

2014

(Devastatingly enlightening chart on white board)

God speaks! Now, remember, Elihu has just finished speaking, but God doesn't respond to Elihu, but to Job. God speaks for two magnificent chapters. He speaks as no one else can about creation. He was there. He did it!

38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: 2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb,

God goes on for two chapters, you'll just have to read it! This is God speaking! The God of creation is talking to Job about what He, the God of all eternity did!

He talks about the stars, the oceans, clouds, lightning, about animals! The lion, the mountain goats, wild donkeys, wild oxen, ostriches and their stupidity, horses and their majesty in battle, hawks and their unreachableness!

Job responds, only two short verses,

40:3 4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. 5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. KJV

Obviously, this set Job back on his heels--the God of Creation speaking to him!! Job didn't argue with God. Then God spoke again for another two chapters. This time God speaks about an interesting, massive creature called Behemoth. He is showing his amazing creativity and design.

40:15 "Behold, Behemoth which I made as I made you; he eats grass like an ox. 16 Behold, his strength in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. 17 He makes his tail stiff like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. 18 His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron. 19 "He is the first of the works of God; let him who made him bring near his sword! 20 For the mountains yield food for him where all the wild beasts play. 21 Under the lotus plants he lies, in the shelter of the reeds and in the marsh.

Next God talks about another big guy, called Leviathan.

¹Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? ²Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? ³Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? ⁴Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? ⁵Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens

He speaks a lot about this Leviathan creature, sounds like a sea monster of some sort. God knows all about Leviathan, He made him. Maybe a dinosaur, or a really big alligator type fella.

Now when Job gets his tongue back, he speaks just a few lines.

42 Then Job replied to the Lord: 2 "I know that **you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.** 3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely **I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.** 4 "You said, 'Listen now, and

I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ 5 **My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.** 6 Therefore **I despise myself** and repent in dust and ashes.”

There’s a lot of wisdom flowing forth here from Job. Job has seen that God is all powerful, and that no purpose of God’s can be thwarted. And there are definitely things that are just beyond us, too wonderful for us to comprehend. Wisdom! Job is now actually confronted with God.

So now that you have the overview, we’re going to **go back to where we left off last week**, after the three friends pummeled Job and discuss the fourth friend to speak out, Elihu, and some other theological implications of Job. Let’s go back to the text:

Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, **burned with anger.** He **burned with anger** at Job because he justified himself rather than God. 3 **He burned with anger** also at Job’s three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, **he burned with anger.** 6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said: “I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you.

Now, you’ve probably noticed a potential character flaw already with Elihu. It looks like he was quick to anger. Maybe he could say it was righteous indignation, as we all try to pretend sometimes, but nevertheless, He burned with anger. More than just a little annoyed.

Elihu spoke for a **full 7 chapters!** The other friends usually just spoke about a chapter or two each time, but 7 chapters!

It is actually pretty good compared to the other three friends. He points out a lot of good points. Basically, he has a pretty good theology. He points out that sometimes God uses our trials to teach us. But there’s a problem here. In the mix of his long lecture, he throws in a couple of seemingly innocuous statements, that, upon reflection, could have had devastating effects in his life and especially in his relationship to God.

Elihu speaking:

26 Behold, God is great, and **we know him not;**

Well, this in itself may not be so bad, until we read a few sentences later:

23 The Almighty—**we cannot find him;**

Elihu has a very lofty view of God, waxing masterfully eloquent about His power and glory. But Elihu states that God is so high, that we **cannot know Him** and we **cannot find Him.** How does God respond to this speech? Remember last week?

At the end of the book, in Chapter 42 verse 7, God rebukes the first three friends for their speaking, for not speaking rightly of Him, God, as Job had spoken rightly.

And to Elihu, God says. . . . NOTHING!

God **neither rebukes nor endorses** what Elihu said.

The Bible doesn't spell this out, but it makes me wonder if God just responded to Elihu's two statements by letting Elihu have what he claimed. We **can't know God**, so God **will not be known** by Elihu. We **cannot find God**, so God **will not be found** by Elihu. This seems to be a glaring omission. God seems to have ignored Elihu. As far as we know He did.

Comfort of Discipline

Hebrews 12:6

“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

The discipline and correction of the Lord upon our lives is surely one of the most precious things we'll ever receive. It proves we are His children. How scary it would be for us if God never disciplined us. As God's children we embrace His discipline, even though it can really be uncomfortable. It helps us realize, “My Daddy really does love me!”

It appears that Elihu had a wonderful theology but as far as we are told in Job, did not have a relationship with God. His theology was all theoretical, but it looks like he lacked the one thing that makes life worth living, knowing God.

Faulty Foundational Belief

The righteous are healthy.

Those with faith are wealthy.

God's ultimate concern is that we be successful, very successful.

If we have faith, we'll not have any troubles.

Any troubles are always evidence that we lack faith.

Our state in life is reliant on our works, actions, strength of our faith.

God would never let his people suffer.

Life on earth is the ultimate good, so there is no need to die, unless we lack faith.

Satan would agree

Think about it! The reason that Satan thought Job would not remain faithful to God was because he was judging from his own point of view. For Satan, it's all about him. He assumed that Job would be the same way. Everyone is selfish, or so he thought. It must be the ultimate galling grating irritation to Satan and his minions when a believer continues to trust in God even when he is being suffocated by suffering and trials. Satan loves the prosperity gospel. Because all he has to do is remove the props, inject a little misfortune, whisper a little doubt, and presto, the prosperity followers will stumble over each other as they flee for the door, away from faith in God, their god who won't give them every little thing they lust for.

Jump to the end of the book, Job is restored. His health is restored, and his wealth is doubled. But, Job died. This was still part of the holy, happy ending. Death is not the ultimate evil, we get to rejoin full fellowship with God.

Life is **not** the ultimate good. **Trusting God is!!**

Luther's favorite Psalm was 119:71, “It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn thy statutes.”

If our treasure, value, is based on wealth, health, family, success, and prosperity- What do we have to offer the wealthy man, driving his wife to the club in one of his Ferraris? What good news can we tell him? It's not about here! It's about life beyond!

Psalms 63:3

. . . thy lovingkindness is **better than life**. . .

It truly is the gem of all eternity, that God loves us and has provided a way of salvation, His Love, for us.

If you believed the prosperity gospel, then Job was just **speaking nonsense** when he said, 13:15 (KJV) **“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”**

How could Job trust in a God that didn't make him healthy and wealthy and handsome besides?

The supreme value of Christ is shown/displayed most clearly where Christians treasure Christ more than what they have or what they are losing! Where is your treasure? This is the main book in the Bible dealing with this question.

Job's faith becomes a glowing, inextinguishable light shining through these pages. Just like God said he would. God knew. God knew Job! When God bragged about Job to Satan, God knew where this was all going. God proved that He was paramount in Job's life. This is the most important thing in the world, God's supremacy in the hearts of His people.

Remember Hebrews chapter 11, called the Hall of Faith. It lists many of the great heroes of faith, who maintained their faith in God and triumphed victorious. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Rahab! The list goes on. However, let's look at verse 35 of chapter 11. It kinda changes here.

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. **36** Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37** They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—**38** of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, **40** since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Not all heroes of faith are victorious on earth, to our eyes! But they are still listed as heroes, here in the Hall of Faith. We don't seek sorrow and trials, in order to test our faith. But when they come, and we are promised they will, we are to, as James wrote,

“Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the trying of your faith produces endurance.” James 1:2-3

Whether it is a gun to your head or cancer in your head, or a teenage child embroiling your family life, it is still a trial!

This is the ultimate faith, when we can walk through the darkest entanglement of problems, so dark you can't see, before or behind, holding God's hand, trusting Him to guide the way. It's okay to tell God your fears. Pain hurts. It's okay to tell God. Fears can cripple us, it's okay to tell God. God knows and He can take whatever we throw at Him. I'm told that Howard Hendricks used to say to his ministerial students at Dallas Theological Seminary, “You're not worth a dime without your problems!” Why try to deny it, you've got problems and God knows it!

Now here is a tricky part. When you have a problem or trial, there are a couple of ways to handle it or present it to those around you. First, you can hide it, act like it isn't happening and not tell anyone what's going on in your life. (Exposing our twisted, hidden endorsement of the health and wealth gospel mindset.)

The second option would be transparency. Honesty. It will make God shine in this dark, scary, depressing world.

God can help us in our problems! He can help the world.

We are wonderfully transparent in our community group, Keep it up!

When God finally speaks to Job, He does not:

- 1-Does not answer the questions
- 2-Does not apologize
- 3-Does not offer a hint about his conversation w/ Satan
- 4-Does not acknowledge or pity Job's struggles
- 5-Does not promise restoration to Job

God is speaking, God speaks of His creation, beyond grasp of man, and examples of God's infinite knowledge and power.

Think, as Job listens to God speaking, do you suppose he even feels his boils now?

So now, still bankrupt, childless, sores galore, glaring friends and **no prospect of any of this being changed**, Job is a humble, worshipping child at God's feet, with his self-worth in Yahweh, not in his own moral behavior or innocence. We can't make a big enough deal of this, that Job **still didn't know he was going to be restored and healed. Job knew that he would likely die from this.**

Everyone does not get a reversal. Remember in John 21:19 when Jesus was talking to Peter. He was telling Peter about "what kind of death he would glorify God". It is all a part of life and God can be glorified in it all! Don't feel guilty if you have trials! They are not a sign of a lack of faith! Jesus promised us that we would have troubles!

John 16:33 "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Not all about troubles

As I looked back over this lesson, I realized that it sounds like all of life is troubles. Stress, stress, pain, troubles, more stress! But in reality, most of Job's life is not consumed by these huge problems. He had a wonderful life with a wonderful wife and kids, a very fulfilling vocation, plenty of friends and joy, lots of joy!

God sets all things straight

Let's read the part where God steps in to set everything straight with Job and his friends.

42:7 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 have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord told them; and the Lord accepted Job. 10 The Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and the Lord **increased all that Job had twofold.**

Greatest Restoration?

Now this is really exciting!

When God intervenes here, and had Job pray for his friends, God was protecting Job from a lifetime of bitterness! Job lived another 140 years after this! What a wonderful gift God gave them when he assured the forgiveness process amongst them.

And remember, when Job was told to pray for his friends, there was no promise or indication that God would heal him or restore his losses. How amazing to see Job's faith as displayed in his obedience to God.

Shine bright in this dark world. We will have troubles, Jesus promised we would. But shine bright as a child who trusts in their heavenly Father, to keep them, to lead them and to love them, no matter what the situation looks like. When we have problems, trials and doubts, that only shows we are human and when we have questions, and wonder "Why?" and still trust in God, that is the ultimate faith! Your hand in God's hand as you walk in the dark, telling Him your fears, grasping ever tighter as He holds you. Our faith shines brightest to the world, in the midst of our trials, when there is no apparent reason to believe, and yet we trust in God! God loves you, more than you love yourself!

Questions:

- 1- Do you tend to be more like Elihu, so concerned with theological tidbits, that you can neglect your relationship with God? How can you correct this focus in your life?
- 2- Do you have tendencies to follow the prosperity gospel, without necessarily realizing it?
- 3- Do you see problems in the way we tend to present Christianity to the world, as just a great way to live our lives so we don't have any problems?
- 4- Have you ever been encouraged as you've seen other Christians trusting God through their trials? Examples?
- 5- Is it hard for you to be transparent with the world concerning your personal trials? How about being transparent to other Christians, ie. our community group? Do you feel like you'd be whining to tell others about all the stresses you're going through?
- 6- Do you have any friends that have mistreated you or (you've mistreated), with whom you need to reconcile, so you can enjoy the last 140 years of your life?
- 7- What is the most encouraging part of the book of Job for you?
- 8- What new things did you learn about Job in this study? About yourself?