



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

JOB: LESSON 11

This week we'll be looking at the conclusion of Job's words. In chapters 29-31, Job wraps it all up, presenting his final comments and arguments. His three counselors are silent as he takes the time to reminisce about his past, lament over his current situation, and again, hold on to his present innocence. Basically, his life was once great (chap. 29), it's now incredibly horrible (chap. 30), and he has done nothing to deserve it (chap. 31). I actually like reading about Job's "good old days" as he shares about the blessings he was once the recipient of. Some feel that this chapter reeks of self pity, while others believe it's a picture of Job's frustration and confusion as he desperately tries to figure out what God is doing. It's really the first time Job even talks about his past "accomplishments" or social standing. He hasn't been boasting or giving his list of "good deeds" to his friends, nor trying to justify his faith by his works. His case before God had been based solely on the integrity of his heart and the cleanness of his conscience before God. Former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson once said, "If you *have* integrity, nothing else matters. If you *don't* have integrity, nothing else matters." About Job, Swindoll writes, "Job clung to integrity in every area of his life. Maybe that explains why we regard him so highly. He was a man of integrity *before* the bottom fell out of his life, *when* it fell out of his life, and even *after* it fell out of his life - right up to the day he took his last breath."

First Day

1. Today let's read Job 29:1-25. Job becomes nostalgic, remembering back to how life was before it fell apart. Read through and list any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases. What is Job's main point?

2. In your own words, what does Job say in verse 2?

Job paints us a picture to show us examples of all the blessings he had received from God, which allowed him to bless others. These blessings brought him great joy over the years.

3. The biggest joy he had was the presence of God in his home. What did he say about this in verses 3-6?

Milk (cream or butter) and oil represent both great abundance and God's favor. They specifically represent the productivity of his animals and his land.

4. Job was remembering back to his "prime" in verse 4. It's healthy to look back and remember how God has blessed us, but looking back to our "prime" can also be dangerous. Why? What can happen?

5. Do you spend more time looking forward towards the possibilities and opportunities of the future, or reminiscing about the days of old? What's a healthy balance? Do you have it?

6. In verses 7-11, Job talks about the respect he received from others. What did he say about it?

7. In verses 12-17, Job mentions the help he was able to give to others. What was he able to do because of God's blessings on his life?

8. Although we aren't supposed to be comparing our actions or ministries to others, reading Job's list makes me wonder ... when we look at the past and the "acts of service " that we have shown, what's on our list? Is there anything on our "present" list? Is showing compassion to those in need and following the words of Christ in Matthew 25:40 a priority in our lives?

I hope the question above made us think about our lives and commitment we've made to serve others. Although we can't just run around "doing" for the sake of "doing," we are called to put feet to our faith. But Job had spent his life "doing," and now he couldn't "do" anything but "trust and believe." Many times when God takes us through a trial, we have to do the same. Being still and waiting on God can be very difficult if you are a "doer." But sometimes God wants us still, and that's the greatest act of obedience we can give Him. I love this quote by Catherine Doherty, "If you want to see what a contribution really is, look at the Man on the cross. That's a contribution. When you are hanging on a cross you cannot do anything because you are crucified." May we allow ourselves to be "crucified with Christ."

Memory Verse of the Week: "Let me be weighed in a just balance, that God may know my integrity." Job 31:6

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Job 29:1-25 again, focusing on verses 18-20. Because God had been blessing him, what *was* Job expecting? (How does Psalm 1:3 describe his expectation?)

2. Read verses 21-25. Job had been able to use his words to be an encouragement to others. What does he say about that?

3. How do you use your words? Would others see you as an "encourager"? Is there another word that might be used to describe you? (Read Ephesians 4:29.)

4. This week, how can you be a better "encourager" to:
 - A. Your husband?
 - B. Your children?
 - C. Your boyfriend?
 - D. Your friends?
 - E. Your co-workers?

5. Read Job 30:1-31. Now Job laments over his present suffering and current condition. His opening "but now" statement shows us that he is suddenly jarred back into reality. Summarize the main thoughts. List any repeated words or phrases.

6. How did others see Job? How did they treat him? Why? (vs 11)

Wiersbe points out that Job's five complaints parallel the joys he named in chapter 29. It's helpful to notice this as we read through Job's words. Sometimes they seem to be such random thoughts, but then we find there really is an order to them. Job is contrasting his present with his past.

1. "I have no respect" (30:1-15, see 29:7-11).
 2. "I have no blessing" (30:16-23, see 29:2-6).
 3. "I have no help" (30:24-25, see 29:12-17).
 4. "I have no future" (30: 26-28, see 29:18-20).
 5. "I have no ministry" (30:29-31, see 29:21-25).
7. Job had helped so many people. Were people there to help him in his time of need?
 8. Job has expected a long and happy life, and that wasn't happening. Job cried out in his despair before God in 16-23. How did he think God felt about him? How did he feel about God?
 9. How does he describe his situation and his feelings in verses 24-31? Did he think he deserved what was happening?
 10. Write your thoughts on this chapter. How does it apply to your life? How can it help you minister to someone else?

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

All through this book, Job expresses his desire to meet God face to face and "have it out," so to speak. He really wants to get God in court and have Him present the evidence of his guilt. He wanted to "dispute with Him," which in Hebrew means "enter into litigation," and force the Lord to answer, which means "testify in court" (Job 9:3). He wanted to plead with the Judge for mercy (9:15). He wanted an arbitrator who could settle the dispute fairly (9:33). He wanted to

plead his own case (13:18-19), but there was no way to set a time and place where he and God could talk together (13:3). Today we'll be reading his last word, his final defense. Job is going to get a meeting with God, that's for sure. But he has no idea that's coming.

1. Read Job 31:1-40. Record the facts you find. What are the main thoughts or points of his final argument? How would you describe his tone, or emotions?

2. Are there any repeated words or phrases?

3. How many times does he use the phrase, "If I have"?

4. Does he use any more "legal" words?

Job ends by speaking in the form of a negative confession. A "negative confession" is a statement whereby an individual proclaims himself innocent of a series of offenses. It is called a "negative confession" because the individual gives a list of sins he has not committed instead of sins he has committed. Job talks about fourteen different sins that he has not fallen into.

5. Does Job continue to affirm his innocence in this chapter?

6. Job begins by claiming to be blameless when it comes to lust and covetousness. What does he say in verses 1-4?

7. There is so much wisdom in these simple verses. Have you made a covenant to not look upon another man if you're married? Or not to lust in your heart after anyone? (Matthew 5:28)

8. What sin does Job discuss in verses 5-8? What, does Job say, can God do to him if he has committed this sin? (Read Proverbs 6:16-19 also.)

9. What does it mean to be "weighed in a just balance"? What is Job saying?

The phrase "Let me eat and another sow" is really interesting. I read that "In the prophets, God frequently warns the nation that if they persist in being faithless to the covenant, He will take away their heritage, the land and its produce. See, for example, Hosea 2:8-9. Job, similarly, says another should take the produce of his land if he is an apostate."

In this section, Job seems to be implying that he has never cheated anyone, especially in business. The curse he calls down on himself, that he should be weighed in a "just balance," implies this. In ancient Israel, business fraud often involved using unbalanced scales and improper weights in transactions. (Proverbs 20:23)

10. What sin does Job discuss in verses 9-12? What "punishment" does Job say it is worthy of?

11. Why is adultery such a serious offense? (Can you give verses to support your answer?) What can be the consequences of it? Was Job guilty?

We'll end here for today. Our chapter will hit just about every sin there is. You may find one, or many, that you yourself have committed. Take heart because God is a forgiving and merciful God! 1 John 1:9 says that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If you are guilty of any of these, you can confess and repent to the Lord, turn from your sins, and be forgiven. You are then whiter than snow. The key to remember, though, is that choosing to "live in" your sin is another story. God doesn't wink at sin, nor does He glance the other way. So if you are continuing and practicing some sin, God is calling you to repent today.

Fourth Day

Work on your verse. Are you walking in integrity?

1. Read Job 31:1-40 again. Go back and focus on verses 13-15. What sin is he speaking about? What argument does he give on why this is wrong?

2. What else does Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 4:1 and Romans 2:11 say about this?

3. What kind of "boss," "leader," or even "parent" are you? If you are in a leadership role, how do you treat those you have authority over?

4. Read verses 16-23. What sin is he speaking of now? What punishment should he receive, according to him, if he was guilty? Can you share any verses regarding this?

Job could not be accused of a lack of love or care towards his fellow man. He took great care of his servants, his family, as well as his neighbors and those in need. He was not a selfish man (vs 31), always offering food and shelter to those

who needed it. It's interesting that he says his arm should be "pulled out of the socket" if he sins by failing to care for the poor. This seems to imply that because the widows and orphans are helpless, he should be rendered helpless by not caring for them. If God did that, there would be many "armless" people, wouldn't there?

5. Eliphaz had accused Job of worshipping his wealth. What does Job have to say about that in verses 24-28?

6. According to these verses, what else was he NOT guilty of worshipping? How is that relevant for today?

Another sin he names in verses 29-30 is having a spirit of hatred for your enemies, causing you to wish the worst for them. Job said he never uttered a curse against anyone so he wouldn't be guilty of this.

7. Have you ever been guilty of sinning by hating and wishing evil on an enemy?

8. Verses 31-32 relate to hospitality, which goes back to how we treat people. Would you consider yourself a "hospitable" person? Any changes you can make?

Job had treated all people with respect, dignity, and honor. He was loyal to his wife, treated his servants fairly, gave clothing and shelter to the needy, helped widows and orphans, and lodged travelers when they came through their town. So why, he wonders, is he given this horrible "reward" for all his good deeds? He hadn't sinned like Adam did, trying to conceal his sin or hide from God. This had to be heart wrenching.

9. Read verses 33-40. What is Job seeking? What is he asking for?

Job uses judicial and legal language again to describe his desire for a chance to appear before God's court and try his case. He longed to present the injustice of what was happening to him before his accusers, the community, most likely his wife, and ultimately, before God Himself. God has become his enemy for some reason, and he's dying to know why. He is very sure of his innocence, because he had called down some pretty severe judgments upon himself if he was guilty!

10. Do you think Job was being too bold in how he approached God, or in his firm desire to plead his case? Why or why not?

11. Write your thoughts on this chapter. How is it relevant to you personally?

See you tomorrow, ladies. I pray that we, like Job, will have the same desire to walk with integrity in all areas of our life.

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

Today we'll be looking at some application questions that stem from these three chapters. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart as we do some self-examination in a few areas.

1. Have you ever looked back at all the blessings you've received in the past, and allowed them to make you look at your present situation in a different light? Maybe allowed the memory of the "good times" to depress or discourage you? How can you guard your heart from allowing this to happen?

2. How can looking at your "past blessings" encourage you as you struggle through a present situation?

3. Have you ever totally been "taken by surprise" in a situation, or faced a trial that you "never saw coming"? How did you handle it? After studying Job, would you handle it differently?

4. Has there ever been a time in your life when everyone turned against you, even people that you spent hours ministering to? Can you relate to how Job felt? How did you handle that? Would you handle that differently now?

Derek Thomas wrote, "Job has sunk so low in his spirits! Job's life is ebbing away (30:16). God has fixed a noose around him and thrown him into the mud (30:18-19). He is tossed about by a storm (vs 22), and death seems imminent (23). His prayers are unanswered (vs 20). His every hope has been dashed (vs 25). 'My inward parts are in turmoil and never still,' he cried (27). With no relief from medication or a friend, his every plea goes unheeded. He sings the blues: 'My harp is turned to mourning and my pipe to the voice of those who weep' (30:31). This is about as sad a piece of writing as there is to be found anywhere in literature. Nothing has surpassed its melancholy. It is impossible to read it and not feel the deepest sympathy for Job. There are faint echoes to which some of us can relate, but few of God's children have walked these dark passages. But those who have will find here a note that induces hope: hope that springs from the knowledge that someone else has been here, too; hope that insists that we are not, after all, alone in our suffering."

5. How sensitive are you to those whose "harps are turned to mourning"? Do you ever just throw out a casual "cheer up!" and go on your merry way?

6. How does suffering through trials often force us to swallow our pride?
(Can you give examples?)

7. If you are in a difficult situation right now, are you holding fast to your integrity? (Job was discouraged, but wasn't defeated. He held on to God even in the midst of his doubts and frustrations.) What can you learn from Job regarding integrity?

8. What lessons can we learn (or did we learn) from Job:
 - A. Chapter 29:

 - B. Chapter 30:

 - C. Chapter 31:

"We are human BE-ings, not human DO-ings."

**"Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart;
wait, I say, on the Lord!" Psalm 27:14**

