



"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 8

We've all heard the expression, "With friends like that, who needs enemies?" I wonder if it came from someone reading the book of Job. Honestly, when you think it can't get any worse, his friends not only thrust the knife in deeper, they twist and turn it. This week, we'll take a look at Bildad's second speech. If you thought that of all the friends, he had been a little kinder than the others, this chapter will change your opinion. He seems to be tired of listening to Job's words and has run out of patience. His words are especially hurtful in light of what had happened to Job's family. I wonder if they are standing now, face to face, nose to nose, as they hurl insults? Or perhaps they are standing over Job, looking down at him while wagging their scrawny, pointed fingers. It would seem that Job was in far too much physical pain to stand and defend himself. Sadly, a lot of what Bildad says about death is true, but he's saying it to the wrong person, in the wrong spirit, with the wrong motive, to prove a wrong premise.

First Day

1. Read Job 18:1-21. Who is speaking? Write any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases.
2. How would you briefly summarize Bildad's speech? Describe the tone.
3. How do Bildad's opening words in 18:2 compare with his words in 8:2?

In verses 1-4, Bildad basically tells Job to simply shut up and be sensible so they can talk. He goes on to accuse Job of treating them like stupid cattle rather than wise and good friends. Does Job expect God to rearrange the world for him, changing the whole moral structure of the universe? (vs 4)

Bildad's argument stems from the same theory as before; God is just, God blesses the righteous and punishes the wicked, Job must be wicked because he is suffering, if he repents, God will bless him once again. Bildad insists that God punishes the wicked and because of this, refuses to believe in Job's innocence. Bildad is sarcastic, mean, nasty, and cruel. Although this principle is partly true, he has forgotten about God's grace, mercy, and sovereignty. He has also forgotten about compassion, love, and tenderness. While it's true that God will always punish evil because He is just, it's not true that it will always occur here on earth. Remember that Job is going through this in order that "his faith may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:7). Mason wrote, "It is not Job's wickedness but his faithfulness that the Lord is disclosing through this ordeal." Job's suffering does not mean that he is out of God's will.

Bildad chooses to use fear to try to make Job repent, and he paints four vivid pictures of the death of the wicked; those who do not know God.

4. In verses 5-6, Bildad compares Job to a light that has gone out. Summarize this section. What does he call Job?

5. Read Proverbs 13:9, 20:27, 24:20, and John 8:12. Is Bildad correct?

6. In 18:7-10, Bildad compares Job to a trapped traveler. He implies he has a scheme or some secret he's not admitting to. According to Bildad, what dangers does Job face as he runs away from death?

7. Now Bildad compares him to a pursued criminal in verses 11-15. Summarize this section. What does he call "death" in verse 14?

In verses 16-21, Bildad compares Job to an uprooted tree. Death is sometimes more gradual, like a tree that slowly withers and dries up. This is a sharp contrast to the Godly man pictured in Psalm 1:3. Bildad reminds Job again that he has lost all his kids, leaving no one to carry on his name. Bildad reminds him that after a tree is cut down, there is no hope. According to Bildad, Job is close to losing any future hope he has left unless he repents. He tells Job he is "wicked" and "does not know God."

8. Although none of this relates to Job, is it a good description of death for someone who doesn't know the Lord? How do these verses confirm this? (John 14:1-6, Romans 6:23, Proverbs 4:18-19.)

9. These verses should rightly instill a fear in the hearts of those who don't know Christ. As believers, what should they do in your heart?

Tomorrow we'll take a look at Job's response to Bildad's harsh words. May we learn, again, that sarcasm and judgment are not the right tools to bring comfort to those who are suffering.

Memory Verse of the Week: "For I know that My Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God." Job 19:25-26

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Job's response to Bildad in 19:1-29. Are there any repeated words, phrases, or thoughts in this chapter?

2. What would you title it?

Swindoll writes, "Job's reply, divided into four main stanzas, appear in Job 19. In the first stanza, Job addresses Bildad's insults. In the second, he offers illustrations to describe the depths of his pain. In the third, he depicts his isolation and sorrow. In the fourth, he offers some insights into his unique situation."

3. What are some things that Job says about God in this chapter?

4. In verses 1-4, how does Job address Bildad's insults?

5. What does Job mean in verse 6 when he says, "God has wronged me"?

6. Job reminds them that if he's wrong, it's his business, not theirs. Do you think that a friend should never rebuke a friend? Read Proverbs 28:23. (Is that what Job is saying?)

In our next section, Job describes the depth of his pain. Verses 5-12 basically say that if they think Job's condition is proof that he's a sinner, then they should step back and recognize that God had made him suffer without just cause, and his troubles are no proof of guilt. He continues on and portrays the injustice of it all using a series of metaphors.

7. In verses 5-12, what seven metaphors, or pictures, does Job use to describe the depth of his pain and the trials of his life?
 1. Verse 6
 2. Verse 7
 3. Verse 8

4. Verse 9
5. Verse 10
6. Verse 10 (there's 2)
7. Verse 11-12

8. Choose one of these metaphors and explain how he feels.

9. Can you relate to Job in any of these feelings? Have you ever felt like a trapped animal or a criminal in court? Maybe an uprooted tree? What metaphor would you use to describe how God is working in your life right now? (You can make up your own!)

Job had once enjoyed God's blessings of peace and prosperity, but now he was stripped of his honor. His "crown" had been replaced with the ashes of suffering. God had broken him down like the walls of an old building, leaving nothing but rubble. He felt like a discarded, unfruitful tree. The worst part of the whole ordeal was that he felt like God considered him an enemy.

10. Was Job's perception of God correct or incorrect? Why?

11. So often our "perception" of God is solely based on our present circumstances. Why is this wrong? What should it be based on? If you based your perception of God on your present circumstances right now, what would it be? Would it be distorted?

See you tomorrow, my friends. Aren't you glad our Redeemer lives?!!!!

Third Day

What's your memory verse?

1. Let's read Job 19:1-29 again. In verses 13-22, Job describes his isolation and sorrow, explaining how his suffering affected his relationship with people. Briefly summarize this section.

2. Why does physical pain and loss often make people feel so isolated, even if it's imagined? Why do people who are struggling often pull away from others? (Do you do this?)

3. How can you and I "get inside of their world" to offer help and support?

4. Mike Mason wrote, "Job's language in chapter 19 is full of haunting premonitions of Christ's crucifixion: " anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies" (vs 11); "My friends have forgotten me" (vs 14); "I am loathsome to my own brothers" (vs 17); Those I love have turned against me" (vs 19); "I am nothing but skin and bones" (vs 20)." **What does he mean?** (Isaiah 53:3)

5. In verses 21-22, Job appeals to his friends for pity. He couldn't understand why they had such hard hearts. Why did they?

I read this paragraph and it really made me think. "People are fond of posing the dual question, 'Why is there so much suffering in the world?' and, 'Why doesn't God do something about it?' Strangely, however, we seldom think to ask the deeper and more pertinent questions, 'Why is there so little love in human hearts? And, 'Why don't we do something about it?'"

6. "Why is the commandment of Jesus to "love one another" so watered-down and ignored?" How would you answer this question? How is it especially true towards those who are suffering?

7. Examine how you are responding to those in your life that are suffering. Maybe they are in physical pain, or experiencing emotional trauma. Maybe they are in a state of financial distress and losing all their possessions. Are you fulfilling the law of Christ to love them? How are you doing that?

8. Read Job 19:23-29. Why do you think he wanted his words written in a book?

Job seems to have a pattern when he grieves. He goes from low, to lower, to the bottom, then back up the heights of faith! It's like he gets a glimmer of hope all of a sudden as he remembers the Lord! I think it was those "glimmers" that kept Job's feet anchored in faith to the God he loved, even if he was barely hanging on.

9. Read verses 25-27. How are these verses an affirmation of his faith?

Wiersbe wrote, "In these verses, Job expressed confidence that, even if he died, he would still have a Redeemer who one day would exercise judgment on the earth. Furthermore, Job affirmed that he himself expected to live again and see his Redeemer! The Hebrew word translated "Redeemer" in verse 25 refers to the

kinsman-redeemer, the near relative who could avenge his brother's blood (Deut. 19:6-12), reclaim and restore his brother's property (Lev. 25:23-24, 39-55), and set his brother free from slavery (25:25). The kinsman-redeemer could also go to court on behalf of a wronged relative (Proverbs 23:10-11). In the Book of Ruth, Boaz is the kinsman-redeemer who was willing and able to rescue Ruth and give her a new life in a new land. The picture of the kinsmen-redeemer foreshadows the coming of Christ, our Redeemer. Though Job does not know Christ, he recognizes God as his Redeemer. He feels wronged, yet he knows that God is still sovereign. Despite his suffering, he believes that his only hope is to cling to his faith in the Almighty. Job trusts that, whether in this life or the next, he will stand rightly before God."

Kay Arthur writes, "As we study the theology of the kinsman-redeemer, we clearly see that Jesus fulfills this role for us. He took on flesh and blood so He would be our close relative. We were sold into slavery to sin by the fall of Adam, held under the dominion of him who had the power over death, satan. Jesus paid the price of redemption: innocent blood. Only a perfectly sinless person could redeem the slaves of sin. Jesus alone had the assets to pay, and He was most willing. And Jesus lives! What a marvelous Messianic prophecy this is!"

10. What words of warning does Job give his friends in verses 28-29?

11. Write your thoughts on this chapter. Did it challenge you? Convict you? What warnings did you find for yourself? How can you apply this chapter to your own life? Do you know that your Redeemer lives?

Fourth Day

Continue to work on your memory verse. It's such a great verse!

1. Read Zophar's second speech in Job 20:1-29. List any repeated words, thoughts, or phrases. What would you say is his main point?

2. Zophar is insulted and outraged by Job's words. What does Zophar say about that in verses 1-3?

3. What does Zophar say about the fate of the wicked in verses 4-11? Is there any truth to his words?

Zophar claims that the wicked triumph for a very short time because God always intervenes quickly to punish evil. Swindoll wrote, "In Scripture, this is rarely the case. The Lord often waits to send judgment upon evildoers. He waited 120 years before sending the Flood (Genesis 6:3). He waited over 400 years to judge the Amorites (Genesis 15:12-16). In His grace, He frequently allows ample time for repentance before destroying the wicked. In fact, Christians throughout the ages have lamented that God has not stepped in quickly enough to punish evildoers. But that's God's grace! His mercy and His lovingkindness toward us cause Him to delay His wrath upon sin. (2 Peter 3:9, Romans 2:4)."

4. Do you ever "lament" over what seems to be slackness in God judging sin?

5. Has God ever shown you an extreme amount of patience and grace? In what ways?

6. In verses 12-19, Zophar tells Job that the pleasures of the wicked are temporary. What examples does he give to prove his point? Is there any truth to his argument?

7. Do you ever get distracted by the pleasures of this world? Although this argument isn't relevant to Job's situation, how is it a good warning to us today?

In verses 12-13, Zophar appears to accuse Job of harboring some secret sin, but God will force the wicked to give it up (12-15). Zophar claims that often while we are enjoying our sin, we are bitten by a viper that is destined for death and we don't even know it. It is true that sin is enjoyable, but only for a season (Hebrews 11:25). He also says that the wicked man won't be able to enjoy the things he worked so hard for because he attained them by sinning, so they won't be able to satisfy him (18-19).

8. Is there some sin that you are dabbling with that seems to "taste good" right now? How does this section speak to your heart? (Remember that sin will always destroy.)

9. Explain how allowing any sin to remain in your heart is like poison.

We're going to finish the remainder of Zophar's speech tomorrow. May each of us take an honest look at ourselves and see if there is any sin lurking in the corners of our hearts. Let's do some spring cleaning this week, shall we? (Even if it's not spring!)

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. Let's read Job 20 again, then focus on verses 20-29. Zophar finished his speech by not only restating that suffering is always the result of God's judgment on the wicked, but he paints a horrible picture of the wicked's death and judgment as well. **List some of the judgments he claims that Job will face.**
2. Zophar paints God as a warrior who chases the wicked, shooting arrows at him as he tries to escape God's judgment. What's the outcome of this pursuit?
3. Verse 27 says that he will finally be captured and dragged into court, where Heaven and earth will testify against him and find him guilty. Why do you think Zophar uses this "court" metaphor?
4. How does he wrap up his speech in verses 28-29? What does he call Job?

Wow, Zophar's words sure pack a punch, don't they? Both Bildad and Zophar are now referring to Job as "wicked" and deserving. After all, this was now Job's "portion" in life. Yikes. Can you imagine being Job right now? Can you imagine having to fight off these deadly blows?

5. Have you ever been the recipient of "deadly assaults" by a so-called friend? The kind that made your head spin and your knees knock? How did you respond?
6. Have you ever been the one delivering the blows? Have you ever been so sure of some truth that you didn't care how you delivered the exhortation? Can you see a better way to handle it?

7. From our chapters this week, what specifically spoke to your heart?

8. How does Job's declaration of faith in 19:25-26 encourage you to stay hopeful in a situation?

9. Bildad and Zophar lacked genuineness, warmth, and empathy in their counsel. Empathy means showing someone that you are "standing with them in their pain." How has your own counseling techniques been this week?

10. Why do you think Zophar completely ignores Job's confession of faith and belief in a Heavenly Redeemer? What was his whole focus on?

11. Notice that although Job's friends are hurting him, their words are being used to drive him straight to God. Thoughts?

12. Lastly, it seems like Job has a very different relationship with God than his friends do. They seem to talk "about" God while Job talks "to" God. Which of these better depicts your relationship with God?

***"Kind words are short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."
Mother Theresa***