

Through the Bible - Job - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen explores the Book of Job, emphasizing the significance of personal suffering and the nature of accusations from fellow believers.

Duration: 54:29

Scripture: Job 6:6-7, Job 8:4, Job 8:6, Job 9:2, Job 11:11-12, Job 32:2

Topics: "Fear Of God", "Spiritual Humility"

Description

In this sermon, Eliphaz begins by sharing a secret truth that was whispered to him in a vision. He emphasizes the fear and awe he experienced in the presence of God. Eliphaz criticizes Job's friends for their lack of empathy and their unhelpful messages. He also highlights the importance of humility and acknowledges that only God can reveal spiritual truths. The sermon concludes by suggesting that the preachers, including Elihu, failed to understand and support Job in his trials.

Transcript

Somebody asked me once, which translation of the Bible I use. Now, there are many good translations. The one I use, when I started studying the scriptures 40 years ago, I used the King James Version, which is almost the only one available those days.

Today I use the New American Standard Bible and the Living Bible, or which is more modern now, called the New Living Translation. That's just for your information. Let's turn to the book of Job and we'll go now to chapter 3. See, the reason why I'm spending a little more time on Job than on some of the other books is because of the very reason which I mentioned in the last session, that I personally believe that this is the first inspired writing in scripture.

I do not believe that all these details could ever have been written hundreds of years after Job died. And therefore, if this is the first inspired book of scripture, then there's a lot of teaching here which is very, very relevant for us. And it deals with the individual.

It doesn't deal with a nation like most of the Old Testament dealt with. It deals with God and one man, God and you. So in that way, the book of Job is a great encouragement and many of the things that we face and suffer from Satan and from other believers, Job faced.

Because these three so-called friends of his were actually a picture of other believers. They are not enemies. They are not unbelievers.

It's a picture of believers who can trouble us, misunderstand us, criticize us. And it is always more painful when a believer attacks us and accuses us than an unbeliever. And if I were to give you my testimony in the last 40 years, I've faced a thousand times more accusation and criticism from believers than from unbelievers.

And I think that is the history of almost every servant of God in the history of the church. It's no different. Jesus faced more opposition from the Pharisees than from the Greeks and the Romans.

Pilate wanted to release him. Annas and Caiaphas wanted to kill him. So it's always been like that.

And so don't be surprised when you find your maximum opposition from believers who don't understand you, who criticize you, who tell all types of false stories about you. Because Job faced that too from his so-called friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. And in the end, there was a man called Elihu also.

So I just want to say something about, you see, there were three rounds of discussion here from between these Job and his three friends that goes on from chapter 3 to chapter 31. Three rounds of discussion. Three of them, one or two of them spoke three times and the last one spoke only twice.

And then at the end of these three rounds of discussion, another young man speaks Elihu from chapter 32 to 37. And then when he's also finished, God speaks chapter 38 to 42. So that's the broad outline of the book of Job.

First of all is this discussion between God and Satan in chapter 1 and 2. And then there's this long discussion between Job and these four preachers, chapter 3 to 37. And then there is a discussion between the Lord and Job in chapter 38 to 42. That's how the book of Job is divided.

Now what we've covered so far is the first discussion between God and Satan and how Job reacted. Now, these preachers, it's very clear that they were also instruments in the devil's hand to accuse Job. Now, before we look into that, I want to show you one verse as to what God said about these preachers.

God said something about Job. We already saw that. God said something about these three preachers.

Let's look at that before we see what they said. Job chapter 42. The Lord said in verse 7, the last chapter, verse 7, to Eliphaz the Temanite, I'm angry with you and with your two friends.

For you have not been right in what you said about me. Please remember that when you read all that they said. Your opinion may be different from God.

Some of those things they said, you may say, well, they were right in what they said. But please humble yourself and remember, God said that they were wrong. Why? According to our human intelligence, when we read some of the things that Eliphaz said and others said, they sound right.

Why did God say then what you said was not right? It's very important for us to understand that. Because the spirit behind it was wrong. And it's the spirit behind your words that God sees.

You can say a right thing, but you can say it with the motive of hurting somebody. And God says it's wrong. But you examine those words according to scripture and in a court of law, it's absolutely right.

And every court of law, the Supreme Court will also say it's right, but God says it's wrong. Please remember this all your life. That a lot of things which men say are right, God will say is wrong.

Because he sees the spirit. Why did you say it? What was the motive in your saying this correct statement? What was the motive in your finding fault with somebody, a servant of God in a particular area? You can find fault with servants of God in many areas. Okay, what you say may be correct.

The question is why do you say it? Do you say it because you're jealous? Do you say it because you want to show that you are clever? You want to accuse? I would say be careful. A spiritual man cannot be discerned by clever people who are carnal. Only a spiritual man can discern another spiritual man.

And there was nobody spiritual in Job's time, so none of these four preachers could discern him. Only God could. Okay, now these four preachers, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar and Elihu are a picture of four types of preachers today in Christendom.

Eliphaz, we read in chapter 4 and verse 12, is the man who is given to visions and angels and supernatural. You know there are preachers like that who always talk about visions that they have seen and angels that they have seen and try to bring authority into their words by giving you these testimonies of their angels and visions. Chapter 4, Eliphaz says, this is his first sermon to Job and he says, you know actually this truth that I'm sharing with you, verse 12, was given to me in secret.

It was whispered in my ear. It came in a vision at night when others were sleeping. Fear gripped me.

I trembled as the power of God came upon me. And I shook with terror. And a spirit came in front of my face.

It sent shivers up my spine. It stopped. And then there was a form in front of my eyes.

And a voice said, can a mortal man be just and upright before God? Can a person be pure before the Creator? The words are right. Absolutely right. Can a mortal man be just and upright before God? Can a person be pure before the Creator? But that was not the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit doesn't bring fear and terror into a man's heart. The Holy Spirit always brings joy and peace. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Don't be scared of all these people who talk about visions and dreams and spirits and all. They're like Eliphaz. It's one group of preachers in Christendom today.

And they try to bring authority to what they say. Not from the written word of God. If they quoted the written word of God, that'd be fine.

No, they say in secret. I saw a vision. And this is what I heard.

And this is what the Lord told me. Some other Lord. Not the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second preacher is Bildad. And he's a gentler type of person. If you read Bildad, I don't have time to show you all the verses.

He's a gentler type of person who is still accusing Job. You know, there are some people who accuse harshly. And some people who accuse in a very gentle way.

You see how sometimes a husband can say one small sentence and there's a sting of a serpent in it. Or a wife can say something very gently and there can be a sting of a serpent in it. There are different ways in which people speak with the same evil nature.

So Bildad was a little more gentle. And he is the type of preacher who talks about what our fathers believed. From the time of our fathers, we know that God always judges wicked people.

And he believes in the traditions of the fathers. You know, that's another type of preacher today in Christendom. Who doesn't want to disturb any of the church traditions that have been handed down from hundreds of years.

We don't change anything. We don't go for visions and dreams and all that. It's just these traditions.

These traditions. This is what our fathers believed. This is what our forefathers believed.

And of course, we don't want to rock the boat. That's the second type of preacher. And we see plenty of those also.

The third preacher is Zophar. And he is a very angry man. He's the man who hit out at Job the hardest.

He's like these self-appointed prophets, you know. These people who have imagined that they are fiery people like Elijah and John the Baptist. God has never anointed them or called them.

But they try to hit out at this and hit out at that. And they are self-appointed critics of everything they see. Everything is wrong.

Self-appointed critics. Now, Jesus also criticized a lot of things. But there's an anointed criticism and there are self-appointed censors.

You know, in the book of James chapter 3, in the Amplified Bible, it says don't be a self-appointed censor of other people's actions. When it says don't be many teachers, the Amplified Bible amplifies that. A self-appointed censor.

You know what a censor is? One who assesses every single word that other people say. The Pharisees were like that. Every word he says, they waited to catch him in some word.

I found that many times in my ministry too. Sometimes there are people sitting in the congregation who are waiting to catch one word that I say. Ah! You know what Brother Zach said? Oh, they want, they are looking carefully with a microscope through my books to find one word.

Jesus faced it. Self-appointed critics who never do anything for God themselves but who are only interested in finding fault with others. There are preachers like this plenty.

There's no anointing in their life. There's no blessing in their life. They are angry people who are just censoring and criticizing and accusing.

That's Zophar, an angry man who uses harsh words and hard words. Jesus said things like, you vipers and snakes, but there was an anointing upon them. But if you imitate Jesus, there may be no anointing on what you say.

You can't imitate Paul. Paul turned around to somebody and said, you enemy of all righteousness, the Lord will smite you. You imitate that, there's no anointing on it.

You can imitate a true prophet and there'll be no anointing on your words. God doesn't back it up. So Zophar was like that.

This other type of preacher appears to be very radical and all that, but there's no anointing there. And Elihu is much better than all these three. He was the fourth type of preacher who accurately taught what he said was the truth.

In fact, in the chapter 42, you don't find God saying anything against Elihu. It's very interesting. He only says against Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad.

God doesn't criticize Elihu because Elihu had a little better spirit. But Elihu was a teacher who taught everything correctly, but he was a man who had not gone through suffering and trial himself. That's another type of preacher who got a lot of knowledge, but never gone through deep waters of suffering and trial.

And they are very pious people who are ready to give advice to other people who are going through the deep waters of suffering and trial, never having known anything of it themselves. What they say is correct, but God does not anoint it because they have not gone through those deep waters themselves. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1.4, I've been through pressure and tremendous distress and trial, and the strength that God gave me in that is what I give to you.

That's a different type of preacher altogether. That's the type we should be, like Paul was. But these four preachers are not the type of preachers any of us should be, even like Elihu, who is the best of the lot.

And that's why none of them could accomplish anything with Job. They just wasted their time. And they were all prosperity preachers, by the way.

Elihu a little less than the others, but basically they all believed that prosperity was the thing. Now I want to share something else with you as a broad outline, first of all. We don't have time to go through every chapter, but let me just show you briefly.

First of all, the first round of discussion. You see, Eliphaz, I'll just pick out a few verses here and there and show you a little picture of how these people preached. When Eliphaz preached to Job, he was saying, you are suffering because you have sinned.

That was his basic message. Job, you're suffering because you have sinned. He didn't know anything about Job's private life, but he accuses him, just like a lot of people today.

Chapter four, verse eight. This is Eliphaz. He says, my experience shows that those who plant trouble and cultivate evil will harvest the same themselves.

So you're getting a harvest of the evil that you have cultivated and the trouble that you have planted in your past life. It was 100% wrong. And what was Job's reply to Eliphaz? Chapter six and verse six and seven.

This is only a sample. He says, people complain when there is no salt in their food. He says, your message is like food without salt and like the uncooked white of an egg.

He uses pretty expressive terms to say, that's what I think of your message. Goodbye. He couldn't care less.

Then Bildad speaks, and I'll give you a sample of Bildad's preaching. In chapter eight, verse four, he says, your children must have sinned. They obviously sinned against God, so their punishment is well deserved.

And if you are, verse six, if you are pure and live with complete integrity, God will rise up and restore your happy home. Highest holy man who knows all about Job's children apparently. Do you criticize other people's children? Do you say, this has happened because of this? I know why this has happened to so and so.

This is because of this, this is because of that. You are like Bildad, no different. Be careful, these are warnings for us, my brothers and sisters.

What is Job's reply to that? Chapter nine, verse two. He says, yes, I know this is all true in principle. You want me to be perfect before God.

How can a person be declared innocent in the eyes of God? If someone wanted to take God to court, is it possible to answer him even once in a thousand times? All these theories you are saying is right. A lot of preachers preach theories which they have never practiced in their daily life. Then we go to the third preacher, that Zophar.

This is the first round of discussion. I am just giving you a little sample and you will get an idea of what type of preachers these were. Chapter 11, verse 11.

Zophar, this angry man. You know, he says things like, verse three, should I remain silent while you babble on, you mock God. And shouldn't someone make you ashamed? And he says in verse 11, he knows those who are false, God knows those who are false.

And God takes note of all these, their sins. An empty headed person. He is calling Job, the godliest man in his generation.

He is calling him an empty headed person. You won't become wise any more than a wild donkey can produce human children. What strong words.

Can a wild donkey produce human children? You are not going to be any better than that. Yeah, yeah. Are these preachers or what? Are these people supposed to represent God or just angry men trying to get their own back on someone whom they are jealous of? So that's the first round of discussion that's over.

And then, yeah, I didn't show you what Job said to him. Yes, Job says in chapter 12, his response to Zophar. In sarcasm, in a sarcastic way, he tells Zophar, oh, you really know everything, don't you? And I suppose when you die, there'll be no more wisdom in this world.

He says, well, I also know a few things myself, verse 3, and you are no better than I am. Who doesn't know all these things that you're saying? See, Job's not bothered by what these people say. He just replies to them straight.

Then we go to the second round of discussion. In the second round, we see Alifaz saying in chapter 15 and verse 2. Alifaz replied to Job and says, you're supposed to be a wise man and yet you give all this foolish talk. You're nothing but a windbag.

You know what a windbag is? A lot of hot air. That's all you've got. It isn't right to speak so foolishly.

And he says in verse 20, wicked people are the ones who have pain all through their lives. These wicked people, verse 27, may be fat and rich, but their cities will be ruined. And what is Job's reply to that? In the second round, chapter 16, verse 2, Job says, I've heard all of this before.

He says, you are a bunch of miserable comforters. Won't you ever stop your flow of foolish words? Whatever I said that makes you speak so endlessly. I could say the same things if you were suffering in my place.

I could come and preach to you like that too. I could spout off my criticisms against you and shake my head at you. Absolutely right.

And then in the second round, Bildad speaks in chapter 18 and verse 2. Bildad says, how long, Job, before you stop talking? Speak some sense if you want us to answer. Do you think we are cattle? Do you think we have no intelligence? You may tear your hair out in anger, but do you think that will make the rocks fall off from a cliff? Verse 5, the truth remains that the light of the wicked is snuffed out. God snuffs out the light of the wicked.

In other words, you're a wicked man. Verse 6, the light in their tent will grow dark. Verse 7, the confident stride of the wicked will be shortened.

Verse 8, the wicked walk into a net. They fall into a pit that God has dug for them in their path. That's what he says, implying that Job is wicked.

And Job's reply to that is, chapter 19, verse 2. How long will you fellows torture me? How long will you try to break me with your words? Ten times you have tried to insult me now. You should be ashamed of dealing with me so harshly. And even if I have sinned, this is the best part.

That's my concern, not yours. God will deal with that. Why are you bothered about that? You're trying to overcome me using my present humiliation as evidence of my sin.

But it is God who has wronged me. He feels that God has wronged him. I cry out for help, but no one hears.

And then Zophar, this is the angry man. He comes to give his second round, third round rather. No, the second round.

He says in chapter 20, verse 19. The wicked man oppresses the poor and leaves them destitute. Job, you must have done something like that.

He turns them out of their homes because they can't pay their rent. You must have done that. The wicked man is always greedy, verse 20.

Never satisfied. He dreams about things and nothing remains. Nothing is left after he's finished gorging himself with the food.

And therefore his prosperity will not endure. In the midst of plenty, he will run into trouble. And disasters will destroy him.

And may God give such people a belly full of trouble. These are supposed to be comforters. Accusing, accusing, accusing, accusing.

Job's reply to this second round of discussion, the third man, Zophar. In chapter 21. Now listen to the wisdom of Job.

Verse 7. He says, actually the truth is that wicked people sometimes live to a good old age. Isn't that right? Absolutely right. He was no prosperity preacher, Job.

He says, wicked people grow old and wealthy. We see it all around us. Wicked people live to see their children, verse 8, grow to maturity.

And wicked people even enjoy their grandchildren. Don't say I'm wicked that suffering only comes to wicked people. He says, look around and see.

Wicked people enjoy their grandchildren. Wicked people, their homes, verse 9, are safe from every fear. And God does not punish them.

Absolutely right. Their animals, their bulls never fail to breed. Their cows bear calves without any miscarriage.

In other words, their business prospers. Their children are happy and skipping about like lambs, verse 11. The children are happy singing with tambourines and harps.

They make music, wicked people. They make merry to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity.

And they go to their grave in peace. This is exactly what we see of wicked people around us. All this, even though they say to God, go away.

We don't want. It's no use praying to you. We don't want you.

Who is the Almighty that we should obey Him? What good will it do to us if we pray, verse 16. Their prosperity is not of their own doing. In other words, Job says, they are not prosperous because a reward for their lives.

Because their lives are so wicked. And so, I will have nothing to do, Job says, with that kind of thinking. That you people are telling me that I'm suffering because I'm wicked.

Very sensible reply. And now we come to the third round of discussion. That goes on between Job and the three.

We saw the two rounds already. In the third round, only two people speak. Eliphaz and Bildad.

Eliphaz says, chapter 22, verse 6 and 7. I know what happened, Job. Now he acts as though he's got discernment. This is the man who talks about visions and spirits and prophecy and all that type of stuff.

You must have lent, 22-6, you must have lent money to your friend. And kept the clothing which he gave you as a pledge and never returned it. That means you treated your friend badly.

You stripped him to the bone. And more than that, Job, verse 7. You must have refused water when some thirsty man came to your house. And you must have refused him the hungry man food when he came to your house.

After all, Job, you think the land belongs to the powerful. And those who are privileged have a right to it because you're such an influential man. You think everything belongs to you.

More than that, some widows who came to your place, verse 9. You must have sent them away without helping them. And you must have crushed the strength of some orphans. That is why, verse 10, you are surrounded today by traps and fears.

That's why you cannot see in the midst of all the darkness and the waters that cover you. And you say, verse 13, that God can't see what I'm doing. How can he judge through the thick darkness? All a lie.

How easy it is to judge other people. What is Job's reply? He says in verse 1, the last part. Why must the godly wait for so long for God? Evil people steal the land, move the boundaries, markers.

They steal sheep. They take donkeys from the poor and the fatherless. The poor widow has to give her ox to pay for a loan.

The poor are kicked aside by evil people. The needy have to hide from these evil people for safety. Like the wild donkeys in the desert, the poor have to spend all their time just enough, getting enough to keep body and soul together.

They have to go into the desert. These poor righteous people sometimes to search for food for their children. The wicked, verse 9, snatch a widow's child from her breast.

They take the baby as a pledge. The poor, on the other hand, have to go about naked without any clothing, verse 10. They press out olive oil for other people.

They are not allowed to taste it themselves. The groans of the dying rise from the city. Yet God does not respond to their moaning.

Wicked people, verse 13, rebel against the light. They don't stay in the right paths. The murderer rises in the dawn to kill the poor.

The adulterer waits for twilight and sins. They break into houses, verse 16. But, Job says, I know, one day they'll disappear from the earth, verse 18.

Everything they own is cursed. Death consumes the sinners, finally. Even the sinner's own mother will forget him.

Worms will find him sweet to eat. No one will remember him. Wicked people are broken.

God, in his great power, verse 22, will drag away the rich, verse 25. Can anyone claim otherwise? Can you prove me wrong? See, Job has got his head screwed on properly. He thinks straight when he is speaking, even though he is in intense suffering.

So, that's his second round with Bildad. He's got very little to say. But, he says, in verse 25, verse 4, How can a mere mortal man stand before God and claim to be righteous? Who in all the earth is pure? God is

so glorious, even the moon and stars scarcely shine compared to him.

Now, Job's reply to that is, to the third round of Bildad, in chapter 26, verse 2, sarcastically. Again, he uses a lot of sarcasm. Oh, he says, how you people have helped powerless people like me.

How you have saved people who have no strength. Oh, how you have enlightened my stupidity. He's being sarcastic.

Oh, you have enlightened my stupidity. What wise things you have said. He's making fun of them.

Where have you gotten all these wise sayings? Whose spirit speaks through you? Verse 4. That's his question. Whose spirit is speaking through you? And he says in chapter 27, verse 6, the last part, My conscience is clear for as long as I live. That's Job's reply.

I use this New Living Translation because it makes some of these things very clear. And so you see, there is this discussion that goes on like this. Now I want to come.

Zophar doesn't speak a third time. I think he's probably heated up so much that he's sitting there and cooling off. He's got nothing more to say.

And then you find this long reply that Job gives from chapter 26 on to chapter 31, where he's justifying himself and he's saying all these things that he did. You see, Job, though he was a very wonderful man and had light on so many things that were wrong, he was an extremely helpful man. But he did not have light on one thing.

Spiritual pride. Pride in his godliness. He was godly and he was proud of it.

And that is why God took him through this trial to make him godly and humble. You know, when the apostle Paul, godly man, was in danger of becoming proud, he also was taken through suffering. He was given a thorn in the flesh called a messenger of Satan.

Job had a messenger of Satan. Paul had a messenger of Satan. But Paul says, I know why I got it.

Job didn't know. Paul says, I know, 2 Corinthians 12, because I was in danger of becoming spiritually proud. So God did this to keep me humble so that I can get grace, because God gives grace only to the humble.

That is the real reason why God takes godly people through suffering, misunderstanding, opposition, persecution to humble us, so that he can pour out his grace upon us. That is the New Testament answer. Job, don't blame Job.

He didn't have a Bible, he didn't have the Holy Spirit, he didn't have a brother. He didn't have a meeting to go to. It's amazing that he lived as he did, with all that, without all that.

But in the New Testament, we have the clear light as to why God takes godly people through suffering. And now we come to the last preacher, Elihu. And I just want to show you a few things that he says in chapter 32.

The fourth preacher says, Elihu, the son of Barakel, was very angry. Now, I've always told the brothers in our church, whenever you're angry, please don't preach. Because the anger of man, James says, can

never work the righteousness of God.

And not only don't preach, whenever you're angry, don't speak. Even at home. You can save yourself from hundreds of sins if you follow this simple rule.

But Elihu did not have that wisdom. He was angry and he spoke. And he was angry in a self-righteous way.

Because he said, Job refused to admit that he had sinned against God. See, basically, all these people were saying was that you've sinned, your children have sinned. God knows you're all a crook, Zophar says.

But none of these people really understood why God, even Elihu didn't understand. Elihu says some wonderful things about God, but he couldn't explain to Job. Like if Paul was there, Paul could have explained after going through that experience.

Today we can explain, but Elihu didn't have that experience. There are many preachers today who have no experience. What they are saying is correct.

Elihu is a good man and you can be a good person. But if you don't have experience of trial and suffering, your ministry will be very shallow. That's what we learned from Elihu's life.

Chapter 32, verse, he was angry. He was also not only angry with Job. Verse 3, he was also angry with Job's three friends.

Because they had condemned God by their inability. And he thought, well, I can answer these fellows. And he was young.

He says in verse 6, I'm young and you're old, so I held back. He's much better than the other three. But he also does not have the answer.

Chapter 34, verse 7. He says, has there ever been a man as arrogant as Job? In other words, he says from the time of Adam. Has there ever been a man on the face of the earth so proud as Job? What did God say about Job? There's no man like him on the face of the earth, such a perfect, blameless, upright man. Do you see how completely out of fellowship with God Elihu is? That Elihu's opinion of Job is exactly the opposite of God's.

The greatest Bible scholars of Jesus' time. The Pharisees, Annas, Caiaphas, the great Bible scholars. They thought he was the prince of devils.

Unlearned people like Peter said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus said, you are blessed. It's not your human cleverness that taught you.

It's not all your Bible study that taught you. My father in heaven has opened your eyes to see the truth. So you see, throughout the ages, you find a lot of people who are very clever, have sometimes got exactly the opposite opinion of a godly man that God has.

They think because of their knowledge, they are right. They are totally wrong. Don't be discouraged if people who are great Bible scholars think you're wrong.

The history of the Bible and the history of Christianity teaches that's always been the case. It's only a godly man who can assess your true value. And imagine, Elihu, the best of these four preachers, says, has there ever been a man who was so proud as Job? What a statement to make about the godliest man of his generation.

That shows how blind even good people can be, who understand everything about God correctly. And he also goes on to say in chapter 36 and verse 11, he's a prosperity preacher too. If people listen to God and obey him, they'll be blessed with prosperity throughout their lives.

And all their lives will be pleasant with health. It's health and wealth. But if they refuse to listen to God, they will perish in battle and die.

It's the same message we hear today from the false preachers. And he says in verse 26, look, God is exalted beyond what we can understand. Some things he says are right.

Chapter 37, he finally says in verse 23 and 24, we cannot imagine the power of the almighty. Yet he is so just and merciful that he does not oppress us. No wonder people everywhere fear him.

People who are truly wise will show him reverence. Correct statement, but a misunderstanding of Job's condition. What is Job's reply to Elihu? Nothing.

Then God replies to Job. And when God speaks to Job, he doesn't talk about his suffering. He doesn't say anything like that.

And Job is convicted. What a lesson for us to learn. God says, my ways are not your ways.

You try to go and convict a man of his sin like some self-appointed prophet, nothing happens. God in his great mercy and compassion speaks in quite another way. And the man is so thoroughly convicted of sin, that he says, oh God, I'm corrupt, I'm nothing.

How did Job change? Now this is an example. If you come to the last chapters of Job, you see that what God is basically telling Job is, if you can't understand all these wonders in creation, how can you understand spiritual principles? If you can't understand even creation, how can you understand spiritual principles which are deeper than creation? That's a very good answer. Scientists are still trying to figure out the mysteries of the universe.

We cannot understand spiritual truths except God revealing it to us. So the first thing we need is to humble ourselves. And then the second thing God tells Job in all these chapters is, if I can control the lightning, I don't have time to show you all these verses, but you can read from chapter 38 to 41.

If I can control the lightning, and I can even control all the wild animals, you think I can't control that lightning that struck the house, that struck those animals that were killed? You think I can't control the storm that struck the house where your children died? You think I can't control the Sabians who came and destroyed your property? You think I can't do that? That's what God is trying to say. Think of creation. Think of what I have done.

I control all these things. And he says in chapter 41 verse 9 to 11, if you can't stand even in front of a crocodile that I have created, you think you can stand before me? God is very down to earth. You see a crocodile and you turn and run.

And he says that, who will confront me? 41.11 No one dares disturb the crocodile. 41.10 And if you don't dare disturb the crocodile, how do you think you can stand before me? I who created that crocodile? Nobody here will argue in front of a crocodile, will you? Your argument won't last very long, if you try to argue with a crocodile. And God says you won't stand in front of a crocodile and you think you can just come and stand before me? That's all he says.

He doesn't talk to him about his sin or his children's sins or anything. He just shows him his greatness. And Job is humbled.

Job says, the Lord says in chapter 40 verse 2, you still want to argue with the Almighty? What is Job's reply now to God? Lord, I am nothing. I want to tell you something from the first book of Inspired Scripture. God's purpose is to bring us down to zero.

Whoever God uses, he has to first reduce to nothing. And when you recognize that you are nothing, Paul said in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, who is Paul and who is Apollos? I planted, Apollos watered. He who plants is nothing, he who waters is nothing.

The man who does evangelism is zero, the man who does Bible teaching is zero. Paul says I did the evangelism, Apollos did the Bible teaching. Who is going to get the credit? God.

You do the evangelism, somebody else does the Bible teaching. Who gets the credit? There are Christians fighting about it today. Why are they fighting? Because they are not zeros.

I brought that soul. You are stealing a sheep from my church. My church? There is a church of Jesus Christ.

Which is this? Your church. Your church, everybody must be stolen and taken away and put in the church of Jesus Christ. We must destroy your church.

This is going on. Paul says who is Paul, who is Apollos? I planted, somebody else watered. I am nothing, he is nothing.

God is everything. That point, many many servants of God have not come to. That was the secret of Paul's life.

He was a zero till the end of his life. He said I am nothing. And Job, what a long time he took to come to that place where he said I am insignificant.

I am nothing. And he said I will put my hand over my mouth. I will never again speak to justify myself.

I am good for nothing. I have already said too much. I have nothing to say.

And thereafter, I believe for the rest of his life, Job became like James says, a man who was quick to hear and slow to speak. That long speech that he gave from chapter 26 to chapter 31, six chapters, is one of the longest messages in the whole, longest sermons in the whole Bible almost. It's all self-justification.

I did this, I cared for the widow, I cared for the poor, I helped the blind. Nobody and the people respected me in the streets and when I spoke, nobody else spoke after that. My words were so blessed.

All this. He was conscious of all these things. And he never realized the pride there was in his righteousness.

Now this man has become zero. As a result of whose preaching? Was it Eliphaz or Bildad? Was it the man who saw visions and dreams and who gave all that? Was it the man who held to his traditions? Was it the man who was a self-appointed censor? Was it the man who was so correct in what he said? None of these people could help him. All these four types of preachers can't help anybody.

But God did. So we can say there are five types of preachers here. The fifth one was God.

Whom shall we imitate? Be followers of God. Be imitators of God. It says in 1 Corinthians 11.

Learn something. Job. All those people directly attacked Job for his sin.

God never said a word about that. God's way is different. He drew Job to become a true worshipper.

She showed him his fantastic sovereignty and his almighty power. And I believe that's what the Christian church needs to demonstrate to an unbelieving generation. That our God is almighty.

He is sovereign. I'm not afraid of you people. I'm not afraid of you religious fundamentalists who try to do things to me.

Not a hair on my head can be touched without my heavenly father's permission. I'm a servant of almighty God. John Wesley once said, I have been sent by God to do a work and I am immortal until my life's work is done.

That is how a man who lives before God speaks. The number of people who tried to kill John Wesley they couldn't kill him. Because God had a plan for his life.

Be a man of God. Be a woman of God. One who lives before God's face.

One who has God's compassion. One who is not ready to criticize. One who does not pass judgments without knowing the true facts.

And even after you know the true facts you say there may be still more which I don't know. Humble yourself and say, Lord I don't know. I'm nothing.

I'll put my hand on my mouth. And God and then Job says in chapter 42 the Lord says Job says verse 5 Lord I had heard about you before with my ears but now I have seen you with my own eyes. See there's a lot of difference between hearing about God and seeing him with our own eyes spiritually.

Oh Lord. You know when John saw Jesus in the Isle of Patmos he fell and worshipped. And Job fell down and worshipped.

And he says I take back everything I said. I take back everything I said. Verse 6, 42, 6. And I sit in dust and ashes and I repent.

What a wonderful place God's brief message brought Job to which all those preachers could not do. Shall I tell you why? And now you understand the reason. If you want an effective ministry God loved Job.

Those other people did not love Job. If you love people from your heart God will give you the right words for them. If you don't love them you only want to criticize them, find fault with them, accuse them, you are jealous of them.

However much of the Bible you know God will not give you the right words to bless them. That was the difference. God loved Job.

Love the people you serve and God will give you words to speak to them. Like I have often said, if you want to be a prophet of God you must have two things in your heart. One, you must have God's word in your heart and second, you must have God's people on your heart.

Then He will give you a word for them. Otherwise He will not. And then the Lord said to Job, the Lord said to these other people, I am angry with you, verse 7. Now you got to offer a sacrifice and ask my servant Job to pray for you.

And ask my servant Job to offer a burnt offering for you. He is going to be your mediator, this man whom you accused. The Lord says to one of the churches in Revelation, these people who have accused you, I will make them come down and kneel before you and acknowledge that I have loved you.

That's what happens here. And He says, if Job prays for you I will accept his prayer on your behalf and then I won't treat you as you fellows deserve to be treated because you have not said about me the right thing as Job said. Job said many things angrily but finally he took back everything he said and what was left was all the good things.

And so Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar went to Job and said, brother we are really sorry we had this wrong attitude towards you. You see, I don't know whether they repented or not, they didn't want judgment. Anyway, and Job prayed for his friends, verse 10, and as soon as he prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes too.

Pray for these people who are supposed to be your friends, who may be your enemies, pray for them. That's a godly man. He learns how to pray for those who persecute him, those who are jealous of him, and when you do that, it says the Lord blessed him double.

You want the Lord to bless you double? Pray for those who persecute you. Love those who are your enemies. Do good to those who harm you.

That's the way. I just want to point out to you one or two things in the book of Job in conclusion that Job said. In chapter 13 verse 15, he said even if God slays me, I will trust him.

Wonderful words. And in chapter 19 and verse 25, he says I know that my redeemer lives remember, this is 2000 years before Christ with no bible written. I know that my redeemer lives and he will stand on the earth at the last day.

Imagine, Job was a prophet speaking about the second coming of Christ. And after my body has decayed, he's speaking about the resurrection. I, in my body, I will see God.

Today when people die, they don't have a body in heaven. This is talking about the resurrection. In my body, I will see God.

I will see him for myself. I will see him with my own eyes. Chapter 23 and verse 10.

In the living bible, it's written like this. He knows every detail of what is happening to me. What tremendous faith.

He knows every detail of what is happening to me. He knows the way I'm taking. He knows every detail of this way.

These are some of the tremendous confessions that Job made. And I believe that these are the things that remain. All the bad things are wiped out from God's record because Job took it all back.

And these are the things that remain. And I hope that what we have studied here will help us to follow the example of this wonderful man and the way that he lived in a time without all the facilities and encouragement that we have in our day. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the wonderful example of this man who did not have even 1% of the opportunities and facilities that we have today. It shows that we can rise a hundred times higher and if we haven't done so, it's because of our lack of faith, our lack of diligence and our lack of seriousness of which we want to deeply repent. Bring us down quickly to that zero point from which you can bless us double.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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