



"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 6

Last week we met Job's wonderful friend, Eliphaz. Today we'll meet another great guy (cough cough) named Bildad. He is probably the second oldest friend, and came from Shuah, which is the middle region of the Euphrates Valley. Bildad is obviously a "legalist" and has a great respect for tradition. His speech is shorter than Eliphaz's, but filled with some pretty low blows. Let's jump right in and meet our new character and hear what he thinks about Job's situation.

First Day

1. Begin by reading chapter 8 and list any facts you find.
2. Are there any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases?
3. What would you say is the main point of Bildad's argument? Basically, how does he "diagnose" Job's problem?
4. What does Bildad "advise" Job to do in verses 5-7?

5. What verses or phrases let us know that Bildad based his opinions on traditions of the past? What's wrong with giving counsel simply based on the past?

6. What cruel words did Bildad hurl at Job in verse 4? Why would these words be so painful?

Wiersbe said, "Bildad was so concerned about defending the justice of God that he forgot the needs of his friend. Bildad preached a sermon of injustice rather than try to comfort his friend." His argument was "God is just, and He judges fairly." Again, it's a correct principle, but wrong application. His argument revolves around three subjects.

7. **Subject one:** The character of God (8:1-7) How does Bildad tie in the character of God with Job's suffering? What's wrong with his argument?

8. **Subject two:** Wisdom of the past (8:8-10) According to Bildad, what does the wisdom of the past tell us about Job's suffering? What "holes" are in this argument?

9. **Subject three:** Evidence of nature (8:11-22) How does nature support the belief that Job's grief was a result of his sin? (According to Bildad) What's wrong with this article?

Bildad tells Job that his speech was pretty much full of hot air (vs 2)! Wow, what a friend! Bildad was correct in saying that God is just, but he had forgotten about His other characteristics as well, like His love and grace. He suggests that to prove his innocence, he should beg God to restore all his prosperity. He told Job to get his wisdom from the past and draw from their experiences. Although that is true, Job's situation was unique, and God doesn't always work the same way with everyone. His position of suffering was beyond what his "forefathers" had suffered, so there was not even a point of reference. And although the former generations embraced the theology of retribution, it's not possible to judge everything we see through this lens. Last but not least, because there is a cause-and-effect theory behind nature, there must be in life as well. For instance, if a plant needs water to grow, if there is no water for the root system, the plant will die. Same with Job.

Elmer B. Smick wrote, "It seems almost incredible that Bildad would reply so callously. There is not only steely indifference to Job's plight, but an arrogant certainty that Job's children got just what they deserved and that Job was well on his way to the same fate. The lesson we must learn is that there are such people in the world and that they do their heartless disservice to mankind under the guise of being the special friend of God."

10. What have you learned about suffering from others? What have you learned about suffering from your own personal experience that you "couldn't have" learned from others?

I think I think even less of this friend because of his cruel accusations of Job's kids. It's like he tried to stab him in a place where Job's heart was most vulnerable. I wonder if he stopped talking or if Job just cut him off and interrupted. I hope it was the latter. (Gosh, I'm evil.) Anyway, we'll read how Job responds tomorrow.

Memory Verse of the Week: "God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?" Job 9:4

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Job's response in chapter 9. What facts do you find? Write your initial thoughts.

2. Does Job doubt God's sovereignty and power? What does he say about God's strength?

Job discusses the justice of God in the next two chapters. What he appears to be thinking about is having a legal trial, so to speak, if he could. Weirsbe wrote, "He wants to take God to court and have the opportunity to prove his own integrity. He uses 'legal' words like: contend (enter into litigation), answer (testify in court), judge (an opponent at law), set a time (summon to court), daysman (an arbitrator), reason (argue a case), order my cause (prepare my case), plead (dispute in court), hear me (give me a legal hearing), and adversary (accuser in court). He asks questions like 'How can I be righteous before God?' and 'How can I meet God in court?' Because he is righteous, he wants to prove it, but how can a mortal man prove himself righteous before God? Can he really take God to court? But if God doesn't step in and testify on Job's behalf, what is the purpose of all this suffering?"

3. After Bildad's argument and accusations, why do you think Job chose this line of reasoning?

Swindoll wrote, "Job's response to Bildad can be summarized in four questions: If I could stand before God, what would I say? If I could declare my own innocence, what good would it do? If I tried to be positive and cheerful, how would it help me? If only I could have a mediator, I could have my needs represented and the truth would be told."

4. Read the following verses that back up each argument and summarize his words.
 - A. If I could stand before God, what would I say? (9:1-4, 14-17, 19)

 - B. If I could declare my innocence, what good would it do? (9:20-21)

 - C. If I tried to be positive, how would it help me? (9:27-28)

 - D. If only a mediator could represent me, the truth could be told. (9:32-35)

5. Under the New Covenant, we do have a mediator. (Praise God for that!) What do the following verses say about this? Read John 14:7-11; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 Peter 3:18.

What's really interesting is that while Job's friends are sarcastically asking the question, "How can a mere mortal be righteous before God?", implying there is no answer, Job is desperately asking that question, seriously and earnestly seeking the answer. Mason writes, "No, there must be more to Him than that. There must be something more to the mystery of godliness than cold, mathematical justice. The God whose ways can be neatly comprehended by human reason, Job argues, is not the same who overturns mountains in His anger (vs 5). It is easy enough to sit in an armchair and make true statements about God, but what are you going to do when the living God 'shakes the earth from its place' (vs 6) and your armchair with it? Trying to defend oneself or argue against such a God, says Job, is more hopeless than trying to win a game of chess against the most sophisticated of computers (vs 3). Job is valiantly seeking to expand his friend's vision of God (and his own too) so that together they'll stop clinging to pat answers. He is establishing the fact that the chasm between man's sin and God's holiness is so impossibly wide

that all human attempts to bridge it are exposed as utterly useless. Yet, for this very reason, Job contends, there must be something else, something besides virtue, or sacrifice, or even correct theology, that will be acceptable to God as righteousness. There must be some way to approach Him! Reading through this passage of Job, such a clear portrait of Jesus Christ begins to emerge. It's perfectly obvious that every word of the Old Testament points in some way directly to Him who is the Word of God incarnate."

6. What does Job say about the "invisibility" of God in chapter 9?

7. It's so amazing that Job is grappling with the concept of a mediator, knowing the need for an arbitrator. He cries out for it again a few times in this book, 16:21 for example. Jump ahead to Job 42:8. What "role" is Job given here? Why is it significant?

In Shepherd's Notes, the author writes, "Job wonders why God should listen to puny Job? The problem with Job's reasoning is not that he is wrong about the magnitude of God's power. Because Job cannot comprehend any purpose or reason behind God's actions, he assumes that God's behavior makes no sense. Job is correct about God's sovereignty, and he is correct to maintain his innocence in the face of his friend's accusations, but he is wrong to portray God as arbitrary."

8. Write your thoughts on the above paragraph. God is not arbitrary. What does that mean?

9. Have you ever wrestled with what seems to be "arbitrariness" from God?

We'll end here for today. Even though Job is wrestling with some truths about God, he still comes to the conclusion that no matter what he personally believes, God can, and will, do what he wants. Way to go, Job.

Third Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Today read Job 10:1-22. Write the facts you find in this chapter, including any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts. What is Job's tone? Instead of speaking to Bildad, who is he addressing?

2. What are some of the questions Job is asking God?

3. Do you think it's wrong that Job is wearing the face of agony? (vs 1) Do you think Job should always try to "put on a happy face"? Should we?

"According to Proverbs 15:13, 'A happy heart makes the face cheerful.' But this process will not work in reverse. If anything, the excruciating effort of insincere smiling will make a sad heart even sadder and will drive a wandering soul farther than ever from the truth." (Mason)

4. Write your thoughts on the quote above. What experience can you draw from your own life concerning this principle?

In verses 4-5, it almost seems like Job is being sarcastic or revealing his anger towards God. Many scholars believe that it is much deeper than that. It seems like Job is looking for the intercessor of 9:33. Job believed that God had no concept of what it was like to be human. "We are limited in our ability to comprehend what happens to us (eyes of flesh) and unable to withstand the blows

that God reigns down on us (days of mortal). If only God could somehow share in this limitation, He would know what it is to be human, and become more compassionate, Job implies. For the book of Hebrews, Job's yearning is not an idle fancy; it gives expression to a necessary component in bringing about reconciliation between God and humanity; a divine-human intermediary. Jesus, although the Son of God, was made a little lower than the angels, took on human flesh, and participated in human weakness. It was in that very condition that He destroyed the works of the devil. Having been one of us, the Son of God is not ashamed to call us His family, but serves as a faithful High Priest, making intercession on our behalf (Hebrews 2:9-18)."

5. In our last chapter, Job is asking for an arbitrator. What does Job ask for in verse 7? Why?

6. What does Job know about God in verses 8-12?

Job acknowledges that God created him, yet God seemed to be destroying him without a cause. God wouldn't even tell him why He was doing it! (vs 2) It seemed like God only created him to crush him (13-17). If that was the case, he wished he'd never been born (18-19).

7. Job does believe that he was created and fashioned by God. (He actually describes his birth in a beautiful way.) Read Psalm 119:73 and Psalm 139. What do these verses say about that?

8. Do you also believe that you are handmade by God, and that you are not your own? If so, how should this change your perspective on life?

9. What does Job ask for in verses 20-22? Why?

10. In any of the chapters we've read so far, does Job ask God to heal his sickness? What does he want from God?

11. I read this question somewhere, and I loved it. In what ways has Jesus Christ made Job's deepest dream a reality?

12. Why was it important that Job "didn't know" what God was doing or why He was doing it? How does that speak to you and what you're going through right now?

See you tomorrow, ladies! I pray that whatever you are going through, you keep clinging to the One who will certainly carry you through!

Fourth Day

What's your verse? Do you believe it?

1. Read Job 11:1-20. We're going to read an argument from one more friend named Zophar the Naamathite. Write down all the facts, repeated words, phrases, and thoughts you find.

2. How would you describe this friend's approach? His tone?

The discussion moves from debate to a full on argument. Wiersbe wrote, "Zophar was surely the most dogmatic of the three. He speaks like a schoolmaster addressing a group of ignorant freshmen. 'Know this!' is his unfeeling approach." Eliphaz was firm, Bildad was tactless, but this guy is simply angry and mean!

3. What is Zophar basically saying in verse 6?

4. This chapter is often broken up into three points. Summarize each section:
 - a. Direct rebuke of Job (vs 2-6)

 - b. The mysteries of God (vs 7-12)

 - c. Demand for repentance (vs 13-20)

Zophar accuses Job of being an idle talker and a mocker (vs 2-3). These are serious accusations. In those days, these words described a fool, a reprobate, and one who is opposed to all that is right. (Proverbs 1:22; 14:9; 9:7-8; 13:1; 21:24). He is outraged that Job claims to be innocent (vs 4).

5. Read Job 6:5. How does Zophar throw his words back in his face in 11:12?

6. What does Zophar accuse Job of in 11:14?

Again, it's important to remember that a lot of what these men are saying about theology is true, just not applicable to Job. It's true that if we are hiding sin, God will judge us (vs 14), but Job wasn't hiding anything. Zophar seems to be grasping at straws, angry at Job for claiming to be sinless, being stubborn as a donkey, hiding sin, and failing to grasp the magnitude of God's power. He is full blown mud-slinging! In verse 5, Zophar says he wished God would appear and rebuke Job Himself!

7. Mike Mason said, "Job is less concerned with tying up all the loose ends of faith than he is with taking a good hard look at those loose ends themselves." What do you think he means? Is this good or bad?

8. Have you ever felt like God was playing games with you, or that what was happening just didn't seem to make sense? Were you able to continue trusting God, even though you were disheartened or discouraged?

9. What should you do when God is silent?

10. Should Job have "made up" something to repent for so he could appease his friends?

Oswald Chambers said, "If I worship God from fear or superstition, then I am wrong. Job's point of view is that if I do anything in order to appease God, I am committing iniquity. Certainly there is a proper place for repentance, and unless you repent, you too will all perish (Luke 13:3). But genuine repentance is something so beautiful that, like a kind of chastity of the soul, it must not be tossed away upon every passing shadow of shame, but carefully guarded and saved for the Lord alone." Well said, Mr. Chambers.

See you tomorrow, my friends!

