

The Book of Job

Job maintains his independence

Study 7

Job 6 verse 22

Did I say bring unto me or give a reward for me of your substance?

Or deliver me from the enemy's hand or redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

We do not read that Job asked his friends to visit him or bring him anything; they just showed up and in doing so gave him nothing but grief! It maybe that their intentions were honourable...just maybe! Maybe they were genuine in their concern for his condition...maybe! But so far we have learned that they were out of order not only in their belief about Job but also in their way of dealing with it.

I believe these chapters about Job's friends show us a great deal on how not to speak, or even approach a person in need of encouragement, prayer for sickness or some affliction that weighs heavy on a fellow Christian unless we have the backing of our Pastor or Elders who have had some real experience in counselling.

Different people on three different occasions who were visitors to our church asked if they could pray for me. We had never met before, I did not know them they did not know me. One turned round from his seat in front of me and asked at the beginning of a service, I felt embarrassed as I said no thank you, another asked me when the service had finished and my wife and I were talking with friends at the back of the church. Another as we were taking our seats to begin the service, I asked him who he was and what was his background...he turned out to be the visiting speaker! Maybe he should have introduced himself or offered to pray for me with others during the service. Be careful who prays for you if you are not sure thank them then tell them your Pastor will pray for you. People may not start out with any intention of speaking hurt to anyone but depending on the reaction of a person in great pain, sorrow, bereavement or a very difficult experience, the best council is from the Pastor the Elders of the church or any who have been given the appointed job by the Pastor to pray for the sick, great care must be given to rebuild faith in God before the sick accept what you say.

A person suffering like Job suffered or who is in great pain, or battling with family issues, employment, mortgage, or marriage problems already has Satan's condemnation to deal with, so our job is to build up a strong faith and belief that God has everything under control even if it looks black on the outside. Those who pray for the sick must have a strong faith and belief that God has everything under control and that He is the healer and no one else.

Job's faith in his God was strong enough to deal with the condemnation of his three friends but he had to draw from deep within himself to do it. How deep is our faith, or our belief in God? How strong is our experience in our walk with the Lord that we can stand tall above our afflictions let alone help those who are not as strong?

Job 6 verse 24. 25

Teach me and I will hold my tongue and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! But what does your arguing reprove?

Job's friends claimed he had sinned but they could not tell him where or what he had done. The reason for the words they used to reprove Job were in their imagination, they were desperate to look as though they were God's mouthpiece speaking on God's behalf but Job recognised they were as the wind! Oh haven't we seen it all before?

Now that is not to say we should not pray for the sick and depressed, of course we should. But we first must take time to ask the Lord what to say or pray after all He is the healer not us and we must commit our praying to Him and pray through Him and in His name.

The rest of this chapter is about Job maintaining his independence and his rejection of the condemning, accusing and ill-conceived words that brought Job no comfort at all. Read it through and write down the comments Job tells his friends.

Job Chapter 7

Is there not an appointed time to man upon Earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hireling?

Job is under tremendous pressure. He has asked to die now he thinks he really will die and he does not want to die in this condition because it looks as though his life has had no meaning at all. All he has seen is destruction, pain and hurt little knowing what is happening in the Spirit world. He does not know of the conversation between God and Satan concerning his life, he does not know that Satan would be out to utterly destroy him but for God's hand withholding Satan from doing so. Neither could he know the tremendous blessing his life-story has been to the generations after him and to us as we study right now.

If we were able to ask Job as he was suffering and as he had lost everything the question do you think your life will be a blessing to readers in the twenty-first century, and do you think others also in pain will take encouragement from reading about your suffering he would say from his heart, I haven't a clue what you are taking about.

James 1:12

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

Well there it is, we must persevere under trial or in great pain or lost loved ones or that lost job or your home, in fact Job's story covers pretty well all that man can lose today so your situation fits in there somewhere! I doubt that there has ever been another person whom the Lord has tested as He did Job. Have you thought that your fellow Christians or your family, your neighbours and workmates will watch you to see how you react to that burden? Wouldn't it be a wonderful testimony to the glory of God if we persevere and fight with Jesus to win over Satan's attacks on us?

Verses 2 to 10 Job speaks out the difficulties of his life which are many. He believes there is no hope and in verse 7 says:

O remember that my life is wind: my eye shall no more see good.

How wrong he was, the Lord is showing us that no matter how bad things get, or how bad things look as we now understand from the beginning of our studies God has everything under control and there is nothing He cannot change.

I guess there are some who are saying right now, yes I believe, I have read God's Word and have been prayed for many times but my pain and suffering has not even diminished, some may be as bold to say "it doesn't work". I believe The Lord understands our feelings, it is difficult to trust when suffering, I have been in such pain at times I cannot pray any more and stopped in the middle of my prayer and Pauline has continued for me. Job felt like that, he came to the point that he complains to the Lord:

Job 7: 11.

Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Because of the lack of understanding in the happenings of our lives, we are prone to give vent to our feelings and emotions and maybe like me, regret them later! This happens because of a lack of faith and lots of unbelief!

When I was in business and there was a lack of work my wife and I would pray about it. Having prayed Pauline would sit back and rest in the Lord, I on the other hand being the Director of the company and responsible for the finance of the home, the business, the mortgage, the car, and the food on the table, I felt I must not rest but try and rustle up some work from somewhere! I even looked for another job; maybe we should sell the house! *Lack of faith and lots of unbelief!*

God is our Father and we are His children I am sure He understands we are ignorant of the war between the hosts of heaven and Satan and his fallen angels over our souls and Satan is a master at telling us lies about our situations.

Satan even gave Job nightmares and bad dreams and visions in the night when all Job wanted was rest. Job thought these demonic dreams were from God which shows that in the middle of such pain, suffering or heartache a person can lose their spiritual direction and become quite irrational. Sometimes it is very difficult to see God's ultimate purpose for the creation of man when we are in afflictions which have lasted for many years. We see and read about the devastating earthquakes, floods and wars and man's inhumanity to his fellow man every day on our televisions and in the media "If God is a God of love why does He allow it" we have often heard from people who do not understand the times we live in. We seem to forget that it started out OK when God made the earth He said "It is good" but man and woman and Satan messed it all up.

Verse 15 to the end of the chapter:

So that my soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live always let me alone for my days are vanity. What is man that You should magnify him? And that You should set Your heart upon him? And that you should visit him every morning and try him every moment? How long will You not depart from me nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle, I have sinned: what shall I do unto You O You observer of men? Why have You set me as a mark

against You so that I am a burden to myself? And why do You not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and You shall seek me in the morning but I shall not be.

There is comfort in the knowledge that Job also complained to God about his condition and he did not choose his words with much care.

He says in verse 13;

“When I go to bed to rest You scare me with visions and dreams”

“I loathe it let me alone”

“How long will You keep me afflicted?”

“If I have sinned tell me that I may repent”

“Why have You marked me against You so I am even a burden to myself”

“Why don’t You pardon my transgressions so that I now sleep in the dust and You will seek me in the morning and I shall not be here”

All these complaints were addressed to God and I can almost see Satan standing behind a tree somewhere laughing his head off. Why do we blame God for what Satan does? At the beginning of this study we saw the need to know our enemy and it is evident that Job was unable to distinguish between the works of Satan and the love of God. We have the Holy Spirit to help and guide us to do just that, we must recognise the voice and works of Satan or he will tamper with our minds and lives and rob us of the blessing of the Lord and as we read about Job he will use everything and anyone to achieve his purpose.

Job Chapter 8 Job’s “other friend” Bildad.

Then answered Bildad the Shuitemite and said. How long will you speak these things and how long shall the words of your mouth be like a strong wind?

Does God pervert Judgement? Or does the Almighty pervert justice?

If your children have sinned against Him and He has cast them away for their transgression...If you were pure and upright surely now He would awake for you and make the habitation of your righteousness prosperous.

Having listened to Job speak out how he feels, how his faith is a bit shaky, losing his faith and trust in God, knowing the depth Job had come to, knowing him when he was a rich predominant man in the town to seeing him now in such a terrible state sitting in a pile of ash, it would seem all Bildad could say is that Job is speaking a lot of hot air! When we look at the discourse of these three friends of Job we will notice they subtly promote their own righteousness while proclaiming Job’s unrighteousness. God on the other hand has not changed His mind about Job at all He still believes Job to be perfect, upright, one who fears God and hates evil and that is what counts, what God thinks of us rather than our friends. And another thing these men, particularly Bildad believe that if Job was without sin God would awake and restore Job’s prosperity. *Our God never slumbers nor sleeps* And what a thing to say to a man when he is down and in need of encouragement that because Job’s children had sinned which we have not read they had, God was within His rights to cast them away or destroy them.

I wish there were no Christians in our churches today who would say or behave like these friends of Job but you know there are, and I speak from experience. I and my family have suffered at the mouths of some who should know better. My wife and I

stayed up until 2.30 on a Monday morning praying with and encouraging one of my sons who had experienced what Job was experiencing from “friends”. I am utterly amazed at the lack of wisdom, tact and compassion from those who choose sometimes to “speak into people’s lives”

Job 8: 11-15.

Can a rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water? Whist it is yet in his greenness and not cut down it withers before any other herb. So are the paths of all who forget God and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand he shall hold it fast but it shall not endure.

Bildad here is preaching to the converted. What these guys were saying was quite true but not to Job and not to the righteous. Bildad is quite right a rush or plant cannot grow without its roots being deeply planted in good soil so the plant when grown can withstand the wind and rain, good and bad weather. A person cannot grow in God if he is not well grounded in faith and well watered by the Word and encouraged by the Pastors and Leaders who are responsible for them under God. Of course if we forget God and rely on hope the Bible says we shall perish. Many today rely on investments, a good job, a nice house and car and they lean on those things instead of a trust and faith in our God. Our verse says *they shall not stand although he holds it fast they shall not endure.*

We talked earlier about eternity and how we cannot comprehend it because we deal in time and time is limited, the day will come to an end, the week will come to an end and even if we project time to the future and call it a year, decade or even a century it still will come to an end. Eternity is not like that, we have no understanding of eternity, and we cannot fit it into our thinking. We still cling to the things of time and place so much faith in them, we do not have the mentality of thinking that the born again Christian is only a lodger on this earth, we are just passing through and all we strive for and cling to will rot and fade away when Jesus comes for us and we go to live with Him for...*ETERITY*. So much of what Bildad said *to* Job was true but not *for* Job who started out in this story upright and true in the eyes of his God. However their comments do apply to us today if we are not living true to God with all our heart.

The rest of this chapter continues with Bildad showing his ignorance of God or about God and he was trying to apply his own traditional beliefs to Job’s situation in the form of advice. Thankfully Job would have none of it.

Job Chapter 9: 1-12 Job’s reply to Bildad.

I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with Him he cannot answer Him of a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength who has hardened himself against Him and has prospered?

Thankfully Job was able to stand up against such a barrage of criticism and condemnation from his friends because he knew his God well. He asked Bildad how should a man be just with God. Well we know this side of the cross that we are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus. He also told Bildad that if we were to contend with God we would be on a loosing wicket, and if God was to ask us a thousand questions we could not be able to answer one.

Verse 5-12.

Which removes the mountains and they know not: which overturns them in his anger.
Which shakes the Earth out of her places and the pillars thereof tremble.
Which commands the sun and it rises not and seals up the stars.
Which alone spreads out the heavens and treads upon the waves of the sea.
Which makes Arcturus, Orion and the Pleisades and the chambers of the south
Which dose great things past finding out; yea and wonders without number.
Lo, He goes by me and I see Him not; He passes on also, but I perceive Him not.
Behold He takes away, who can hinder Him? Who will say unto Him what are you doing?

These are the words of Job to Bildad! What a contrast to the ramblings of his friends! Job knew his God, he knew that his God can shake the Earth with earthquakes, thunders and lightning, he knew it was his God who made the sun to rise and set. It was his God who could paint the heavens with pure white clouds on a background of rich blue sky. A God who made Arcturus thought to be the Great Bear constellation, and Orion also known as the Giant with the space in the sword of the Giant alone is estimated to be 2 trillion, 200, 000 billion times bigger than our sun. As we read these verses again we can see the wonders of our almighty God and give Him praise and glory, how great is our God. These friends of Job knew nothing of the God that Job worshipped. They didn't know how great He was and I doubt if they knew Him at all.

Verse 10 says:

Which doeth great things past finding out: yea and wonders without number.

Who can hinder Him or stop Him doing what He wants with our lives and who will dare to say to Him "What are you doing?"

Job chapter 9 verse 17 to Job chapter 10 verse 22.

In these verses Job begins to weaken, partly because of his three 'friends' discourses which were quite strong and to the point but wrong all the same, and partly out of the pure wear down of his sickness and condition. He begins to accuse God of injustice, oppression and being in league with the wicked. There is no doubt that Job was struggling with what he knew of his God, what he knew his God to be, what he remembered his God to be before all this sickness came upon him. He remembered he had always trusted his God to supply all his need all the time he worshipped and was faithful to his God. But now accusations began to creep in.

Chapter 9 verses 27 to 33 Job complains that God will not answer his prayers to rid him of his sores and pain and to explain why he had to lose everything, so he will comfort himself and do without God.

He says he knows that in spite of his repentance God will not account him innocent. He says if he washes himself thoroughly with snow water and make his hands cleaner than ever before he says that God would still cast him into a ditch.

Chapter 10

My soul is weary of my life: I will leave my complaint upon my self; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2. I will say unto God, do not condemn me; shew wherefore you contendest with me. 3. Is it good unto you that you should oppress,

that you should despise the work of your hands and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

In acute pain we can really identify with Job, my doctors telling me the only treatment left is an operation on my spine with just over 50% success rate and possibility end my days in a wheel chair, I understand Job's utter depression and helplessness in believing his God could remove his condition and ease his pain but disappointed that God dose not do a thing to help him. He even accuses God of favouring the wicked above the righteous, I haven't got that far! But I do believe my Lord has my condition in hand as He had Job's and I am doing my best with the help and prayers of my wife, to be the over-comer He wants me to be.

All through chapter 10 Job maintains his integrity but also maintains that God is seeking his destruction. We are not going to read this chapter verse by verse but I would encourage you to read it through there are only 22 verses. Personally I am very grateful that such a chapter is in the Bible. If you are in real pain, can hardly walk, lift or sit for any length of time you will understand Job's words very well. If you have been prayed for, you believe what the Bible says about healing but are still suffering you, with me must fight that good fight of faith and continue to trust in an everlasting God.

Verse 6 and 7 tell us Job is declaring in is heart that he has no known sin that would offend his God. There is no doubt that Job had examined himself before God to find any sin or iniquity so that he could stand before his maker blameless. When all this started in chapter 2 God pointed out Job to Satan and said of Job:

There is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and upright man one that fears God and shuns evil.

The fact is that we are ignorant of the mind of God even as Job was. We read the Book of Job as we may read any other book but the message in Job is given to us a glimpse as to why God allows Satan to have his way with us, under strict limitations as He did Job. It occurs to me that some readers do not agree with me that Satan lays sickness upon God's people, some believe that Christians should be free from such afflictions, well I am sorry I do not agree with you, there are only two forces at work in the world today good and evil, and the source is either God or Satan. Because Jesus won the battle for the souls of His creation at the cross Satan is all out to destroy God's people with suffering, pain, troubles and afflictions and bring about doubt and unbelief. Let's look at this a bit further: Paul was writing to the Colossian church from prison, the same Paul who had suffered greatly for the sake of the gospel and the church, he wrote this mind blowing word:

Colossians Chapter 1. verse 24.

Who now rejoice in my suffering for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake which is the church.

The Amplified says:

Even now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed on our part of Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body which is the Church.

What a verse! This is one of those ‘mysteries’ of the Bible, he says there is a part that the Christian plays in the suffering of Christ. It has nothing to do with the bearing away of our sin, only Christ the sinless one could do that, but the suffering the Christian is called upon to suffer is for His sake and our suffering makes up that which may be missing to bring about completeness. Again Paul says in:

Romans 8. verse 18.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

We all like to quote the verse in Romans 8 17; that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, that puts us in a high position in God and that makes us feel good, but the next part of the same verse says;

if so then we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified together

...and there is that “*glory that shall be revealed in us*” again, I believe there is much more Glory to be had in heaven than suffering down here. We have reminded ourselves of this verse before:

2 Corinthians. 4:17

For our light afflictions which is but for a moment works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In view of the reward the worst suffering and afflictions are referred to as light. And that part we have no idea about, the Lord does not tell us how great the reward will be because He wants us all to trust Him and have faith in Him that He will keep His promise and replace our sickness and suffering for ETERNAL glory. I can’t wait!

Well we had better get back to our story in Job, we will continue in the next study.

Be blessed and keep faithful our glory awaits us.