

Job 9-12 When Life's not Fair

Good evening and thank you for joining us. We're continuing our VBV study through the book of Job, so would you please turn to Job 9?

Last week we saw the beginning of the conversations between Job and his so-called friends. We left off with Bildad speaking bluntly to Job, and tonight we see Job's response, as well as a new friend chime in with his misguided thoughts.

We're gonna study chapters 9-12, and the title of tonight's message is When Life's not Fair
Let's pray

Most kid's experiences with their parents are pretty straightforward. Most parents see to it that good deeds are rewarded and disobedience is punished.

But as we grow up and move out into the real world, we discover that's not always how life shakes out is it? Life can be cruel and unjust. Bad things sometimes happen to good people. Bad people often get away with their crimes. Life isn't always fair.

This is one of the reasons I love going VBV through God's word. The bible makes no attempts to gloss over the harsh reality that at some point, we all suffer in God's sovereignty. Sometimes, life doesn't make sense.

And Job is the classic example of this: Job did nothing to justify the loss of his property, his servants, or the loss of his 10 children.

As we'll continue to see in our studies for the next several weeks, Job's 3 friends continue to beat the drum on a faulty theology. The one that says if bad things happen to you, you must be at fault.

Of course that is not the case. **Matthew 5:45** "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

These friends of Job, while counseling him, failed to take into account the sovereignty of God.

We know that one day good will be rewarded and all evil will be judged. But in the meantime – God tolerates sin, and suffering, and injustice. God has allowed - and even uses - the evil in the world for His own divine purposes.

But I bet everyone of us here, even recently, have noticed how from our perspective life doesn't always make sense. Why is it the little boy gets cancer, yet the sun shines on the Gay Rights Parade?

Folks, God is not asleep at the wheel. God is sovereign, He makes no mistakes. He has a reason for all that He does - even when that purpose isn't revealed to us.

That false theology of good things happening to good people and bad things happening to bad people fails to embrace God's sovereignty. And a restricted theology always produces a tragedy of faith. If you believe good is always rewarded and evil is always punished you end up trapped by a defected theology.

What happens when life beats you up unfairly – or you do something for God, only to have experience suffering? How do we react?

We can blame the devil – we can blame a fallen world – but isn't God big enough to overcome both satanic strategy and human error?

Of course He is, and yet we still got beat up. And if you hold to this restricted theology you're left with only two choices - either God failed to do His job, or you did something that displeased Him and now He's punishing you. Either God failed or you are a failure? Both ways faith gets sabotaged.

Some people give up on God. Ever heard someone say, "Hey, I tried God, I did the Christian thing for a while... it just didn't work." They were treating God as if He were a vending machine- you do the right thing and out pops a reward.

Other people end up feeling needlessly condemned. They try their best and don't get the desired result. They conclude there's something wrong with them that God can't bless.

We have to be aware of this trap we can easily fall into. A theology that doesn't embrace the sovereignty of God is a restricted theology, and it will eventually lead to a crisis of faith...

Job is the classic case. When Job's life was struck with calamity, his friends concluded he must've sinned. Since Job's losses were so catastrophic he must've really sinned.

Of course, the first two chapters tell us that Job's sin was not the cause of His calamity. God Himself affirms Job's innocence.

There was another reason... God had pointed to Job as an example of a pure and sincere faith. Job had been given the honor of defending God's glory in heaven – without ever being told he was doing so.

One author reminds us, “The secret in Job, the vital force, the nerve, the idea, is that Job, despite everything, is in the right.” Job really is innocent. And Job's confidence in his innocence never rattles. Job assumes there's another answer, but he's confused.

And seeking an explanation - asking why becomes the burning issue in Job's life. He's relentless. Two of his friends, Eliphaz and Bildad, have addressed Job – and Job has offered a rebuttal. Now a third friend, Zophar, takes a crack at accusing Job...

Chapter 9

1 Then Job answered and said:

2 “Truly I know it is so,

But how can a man be righteous before God? Job understands no one is truly righteous before God. He realizes he's sinned, he just knows his sin didn't cause his calamity.

3 If one wished to contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand. Job 38
4-8

4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?

5 He removes the mountains, and they do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;

6 He shakes the earth out of its place,
And its pillars tremble;

7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise;
He seals off the stars;

8 He alone spreads out the heavens,
And treads on the waves of the sea; This is why Jesus' walking on the water was such an incredible miracle. Not only did it show His power over nature, it revealed that He was God (Mark 6)

9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south; These are constellations known to us today by the same names. Astronomy is the oldest of all the sciences and Job is the oldest Bible book.

Bible scholars believe astronomy dates back to Garden of Eden. Genesis 1 tells us God created the stars not only for "seasons," but as "signs." Some folks believe the zodiac, and its constellations, once told the story of redemption. The first sign of the ancient Zodiac was Virgo – or the virgin – which is how the Gospel begins – when a virgin conceives. The last sign of the

zodiac is Leo – the lion – and Jesus will return to rule this world as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Obviously, the meaning of the zodiac has since been corrupted - probably at the tower of Babel. By the time of Moses, God forbid His people from seeking the stars for guidance. But it's possible that in Job's day the stars still carried divine meaning.

10 He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number. A good verse to remember when we struggle

11-12

11 If He goes by me, I do not see Him;
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;
12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him?
Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?' Here's the difficult reality we are all faced with-God answers to no one.

13-16

13 God will not withdraw His anger,
The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath Him
14 "How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words to reason with Him?
15 For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.
16 If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was listening to my voice. God seemed distant and impersonal to Job, and to many who suffer.

17 For He crushes me with a tempest,

And multiplies my wounds without cause.

18 He will not allow me to catch my breath,

But fills me with bitterness. Job's anguish is so deep he felt that God was against him, not for him.

19-20

19 If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong;

And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?

20 Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me;

Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse. Job says that if a man justifies himself, his own mouth will condemn him.

The sin of pride would come forth

Romans 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. We don't have to try and plead our case before God-Christ has done it for us!

21 "I am blameless, yet I do not know myself;

I despise my life. Job genuinely believed that he was blameless, yet at the same time he admitted that he didn't know himself well enough to have a completely clear conscience.

22-24

22 It is all one thing;

Therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'

23 If the scourge slays suddenly,

He laughs at the plight of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.

He covers the faces of its judges.

If it is not He, who else could it be? We're watching Job spiral into a spiritual crisis, and the crisis is because Job has a misunderstanding of who God is. It was AW Tozer who wrote, "The most important thing about you is what comes into your mind when you think of God." Job's conception of God was becoming — quite understandably — twisted by his own experience and imagination.

25-28

25 "Now my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.

26 They pass by like swift ships,
Like an eagle swooping on its prey.

27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad face and wear a smile,'

28 I am afraid of all my sufferings;
I know that You will not hold me innocent. Job isn't going to just pretend. He's not going to slap on a happy face and ignore his agony.

29-35

29 If I am condemned,
Why then do I labor in vain?

30 If I wash myself with snow water,
And cleanse my hands with soap,

31 Yet You will plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes will abhor me.

32 "For He is not a man, as I am,
That I may answer Him,

And that we should go to court together.

33 Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.

34 Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.

35 Then I would speak and not fear Him,

But it is not so with me. Job is a man – and in essence, he's up against God. He can't argue with God. His desire is for a mediator.

You and I have the great promise of a Mediator that Job didn't yet know about **1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,**

What Job longed for is fulfilled in Jesus.

Chapter 10 Job continues

1 "My soul loathes my life;

I will give free course to my complaint,

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. It's been said, "Trials will make you better or bitter." They made Job bitter. He's about to declare what he would say to God if given the chance.

2-3

2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;

Show me why You contend with me.

3 Does it seem good to You that You should oppress,

That You should despise the work of Your hands,

And smile on the counsel of the wicked?" Shocking response from a man of God isn't it?

4-7

4 Do You have eyes of flesh?

Or do You see as man sees?

5 Are Your days like the days of a mortal man?

Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,

6 That You should seek for my iniquity

And search out my sin,

7 Although You know that I am not wicked,

And there is no one who can deliver from Your hand? Remember

back in chapter 1 God called Job blameless and upright

8-11

8 'Your hands have made me and fashioned me,

An intricate unity;

Yet You would destroy me.

9 Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay.

And will You turn me into dust again?

10 Did You not pour me out like milk,

And curdle me like cheese,

11 Clothe me with skin and flesh,

And knit me together with bones and sinews? Job knew that God

created him; but Job wonders-why does God now want to destroy

him?

What Job didn't know is that God had strictly forbade his suffering to end in death back in chapter 2.

12-13

12 You have granted me life and favor,

And Your care has preserved my spirit.

13 'And these things You have hidden in Your heart;

I know that this was with You: Job wants to know why, yet God has hidden His reasons.

Once more, through the rest of chapter 10 Job despairs of his life.
14-19

14 If I sin, then You mark me,
And will not acquit me of my iniquity.

15 If I am wicked, woe to me;
Even if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head.
I am full of disgrace;
See my misery!

16 If my head is exalted,
You hunt me like a fierce lion,
And again You show Yourself awesome against me.

17 You renew Your witnesses against me,
And increase Your indignation toward me;
Changes and war are ever with me.

18 'Why then have You brought me out of the womb?
Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me!
19 I would have been as though I had not been.
I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.

In verse 20-22 he tells his counselors to bug off -

20 Are not my days few?

Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort,
21 Before I go to the place from which I shall not return,
To the land of darkness and the shadow of death,
22 A land as dark as darkness itself,
As the shadow of death, without any order,

Where even the light is like darkness.’ ”

Job wants a little peace and quiet before he dies. But that’s not what he gets... In chapter 11 we’re introduced to a new friend...

Chapter 11

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 “Should not the multitude of words be answered?

And should a man full of talk be vindicated? Zophar tells Job he’s full of baloney. Just because he can talk a lot doesn’t mean he makes sense.

3 Should your empty talk make men hold their peace?

And when you mock, should no one rebuke you? Eliphaz had been courteous, and somewhat sympathetic to Job. Bildad had been a little more frank and to the point. But this Zophar – he’s going to make some really cruel comments to Job.

4 For you have said,

‘My doctrine is pure,

And I am clean in your eyes.’

5 But oh, that God would speak,

And open His lips against you, Zophar says ‘Job you claim to be innocent of wrongdoing, but if God appeared He would expose your sin.’

6 That He would show you the secrets of wisdom!

For they would double your prudence.

Know therefore that God exacts from you

Less than your iniquity deserves. Wow, talk about harsh. This

Zophar is spitting razor blades. Job’s ten kids are dead. He’s bankrupt. On top of that, itching, puss-filled boils cover his body.

Job sits in the town's garbage dump. Now Zophar insists it's all less than what Job actually deserves.

7 "Can you search out the deep things of God?

Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? Job wants to talk to God. He's calling for an audience. He's asking God why. And this has infuriated Zophar. Who is Job to question God?

8-9

8 They are higher than heaven— what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol— what can you know?

9 Their measure is longer than the earth

And broader than the sea. Zophar should've listened to his own advice. The reason for Job's suffering was hidden from Job – but it was also a mystery to Zophar. But instead of taking heed to his own counsel, he proceeds in telling Job that he's committed serious crimes.

10-12

10 "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers to judgment,
Then who can hinder Him?

11 For He knows deceitful men;

He sees wickedness also.

Will He not then consider it?

12 For an empty-headed man will be wise,

When a wild donkey's colt is born a man. Zophar says its obvious Job is being punished. Job will be considered a wise man on the day a donkey births a man

Zophar goes on like this for the rest of the chapter. He tells Job if he'd just repent he could lift up his face again - his life would be brighter than noonday...

13-20

13 "If you would prepare your heart,
And stretch out your hands toward Him;
14 If iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away,
And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
15 Then surely you could lift up your face without spot;
Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear;
16 Because you would forget your misery,
And remember it as waters that have passed away,
17 And your life would be brighter than noonday.
Though you were dark, you would be like the morning.
18 And you would be secure, because there is hope;
Yes, you would dig around you, and take your rest in safety.
19 You would also lie down, and no one would make you afraid;
Yes, many would court your favor.
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And they shall not escape,
And their hope—loss of life!"

Chapter 12 Job answers his critics and even gets sarcastic.

1-5

1 Then Job answered and said:

2 "No doubt you are the people,
And wisdom will die with you!

3 But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.

Indeed, who does not know such things as these?

4 “I am one mocked by his friends,
Who called on God, and He answered him,
The just and blameless who is ridiculed.

5 A lamp^[fn] is despised in the thought of one who is at ease;
It is made ready for those whose feet slip.” Those who seek only
comfort despise the light of truth. It makes an uncomfortable
situation when God shines His light and exposes our sin. Job has
invited God to speak to his situation because has nothing to hide.

6 The tents of robbers prosper,
And those who provoke God are secure—
In what God provides by His hand. Job is pointing out what every
person realizes. Life isn't always fair.

7-10

7 “But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;
And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

9 Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done this,

10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing,

And the breath of all mankind? A cow minds his own business.
Avoids any beefs with his neighbor – yet still ends up somebody's
steak...

A fish spends his whole life in a school, yet can't get a job...

Job is suggesting the animals are more honest about life than
Zophar.

11-12

11 Does not the ear test words

And the mouth taste its food?

12 Wisdom is with aged men,

And with length of days, understanding. Zophar needs to grow up.

Now the rest of the chapter, and our study tonight, Job describes the great power of God.

13-14

13 "With Him are wisdom and strength,

He has counsel and understanding.

14 If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt;

If He imprisons a man, there can be no release. God has ultimate say in His creation and in the affairs of mankind.

15 If He withholds the waters, they dry up;

If He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.

16 With Him are strength and prudence.

The deceived and the deceiver are His." God is ultimately responsible for both. He allows deception to exist.

17-22

17 He leads counselors away plundered,

And makes fools of the judges.

18 He loosens the bonds of kings,

And binds their waist with a belt.

19 He leads princes away plundered,

And overthrows the mighty.

20 He deprives the trusted ones of speech,

And takes away the discernment of the elders.

21 He pours contempt on princes,
And disarms the mighty.

22 He uncovers deep things out of darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to light. Job is affirming God's sovereignty. We don't always see God's purposes, but we know all that happens in the universe is at the very least allowed by a sovereign God.

23-25

23 He makes nations great, and destroys them;
He enlarges nations, and guides them.

24 He takes away the understanding^[fn] of the chiefs of the people of the earth,
And makes them wander in a pathless wilderness.

25 They grope in the dark without light,
And He makes them stagger like a drunken man." Job's message to his friends was clear: "I do know God and how great He is. Don't criticize me on this point any longer."

No matter how dark and unfair life may seem, rest assured God has never lost charge of a situation.