

Job #3: The 4th Friend

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the role of Elihu in the Book of Job, emphasizing the importance of looking to God for understanding amidst suffering.

Duration: 1:04:10

Scripture: Job 33:16, Job 34:31, Job 35:10, Job 37:14, Job 37:21, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Suffering Lessons"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit when studying the Bible. He then introduces the character of Elihu in the book of Job, highlighting how Elihu differs from the other characters in his approach to speaking about God. Elihu claims to have a word from the Lord and speaks with authority. The speaker suggests that Elihu's speech serves as a teaching moment for Job and the readers, allowing them to learn important lessons from their suffering.

Transcript

Well, good evening, brothers, again. I'll ask you to open, please, to Job, chapter 32, if you would. Eventually, we'll get there, but we'll do a little review first.

As we come again to look in the Word of God, just in case you didn't know, there's a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable. And that principle is total reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. No matter how often you come to this book, and no matter what form it takes, whether you're having a private time with the Lord or whether it's in a corporate group, we need to remember that God reveals His truth to babes.

Now, you can't work up that attitude. God has to work that in you. He's promised He would do that.

But we need to come as little babies, helpless. He's hidden His truth in Christ from the wise and the prudent. He's revealed it to babes.

And so we need to trust Him as we look in His Word. Let me share a verse with you from Jeremiah 23, and then one from the passage we'll look at tonight, a word that Elihu spoke. Jeremiah 23, 28, just a portion of that verse, and it says, Let him who has my word speak my word in truth.

What does straw have in common with grain? And I think you brothers have known the Lord long enough to know the difference if another brother is feeding you straw or if he's feeding you grain. You know straw

when it's in your mouth. Hold that thought and listen to what Elihu said in chapter 34 of Job, verse 3. The ear tests words as the palate tastes food.

Interesting little expression. If you put something bitter in your mouth, the palate tests the food and you'll spit it out. Well, I don't want to give you straw tonight, and I don't want to give you anything bitter.

But if I do spit it out, the ear tests the words like the palate tastes food. I'm praying that it will be grain. He that has the word of the Lord, let him speak that word in truth.

And I believe that I have the word of the Lord. Some of it might be clothed in flesh and you spit out those kernels. And may God help us.

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you so much for your precious Holy Spirit, whoever ever turns the eyes of our heart to our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, again tonight as we go through this book and we see your wonderful ways, your hand in the life of Job and how you took him to the place where he beheld by faith with eyes to behold El Shaddai, that you also in your grace take us to that place.

We ask you, Lord, to continue to minister unto us and show us your heart and your ways so that we might behold our Lord Jesus in a living way. We commit our meditations tonight unto you. We thank you in advance that nothing depends upon us, but everything depends upon you.

Minister to your people. I know your sheep hear your voice and the voice of a stranger they will not hear. And so you speak.

We know when you speak, the dead are raised. So we wait for that. In Jesus name.

Amen. Well, we come again to our little look at a wonderful Savior as he is manifest in this wonderful book of Job. Let me get again before your heart the theme.

I hope you don't tire of review because I find it very important in my own life and teaching. I think the theme of the book rises from that double insinuation that Satan made at the beginning of the book. One addressed against the Lord himself and one addressed against Job, the servant of the Lord.

Chapter one, let's read verses eight to 11. And the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job? There's no one like him on the earth, a blameless and an upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And then Satan answered the Lord, does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has on every side? You've blessed the work of his hands and his possessions have increased in the land.

Put forth your hand now and touch all that he has and he will surely curse you to your face. And similar words were spoken after Job's first victory and Satan challenged God to touch his body to take away his health. The double insinuation is this, against Job and all servants of the Lord, Satan insinuated that none would serve the Lord apart from the hedge.

It's only the blessing of God that causes a man to choose the Lord. And then growing out of that is the insinuation against the Lord himself, that God is not wonderful enough in himself, in his person, that there's no attraction in the Lord that he would be chosen just for himself. And Job said that God is not worthy enough for anyone to ever choose him and serve him and adore him and worship him as we were doing this evening.

From that terrible suggestion comes this question that the book answers, I believe. Is God enough? Is he more than enough in himself? If all you had was the Lord and nothing besides, would that be satisfying? Would that be everlastingly enough to make your heart content and to give you a fullness? The book of Job, as I suggested, has been preserved by the Holy Spirit for the revelation of that wonderful title 31 times in this book, El Shaddai, the God who's more than enough. As I suggested, not only the people in Job, but many folks try to answer the wrong question when they study the book of Job.

They pick up that book and say, well, now here's God's answer to the mystery of suffering. It is not. It doesn't address that.

It doesn't even attempt to give an answer to that. That's the wrong question. Why do the godly suffer? God doesn't address that in this book.

Job, I believe, was privileged to have his hedge come down that the whole world might know forever that El Shaddai is enough and more than enough when the hedge comes down. Some people cringe. It's amazing.

Talk to a Christian. Just say Job. Just the name, Job.

And all of a sudden they say, oh, I feel so sorry for Job. I feel so sorry for that man, what he had to go through. Don't you feel sorry for Job? Job was one of the most privileged men on the earth.

If you could have talked to Job after his trial, said, Job, are you happy or sad that God allowed you to go through that? He would say a by the hearing of the ear. But now my eye sees him. Don't pity Job.

Job had a great privilege. And now we have the same privilege as we study this book. Well, after his ordeal is when he was able to say that, you know that going through it, as it would be true of you, as it would be true of me, he had a struggle along the way.

This morning I suggested that Job actually, though he was trying to answer the wrong question, he actually did answer the right question. But he didn't give the right answer to the right question the first time. Now tomorrow we're going to look at the right answer to the right question.

He finally is brought there. But at first he gave the wrong answer to the right question. Here's the right question.

Is God enough? Is he more than enough when the hedge comes down? And here's the first answer that Job gave, and we saw it in those first 37 chapters. He said, yes, God is enough, but not God alone. God plus.

God plus an explanation. God plus the reason why. God is enough and he has a right to do whatever he wants to do.

But I think he should tell me what's going on. I think he should explain it to me. I should know what's happening in my life.

That was the wrong answer. That question why, Luther said, those who go forward with Christ will learn to crucify the question why. And I think if you've studied Job, you can see why Luther had a good point.

It's the Lord plus nothing. Not the Lord plus any part of your hedge or mine, and not the Lord plus some reason why God doesn't allow us to have the hedge. Is God enough in himself? Intrinsically lovely, beautiful, attractive, worthy.

We sing it. Thou art worthy. Is he worthy apart from anything else? Well, finally, you know he'll say yes.

I want to show you this evening God's transition from the confusion of those three debates to the revelation of El Shaddai. There's a transition. There's a time where we leave that confusion and God prepares us and begins to get us looking in the right direction.

Up to this point, they've been asking the wrong question. Why does Job suffer so? Why do the godly suffer? Why is there suffering in the world? And you know the answer the three gave. Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, they all gave the same answer.

It's punitive. It's punishment. That's why the wicked suffer.

That's why there's suffering on the earth. Job sinned. Sinners suffer.

Wicked men suffer more. The very wicked really suffer. And Job was really suffering, and therefore they concluded he was very wicked.

Job also was answering the wrong question, and he denied what they said. They said it's all punishment. And he said, no, that's not right.

The only conclusion I can come to since I haven't done anything to deserve this, in his own mind and estimation. Of course, at this time, I believe he knew nothing of Satan. His only conclusion was this is all God.

It's his hand. I had pulled the wrong card. God did it in a capricious way.

He arbitrarily chose me. He has no cause. He did it for no reason.

And then Job went so far as to say, and he was wrong to do that. He shouldn't have done that. And then after a while, it got so bad that he thought God was his enemy.

And of course, then he went right into despair. Now, it's at this point I want to introduce to you that fourth friend. And I think all of you are familiar with the book of Job, just for interest.

And there's no shame in this. I just want to know, is there anyone who's never read the book of Job? That's possible. Some have never read it.

So maybe this will be the first time that you meet then Elihu. His name is Elihu. And you see from the Bible record and the sheet that I handed out, he's introduced in chapter 32.

Who is Elihu? Now, again, I'm not going to spend a lot of time. I've read the arguments, and the nephew of Abraham, and all of that. I'm concerned with his spiritual contribution to the history of redemption, how he fits in this book, how he fits in the message, how God used him as the transition to get Job ready for the revelation of his God as El Shaddai.

Now, it does appear to me, though some would deny this, that he's been there since day one. In other words, when those other three showed up, though he's not mentioned. See, they say, you look in 2.11,

and you see when the three guys came, you don't see Elihu's name mentioned there.

So he wasn't there, they conclude. But look at 32.3. His anger burned against his three friends because they found no answer, and yet they condemned Job. It sounds like he was there through the debates, that he had heard the debates.

And we know he says in 38, rather 33.8, surely you have spoken. He's talking to Job. Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words.

So he was there. He was there, I believe, the whole time. Glance at verse 4 and 5 of chapter 32, and you'll see that Elihu is the youngest of all of the men that were there, younger than Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar.

32.4 says, Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than him. He gave deference to the elder. And then if you look at verse 6, he said, I'm young in years, and you are old.

I was shy. I was afraid to tell you what I think. I thought age should speak.

And so here's a young man who was there. He heard all the debates. He heard what Eliphaz had to say, and how Job responded, and Bildad, and how Job responded, and Zophar, and how Job responded.

He was at all three debates. According to what he heard, he said Job won. Job won the arguments.

He concluded that Job won the debates. In chapter 32.3 and 5, he said that the three men were unable to answer the arguments of Job. In verse 12, 32.12, indeed, there was no one who refuted Job.

Not one of you answered his words. And in the mind of Elihu, Job won the debates. And that's why he was angry with his friends.

He says, what right do you have, you losers of the debate, to condemn Job when you didn't win? You lost the debate, and you're still condemning Job. And he said, that's not right. And he was angry with them.

But he was also angry with Job. Look at chapter 32, verse 2. Against Job his anger burned, because he justified himself before God. And so Elihu has a full heart.

It was sort of like Jeremiah when he says, it's fire burning in me. I've got to vent. Got to let this out.

He was quiet, young, giving deference to the elders, patient, chewing his tongue to a stump while he waited. He wanted to speak. And he was waiting until they finished.

And finally now he's going to vent his heart and pour out his heart to the Lord. Now we're going to see, and I'd ask you to look there, at the end of the book, chapter 42, verse 7, that God had some hard things to say about Job's three friends. It came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, my wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you've not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

Did you notice that Elihu, sometime I call him Elihu, I'm trying to say Elihu, that's the correct pronunciation. Anyway, God never said he was angry with Elihu. In Job 42.8, we read that the three had to offer animal sacrifices because of their sin.

Seven bulls and seven rams, but not Elihu. So he's different. He's one of the friends, but there's something different about this particular brother.

Now am I saying that Elihu finally came up with the right answer? No, he didn't. He's still on the wrong question. Elihu is also trying to answer the question, why do the godly suffer? Why is Job suffering? You can't look at the speech here of Elihu and say, now there you have it, he has the right answer.

He does not have the right answer. What does he have? Mark this, brothers, he has the right direction. He doesn't have the right answers, but he had the right direction.

His answers were very incomplete, but he did something that the debates did not do. They were so busy trying to get Job introspective, looking at the problem, looking in his own heart, they forgot to look to the Lord. And for the first time now, we're going to get a man who has the right direction.

He's on the wrong question, and he's given the wrong answers, but he looks to the Lord. He said, has anybody in this debate considered the Lord, the one who gives songs in the night? And I'll tell you, that was a new direction. And even though he doesn't have the right answers, a new direction is now introduced into this wonderful book, and it's refreshing.

And for the first time, Job is encouraged to lift up his eyes. As I suggested, those three friends in their debates, they were encouraging Job to look inside rather than to look up, encouraged him to this morbid introspection. Look in your heart, they said.

You're a sinner. You're a dirty sinner. Examine yourself.

He said, I did. I don't find anything. Dig deeper.

I've been digging. I can't see it. Dig deeper.

And he kept his eyes inside of him. I'll tell you, brothers, I don't know. There's a move today about all of this introspection.

Look down inside and discover your sin and then give it to Jesus. You have no more power to discover your sin than you have to solve the problem. Search me, O God.

That's Psalm 139. That's God's way. Let God search you.

They were saying, look in your heart and repent. We're going to find out the way to repent is to look to the Lord and repent. When you see God, you're going to see your heart.

You're going to get awfully discouraged if you look inside there. People have tried to encourage me, you know, just keep examining yourself and looking. I won't do it.

I get discouraged. It's a mess down there. I know what's down there.

I don't want to see that trash. When I'm ready, God will search me and know my heart and show me if there's any wicked way. And when He does it, then it's dealt with.

Otherwise, you just go into a depression. But we need to see the Lord. Then Isaiah said, I saw the Lord.

Then I said, woe is me. I'm like a leper in a leper colony, an unclean man with unclean lips among an unclean people. And so this is a new direction.

This is a new look. And it's so encouraging. I'll tell you, having the right direction is 10,000 times, that's hyperbole.

It might be more than that. It's a million times better than having a right answer. Somebody comes to you with a question and they say, well, what does the Bible teach you about this? You might give them a very sound theological answer.

But if you haven't given them a direction, then they're going to go away dissatisfied. Ask God to make you a man of direction. I'm going to ask God, I have asked God, to make me a man of direction.

Elihu was not a man with answers, but in the transition, God brought into Job's life a man with direction. And that does so much more than giving the right answers. Now, when we looked at Job's three friends, I told you where they were coming from.

In other words, we had that little memory jog, Eliphaz, trusted experience, and Bildad, rested in books, and Zophar, that guy. Zophar, he was just zealous and was basing everything on nothing. Where does Elihu come from? What's his background? What's he going to base his arguments on? This too is refreshing.

He comes on the scene, and for the first time, he says, I have a word from the Lord. Eliphaz never said that. He said, according to what I've seen, and this is my observation, and according to experience, and once I had a vision, and that's how I see it.

And Bildad said, ah, the talk of the ancestors. That's what they said. And they said, and all the fathers said this, and that's how that is, and that's why you should know.

Zophar just said, I know because I know, and that's why you should do it. And now comes a man with a direction, and he said, I can't hold it anymore. I have a word from God.

Oh, brothers, this transition is so basic. It's going to be a turning point now in Job's life. Chapter 32, verse 7, 7 and 8, I thought eight should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom, but it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

Job 33, verse 3 and 4, my words are from the uprightness of my heart. My lips speak knowledge sincerely. The Spirit of God made me.

The breath of the Almighty gives me life. Elihu speaks from the light that he had from God. Now let me give you the essence of Elihu's light.

What did he see? What was his revelation of the Lord? Let me state it for you, and then show it to you from his own words. God had revealed himself to Elihu as the teacher, the teacher. You see, Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar, they didn't say, we have a revelation of God, but Elihu does.

He said, I've seen God as the teacher, and Job, have you considered this? Maybe God wants to teach you something. That's a new thought. Maybe all of this has come into your life because God wants to teach you something.

Follow these verses, please. 33, 16, he opens the ears of men and then seals their instruction. Chapter 34, verse 31, has anyone said to God, I have borne chastisement, I'll not offend anymore? Teach me what I do not see.

If I've done iniquity, I'll not do it again. Teach me. He saw God as the teacher.

Verse 10 of 35, no one says, where is God, my maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us? More than the beast of the earth makes us wiser than the birds of heaven. Job 36, 2, wait for me a little, I'll show you there's more to be said on God's behalf. Verse 10, he opens their ears to instruction.

He commands that they return from evil. Chapter 36, 22, behold, God is exalted in power. Who's a teacher like him? Over and over again in Elihu's message, he kept saying, God's a teacher, God's a teacher.

You see, that's his answer to the question, why suffering? Why did the godly suffer? Why is Job suffering? The three friends said, it's punishment. Elihu said, no, it's education. The teacher wants to teach him something.

That's what it's all about. And of course, Job himself said, there's no reason. Well, have you considered this, says Elihu, that maybe God wants to teach you something through your suffering? He may not be punishing you.

He may not be chastening you. Are you open for teaching? Maybe he has a lesson. Maybe he has instruction for you.

Now, Elihu, in his sermon, does not claim God is a teacher, and here's what he wants you to learn. You read the sermon, you won't see that. Here's what Elihu says.

I'm paraphrasing, but you read it, you'll see. He said, God's a teacher. I don't know what he wants you to learn.

Maybe it's this, and he mentions a possibility. Or maybe it's this, and he mentions another. Or maybe it's this, and he mentions a third.

Or maybe it's this, and he mentions a fourth. Or maybe it's this. That's how to understand Elihu's speech.

He said, God's a teacher, and this is educational, and he allows you to go through that because he wants you to learn something. Maybe it's this, this. I don't know what it is, but are you open to the fact that God's a teacher? I tell you, that's a new direction.

In this whole book, Job had been looking down inside his heart, and now for the first time, he's considering, maybe he wants to teach me something. That's not the answer, but that's a long way toward the answer. That's a forward step in the answer.

Let me show you some of the possibilities that Elihu mentions. Maybe it's this, maybe it's this, let me just mention several of them. Chapter 33, verses 15 to 18, he suggests that sometime God sends affliction, like he did with Paul's thorn in the flesh, to keep a man from pride.

That was his first suggestion. Chapter 33, 15, in a dream, in a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men, when they slumber in their beds, then he opens the ears of men and seals their instruction, that he may turn man aside from his conduct, and keep a man from pride, keeps back his soul from the pit, and

his life from passing into Sheol. Have you thought of that, Job? Maybe God just wants to humble you.

Maybe you're too proud. And then he makes another suggestion. He says, you know, sometimes things come into your life for another reason.

Verse 26 of 33, then he'll pray to God, and he'll accept him, that he may see his face with joy, that he may restore his righteousness to man. Maybe God just wants you to pray, like they did in Judges. You know, those six declensions in the book of Judges? And then they cried unto the Lord.

And then they got hard again, and oppressive, and then they cried unto the Lord. He said, have you thought of that? Maybe God wants to teach you to cry. Trouble crowds you to Christ.

And maybe he wants you to cry. You know, brothers, a person, a man or a woman, a Christian, will only trust God when they must. You will only trust the Lord when you have to.

Well, here's the key. You always have to. You always must.

But you don't always remember that you always must. And so God sends trial to remind you. Some people say, oh, I got this trial in my life.

This is a special opportunity to trust the Lord. Well, it is that, but that's not why he sent that. That's not a special opportunity.

Every moment is a special opportunity to trust the Lord. You don't need trial as a special opportunity. I don't need trial as a special opportunity.

We're always to trust the Lord. Sometime we forget it, and God sends trial into our life to remind us that we always need to trust the Lord. And Elihu is suggesting maybe he sent this affliction in order to get you to cry unto him.

In prosperity, you know how it is, we do get self-sufficient, and we start to lean on our own wisdom and stuff, until God pulls the rug out from under us. And you know, one thing that God does is he often adds to your burden to lighten your load. You say, well, what do you mean he adds to my burden to lighten your load? Sometime it's better expressed in poetry.

In mercy he adds to the I must carry. In grace every trial by him is bestowed. He knows in my weakness I'll run straight to Jesus.

He adds to the burden to lighten the load. Some burdens I try in my own strength to carry. Some problems I think my own wisdom can solve.

So God adds a weight. Then I run from beneath it. I cry to the Lord and the pressures dissolve.

The Lord knows my frame and the strength of my shoulder. He knows how I struggle, my labor he sees. And in his great wisdom he adds an affliction proportioned in love to bring me to my knees.

Well, that's what Elihu said. Elihu said maybe he's just the teacher is trying to get you to call upon him. Maybe he's not trying to make you humble.

Maybe he's not trying to make you call upon him. And so he suggests the third thing, Job 33, 29 and 30. Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men to bring back his soul from the pit, that he might be

enlightened with the light of life, that he might be turned around.

He said maybe God wants to purify you. Maybe this whole thing is to make you more holy and to purify you. He brings you low, then he delivers you and you've become a better man through it.

You're matured and you have new life. I think Elihu went a little far because if I read his words right, he was saying suffering purifies. Does suffering purify? Not in itself it doesn't.

Now your response to suffering might have a purifying influence, but suffering by itself sometimes that just makes you hard. That just makes you bitter. If suffering purified, the purest people in the universe would be those who are going to hell because that's where suffering is.

It doesn't purify. Not by itself, it doesn't. When we see Christ, we'll be like him.

That's what purifies. Seeing the Lord. I used to think that when I died, death gets rid of my old sin nature.

Oh, don't share the glory with death. Death doesn't get rid of your old sin nature. When you see him, you'll be like him.

That's the end of your old sin nature. It's the revelation of the Lord himself. And so Elihu is making these suggestions.

He said God's a teacher. Maybe he just wants to make you humble. I don't know.

Maybe he wants to bring you to the place where you'll cry out to him. I don't know. Maybe he wants to purify you and make you holy.

I don't know. Then he gives another suggestion. 35, 10, and 11.

No one says, where's God my maker who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than the beast of the earth, makes us wiser than the birds of heaven. Maybe he wants to give you a song in the night. How the Lord loves to hear his children sing at night.

And I'm talking about the night of affliction. Maybe in the midst of this, he wants you to praise him. Not after it's over, but right in the midst of it.

He's a teacher. Job, think of the lessons. Maybe he wants to work these things in your heart.

Then he says, maybe it's just to get your attention, Job. Maybe you haven't given him your attention. Job 36, 15, he delivers the afflicted in their affliction.

He opens their ears in the time of oppression. Verse 10, he opens their ear to instruction. Maybe your ears haven't been open.

Elihu argues, Job, you've been saying, God is silent. That's your big problem with it. God won't talk.

God has shut his mouth. He won't speak to me. Elihu says, are you sure? Maybe you're not listening.

Maybe God is speaking and maybe he's speaking through this affliction. It's so interesting in the original here, how verse 15 reads, he delivers the afflicted in their affliction. Another translation says he delivers from affliction by affliction.

Another translation says, those who suffer, he rescues through suffering. Isn't that an interesting thing, that God uses affliction to rescue you? Verse 16, Elihu says, he enticed you with a mouth of distress. He enticed you, he called you through this trouble.

How God uses suffering and trial to set us free from the material side and the flesh and sight, and he entices us with trouble. Sort of like Hosea 2 and verse 14, behold, I allure her, bring her into the wilderness, speak kindly to her. Then I will give her vineyards from there and the valley of trouble as a door of hope.

Isn't that an interesting phrase? He brings you to the valley of trouble because that's your door of hope. He lures us because he wants us to himself. You see, Elihu doesn't have an answer.

He does not know. He knows God's a teacher and he knows Job would be wise instead of trying to find sin in his heart if he said, what's God trying to teach me? That's a new step. In his wonderful message, Elihu describes the storms of nature and oh, it's a graphic description.

You go through his sermon and he asks the question, why does God send storms? And his answer is in verse 12 of 37. Speaking of the storm, he said, it changes direction, turning around by his guidance that it may do whatever he commands it on the face of the inhabited earth. Now note verse 13, whether for correction or for his world or for loving kindness.

See, he doesn't know. He just said God's in charge of the storm. He's the one that sent it to New Orleans and other places.

He's in charge. And then you say, why? He said, I don't know, maybe correction or maybe for the world or maybe there's some love involved and he's going to use it in a redemptive way. Elihu doesn't know.

All he knows is God is a teacher and whether it's for humility or whether it's to cause you to pray and call upon the Lord or whether it's to purify you or whether it's to give you a song in the night seasons in the dark or whether it's just to get your attention or whether it's for his world or whether it's for correction or whether it's for love, he doesn't know why. And he doesn't try to say why, but in that new direction, he's got Job now to look at God as his teacher. That's not yet El Shaddai.

I almost said Elihu. That's not yet El Shaddai, but it's a revelation of God and the direction is toward the Lord. Now, before I get into the next part of this, let me just pound this home because this is on my heart.

Many Christians I know have come as far as Elihu's light. It's a good direction, but it's the wrong answer. I'm not going to condemn the direction.

Praise God for the direction. If I've heard it once, I think I've heard it a thousand times. People say, I'm going through it.

Please pray for me. I know God is trying to teach me a lesson. God is trying to show me something.

I'll tell you, that is as frustrating as the question why. And it's about as futile. What does God want me to learn through this? That is an unbiblical question.

What does God want me to learn? I'm going to speak, brothers, as simply and as boldly as I can. See, I've already had a heart attack, and I never know when God's just going to call me home. And so I don't clear my throat anymore.

I just say what I believe is the word of the Lord. If it's straw, spit it out. But if it's grain, may God help you to swallow it.

But I say as clearly as I can, God is not trying to teach you a lesson. God is not trying to educate you. When you go through something, don't say, what's God trying to teach me through this? He's not trying to teach you anything through that.

He's not interested that you get lessons. He wants you to know Jesus. He wants you to know His Son.

It's all about the knowledge of the Lord. And if it weren't for a lie direction, Elihu would have been in as much trouble as the other boys. But that direction saved his skin.

It was his direction. Christians ask me to pray, you know, and I don't know how to answer. I'm going through such and such, you know, I want to learn what God has for me.

Now you pray that I'll learn that particular lesson. I'll learn that particular principle. I'll tell you, may God deliver us from that.

It sounds spiritual, doesn't it? It sounds very spiritual. God is taking me through this so I can learn something. And I'm trying now, and I'm being open.

I want to learn what God wants me to learn. I went through hell last year and learned seven lessons. So what? That's not what it's about.

Do you know the Lord better? You're walking in a closer union with Him. You're more conformed to Jesus Christ. That's what it's about.

Now no doubt when you go through something, you are going to learn lessons. I'm not saying you're not going to learn lessons. I'm just saying don't seek after that.

That's not where your heart should be seeking. No doubt you're going to learn many precious secrets of the Lord. He's a teacher, yes.

Elihu, you got that right. He's going to teach us. Bless God that He teaches us these lessons.

But don't look for lessons or you'll get the lesson and miss the Lord. What good is that? You don't want to miss Him. Elihu's great contribution, I believe, was to point away from all of the problems and all this internal searching.

Chapter 35 and verse 10, no one says, where is God my maker? In the whole debate, no one said that. No one turned to the Lord. And now for the first time we have this direction.

Chapter 37, 14, listen to this, Job. Stand and consider the wonders of God. I love chapter 37, 21.

Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies. The wind has passed and cleared them. Out of the north comes the golden splendor and around God is awesome majesty.

And he just makes this observation. The sun shines in the sky. The clouds come in front of the sun.

Don't conclude the sun went out. The sun didn't go out. Just because the clouds are in front of it, the sun is still shining.

And you're up in an airplane, you see what a beautiful day it might be on a very cloudy day. And he's saying the sun, God has not changed. God continues to shine.

And don't let that cloud take your eyes off the fact that God's behind the cloud and He's still shining. As Elihu gets, I would say, toward the middle of his sermon, or message, or burden, whatever you want to call it. He begins to describe, and you'll see it in chapter 37.

You ought to read that chapter. What a chapter that. He begins to describe the Lord as the king of nature, as the God who's sovereign over the storms.

And he begins to talk about the thunder and the lightning and the snow and the rain and the wind and the cold that comes down from the north and the south wind that comes up from the south. And he talks about ice and he talks about moisture. And his whole message is 37.5. God thunders with His voice wondrously.

God's in the storm. And as he's preaching on this, he's talking about the storm. Something happens.

Now I'm going to come back to that. So set that here. As you can see from the handout sheet, or if you've studied the book, it's very easy to mark where Eliphaz begins to talk and where he stops talking.

And then Job answers. You can mark it. And then where Job quits.

And then Bildad picks it up. You know where it happened. You can go there.

There is where it starts and here's where it ends. And when Zophar begins, where he begins and where he ends and so on. They give an argument and Job responds and refutes it.

But when Eliphaz is speaking, Job doesn't respond. He responded six, seven, eight times. He responded every time they spoke.

Now Elihu, as he speaks, it's interesting because he stops almost as if to say, do you have anything to say, Job? Three times he gave him an opportunity in the midst of his sermon. Once is in chapter 33 and verse 32. If you have anything to say, answer me.

Speak. I desire to justify you. If not, listen to me.

Keep silent and I'll teach you wisdom. And evidently he paused and waited. And Job didn't have anything to say.

So we read in 34-1, then Elihu continued. And so he's preaching and then he stops. He says, you got anything to say? Say it.

He says nothing. So he continues. At the end of chapter 34, he gets real strong.

And I guess as strong as some of the other brothers were against Job. Verse 35, Job speaks without knowledge and his words are without wisdom. Job ought to be tried to the limit because he answers like wicked men.

He adds rebellion to his sin. He claps his hand among us and multiplies words against God. Pause.

Anything to say, Job? Job doesn't respond. So we read in 35-1, then Elihu continued. And so he continues his sermon.

At the end of 35, he does the same thing. Look at 16. Job opens his mouth empty.

He multiplies words without knowledge. Job doesn't respond. So we read in 36-1, Elihu continued.

And so he's just preaching this sermon. And then when he doesn't say anything, he continues. And then he doesn't say anything, he continues.

But he's given him an opportunity. If he wants to, he can answer. All right, now, what I want you to see, let's go back.

In the sermon, he's come to this part where God is in charge of the storm and God is sovereign over the storm. The wind, the rain, the lightning, the thunder, the north wind, the south wind, the ice, the frost, the dew, everything is from the Lord. He's in charge of the storm.

And he gets to that point. God is in the storm, thundering. His voice thunders.

I forgot the word. Anyway, you get the idea. He's well into his sermon, and all of a sudden, 38-1.

It doesn't say, and Elihu continued. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said. Now, that's the spot in the sermon where he's saying the storm.

God's in charge of the storm. I think the chapters where the Lord answers Job out of the whirlwind are probably the most well-known in the book, except for 1 and 2. Chapters 38 to 40, when God fires those 79 questions at Job one after another. Awesome section.

But what I want you to notice is this, that Elihu never stopped speaking. God interrupted him. You can see where everybody else stopped, but Elihu didn't stop.

He's in the middle of his message. He's describing God as the one who's in charge of the storm, thundering wondrously. I like the way Christopher Wordsworth, I don't know if you're familiar with that commentator, but he said it this way, the voice of Elihu dies away in the thunders of Jehovah.

That's exactly what happened. Job is listening very carefully. He doesn't have anything to say to Elihu, even though Elihu has said some hard things.

But Elihu had a direction, and he turned his eyes toward the Lord. He doesn't have answers, he just has a direction. And as Job listens to this young man pour out his heart, one minute he's listening to Elihu, and the next minute he's listening to the Lord.

I tell you, this is a great turning point in the book and in Job's heart. I can't prove it, but I think from what I'm reading here, that Elihu did not stop when God started. I don't think he went, excuse me, and let God speak.

I don't think Elihu even knows God's speaking. I think it's still Elihu talking. And these wonderful chapters are him giving his sermon, but now Job's not hearing Elihu anymore.

He's listening to the Lord. Brothers, as I was studying this, my heart was so moved. I long to be an Elihu in this sense.

Like Elihu, I'm young in the things of the Lord. I'm just a toddler. I don't know anything about the Lord.

There are thousands of instructors who are more able to understand more of the Lord than I am. And even in this room, there are men who could be up here and give probably a lot more light than I'm sharing. But I believe I have a direction.

I don't have answers, but I have a direction. I long to point you to the Lord. If I can get you to look away from your problems and look away from your heart and look away from the solution and look away from your edge and look away from all questions and the question why, I'll do that.

I want to turn your eyes that you'd consider the one who gives songs in the night. And what a glory it would be if somewhere along the way you started hearing God and you stopped hearing me. See, that should be the prayer of everyone who has an opportunity to share the word of the Lord.

If suddenly people just started hearing the Lord, that's my prayer that I can vanish and all of a sudden you're just hearing the Lord. It wouldn't bother me one bit if every man in this room did not hear the end of this message. I don't care if you don't hear the end of this.

If you're hearing God, if the Lord is speaking to you, that's what it's all about. That's the goal of all Bible teaching, I think. God longs to reveal Himself as El Shaddai.

This is how He did it in Job's life. And I don't want to just say steps and this is first and this is second and this is third because that can get so cold. But I'm suggesting if you're going to see God as El Shaddai, God will bring an Elihu into your life.

Somebody who has direction. Not somebody with a bunch of fancy answers because your soul doesn't need that and my soul doesn't need that. But somebody with the light that they have, they can just point you to the Lord.

And once you start looking to the Lord, then God is going to begin to speak. Praise God for the Elihus that He sends into lives. Men and women and young people, He sends these Elihus.

Now Elihu had been speaking of God's control over the storm and suddenly out of the storm, nice connection, out of the whirlwind, God speaks. Now the commentators are going to go crazy. Was it a literal whirlwind? I don't know if it was a literal whirlwind or not.

Remember, Job's story began with a whirlwind. It was a whirlwind that took the house down and took his children away. And now the story ends with a whirlwind.

And I know for one thing, whether it was literal or not, I don't know. But I know his head was in a whirlwind after those debates. And he was in a spin, all of that human wisdom.

I know that. And out of that situation, God begins to speak. In this connection, I won't look at it now, but you got to study Psalm 29.

If you have headings in your Bible, it says the voice of God in the storm. And over and over again in that Psalm, seven times, in just 11 verses, he talks about the voice of the Lord, the voice of the Lord. He speaks in the storm.

And may God open our ears to hear that. Job at last has been turned toward the Lord. And man now is beginning to fade away.

All of the debates, and all of the argument, and all the confusion, and all of the perplexity, and all of the frustration. And now it's just Job and God. We never hear of Elihu again.

He's gone. He's faded away. I don't know how he ended his sermon.

It doesn't matter. And now it's between God and Job. And God begins to speak.

That is the transition. An Elihu who has a direction, who turns your eyes to the Lord. And now God can take over from there and begin to reveal Himself as El Shaddai.

That's what we're going to look at, Lord willing, tomorrow morning. How does God reveal Himself as El Shaddai? What does He use? What are the steps? Job had reduced his three friends to silence. And now God has reduced Job to silence.

Chapter 40, verse 3, Job answered the Lord and said, remember before, he was saying, why don't you come down and debate me? I wish we could duke it out. Come down and speak like a man. And Job was calling on God to come down and explain Himself.

Well, now God comes down. Verse 4, behold, I'm insignificant. What can I reply to you? I lay my hand on my mouth.

Once I've spoken, I will not answer. Even twice, I'll add nothing more. And in a moment of time, because his eyes are now turned to the Lord, the law of silence is on his lip.

He has nothing to say anymore. And now in his presence, God will talk to Job. What will he say? What will he say? How will that lead to the revelation of Himself as El Shaddai? Because that's how He always does it.

So you pray that we see that, Lord willing, and that we all leave here knowing that God is more than enough when the hedge or any part of it comes down. Let's pray. Father, we thank You so much for Your Word and for sending Your servant Eli who had direction, who had a word from God, who had a revelation, who didn't have answers but didn't need answers because You used him to turn the eyes of Your servant unto You.

Oh Lord, thank You that when that happens, You begin to speak and man begins to fade away. Will You make that real in our hearts? We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you.

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