

Job Chapters 8-10 - John Karmelich

Let me open with a thought most of us can hopefully relate to: Whenever I hear about someone who is hurting, one of my favorite prayers (besides for the recovery) is as follows: "God help this person learn what you want them to learn from this situation!" I'd argue that idea applies to Job and his friends! We must remember none of them were privy to the debate God had with Satan back in the chapter one why Job went through this trial. Instead, we get a few dozen chapters of debate over why Job's suffering. It is worth noting how his friends spend a lot of time repeating his words, and giving arguments that don't answer why he's suffering! I believe Job's coming to accept his situation and grasping that God doesn't owe him an explanation. Job's accepting his suffering is God's will and deal with it the best he can. As we know, when a bad situation arises, we must deal with it the best we can!

I admit, I ponder if Job enjoyed the company to give him something to do and get his mind off the pain and just focus on the debate. No idea if I'm right because the text doesn't say. As I've stated in the last few lessons, Job's friends make some good points, but their arguments don't apply to the reason (a test) of what he was going through. Therefore, the debate simply gives Job something to do and at the same time, I'd argue it gave time for Job to think about why God was silent and to accept the situation. What I want you to get out of this lesson is the fact when we go through something tragic, that does not mean we're entitled to an explanation from God even though He allows us to go through it for a reason we do not know till say, we get to heaven. All we can do is deal with the situation the best we can and yes, we must deal with people around us.

So why try to correct people who refuse to listen? First, we don't know if they'll accept what we say, as the end of the arguments with these three friends will be that they "gave up", which then leads to when we see God stepping in to give His speech. In the meantime, we're still early in this debate process. All I want you to consider as you read the rest of this lesson, is what does God want us to learn when we're dealing with our own tragedies. With that said, these three chapters are the first speech by "Friend #2" (I use the word "friend" lightly) and then Job's two chapters response to his arguments. Here we go:

The second friend is named Bildad. He opens his arguments by saying in effect, "Isn't God in charge of justice?" He argues that Job's children must have deserved to die for some horrible sin just as he is in a lot of pain, so Bildad argues Job must have done something horrible! Keep in mind, these three men do say a lot of things that are true about God, but just wrong in Job's situation. He denies he's sinless, only that he's blameless. God himself stated in Chapters 1-2 that Job's blameless. That just means if Job has sinned, he confessed it and turned from it! Anyway, Bildad gives examples using nature that God must exist. (E.g., he says papyrus grows where there's lots of water!) His point is simply that all we must do is look at the evidence of design to prove God exists! He then condemns Job saying in effect that those who turn their back on God "get what's coming to them!"

I have to admit I'm fascinated by the fact Job talks to God a lot in his responses, but these three men do not in any of their speeches. They are so convinced Job has somehow sinned so horribly there's nothing Job can say to convince them otherwise. Keep that in mind as we go through these speeches. In short, Chapter 8 is a 22-verse condemnation of Job both directly and indirectly. Chapters 9-10 are Job giving a response to those criticisms.

One thing to keep in mind as we read Job's comments through these speeches is he is not perfect in his responses. I simply mean in his physical pain and anger at his friends responses he says things he will

come to regret when God "speaks up" in the last few chapters of this book. I simply want to make the point that Job is not blameless in his responses. He appears to go back and forth a lot to complain over the misery, wanting to be dead and then realizing God can do what He wants when He wants. He even says something to start Verse 9 that we Christians would disagree with. He complains in these chapters that there is no arbitrator who could be both human and God! (Chapter 9, Verse 32!) Another example is in Verse 3 when Job wishes he could argue with God. Job repents of that request when God responds later in the book! Job's key argument in Chapter 9 is that God does what He wants when He wants and there's nothing we can do to affect that! Job gives his own example of creation naming 3 constellations one can see in the northern hemisphere night sky!

He then gets back to Bildad's arguments about dealing with God. Job asks how can I argue with God? His point being if he was guilty before God, Job could say nothing in his defense. It still doesn't mean Job did anything wrong, it just takes on his point about what being blameless before God entails! Job then complains how hard his life is! (We can all relate to that!) He states the "that there is no arbitrator between man and God statement", which Job will contradict later in this book! Again, my point is Job is not perfect in his arguments, but he is "blameless" as far as being guilty of a sin that deserves all that he is dealing with at the moment! Anyway, the last part of Chapter 9 is basically Job groaning in pain, which is what most of us would do if we suffered the way he was suffering at this moment.

That leads me to Chapter 10. (Again, no chapter breaks in the original text!) Again, it is fascinating to me that Job constantly talks to God during his rebuttals (no responses till the end) but his three friends, who state things about God's nature never pause to pray to God during their speeches. Job starts off in another one of his "pity party" moods saying in effect, "Woe is me, and I wish God would hear all that I am dealing with right now!" Let's be honest, if we were dealing with that type of pain, we too would want an explanation from God about why we have to go through it. That leads me back to the prayer I stated to open this lesson, "God help this person understand why they are dealing with this situation!" I realize that doesn't relieve the suffering but thinking about struggles from the eternal perspective helps us to process why we're going through such things. Obviously, Job's not there yet, so he's crying out in pain again at this moment, which is understandable! Job then questions is it fair of God that those who don't honor Him have a long healthy life and many godly people suffer? It's one of those questions we can't comprehend unless we accept there is a God of justice who judges all people! Job asks (in effect) the question of since God knows he's not guilty so why is he allowed to suffer this way?

Realize God could intervene anytime He wants. I suspect one reason for the delay is for Job to process all of this and realize God is sovereign through good times and bad! By Verse 15, Job is asking if he is guilty of something, why doesn't God reveal it to him? What Job's arguing to his friends is that if he is guilty of some sin, why hasn't God made it obvious to Job what it is? I'm sure Job went all of his adult life occasionally thinking of sins he had to confess! Again, God called Job blameless in the start of the book so Job in effect demanding God either put him out of his misery or reveal what the issue is!

Bottom line, Job's second speech in effect ends in failure, because as far as his friends are concerned, it was no admission of guilt by Job. At the same time, he demanded God respond and well, nothing. For us, it is the reminder when all is falling apart, God is still on the scene, but He's not obligated to rescue us out of every painful situation even when it's not our fault. Yes, there are lessons to be learned when we deal with painful lessons and like Job that is for us to contemplate and pray for God for guidance as we mentally and physically deal with the challenges we must deal with in life! With that said, I'll wrap it up this lesson for this week.

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!