

Job 4-7

As we catch back up to the context here remember that Job is currently suffering, going through one of the most difficult times anyone in the human frame has ever experienced except for Christ Himself. Why? Because of his great *fear*? Because of his negative *confession*? No, but rather because of his great *faith*, because God knew his heart, that he was a man who was blameless and upright, who feared God and shunned evil, there was none like Job on the face of the earth, that's what God said of him. And So God entrusted him with a trial like none of us has ever known, nor probably never will know to silence Satan, and vindicate His own integrity regarding the heart of a man in love with Him. That man will love God though there be no personal profit (on this side of eternity) *from* God. And That not only will man love God if there's no *profit* in it, but even if he's *penalized because of* it. Which brings about a very soul searching question for you and me, why do I serve God, why do you serve God? Do we serve God because of what He can do *for* us, or out of the overflow of all that He is *to* us, full of love and mercy, holy and righteous, worthy of all honor and praise?

God owes us nothing, when you trusted Christ, God imputed to you His righteousness that you might be spared eternal separation from Him, that you might be forgiven of all your sin, entering in to everlasting life. What's my point? That that alone places us eternally in *His* debt, no matter how difficult our days may become, or how turbulent times may be, God has given us more (in Christ) than we ever deserve, we owe Him our everything, He owes us absolutely nothing. So we're not to praise Him in hopes of getting something *from* Him, but simply because *of* Him, who He is, what He's done, He's worthy of our deepest praise.

Something else Job forces us to come to grips with is the fact God doesn't exist for us, but rather we exist for Him. And I know that we all know that theologically, and we consent to that *intellectually*, but I think its difficult for us to really come to terms with that in *reality*. We think God is there to watch out *over* us, take care *of* us, provide *for* us, and be a shield *about* us, and though He'll do all those things because of His great love, we need to realize that He doesn't exist for us and *our good pleasure*, but rather we exist for Him, and *His good pleasure*. Paul told the Ephesians, "...*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*" Eph 1:4-5 To the Philippians he said, "...*it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*" Phil 2:13. And of course we read in Colossians, "*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*" Col 1:16 What's my point in this? We mentioned Sunday morning that God owns the editing rights to our lives. So that should God choose to use us in a certain way, or even allow us to be an example in a certain situation that though we don't understand in the moment, will ultimately make for our eternal good, and His eternal glory, He's free to do that. Because He doesn't belong to us, we belong to Him, we're *His* creation, therefore we're subject to *Him*, He's not subject to us.

Now having said that we understand that we can trust Him implicitly, He's for us not against us, but He's free to use us in whatever capacity and to whatever degree He should so choose.

Which brings us back to Job, we find him *currently* suffering *tremendously*. And Three of his friends have come to see him, and they've sat in stunned silence for 7 days. Job's lost everything, and isn't even recognizable anymore due to the personal devastation that's come upon him.

Open oozing sores, his skin is turning black and falling off, he's been scraping himself due to the deep insatiable yet incredibly painful itch, he suffers from insomnia and can't sleep at night. He has fever that seems to cause him to hallucinate now and then, when he finally sleeps he has nightmares, his sores (probably infected) are covered with worms, he's lost his appetite and is skin and bones. And Job finally cries out in Ch 3 saying that he wishes he'd never been born, or that he'd have been left to die at birth because life has become so unbearable.

Now what do you say to someone like this? He's lost everything, his family, his finances, he's been suffering for months with what seems to be a terminal disease that's so radically violated him *physically* that it's difficult to even look at him *personally*. Sometimes there's nothing you can say, and that's ok. Because sometimes we feel so pressed to say *something* that we wind up saying something we regret, we put our foot in our mouth, Peter did that a lot. But this much I can tell ya, when ministering to the bereaved, or someone who's just really going through the ringer, you'll miss it if you try to minister through *logic*, we're to minister through *love*. Trying to answer the "whys" is futile, explanations, logic, those things don't heal a broken heart, but God's *love*, and His grace, will. Job's friends try to use logic, much of which is faulty anyway, and they don't help a thing, they only hurt him more, adding insult to injury.

Vs1-2

After having sat in silence for 7 days, then hearing Job breakout in desperation, just wishing he'd never been born, Eliphaz says, "Listen, is it ok if I say a little something here, and really even if you say "no" how can I not?" (And being the 1st to speak of the 3, he's probably the oldest). And What's happening here is that after hearing Job speak so detestably of the day of his birth and all of that, he's offended, and he feels the need to respond. And This is what I was in reference to with regard to logic as opposed to love, we're to speak the *truth* but it's always to be balanced in love. And Often times when people are speaking out of anguish we'd do well to hear the cry of their heart, rather than nit pick the word's of their mouth. Job's hurting here, and he's needing some encouragement, but rather than being reassured, he's rebuked, rather than being comforted, he's condemned, Eliphaz is going to kick him while he's down. Be careful in your response to the wounded, James tells us, "...*let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*" James 1:19-20 Which is to say that our getting uptight in a given situation, feeling the need to bring a vindictive correction, doesn't bring a loving, peaceful and righteous resolve, all it does is stir up contention.

Vs3-5

“Listen Job, you’ve always had advice for *others* who are in trouble, given *them* some instructions to help them when they’re down and out, but now that you’re the one who’s going through it, you’re all freaking out! Why don’t you take your own advice?” He’s saying that now that Job is in the kitchen, he can’t take the heat. He started out seemingly in a mode of compassion, but it becomes evident real quick that it becomes a means of criticism. The proverbs tell us, “*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold In settings of silver.*” Prov 25:11. And again, “*He who gives a right answer kisses the lips.*” Prov 24:26 A right word in due season can be powerful, restoring, refreshing, the wrong word can crush you, injure you, bring you further down. Eliphaz isn’t ministering to Job’s heart; he’s arguing Job’s words.

Vs6-11

What’s he saying here? Basically that if Job is innocent he has nothing to worry about, but by the way things look there must be sin in his life, so God must be judging him. Makes you feel all warm and fuzzy inside doesn’t it?

He’s saying, “You’ve sown in Job, so now you’re reaping it, the old lion is perishing and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.” Remember all Job’s kids were crushed when a storm collapsed their house. And He’s making a universal application, out of his own limited personal *observation*, “I’ve seen it, those who plow iniquity, reap trouble. Whoever perished being innocent, or where were the upright cut off?” The idea being that the righteous are blessed, while the wicked are judged, you’re being judged therefore there must be some form of wickedness in you. And I think that everyone would agree that *ultimately* God *will* bless the righteous and judge the wicked, but Job’s not dealing with the *ultimate* he’s dealing with the *immediate*.

And this idea that the innocent never suffer is ludicrous, how many of the prophets were *rightly* martyred? How many of the apostles were cut off due to *wickedness*, of course the ultimate innocent one to suffer was Jesus Himself in whom there was no sin, yet He suffered excruciatingly being “cut off” for you and me, wounded *for our* transgressions, bruised *for our* iniquities, the chastisement for *our* peace was placed upon Him. It had nothing to do with him yet He “perished” or was put to death in innocence, cut off in uprightness. “Well, how could he have known of any of those people?” He couldn’t have, but what about Abel? Did Cain kill him because he was wicked? No, he was cut off in uprightness, perished in innocence.

But I find that it’s easy for people who’ve never down certain paths experientially to tell you and me how it’s supposed to be “in reality.” They’re able to slice and dice with the sword of the Spirit, but they’re ineffective at washing wounds with the water of the Word. Isn’t it interesting that the last miracle Jesus ever performed on the pre-side of the cross was to heal a wound inflicted by one of His own with the sword as He restored the ear of Malchus? And I wonder how many times He has to come behind us after we’ve done our damage to people slicing them by means of the sword, sharing the straight hard truth, not ministering in the love of Christ?

Those of you who were with us in the Calvary Distinctives course remember that we learned that we can't truly minister apart from compassion, but that compassion comes through understanding. Eliphaz doesn't understand, he has no compassion, he's simply saying, "Well, buddy you reap what you sow." And that's true, but it's not always applicable.

Vs12-21

"Not only am I speaking from personal *observation*, but from spiritual *revelation*." And he starts getting all spiritual on Job, "A word was brought to me secretly in the night, a spirit passed by, the hair on my body stood up, then he spoke to me and said, 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?'" Now did this actually happen? Perhaps, but what kind of spirit was it? It's not generally God's style to sneak up on someone and scare them out of their mind. Not only that the message didn't carry much substance, "Can a mortal be more righteous, or more pure than God?" Well who needs a spirit to give them the answer to that? Of course not! But he's really laying it on thick, "Job I'm a man of personal observation, and spiritual revelation, this is what's going on." He doesn't have a clue what's going on, which is another reason we've gotta be careful when we speak into a situation, we generally have very limited information as to the full set of facts, we're not always accurate in our assessment.

But I do like this description here of our humanity in Vs 19, "Those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust." Paul spoke of our bodies as "earthen vessels" but how that God has put treasure in them in reference to the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ in us, the hope of glory. Why put such treasure in clay pots?

Because it draws attention to the treasure, if you were to fill one of those red clay flower pots with Diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, all kinds of precious treasures, how many people upon seeing it do you think would go, "My that clay pot is gorgeous!?" No one is going to even notice that pot, except perhaps to say, "Why?" They're going to be all about the treasure in it, and that's exactly what God is doing with us, in and through us, placing treasure in us, not so that people can be attracted to the earthen vessel, but the treasure that's in it, the gospel and person of Jesus Christ

Ch5

Vs1-5

He's accusing Job of just about everything but innocence isn't he? He says that he's seen wicked people prosper for a time, but it always catches up to them, his sons are crushed, and his harvest is taken. Well, what has happened to Job? His sons have been crushed, his harvest and livestock stolen, translation, "You had us fooled, but God seen right through it," what a friend. Is it true that the wicked are always crushed, while the righteous take root? Ultimately, yes, immediately, not at all, all kinds of injustice is done to the righteous, while the wicked *often* prosper in this life, the bible is clear, "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Tim 3:12 In this world *we will* suffer tribulation, it's part of the package.

But note quickly in Vs 1 another truth we're able to glean here. There's no man who'll be able to meet the need of the human heart, "...to which of the holy ones will you turn?" Only one Man, and that's the Son of Man, the Man Christ Jesus can meet your need, any other avenue is an effort in vain.

Vs6-7

Now we'll agree with this though I'm not certain of his angle here. As sure as sparks fly up out of a fire, trouble will visit a man's life. But it seems that he's saying, "Hey, Job, the problem isn't coming from up out of the ground, just out of nowhere, trouble is rooted from within, it's because of the sin in your life that this has come upon you." Which of course we know to be completely false.

Vs8-16

Now this is beautiful and picturesque, and some great advice generally speaking, but again completely irrelevant to Job. "If I were you buddy, I'd be seeking God, getting right *with* Him, repenting *before* Him, committing my cause *to* Him, because He's merciful, compassionate and just." As if Job hasn't cried out *to* God, fell on his face *before* God, and committed his life into the *care* of God a thousand times over since this whole thing began. Can you imagine how wounding these words must've been?

Vs17

Again this is a powerful, and ready to be received truth, Solomon picked upon it, stated it in the Proverbs (Ch 3) the writer of Hebrews quoted it in Heb Ch 12, the only problem is that it's not applicable to Job. God isn't chastening him, he's done nothing wrong, God help us to be sensitive to the situation when we're offering our input.

Vs18-27

"Personal observation, spiritual revelation and experience, Job, that's the way it is." Again the premise being that suffering is sent in proportion to a man's sin, and prosperity according to his piety, it doesn't take a theologian to blow buckshot all through that. It just doesn't hold water with even a little bit of thought placed into it.

Ch6

Vs1-3

"Did I say some things that I shouldn't have, probably. But give me a break, can't you see my grief, the degree of calamity that's struck me? If you placed all the sand of the sea on one side of the scale, and my grief on the other, my grief and calamity would outweigh the sands of the seas!" In other words, "Show mercy, look at the destruction, and devastation in my life."

Vs3-4

Remember Job is speaking out of anguish, he's not always altogether accurate either, it's not God doing this to him, Satan is the one who is directly afflicting him.

Vs5-7

Translation, "Your words have done nothing for me, only adding to my affliction, they're like tasteless food, my soul refuses to dine on them." "Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass, or the ox low over its fodder, its food?" No, when things are going well they don't bellow out, he's saying a couple things here, #1 My life has no substance left in it, I'm crying out here, and #2 You're not feeding me anything nourishing, I can't even take this junk in that you're trying to cram down my throat.

Vs8-10

"I've been in anguish, but I haven't hid His word, I haven't turned my back on God. But I just wish that He'd take me out." God doesn't always answer prayer in the affirmative, and we need to thank Him for that, or else we'd have destroyed ourselves many times over. Though we can't see the forest for the tree in front of our face, God is often times merciful to spare us our request.

Vs11-14

You might underline Vs 14, "To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friends." One has defined sympathy as, "Your pain in my heart." And that's pretty good, and Job's not saying that he's forsaken God, but even if he did, it doesn't mean he wouldn't need compassion and love in his time of need. It's the goodness of God, the kindness and compassion of God that leads us to repentance, if hell is breaking loose in my life, than how about shining Heaven's love into it? He tells them, "It's not your lectures I need, its your love." Friends should be refreshing in a time of need, not rebuking, doesn't mean we don't speak the truth to one another, sometimes the only one who'll tell us the truth is our friends. But again the problem here is that Job's friends aren't speaking the truth, its nothing more than critical conjecture.

Vs15-20

Translation: "Thanks for nothing, you guys are like dried up river beds in the desert, you flow with water in the winter, but when the heat is on, and someone needs refreshing, it's pointless to turn to you." He says they're fair weather friends, as long as everything was cool, they were fine to have around, but now that Job is in the wasteland of spiritual/emotional/and physical depravity, they have nothing refreshing to offer him, no soothing water by their words to refresh him.

Vs21-27

"Here I am venting in anguish, but rather than comfort me, you criticize me, bring me further down."

Vs28-30

“Look at my face, I’m not hiding anything from you, but you just can’t say that tragedy of cataclysmic proportions can happen to the righteous, or the godly.”

Ch 7

Vs1-10

“Life is hard, and time is short,” and he seems to be crying out to God here to settle things one way or another quickly because, he’s just not going to last much longer.

Vs11-12

Again remember that it’s not God who’s afflicting him, but Job can’t discern that, he didn’t have the benefit of the 1st 2 Ch’s. He’s saying, “I feel like God has subdued me and is afflicting me, keeping me under watch as if I’m a threat if left unchecked, but what can I do, I’m no threat, no reason to afflict me like this.”

Vs13-18

David picked up on Vs 17 here in Ps 8, and again in Ps 144, but with David he’s thinking of God’s grace, that He would be mindful of him, keep an eye on him and all of that. But with Job he’s asserting negative connotations like, “Why would You keep me under guard, as if I could do anything against You or Your cause, please just relent from this devastation of my life...”

Vs19-21

Job’s not confessing some sin to the Lord that he’s been hiding, but what he’s saying is that if there *is* sin in his life that he’s not aware of, “Please forgive me, why haunt me like this, cleanse of my secret faults, things I’m not aware of. If that’s what’s brought this on, than reconcile me please, because I might not make it till the morning.” Job thinks he’s terminal, it’s only a matter of time, and not much at that.

Are we to avoid truth? No, because that’s not love, but remember our Lord who ministered not out of spiteful criticism, but compassion. Don’t jump up on your soapbox, cutting hard lines with your sword, administer healing as with a surgeon’s scalpel. Both may hurt, but one only harms, the other brings healing, don’t minister through the lens of logic, but through love.

Prayer Points:

God would You help us? Its so easy to criticize and condemn when we should comfort, to harm rather than heal, to wound rather than refresh, Lord may we be used to bind up that which is broken through Your love. Give us wisdom that we might know when to speak, and when to hold our tongue, forgive us when You have to come behind us to clean up all the wounds we’ve administered by swinging the sword of the Spirit around wildly, rather than using it tactfully and precisely as You desire. We thank You for Your love *for* us, and patience *with* us.