he *didn’t* say, “There’s no profit to this,” remember that was the whole point of Satan’s trying him. He told God that Job was only serving Him for profit and that when his profit was taken from him, when God was no longer blessing him materially, physically/personally, that he would curse God to His face. Now he *did* speak of being bummed (I’m paraphrasing) over the fact that he was seeking to serve God and that *God* seemed to be ignoring *him*. But he’s never made a statement to the effect that it was pointless to serve God because there was no personal profit in it.

But be that as it may (though his facts are off a bit) Elihu’s point is well taken and that is this; Job is accusing God of being *unjust*. Vs 5 voices the essence of the complaint, “God has taken away my justice.” “God is punishing me unjustly,” and in Vs 7 Elihu says, “Man, can you believe this guy? Nothing seems to phase him; he drinks in scorn like water. He just refuses to break.”

And now Elihu spends the majority of the rest of this Ch demonstrating the fact that God *is* just and that’s there’s no such thing as *injustice* with God. And the overarching emphasis that he’s making is that God is sovereign therefore injustice is something that He’s incapable of.

Vs10-12

We often speak of the fact that God can do anything, that there’s nothing impossible for God, and that’s absolutely emphatically true. Yet it’s equally true that there are certain things that God *can’t* do. For instance, God can’t learn (and Elihu will remind Job of that in Vs 23) He already knows everything, and doesn’t need to search out *anything*. He’s all knowing therefore He can’t learn anything more.

Nor is it possible for God to love you more, or love you less than He does right now, God is love, and He'll never love you less and He can't love you anymore. He can't go against His own Word, because that would compromise His holiness, and His righteousness, and He can't do that. Here Elihu tells us that God can't do wickedly, or pervert justice. God is always perfectly just; he's incapable of doing any wrong. God will always do the right thing.

Remember when the LORD visited Abraham there in Gen 18, (God came down in what we call a Theophany, Christ pre-incarnate seen in various places throughout the OT). And he told Ab that He was on His way to destroy Sodom because the outcry against them was great and their sin was very grave. And Ab began to intercede saying, "What if there's a few righteous in the city, will You destroy the righteous with the wicked? Will not the Judge of all the earth do *right*?" Of course He will, and God said that He'd spare Sodom (the entire city) for as few as 10 righteous souls found therein. But God didn't even find that many, only 1, Lot and at that God made sure he was taken out before His wrath fell upon that city. So the judge of all the earth does *right*, He's incapable of perverting justice, because if He's truly God than He's perfect, and if He's perfect He can do no wrong. (He's goes on)

Vs13-15

So not only is He incapable of doing any wrong *personally*, He's also the ultimate *authority*. "Who gave Him charge over the earth, or appointed Him over the whole world?" No one did, if no one gave it to Him, than no one can take it from Him, or to understand that another way, there's none higher than Him. He's the ultimate authority, the buck stops with Him. The bible is clear, "...*the LORD Himself is God; there is none other besides Him.*" Deut 4:35. And again, "*Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*" Isa 46:9-10

There is none above Him, none even beside Him; He reigns in authority over all the earth. If He should gather to Himself His Spirit, and His breath, all flesh would perish together and man would return to dust. My next breath, your next breath is in His hands, He's the giver and taker of life.

Vs16-20

Remember at one time Job himself was apart of his local government, he sat in the gates executing justice, and yet he's willing to chide God who is at the very apex of justness. He's saying that Job has the audacity to say that he was able to do the just and right thing as a finite and frail member of humanity, yet the infinite God of all the universe has messed up, executed injustice. But God's no respecter of persons, rich, poor, powerful, none of that matters to God in the sense that we're all the work of His hands. And so there's something inherently wrong in a statement that implicates that I'm able to do justly in a certain situation but God can't.

Vs21-30

Few things here. #1 Elihu is saying for God to be unjust, or to sentence someone inappropriately as a judge that would mean that He must not have all the facts at His disposal. He must not see everything, or understand the situation, but He reminds Job that God's eyes are on the ways of man. And he sees *all* his steps, there's *no* darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. Remember David wrote, "*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall fall on me,' Even the night shall be light about me; Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*" Ps 139:7-12 There's nothing that goes on in your life but that God doesn't see it, and isn't altogether familiar with it. The book of Hebrews tells us, "...*there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" Heb 4:13 Remember Job wanted to come before God and present his case, as if there were a few things God needed to be aware of that He apparently didn't realize or else things wouldn't be the way they were. And there in Vs 23 Elihu reminds Job that God doesn't need to further consider a situation, He already knows everything, therefore He judges with perfect wisdom.

And there in Vs 29 he addresses Job's complaint that God seemed to hide His face from him, not seeming to respond to Him, and again the bottom line is who are we to question the sovereign reasoning of God? In Ch 24 Job complained of how God seemed to ignore men's sins, Elihu says we ought to be grateful that God is longsuffering. He waited 120 yrs before sending the flood, some 400 yrs before eradicating the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. And it's not that God is slack, but that He's patient, He desires to give men opportunity to repent. Remember Peter said, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" 2 Peter 3:9 I for one thank God for that, where would some of us be had God brought judgment 15-20 yrs ago? Perhaps 5-10 yrs ago, or even 1-2 yrs ago, when God seems to go into hiding, "hides His face," perhaps we shouldn't be so quick to jump to conclusions, God loves the lost of this world, doesn't want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. Why is it that I'm so thankful that God was patient with me, but I want Him to execute justice swiftly on so many others?

Vs31-32

The point simply being, "Why can't people just say, 'You know what I've learned my lesson, if there's anything I can't see, open my eyes so that I might repent of that.'" He's saying, "Just subject yourself to the chastening hand of the Lord and learn whatever lesson He's trying to teach you."

Vs33

You won't submit yourself to the Lord's terms but you think that He should submit Himself to yours. Man, how often I want God to respond according to *my* terms, but I resist *His*, but the bottom line is that Father knows best and God is in no way obligated to do anything to my satisfaction or how I think they need to be done.

Vs34-37

Apparently when he paused to give Job an opportunity to respond, Job didn't, and I'm not sure if that made him mad or what (we already know that he was pretty passionate about his position) but this doesn't really sound like the same young man who said, "Surely no fear of me will terrify you, nor will my hand be heavy on you." Now he's all, "Job is speaking like an idiot; he needs to be tried to the utmost, because now he's adding rebellion to his sin; clapping his hands and multiplying his words against God." And it's not that Job's standing before God was wrong, it wasn't God said that Himself, but that his attitude towards his suffering before God was wrong. And I'm not saying we can't identify with Job, I don't like to suffer and it's difficult to understand when you don't know why, or you've done nothing wrong. But nevertheless we're to trust *in* the Lord, and submit *to* the Lord regardless of the circumstances that surround our lives, because even when I can't see it, God is still good, He still loves me, and has an eternal concern *for* me.

Ch 35

Vs1-8

The proverbs tell us, "*If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you will bear it alone.*" Prov 9:12. And here Elihu is telling Job not to overvalue himself, or think of himself more highly than he ought. Don't think that God owes you, or owes me anything. He says, "If you're righteous what do you give Him?" In other words what does our righteousness add to Him? Nothing really, "and your wickedness only affects you and the people around you, but not God." Now there's certainly a sense in which our sin breaks God's heart, but it doesn't detract from Him, or make Him any weaker, or any less God than He would've been. Sometimes people get mad at God and think that they're going to go on a sinning rampage to get Him back, but ultimately they're not really doing damage to God in that sense, they're only heaping judgment upon themselves. We can't add to or take away from who God is by the way we lead our lives, He is higher than us, higher than the heavens are above the earth.

Vs9-12

Elihu says, "There's a reason that men cry out to God and God doesn't respond. It's because men are insincere in their cry, they cry out in times of trouble, make these false claims of repentance, but when deliverance comes their way they're right back into the same lifestyle they previously led with out regard for God." You're on a plane, it gets crazy turbulence, and suddenly everyone is praying, "God if you get us safely to the ground I'll serve You the rest of my days, just help us land, get us out of this trouble." The plane lands and people relent to the, "Thanks for being there God, now don't call me I'll call You," plan.

It stems from the pride of man, calls out to the strong arm of God only when it suits them, they're not really seeking God for God's sake, being willing to praise Him for who He is, rain or shine. And so it's not that God is indifferent to man, but that man is indifferent to God. Remember there in the book of Ezekiel when God was speaking to Israel about His judgment (in Ch 18 and again in Ch 33) and how that if a righteous man turned from his righteousness and committed wickedness that God wouldn't remember his righteousness but would account to him wickedness.

But if a wicked man was to turn from his wickedness unto righteousness that God wouldn't remember his wickedness but would account to him righteousness. And he said that Israel was saying, "Hey that's not fair," (Basically saying that it didn't matter what they'd done they wanted to be remembered for righteousness) and God said, "It's not *My ways* that aren't fair, it's *your ways* that aren't fair. I'm not the one with the double standard (God was saying) you are, man is." And he's not going to play those games of "crying wolf." So that He's all the time coming to man's rescue only to be turned against over and over again. He knows the heart of man and doesn't respond to the insincere cry.

Vs13-16

Because God's not responding to your liking, according to your schedule you're getting all out of line. And I think that we can all identify with that as well. But God is sovereign, He has a purpose and plan, and the purpose of prayer isn't to get my will done in Heaven, but God's will done on earth. And so God help us to be patient *with* Him when things don't go according to our liking, to be submissive and subservient *to* Him, and that we might walk in humility *before* Him trusting that His purpose and His plan will ultimately yield fruit from our lives for our eternal good, and His eternal glory.

Prayer Points:

God we don't always understand, but You've never asked us to understand, but to trust in You. Lord increase our faith, we realize that You are in control, that You're sovereign, that *You* are the authority and Lord You don't answer to us, but we answer to You, help us God to walk in humble subservience to You even when we're wrestling with the "whys" of life. Just resting on the bedrock elements of Your goodness, Your love, and Your thoughts of peace and not evil towards us, to give us a future and a hope.