

Last time we left Job sitting on the ground with his three friends who came to comfort and support him in his pain and loss, and they sat with him for seven days and nights, not saying anything in the way of counsel. In all likelihood they prayed with him, cried with him and simply tried to be a support for him and his wife.

Up to this point Job has been a faithful man to the promises of God as he acknowledged to himself and his wife that it is important to be able to accept from God, both the good and the bad that comes our way.

It is noteworthy to see where some of the bad originates, at least at this time in the life of Job.

**Job 2:3** <sup>3</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."

**Job 2:7** <sup>7</sup> Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

**Who are the players personally involved in bringing calamity in the life of Job according to these verses?**

**Now let's read verse 10**

**Job 2:10** <sup>10</sup> But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

**Who does Job believe these misfortunes are coming from?**

And yet we are told that he did not sin with his lips precisely because he knew who held him in all of life.

But most people have got a breaking point where even God's grace seems to wane at times. And Job seems to have his, quite understandably under the circumstances.

And the entire third chapter of Job goes into the depths of his heart as he ponders how he would not be suffering, as he is, if he had never been born. He sums it up in this way.

**Job 3:20-21** <sup>20</sup> "Why is light given to him who suffers, And life to the bitter of soul, <sup>21</sup> Who long for death, but there is none, And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,

He seems to have given up and it is at this point that one of his friends finally speaks up. And it is at this point that his friend realizes that trying to help Job, or anyone in the distress of life, can be a perilous place to be.

**Job 4:1-2** <sup>NAU</sup> Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, <sup>2</sup> "If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking?"

**Have you ever tried to come alongside a friend or family member and comfort them as you counseled them in their situation?**

More times than not that usually doesn't go well. Not because the comfort or counsel isn't necessary and true, but people who are struggling have a tendency to want to be heard but not very eager to hear.

And Eliphaz is quite aware of this with his friend Job. And so, he prefaces his remarks with the obvious. 'If I say anything to you Job in response to what you have just said regarding death being more of a comfort than life will you become impatient with me?'

But it's not as much a question as it is a statement. Because Eliphaz states that he expects Job to be impatient with him, but under the circumstances he must speak to his friend about his situation.

In fact, he points out to Job that Job himself has entered into this same sort of situation with his friends who encountered problems in life as he came alongside them to help them.

**Job 4:3-5** <sup>3</sup> "Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. <sup>4</sup> "Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees. <sup>5</sup> "But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed.

**How does verse 3 read in some of your bibles?**

**When Eliphaz says that Job has admonished or instructed, or as the NJB says, you have schooled many, what is Eliphaz intimating about Job's type of counseling of his friends?**

It was the kind of counseling that was not always meant to be light and fluffy to simply make his friends feel warm a fuzzy, but the type of counseling that dealt with the problem head on, and in many cases was entered into knowing his friends would not be happy with the counsel.

Eliphaz is simply stating that what he is about to do with Job, Job has already accepted as a necessity at times.

And I think that this is where Eliphaz and his friends have gotten a bad rap because there is a tendency to conclude that simply because their counsel did not understand what God was actually doing in the life of Job at the time, it doesn't mean that counseling of this type should not be entered into.

Sometimes we know why things are happening in our lives and the counsel we get is commensurate with our situation. Paul with Peter would be a classic case of knowing the problem of the person you're about to confront.

**Galatians 2:11-14** <sup>11</sup> But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup> For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. <sup>13</sup> The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

But even if we don't know all of the intimate details of the one we're trying to counsel or encourage it doesn't mean we don't try to share the truth in love. It may or may not be accepted but the response we get should be measured against the situation we find in the life of the one we're coming alongside and understand that sometimes their response is bathed in their hurt or fear.

Eliphaz has not said a word of counsel in seven days. Job finally cannot contain himself as he speaks and now Eliphaz sees this as his cue to speak up.

The rest of chapter 4 and all of chapter 5 contain Eliphaz's perspective on Job's situation. And most of it is wise counsel. The problem is that the wisdom would apply if what he were saying

were true of Job. But because neither Job or his friends or Job's wife are privy to the real situation behind the scenes, that is the scene we saw between Satan and God, we would naturally reach the wrong conclusion.

**Generally speaking, whenever we see something bad happen to someone, what is one response, either right or wrong, that can be drawn from that?**

That person must have done something bad. And this was not uncommon among the times of Job. And, even in God's word, one could conclude that it is always black and white when it comes to either blessings or discipline from God depending on how you are living your life at the time.

**Psalm 34:14-16** <sup>14</sup> Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. <sup>15</sup> The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are *open* to their cry. <sup>16</sup> The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.

**Well, if a person is seeking peace and departing from evil should we expect that the Lord would cut off their memory from the earth, which is another way saying that God destroys the righteous? Should we expect that?**

**And Eliphaz knew this. But for all intents and purposes he is seeing his friend Job being destroyed by God, so what would be the natural conclusion he might reach?**

He's working with the information he's got in front of him. But again, he doesn't know the whole story. In fact, keep in mind what God has already made clear regarding Job.

**Job 1:8** <sup>8</sup> The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."

These are God's words regarding Job. The only thing Eliphaz knows are Job's words about Job. I've done nothing wrong. What's going on here?

Eliphaz sees what he sees and knows that God doesn't destroy the righteous.

**Job 4:6-9** <sup>6</sup> "Is not your fear *of God* your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope? <sup>7</sup> "Remember now, who *ever* perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? <sup>8</sup> "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And

those who sow trouble harvest it. <sup>9</sup> "By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end.

Notice here that Eliphaz holds out the hope that Job can turn around if he has strayed from the Lord.

**Job 4:6** <sup>6</sup> "Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?

Eliphaz knows that Job is a righteous man, but he concludes that Job had to have done something to bring this upon himself, not knowing that God was going to use Job as an example for Satan and ultimately for us, to show how God, in all of His sovereignty can and will use people to bring Him honor and glory, even in the midst of trials.

This is about God's ability and willingness to test us and then give us the grace and strength to come through by His strength with no intention of destroying us, but causing us to come out on the other end stronger than before with the express purpose of giving Him the glory in the process.

**1 Peter 1:3-9** <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup> and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

There is a reason for trials, even trials that are administered by the very hand of God through the agents of His choosing.

**James 1:2-5** <sup>2</sup> Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup> But if

any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

But even when we are at the end of our ropes, as Job obviously was, God will not use it to destroy us.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Eliphaz and the rest of his friends will finally see this, but in the mean time Job has to contend with their perspectives with the information they have. And with the information he has Eliphaz sees God disciplining Job for something that was out of accord with being an upright man walking after the Lord.

**Job 5:17** <sup>17</sup> "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of <sup>1</sup>the Almighty.

By the way, Eliphaz is not just making this up.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Proverbs 3:11** My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof,

<sup>NAU</sup> **Psalms 94:12** Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD, And whom You teach out of Your law;

There are times in our lives when we deserve a chastening hand from God, but even David and his son, Solomon understood that it is in those times that we should view it as something blessed or to be received as one who is happy.

## Why?

Because it demonstrates that we have a loving Father who is only doing what is best for us. And this is why the writer of Hebrews quotes some of the passages we just read.

<sup>NAU</sup> **Hebrews 12:5** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; <sup>6</sup>FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." <sup>7</sup> It is for discipline that

you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

Eliphaz understood this and was concluding that God had not abandoned Job but was disciplining him precisely because he needed it. It makes sense. But it didn't make sense to Job because he knew that he had done nothing wrong.

And this can be a frustrating part of life. Things may happen to us, or things may be said of us, and we know that there was not a one to one correlation between what we were doing and what is now happening to us.

And we spend all of this time trying to figure it out. We get anxious, we get restless or angered or blame others or even God, when it may have had nothing to do with anything that was related to our situation.

In fact, the entire book of Job is about Job and his friends and family trying to figure it out. And when they finally get the answer it had nothing to do with what they thought it was.

And in the final analysis God finally rolls back the curtain and says, I am who I am, the Almighty God and Creator of all things and I am the One you must look to even when life makes no sense, because I bring purpose to all of life including the chaos in yours.

Well, Eliphaz finally rests his case and he knows that the only thing Job should do is to repent of his sin and throw himself on the mercy of God who is simply waiting for a repentant Job who will then be restored to his former status.

And Job responds to his friend. And chapters 6 and 7 contain Job's response. And essentially he lays out his case before his friends and agrees with them that it is only reasonable that God would discipline him if he is the wayward man that Eliphaz has made him out to be.

**Job 6:22-26** <sup>22</sup> "Have I said, 'Give me *something*,' Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth,' <sup>23</sup> Or, 'Deliver me from the hand of the adversary,' Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the tyrants'?"  
<sup>24</sup> "Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have erred.  
<sup>25</sup> "How painful are honest words! But what does your argument prove?" <sup>26</sup> "Do you intend to reprove *my* words, When the words of one in despair belong to the wind?"

And then finally Job sums up his arguments in the last part of chapter 7.

**Job 7:20-21** <sup>20</sup> "Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? <sup>21</sup> "Why then do You not pardon my transgression And take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will seek me, but I will not be."

Job is beside himself with doubt and pain and now as he perceives it, disloyal friends who speak without wisdom, not knowing his heart, but simply making accusations without all the facts. He's frustrated as anyone would be. And he's frustrated with himself for doubting God of whom he earlier said, God gives and God takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Well, he apparently isn't blessing the name of the Lord at this juncture. But God has not abandoned him. But it's time for another friend to give more counsel. And I'm sure Job can't wait.

This is probably not the guy you want coming alongside you in your despair. Eliphaz had some tact, some compassion, some understanding and a ray of hope. Bildad will lack most of these qualities.

**Job 8:1-6** <sup>NAU</sup> Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, <sup>2</sup> "How long will you say these things, And the words of your mouth be a mighty wind? <sup>3</sup> "Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right? <sup>4</sup> "If your sons sinned against Him, Then He delivered them into the power of their transgression. <sup>5</sup> "If you would seek God And implore the compassion of the Almighty, <sup>6</sup> If you are pure and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate.

I'd be coming out of my chair and grabbing this guy's throat, which is probably why Bildad's case is made in one chapter while Eliphaz was allowed two chapters to make his case.

And in this chapter Bildad piles one accusation upon another, and then as if to throw in the obligatory encouraging word he ends by saying this.

**Job 8:20-21** <sup>20</sup> "Lo, God will not reject *a man of integrity*, Nor will He support the evildoers. <sup>21</sup> "He will yet fill your mouth with laughter And your lips with shouting.



This is almost an afterthought as if to say, 'you're a man who has obviously deserved everything you got, but don't give up hope Job, just repent of your evil deeds and all will be made well.'

But Job's response to Bildad is interesting in that it almost seems he is beginning to concede to the accusations. His tone with Bildad is not the angry response but is a calculated approach to what is happening to him.

Job begins by agreeing with Bildad that there will be a day when he will be restored to the Lord and that those who hated him without a cause will be dealt with. Here is how Bildad ends his case.

**Job 8:22** <sup>22</sup> "Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, And the tent of the wicked will be no longer."

**Job 9:1-4** <sup>NAU</sup> Then Job answered, <sup>2</sup> "In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God? <sup>3</sup> "If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand *times*. <sup>4</sup> "Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him <sup>2</sup>without harm?"

You can begin to see the wind being taken out of Job's sails. He knows that turning to the Lord is the only answer, but even there he doesn't see much being accomplished because he perceives that if he took his case before God the Lord would harm him.

Job knows better than this but when you hurt and when others are not understanding the real situation it does affect your perspective on God and His grace and mercy and instead of turning to God there is the tendency to try and travel the path alone because not even God seems to understand.

It's misguided yes, but the frailty of our faith can be affected by the intensity of our situation, at least as we perceive it.

**Job 9:14-18** <sup>14</sup> "How then can I answer Him, *And* choose my words before Him? <sup>15</sup> "For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. <sup>16</sup> "If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. <sup>17</sup> "For He bruises me with a tempest *And* multiplies my wounds without cause. <sup>18</sup> "He will not allow me to get my breath, *But* saturates me with bitterness.

His thinking is all messed up. In fact, listen to this.

**Job 9:20-22** <sup>20</sup> "Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. <sup>21</sup> "I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life. <sup>22</sup> "It is *all* one; therefore I say, 'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'

God just kills everyone whether you're guilty before Him or not. Job is essentially saying that, my life is a testament to that.

When hope seems to vanish you have nothing to lose. Death is as good as life, maybe better. And this is the common denominator throughout Job's ordeal. God has taken his hope away. Not hope in God but hope in tomorrow.

And this will be part of the lesson that Job will learn as we all should. Our hope is not in this world but in the God who will give us a new world with Him. But when that hope for tomorrow vanishes and we equate that with a hope in God our thinking goes to dark places.

**Job 10:1-2** <sup>NAU</sup> <sup>1</sup> "I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. <sup>2</sup> "I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me.'

This is partly why Christians may not desire to come before God in times of despair, especially when our prayers seem to go unanswered. We figure, what's the point? And Job felt this way.

**Job 10:12-16** <sup>12</sup> 'You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit. <sup>13</sup> 'Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You: <sup>14</sup> If I sin, then You would take note of me, And would not acquit me of my guilt. <sup>15</sup> 'If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. *I am* sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery. <sup>16</sup> 'Should *my head* be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion; And again You would show Your power against me.'