



"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 9

This week we will begin by reading Job's response to Zophar's second speech. Job takes a little different approach this time, basically urging them to listen carefully to him before they continue to mock him. In chapter 21, Job doesn't describe his own suffering, nor does he pray to God. Job focused on answering Zophar's arguments, point by point. He desperately wanted them to look at their theory of retribution and see that it had definite problems. He felt that they truly needed to rethink their theology and perspective, which would change how they lived. "Job in his person represented the collapse of their theological system." (Shepherd's Notes) He was rocking their core values down to the basic foundation.

Job was beginning to understand that God isn't predictable. He obviously doesn't go against His Word, but people who think they can predict how God is always going to work are sadly mistaken. Ecclesiastes 8:17 says, "No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it." Job is arguing that life doesn't always make sense. He no longer understands any of it. "Belief in God does not bring an ability to answer all questions or to account for everything that happens under the sun. On the contrary, mature faith accepts that there is a great deal which cannot be explained. Only in Heaven will we "know fully" even as we are fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)" (Mason)

First Day

1. Read Job 21:1-34. Write the facts you find. What is Job's tone? Are there any repeated words or thoughts? Can you detect any type of pattern or order? Is this response similar or unlike his others?

As you read, notice that Job reviews some of the previous discussions, so many cross references can be found to what has already been said. This really helps us to follow his line of reasoning much more easily. This discussion almost seems more like a debate than an emotional argument.

2. Zophar summarizes his opinion of what the wicked will receive in 20:29. How does Job's view compare with that?

3. In verses 1-6, Job is angry at his friends' lack of sympathy. In your own words, what does he say? What is he asking for?

4. In verse 4, who does Job say he has a case against, God or man? Why does he say this?

Job refutes the three points that Zophar tried to make in chapter 20 and gives his rebuttal. In verses 7-16, Job states that the wicked often lead long lives. In verses 17-21, Job states that the wicked don't always suffer calamities and trouble. And third, death for the wicked is the same as death of the righteous; all men die. Let's take a look at his first argument.

5. Read Job 21:7-16. (Also read Zophar's statement in 20:5.) What does he say about the lives of the wicked? Do they ever prosper? Do they ever live long, happy lives?

6. Job describes the attitude of some of them as well. What does he say in verses 14-15? According to verse 16, does Job agree with this philosophy of life?

7. Read verses 17-21. Read Bildad's argument in 18:5. How does Job answer the question?

Job challenges Bildad's argument by basically asking, "How often does that really happen? Does God really display His anger against the wicked right away, and are they really driven away like straw in the wind?" God doesn't always reward the righteous and punish the wicked here on earth. The real question is how do we measure true fulfillment? Do we measure it against worldly standards of happiness or do we count as riches the abundant hope of our eternal life with Christ?

8. What does Matthew 6:19-21 say about this?

I read this week that God didn't promise us a *perfect* life, but an *abundant* life in Christ. When things seem crazy or "unfair," we must remind ourselves that we are "pilgrims and aliens in this world (1 Peter 2:11), strangers in a strange land that has been profoundly infected and deranged by chaos. "True, the face of the Creator still shines through His creation. But His image is no longer perfectly reflected in the nature of things. The waters of the world have been muddied by evil." (Mason)

9. Do you ever find yourself comparing your lifestyle or possessions to someone else's? Do you ever fall into the trap of looking at what someone has or doesn't have as an indicator of God's blessings on their life? Why is this so dangerous and misleading?

We'll finish our chapter tomorrow. Spend some time thinking about the location of your treasures! ☺

Memory Verse of the Week: "I have not departed from the commandments of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."
Job 23:12

Second Day

Work on your memory verse.

1. Read Job 21:1-34 again. Go back and reread verses 22-34. Job now states that death for the wicked is the same for the righteous. What are some of his arguments?

In verse 26, Job basically says that all men die. "Death always has the final say, and it says the same thing to everyone." (Francis Andersen) He goes on to say in verses 27-28; "Well, I know what you're going to say," and then he repeats their previous words. I found it very interesting that he asks them if they've ever considered asking a traveler for their opinion. (vs 29-30) A traveler would represent someone with a wide range of experience. He suggests that they would be able to give them many examples of rich and wicked people who have held on to their powers and pleasures well, as well as righteous people who don't even have a roof over their head. Very interesting indeed.

2. According to verse 34, what does he consider the words of his friends?

The word "falsehood" means "a deliberate violation of God's law, and act of treachery."

3. What emotions or thoughts does this chapter stir in you?
4. Why is it such a struggle to see the wicked prosper?

5. Read Job 22:1-30. Eliphaz, again, has some serious charges against Job. (I don't think he was listening.) He takes the role of an attorney who is ready to try his case. **Briefly describe what Eliphaz says regarding each point.**

A. Eliphaz accuses Job of being a sinner. (Verses 1-11)

B. Eliphaz accuses Job of hiding his sin. (Verses 12-20)

C. Eliphaz exhorts Job to confess and repent so God will help him. (Verses 21-30)

6. What specific sins does Eliphaz accuse Job of committing in verses 6-9? Why does he say this? Is it true?

7. In verses 24-25, what does Eliphaz accuse Job of putting his faith in rather than God? Is this true?

Eliphaz now viciously attacks his friend with unfounded accusations. They are outrageous and unfair. We know this because of what God said about Job in chapters one and two. But Eliphaz assumes he *must* be guilty if this is all happening to him. He also accuses Job of losing all fear of God! In verse 17, he even puts Job in the category of the man who asks what God can do to him. (Did he not listen

to Job's last argument?) He thinks Job has charged God with moral indifference to the conduct of wicked men (vs 13). Bottom line, if he confesses and repents (vs 23), God would forgive him.

8. What part of Eliphaz's reasoning is correct? What truth is in his words?

9. Although Eliphaz's exhortation was aimed at the wrong man, his basic exhortations were true. Is your faith and trust in money or God? How do you treat your fellow man? Are you guilty of any of the things he accused Job of?

We'll end here for today. Tomorrow we'll take a look at the context of our memory verse, which I love. God bless you, dear ladies!

Third Day

Working on your verse? Do you treasure His words?

1. Read Job 23:1-17. (I love this chapter.) What are some things that Job laments over in the first few verses?

2. Does Job believe in God's justice? How do we know?

In this chapter, Job doesn't address his friends at all, but speaks *about* and *to* God. He longed for God to bring about justice in his case. If he could only find a way to get to God, he was sure that God would give him a fair hearing. He sees himself as the "upright" man in verse seven who would win if given a chance. Job wanted a personal meeting with God, yet he knew that God was found in the furnace!

3. What does Job say will happen as God tests him in verse 10?

7. Are you in a furnace of suffering right now? How are you being purified? How can you be confident, like Job, that you will come forth as gold?

8. Read Job 23:11-12. What powerful claim does Job make? How does this relate to going through the furnace?

Wiersbe wrote, "Some people go through the furnace of affliction and it burns them; others go in and the experience purifies them. What makes the difference? *Their attitude toward the Word of God and the will of God.* If we are nourished by the Word and submit to His will, the furnace experience, painful as it may be, will refine us and make us better. But if we resist God's will and fail to feed on His truth, the furnace experience will only burn us and make us bitter."

8. Have you ever resisted the furnace? What was the result?

9. Do you treasure His words more than your necessary food? Can you explain what that means, in your own words?

10. What changes can you, or do you, need to make in your own personal life to be able to make this statement with Job?

Fourth Day

Are you treasuring His Word today?

1. Read Job 23:1-17 again, focusing on verses 13-17. What is the main point of this section?

2. What truths does he say about God?

3. We know that Job believed in the sovereignty of God. Why, then, is he afraid?

God runs the world, that's a fact. People who don't believe in the sovereignty of God rob themselves of peace and courage. Spurgeon said, "There is no attribute of God more comforting to His children than the doctrine of divine sovereignty. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by world-lings."

4. What does Spurgeon mean by his statement? Do you think it's true?

Job calls God "unique." I love this statement. Isaiah 40:25 says "To whom will you compare Me? Or who is My equal?" There is individuality about the Lord, and "otherness." There's no getting around Him. Rather He is to be wrestled with, reckoned with, and ultimately bowed to. God is who He is, and what He says goes. "Our God is in Heaven; He does what He pleases." (Psalm 115:3)

5. Spend some time meditating on the "uniqueness" of God. Write your thoughts.

6. Does the Almighty God ever "terrify" you or make your heart weak? If so, is it a healthy or unhealthy fear?

7. This chapter opened with Job seeking an audience with God. Although God was silent, Job would not be silenced. Even though God seemed to be ignoring Him, Job wouldn't give up or be silent. How is this an example to us? How persistent or patient are you when God seems to be silent?

Have you ever thought about how lonely Job must have been? Elisabeth Elliot once said about loneliness, "Offer it up. Thank God for the transformability of the problem you don't want, but still have. Thank God for His power that can take the worst and make it into the best."

8. Have you ever felt the type of deep loneliness where even God seems to be absent? Can you "offer it up" like Elisabeth said? How is that practically possible?

9. Job knew that God "knew him" in verses 10-12. Why was this so comforting? How does it comfort you as well?

See you tomorrow my friends. I hope you're filling your souls with the treasures of His Word!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

Today we're going to do a little overview of chapters 21 through 23, specifically applying them to our own personal lives.

1. From our lesson this week, what specifically spoke to your heart?
2. Read Matthew 5:45. Do these words of Jesus support or come against Zophar's claims?
3. What does Job's situation teach us about waiting on God?
4. Wiersbe asks a good question, "Which do you think is harder: to face a failure that you brought on yourself, or to face a failure that was completely undeserved?" Why?
5. Job is confused about how God is working in his life, and the lives of others. Are there things that confuse you about God? Like what?

Job was being falsely accused, over and over, by his best friends. Swindoll offers some helpful suggestions, taken from Job 21-23, on how to have a Godly response when we are being falsely accused.

1. ***Stay calm.*** Listen to what's being said, considering the nature of the critic. Take everything you hear with a grain of salt and respond carefully. If someone makes you angry or falsely accuses you, take time to cool off before approaching that person.
 2. ***Speak truth.*** If someone accuses you personally, weigh the pros and cons of responding to that person versus keeping silent and letting the situation blow over. Be sure you have proof of the person's hurtful words or actions before confronting him or her. Take time to prayerfully consider what your Godly response should be. Then if you believe God is calling you to do so, confront the person in a gracious, loving, and calm manner. Express your confidence by stating that you know he or she would not want to spread false information, and you want to set the record straight. In addition, if you hear that someone is speaking lies or spreading gossip about others, you may be called to confront the person in love to keep him or her accountable for his or her words or actions.
 3. ***Lean hard on the Lord.*** In the past, perhaps someone accused you of something and you weren't able to confront them. As a result, you may have carried an undeserved damaged reputation or the knowledge that others have wrong ideas about you. At times like this, trust your defense to the Lord. Pray for wisdom and strength to deal with the problem and stay rooted in Scripture. Seek Christian counsel if necessary. You don't want to drown in a sea of false accusations.
 4. ***Get tough.*** Refuse to let the accusations discourage and derail you. Don't be afraid to address problems of false accusations when they arise. Rumors are like ticking bombs; the sooner you defuse them, the better off you'll be. Use the spiritual discernment God gives you through the Holy Spirit. And use your common sense too! As much as possible, avoid people and situations that you know could lead to gossip or rumors.
6. Have you ever been falsely accused of wrongdoing? From the four steps above, did you handle it correctly? If not, what could you have done differently?