

Job 4-8 “Grace and Truth”

Good evening and thank you so much for joining us! We’re continuing our VBV study through the Bible, and tonight we are in Job 4.

Last week we studied chapters 2-3, and now we’ll pick up the pace as we see the dialogue between Job and his so-called friends. Because we’re reading this dialogue in the form of Hebrew poetry, we’ll be tackling many verses at a time.

What you’re going to see over the next few weeks is how the discussion begins between Job and his 3 friends. Soon it will become a debate, then a dispute; and the Lord will have to intervene to bring it to a conclusion, that starts in Job 38.

We’re gonna study chapters 4-8 this evening, and the title of tonight’s message is Grace and Truth
Let’s pray

When someone is in the midst of suffering, just because something is true, it doesn’t mean it needs to be said at that moment.

So here’s a critical verse to remember not only for this study, but for comforting those who hurt: **John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

Each of Job's 3 friends believed that all suffering is a direct punishment for a specific sin, and since Job was suffering, they repeatedly tell him he was guilty as a result of some unnamed sin.

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary?
But who can withhold himself from speaking? Eliphaz begins by acknowledging Job's fragile state. Poor Job probably isn't up for a conversation, but Eliphaz can't help himself!

It's wisely been said that there are two kinds of people in the world: Those who have something to say and those who have to say something. Eliphaz is the latter.

3-6

3 Surely you have instructed many,
And you have strengthened weak hands.

4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,
And you have strengthened the feeble knees;

5 But now it comes upon you, and you are weary;
It touches you, and you are troubled.

6 Is not your reverence your confidence?
And the integrity of your ways your hope? Job is an honest man. Eliphaz is confident that when he points out Job's sins, that Job will admit it, repent, and immediately his circumstances will improve.

7 "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent?"

Or where were the upright ever cut off? Ouch. Eliphaz is saying to Job- that which you have just suffered doesn't happen to righteous people..." He's telling Job he must've committed a horrible sin.

And Eliphaz says it as if it's the obvious, non-debatable, self-evident truth. Here's what happens for the next 28 chapters...

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar try to impose on Job a faulty theology. The theology that says good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people.

This faulty thinking says if you face trouble, or sickness, or any kind of loss it means you've sinned in some way and you're being punished for that sin.

Elphaz and his friends assume that suffering is always God's way of judging evil – while wealth and health are always God's reward for righteousness.

Tragically, there are Christians today who hold to this same faulty theology. Joel Olsteen, Kenneth Copeland, TD Jakes, Creflo Dollar to name a few.

And here's what they say-Do the right thing, and you'll be rich – you'll be healthy wealthy and happy. Boil it all down and they'll say 'Believers prosper and sinners suffer.'

Sadly, Job's message doesn't resonate with many Christians.

8 Even as I have seen,
Those who plow iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same. Notice Eliphaz says, "Even as I have seen..." He's basing his beliefs and opinions on his own personal experience. And of course, this can be dangerous.

Just because a set of circumstances in my life panned out a certain way - it doesn't mean life will turn out the exact same way for everyone, every time.

It's like the rare situation where the guy in the car gets thrown from the car right before it explodes - because he wasn't wearing his seatbelt. Now despite the statistics that prove otherwise – this guy is adamant that it's safer to ride without a seatbelt.

Hey, just because it panned out a certain way for you, don't make the mistake thinking it'll work that way the next time – or be the same for everyone.

When did one person's experience or observation become the blueprint for everyone? This takes many different forms-think of the guy who says he spoke in tongues when he was filled with the Holy Spirit. So his thinking goes that if you don't speak in tongues you haven't been filled with the Spirit.

Never forget, truth needs to be based on God's Word, not on human experience.

9 By the blast of God they perish,

And by the breath of His anger they are consumed. Eliphaz tells Job that God is quick to blast them with judgment. To Eliphaz, this explains Job's overnight destruction – it was a blast from God.

10-11

10 The roaring of the lion,
The voice of the fierce lion,
And the teeth of the young lions are broken.

11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
And the cubs of the lioness are scattered. God judges the king of beasts. He can bring judgment on Job.

12-14

12 "Now a word was secretly brought to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it.

13 In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling,

Which made all my bones shake. Here Eliphaz pulls out the ole supernatural trump card. At first Eliphaz appealed to what he had seen – his ordinary experiences. But now he claims to have had a dream.

This is the favorite technique of those who try to intimidate someone spiritually. I mean, how do you argue with supernatural revelation? How can you debate with the words of an angel?

I pray you're smart enough not to get bullied around by this kind of tactic. In **Galatians 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven,**

preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Dreams and visions are suspect. Angelic communications and personal experience should be viewed through the lens of scripture.

15-17

15 Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair on my body stood up.

16 It stood still,
But I could not discern its appearance.
A form was before my eyes;
There was silence;
Then I heard a voice saying:

17 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker? Remember what Jesus said in John 8:32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Which means that the opposite that a faulty, erroneous theology will trap you and force you into drawing harmful, guilt-producing conclusions.

In verses 18-21 Eliphaz tells Job if God judges angels who sin how much more will He judge humans. The implication is... Job must have some sin to confess.

18 If He puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,

19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth?
20 They are broken in pieces from morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding.
21 Does not their own excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.'

Chapter 5 Eliphaz continues

1-4

1 "Call out now;
Is there anyone who will answer you?
And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root,
But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.
4 His sons are far from safety,
They are crushed in the gate,
And there is no deliverer. " Implied is Job's sons were crushed
because of their father's sin.

5-6

5 Because the hungry eat up his harvest,
Taking it even from the thorns,[fn]
And a snare snatches their substance.[fn]
6 For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble spring from the ground; Eliphaz says affliction
and judgment don't just happen at random. There's a reason
calamity strikes.

7 Yet man is born to trouble,
As the sparks fly upward. A lot of what Eliphaz says is true. Here he reiterates mankind's sinful nature. We're born sinners. You never have to teach a kid to sin!

8 "But as for me, I would seek God,
And to God I would commit my cause—

9 Who does great things, and unsearchable,
Marvelous things without number. He's calling on Job to turn to God, as if Job had turned from Him.

10-17

10 He gives rain on the earth,
And sends waters on the fields.

11 He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.

12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.

13 He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them.

14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope at noontime as in the night.

15 But He saves the needy from the sword,
From the mouth of the mighty,
And from their hand.

16 So the poor have hope,
And injustice shuts her mouth.

17 "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects;

Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. Again is what Eliphaz is saying here true-absolutely! We're told the same in Hebrews 12:5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

Like any good father, God disciplines His kids. But discipline was not the reason for Job's troubles. And now was not the time to share this truth!

Let me give you a real life example-death notification to a mom and dad their son had died. I did NOT share Romans 8:28. Is romans 8:28 truth-yes. But grace says I'm not going to share it at that moment.

18 For He bruises, but He binds up;
He wounds, but His hands make whole. This is a good verse to remember when God takes us to the woodshed. God's discipline is always short lived. He has a purpose for our brokenness, but He's quick to bind us up.

19-21

19 He shall deliver you in six troubles,
Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.”

20 In famine He shall redeem you from death,
And in war from the power of the sword.

21 You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,

And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. In the rest of chapter 5, Eliphaz points out that God can bring peace and order to a chaotic life. He can enlarge families and let men live to ripe old ages. In short, God is good. He gives good gifts... so why has He chosen Job for hardship?

22-26

22 You shall laugh at destruction and famine,

And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23 For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field,

And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

24 You shall know that your tent is in peace;

You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.

25 You shall also know that your descendants shall be many,

And your offspring like the grass of the earth.

26 You shall come to the grave at a full age,

As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. V26 is an important verse.

Death is inevitable (You shall come).

Death is acceptable (You shall come).

Death is timely (at a full age).

Here's the problem-our definition of a full age may be different than God's

Again this is truth right? Will I share verse 26 with a parent who just lost their 3 month old child-absolutely not.

27 Behold, this we have searched out;

It is true.

Hear it, and know for yourself."

Chapter 6 Job responds to Eliphaz.

1-3

1 Then Job answered and said:

2 “Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,
And my calamity laid with it on the scales!

3 For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea—
Therefore my words have been rash. What vivid imagery. **SHOW
PIC** Can you think of anything in nature as heavy as wet sand?
Job says if his grief were weighed it would be as heavy as the
sand of the sea. **CLOSE PIC**

We saw last week how Job’s outburst in chapter 3 did not curse God, but it did come close. Here Job admitted that his words were rash, but explained that it was because of the excessive heaviness of his grief.

4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me;
My spirit drinks in their poison;
The terrors of God are arrayed against me. Job explained why his suffering was so deep and his words were so rash. It was because he felt that God Himself had attacked and cursed him.

5-8

5 Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass,
Or does the ox low over its fodder?

6 Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

7 My soul refuses to touch them;
They are as loathsome food to me.

8 “Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant me the thing that I long for!
9 That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
10 Then I would still have comfort;
Though in anguish I would exult,
He will not spare;
For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. Job is saying,
He didn’t deny God. But just like in chapter 3, as a result of his
suffering, he just wants God to wipe him out.
11-13

11 “What strength do I have, that I should hope?
And what is my end, that I should prolong my life?
12 Is my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh bronze?
13 Is my help not within me?
And is success driven from me? Job realizes that he has no
strength within himself.

14 “To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his
friend,
Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. Not that Job
had, but even if he had forsaken God, his incredible suffering
might warrant some sympathy and pity from his friends.
15-23

15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook,
Like the streams of the brooks that pass away,
16 Which are dark because of the ice,

And into which the snow vanishes.

17 When it is warm, they cease to flow;
When it is hot, they vanish from their place.

18 The paths of their way turn aside,
They go nowhere and perish.

19 The caravans of Tema look,
The travelers of Sheba hope for them.

20 They are disappointed because they were confident;
They come there and are confused.

21 For now you are nothing,
You see terror and are afraid.

22 Did I ever say, 'Bring something to me'?
Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth'?

23 Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand'?

Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of oppressors'? Job had never asked for their help from these guys- they just busted into his life and started volunteering their unkind counsel.

This is why it's so important to be prayerful when going to counsel people who are suffering.

Job challenges them in verse 24-30

24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;
Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

25 How forceful are right words!
But what does your arguing prove?

26 Do you intend to rebuke my words,
And the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind?

27 Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless,

And you undermine your friend.

28 Now therefore, be pleased to look at me;

For I would never lie to your face.

29 Yield now, let there be no injustice!

Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands!

30 Is there injustice on my tongue?

Cannot my taste discern the unsavory? Job was righteous in God's eyes you'll recall. He didn't do anything to warrant this suffering.

Chapter 7 Job continues

1-3

1 "Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth?

Are not his days also like the days of a hired man?

2 Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade,

And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages,

3 So I have been allotted months of futility,

And wearisome nights have been appointed to me. Job's suffering has apparently gone on for "months of futility." We don't know how long Job suffered – but it was more than just days or weeks.

4 When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise,

And the night be ended?'

For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn. Job tosses all night-he can't get rest. Very common among those who are suffering.

5 My flesh is caked with worms and dust,

My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. We mentioned this last week-the word for worms is maggots

6 “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle,
And are spent without hope.” Job’s nights seem to never end, but
his days fly by without hope of healing or change.

7 Oh, remember that my life is a breath!
My eye will never again see good.” Of course this isn’t true. In the
end Job receives twice the blessings he had before. But Job
believes his death is imminent-he won’t last much longer like this.
8-10

8 The eye of him who sees me will see me no more;
While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be.

9 As the cloud disappears and vanishes away,
So he who goes down to the grave does not come up.
10 He shall never return to his house,
Nor shall his place know him anymore.

Verse 11 marks a turning point

11 “Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” Did you know the word
“complain” occurs more times in the book of Job than in any other
book of the Bible? More than half the complaints in Scripture fall
from the lips of Job.

See Job thinks he’s going to die soon, so he might as well speak
his mind. It’s sad, but from this point onward, you see a bitterness
growing in Job.

What we're about to witness is a suffering man lose his perspective. Job forgets who God is - God's holiness, His righteousness, His justice.

Agitated from his friends counsel, Job will become bold and brash. As he questions God - in his estimation - Job becomes bigger and bigger, while God becomes smaller and smaller.

It's been said, "In asking why, Job loses his way!"
Hey this can happen can't it? This is why having Godly counsel full of grace and truth is important.

12-16

12 Am I a sea, or a sea serpent,
That You set a guard over me?

13 When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,'

14 Then You scare me with dreams
And terrify me with visions,

15 So that my soul chooses strangling
And death rather than my body.[fn]

16 I loathe my life;
I would not live forever.

Let me alone,

For my days are but a breath. In verses 17-19 Job cries out for God to leave him alone.

17 "What is man, that You should exalt him,
That You should set Your heart on him,

18 That You should visit him every morning,
And test him every moment?

19 How long?

Will You not look away from me,
And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?

20 Have I sinned?

What have I done to You, O watcher of men?

Why have You set me as Your target,

So that I am a burden to myself?^[fn]

21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression,

And take away my iniquity?

For now I will lie down in the dust,

And You will seek me diligently,

But I will no longer be.”

Chapter 8 a new friend Bildad steps up to offer his counsel to a crushed Job.

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 “How long will you speak these things,

And the words of your mouth be like a strong wind? An easy way to remember bildad is he is blunt, he doesn't beat around the bush. He says what he thinks. In his opening words, he tells Job that he's full of hot air – “a strong wind.”

3 Does God subvert judgment?

Or does the Almighty pervert justice? Again, in Bildad's theology he only has two options... Either God is unjust, or Job sinned...

And rightly so, Bildad won't consider the possibility that God is unjust, which implies Job's actions caused his suffering.

But as we've mentioned before, the problem with this theology is it doesn't take into account God's sovereignty.

God is a big God. He's not some machine that always yields predictable results. Often God has purposes we know nothing about.

In the here and now catastrophe can strike even the godliest among us. Difficulties can hit without explanation. Faith doesn't always get a reason. Remember the real reason for Job's suffering was hidden in the heavens.

See there is another reason for Job's suffering, but Job just doesn't know it...

Bildad continues his ignorance.

4-7

4 If your sons have sinned against Him,
He has cast them away for their transgression.

5 If you would earnestly seek God
And make your supplication to the Almighty,

6 If you were pure and upright,
Surely now He would awake for you,
And prosper your rightful dwelling place.

7 Though your beginning was small,

Yet your latter end would increase abundantly. Bildad is saying 'Job if you'll just confess your sin everything will be okay.'

8-10

8 "For inquire, please, of the former age,
And consider the things discovered by their fathers;

9 For we were born yesterday, and know nothing,
Because our days on earth are a shadow.

10 Will they not teach you and tell you,
And utter words from their heart? Recall Eliphaz appealed to
experience – then dreams. Now Bildad bases his theology on
tradition. Not the Word of God – but words of generations past.

This is the mistake the Roman Catholic Church has made. Their
theology is based on the church fathers. They've elevated
tradition to the level of Scripture.

In the rest of our study, Bildad says nothing grows apart from its
environment.

11 "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?
Can the reeds flourish without water?

12 While it is yet green and not cut down,
It withers before any other plant.

13 So are the paths of all who forget God;
And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish,

14 Whose confidence shall be cut off,
And whose trust is a spider's web.

15 He leans on his house, but it does not stand.
He holds it fast, but it does not endure.

16 He grows green in the sun,
And his branches spread out in his garden.
17 His roots wrap around the rock heap,
And look for a place in the stones.
18 If he is destroyed from his place,
Then it will deny him, saying, 'I have not seen you.'

19 "Behold, this is the joy of His way,
And out of the earth others will grow.
20 Behold, God will not cast away the blameless,
Nor will He uphold the evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughing,
And your lips with rejoicing.
22 Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,
And the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing."^[fn]

Bildad's message was blunter and less diplomatic than that of Eliphaz, but his basic message was the same. Job could once again come to a place of joy and laughing if he would turn to God again.

Again is there truth to this? Of course! But Grace makes sure the delivery method and timing of these truths are taken into consideration.

Think of Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well in John 4!