

Job Chapters 6-7 - John Karmelich

As we go through this section, remember the book of Job has a happy ending. In life we often have to "go through hell to get to heaven". Yes, lots of lessons to cover through this book with many chapters to go. Anyway, hope you enjoy this lesson as "This too shall pass".

I want everyone to imagine a world where the "bottom" has fallen out: All your offspring die instantly, and you're in horrible pain, both physical and emotionally. The good news is you've got friends there to "unload on"! Instead of them saying, "how can we help", they just criticize and say you must repent of whatever sin caused this! I'm sure Job racked his brain over what sin he might have committed. What I am asking is, what would we do in this situation? I realize what Job dealt with is worse than what most of us will ever have to deal with! When we feel sorry for ourselves, with no relief or solution in sight, what would we do if people make it worse by insulting us at that time? I realize most of us never have to deal with Job's situation, but most of us had our "woe is me" moments. What would we say at times of unfair criticism, especially when suffering? How Job responds can teach us a lot about dealing with all the hardships of life.

I suspect most of us know this book fairly well. It's the oldest bible book chronologically. If Job is part of the bible, obviously God wants us to learn from this and not just feel sorry for Job. In this lesson we get the first of many responses by Job! Again, think about how we'd handle a tough situation! Most of us have had to deal with problems! OK, enough of the "why", let's study how Job responds to the first of many critical speeches made against him in this book!

To begin let's remember where we left off: Job's beginning what will be three debate rounds with three friends who came to see him and to check out how he's doing. The text says none of them spoke for the first seven days they were with Job. Now apparently none of them can shut up! Since the speeches are stated on a verse-by-verse basis probably means the speeches were written down for us to study. As we know men want to fix the problem as opposed to giving comfort! I state that as the first speech by one of Job's three friends there was basically a plea for Job to repent of whatever sin he did and that'll bring to end his suffering. His basic argument is God only punishes those guilty of sin so Job must have done something horrible. Again, I'd bet Job racked his brain for what he did wrong. While Job never claimed to be perfect, he couldn't think of reason why he was suffering so much! If you don't know the first two chapters of this book, God allowed Satan to do that damage, to test Job. He didn't know (nor any of his three friends knew) about this bet, so the saga continues.

With that said, let me discuss Chapter 6 and 7 a bit. Job opens by saying in effect, "None of you grasp the pain I'm in"! The implication is most people suffer a lot less and it doesn't mean God's "after them" for some specific sin! He uses examples like "Do animals complain when they get food, to imply if the fact animals don't complain when they're full"! By Verse 7, Job's stating he has no appetite since all of his suffering started! What Job's implying is there's no reason God would single Job out this bad when some people do far worse and seem to get away with it in this lifetime!

By Verse 8 Job's back to pleading for God to end his life (similar to what Job argued in his first speech he gave in Chapter 3). Notice Job never tries to kill himself or ask these guys to kill him. He is asking God to just end his life to end the misery! Job even says then he'd be in the afterlife along with people who've done great things in their life (and have never suffered for their sins in this life!) One thing that

I notice Job is constantly talking about God or to Him while he's making his speeches. His key point is if he is guilty of some horrible sin, why keep speaking about God if he's trying to avoid guilt for it?

Job's final argument of Chapter 6 is in a sense, if God's punishing me, why doesn't He just end it versus making this go on and on? I know that doesn't rebuke the argument his friends are making about a need to repent, but Job's point is he has no idea why he's suffering, and his friends have no reason to assume it is due to some sin!

Chapter 7 then switches from a focus on the three friends to Job talking directly to God! Job's point is the fact that most people have a hard life on earth. Most people have a hard life of work, and then it is time to die and face God's judgment. It is the great reminder that life is short, a lot of things happen to us in this life. The implication is one can't just blame God for tragedies assuming it's His way to make us suffer for our sins!

Job even uses terms like the sea (as in a storm) or a sea monster that must be controlled. In other words the issue isn't Job suffering due to some sin, it's simply that he's suffering due to some unknown reason and he must deal with it the best he could! In Verse 14, Job refers to visions that the last speaker made in the last chapters. Job's response is in effect, "so what"? Just because you had visions does not mean God is using those dreams to send me a message! As I like to say, "Has God lost my number that He's speaking through you in order to speak to me?"

By Verse 15 Job is asking, "Hey God, why are you allowing me to go through this?" It implies that Job has no idea why he's suffering! By the final verse he's asking God in effect why not forgive me for the reason I'm suffering, and let me (Job) deal with the rest of my life the best I can?

In short this answer isn't satisfying his three friends who will go on for many more chapters, as they are going to state in effect over and over again Job must be guilty of something bad! Yes, there's more to it than "just that" as Job and his three friends will eventually learn from God Himself who was right here, but more importantly for this lesson that just because one is suffering it doesn't mean God is allowing it for some sort of punishment purpose.

Which leads back to you and me. Obviously, when things are going wrong there's nothing wrong to do a little inventory to see if there's any sin issues. Yes, we confess and turn from them, but the reason for any particular suffering may have nothing to do with whatever situation we are going through. When I hear of people suffering and they ask for prayer, the first thing I like to pray for besides relief, is they'd learn whatever lesson God wants them to learn from that situation.

For what it's worth I've had my own share of suffering and I'd had painful situations with no idea why I had to go through it. I just praised God that He got me through it and I'm still alive to praise Him after it past. Obviously, there are many people who suffer with all sorts of issues. I try to remember we can't always control our situation, but we can always control our attitude while dealing with the situation we are dealing with!

That leaves the issue of what do we say to our friends when they accuse of us of wrong doing! Yes, we can rack our brains and tell our friends we can't think of any reason! Obviously, I believe in doing what doctor's ask me to do to stay as healthy as long as possible. I suspect the most important thing is to be a good witness for God through whatever we're dealing with. Was I perfect in my suffering? Of course I messed up as I'm human! Still when we realize we're "always on the clock for Jesus" the key is to be a good witness for Him and be grateful for our relationship with Him, no matter the situation. We cannot

control what others think of us, just do our best to have a clean conscious and use our lives as a witness for Him no matter the situation. As far as the debate with Job's three friends, this will continue for lots of chapters to go and yes there's more to learn from it. With that said, that's a wrap for this lesson!

If you liked this study, I wrote a more detailed account some years back with the links on this web site!
Thanks for reading this!