

## Job 13-17 “Wrestling with God”

Well once again good evening and thank you for joining us.  
Would you please turn in your Bibles to Job 13?

Last week we saw the final of Job’s 3 friends, his name was Zophar, who completely accused and really slandered Job. Remember Job has lost his finances, his health, and his 10 children. On top of that he sits in the town trash heap scraping his pus-filled boils with a broken piece of pottery in order to try to get some sense of relief.

Tonight we’re gonna tackle 5 more chapters and study chapters 13-17

The title of tonights message is WRESTLING WITH GOD  
LETS PRAY

One of the reasons I love the Bible is it makes no attempt to conceal or gloss over the flaws of it’s characters. We got raw, unfiltered looks not only into their actions, but their hearts. Aren’t you glad you’re exploits aren’t in the Bible?

We’re seeing a man ride an emotional rollercoaster...

Chapter 13 is a continuation of chapter 12, where Job is responding to Zophar’s comments.

1 “Behold, my eye has seen all this,  
My ear has heard and understood it.

2 What you know, I also know;

I am not inferior to you.

3 But I would speak to the Almighty,

And I desire to reason with God. Job isn't inferior to his three friends. He's very familiar with their shallow arguments and insufficient theology. They're telling him nothing new. Job doesn't want to talk to them, he'd rather take his questions to God.

4-5

4 But you forgers of lies,

You are all worthless physicians.

5 Oh, that you would be silent,

And it would be your wisdom! You'd prove wiser if you just shut up.

6-7

6 Now hear my reasoning,

And heed the pleadings of my lips.

7 Will you speak wickedly for God,

And talk deceitfully for Him? Last week we saw how Zophar had put words in God's mouth. Who was Zophar to suggest that Job had received less than he deserved. Zophar is a reminder that it can be dangerous to speak for God.

This is why I'm very careful about telling someone God's will for their life. If I can point to chapter and verse, I'm on solid ground.

But when it comes to who you marry, or the job you choose, or the music you listen to, that's between you and God. You need to hear from Lord on those issues.

Likewise, Job won't be satisfied until he hears from God. Here's good advice when you counsel a suffering person. Don't be a know-it-all. Don't go busting into their lives with definitive answers about this and that...

Zophar would've been wiser if he'd looked at Job and said, "I don't know why this happened." Sometimes the most God honoring counsel is "I don't know." Does God have a plan-yes! Do we fully understand His plans for our lives-probably not!  
8-13

8 Will you show partiality for Him?

Will you contend for God?

9 Will it be well when He searches you out?

Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man?

10 He will surely rebuke you

If you secretly show partiality.

11 Will not His excellence make you afraid,

And the dread of Him fall upon you?

12 Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes,

Your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Hold your peace with me, and let me speak,

Then let come on me what may! Job wants Zophar to nip-it - and God to speak - then he'll accept whatever God hands out.

14-15a

14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,

And put my life in my hands?

15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. pause here... What a powerful affirmation of faith.

Job worships God – not because God promises him a good outcome to his life or a life full of blessing. Job worships God because God is worthy to be worshiped.

Even though Job was unable to reconcile what had happened to him with what he knew of God – even though he felt betrayed by God – nevertheless he knows God is great, and he knows God is trustworthy.

...15 Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

But notice the rest of verse 15. Job will trust God, but he still wants a reason.

Job is still focused upon knowing why this has all fallen upon him.

16 He also shall be my salvation,

For a hypocrite could not come before Him. Job is saying, “If I go before God and live to tell about it, I was telling the truth-I’m not a hypocrite.

17-21

17 Listen carefully to my speech,

And to my declaration with your ears.

18 See now, I have prepared my case,

I know that I shall be vindicated.

19 Who is he who will contend with me?

If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

20 “Only two things do not do to me,

Then I will not hide myself from You:

21 Withdraw Your hand far from me,  
And let not the dread of You make me afraid. back in chapter 7 we saw how Job had told God that he just wanted to be left alone

Now he shows that this previous feeling was just a feeling, and that really, he didn't want God to withdraw His hand far from him.

See in the midst of great suffering we're watching Job's emotions go up and down aren't we?

Job felt abandoned by God, yet he can grudgingly admit that God's hand has been with him in the fire of affliction.

22-24

22 Then call, and I will answer;  
Or let me speak, then You respond to me.  
23 How many are my iniquities and sins?  
Make me know my transgression and my sin.

24 Why do You hide Your face,  
And regard me as Your enemy? Job has concluded God regards him as an enemy. The opposite was true.

Remember chapters 1-2 God was so proud of Job He staked His honor on Job's reactions. Here's the tragedy of a restricted theology – it steals away your assurance of God's love

25-26

25 Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?  
And will You pursue dry stubble?  
26 For You write bitter things against me,

And make me inherit the iniquities of my youth. Since there was no particular sin Job could blame for his calamity, he wonders if he's paying for some youthful sin.

27-28

27 You put my feet in the stocks,  
And watch closely all my paths.  
You set a limit[fn] for the soles of my feet.

28 "Man[fn] decays like a rotten thing,  
Like a garment that is moth-eaten. Job felt trapped, like he was hedged in by God. Little does he know that God did have a hedge, rather it was a hedge of protection around his life!

Chapter 14 Job speaks of life's woes

1 "Man who is born of woman  
Is of few days and full of trouble. This sums us up. Life is short and full of trouble

2-4

2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away;  
He flees like a shadow and does not continue.

3 And do You open Your eyes on such a one,  
And bring me[fn] to judgment with Yourself?

4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

No one! Job knows humans are born in sin. We have a sin nature- we never have to teach our kids to sin!

5-6

5 Since his days are determined,

The number of his months is with You;  
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.”

6 Look away from him that he may rest,  
Till like a hired man he finishes his day. Job continues to describe  
being hedged in. He’s saying it would be better if God would just  
look away so he could rest.

7-9 is for all you gardeners out there

7 “For there is hope for a tree,  
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,  
And that its tender shoots will not cease.

8 Though its root may grow old in the earth,  
And its stump may die in the ground,

9 Yet at the scent of water it will bud  
And bring forth branches like a plant. Plants rejuvenate  
themselves. They can sprout again.

10-12

10 But man dies and is laid away;  
Indeed he breathes his last  
And where is he?

11 As water disappears from the sea,  
And a river becomes parched and dries up,

12 So man lies down and does not rise.

Till the heavens are no more,

They will not awake

Nor be roused from their sleep.

Pain had warped Job’s perspective. Job isn’t thinking beyond the  
grave – of his soul. He’s concerned only with his boil-racked body.

Later in chapter 38 God will correct Job's faulty thinking of the afterlife.

13-14

13 "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,  
That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past,  
That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man dies, shall he live again?

All the days of my hard service I will wait,  
Till my change comes." Job does believe in a resurrection of the body. It's his hope. His change will come.

We too will receive a body without boils or cancer.

15 You shall call, and I will answer You;  
You shall desire the work of Your hands. Folks God is calling each one of us. What does God want most? It's you. It's me? The question is, will we answer Him?

NEVER FORGET YOU ARE AS CLOSE TO GOD AS YOU DESIRE TO BE. We cannot reach the end of Him, we cannot explore His limits.

He is calling. He's calling us to abandon ourselves. To release our wills. To adjust our priorities. He's calling us to deeper waters of knowing Him.

I pray everyone of us in this room will answer.

16-17

16 For now You number my steps,  
But do not watch over my sin.



17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag,  
And You cover<sup>[fn]</sup> my iniquity. Job recognizes not a single sin  
get's past God's eyes.

Now we're about to see Job reflect on the amazing power of God,  
which leads to further despair.

18-20

18 "But as a mountain falls and crumbles away,  
And as a rock is moved from its place;  
19 As water wears away stones,  
And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;  
So You destroy the hope of man.  
20 You prevail forever against him, and he passes on;  
You change his countenance and send him away. Job's suffering  
has eroded his hope like water erodes away a mountainside. His  
pain and calamity have washed away his hope.

21-22

21 His sons come to honor, and he does not know it;  
They are brought low, and he does not perceive it.  
22 But his flesh will be in pain over it,  
And his soul will mourn over it." Job's children died, so he didn't  
get to see how their lives would fully turn out..

Chapter 15 begins the second round of accusations. Eliphaz  
steps back up to the microphone,

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge,

And fill himself with the east wind? The east wind was a hot, arid, desert wind. Once again, Eliphaz is accusing Job of being full of hot air

3-4

3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk,  
Or by speeches with which he can do no good?

4 Yes, you cast off fear,

And restrain prayer before God. Eliphaz accuses Job of never praying about his situation.

But have you noticed that we never see Job's 3 friends ever bother to pray themselves? Oh they don't need to pray cuz they already know the answers. They give out counsel, but never pray.

If you're going to counsel with someone, a great verse to pray is that the Lord would give you a word like we're told in

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold  
In settings of silver.

Eliphaz continues his accusations...

5-9

5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth,  
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.

6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;  
Yes, your own lips testify against you.

7 "Are you the first man who was born?  
Or were you made before the hills?

8 Have you heard the counsel of God?

Do you limit wisdom to yourself?

9 What do you know that we do not know?

What do you understand that is not in us? This has now boiled into an argument over which of them truly has wisdom and understanding. Some comforters!

**SHOW PIC** Never forget why dogs have so many friends—they wag their tails and not their tongues.” Good advice for humans.

**CLOSE PIC**

10-13

10 Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us,  
Much older than your father.

11 Are the consolations of God too small for you,  
And the word spoken gently with you?

12 Why does your heart carry you away,  
And what do your eyes wink at,

13 That you turn your spirit against God,

And let such words go out of your mouth? Evidently, Job’s three friends were older than Job. Eliphaz appeals to their gray-hair. In fact they’re older than Job’s dad.

According to Eliphaz age means wisdom. But that’s not necessarily true. Just because someone is older doesn’t mean they’re wiser in God’s ways.

14-16

14 “What is man, that he could be pure?

And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous?

15 If God puts no trust in His saints,

And the heavens are not pure in His sight,  
16 How much less man, who is abominable and filthy,  
Who drinks iniquity like water!

Eliphaz refers to “saints” – in contrast to men. Remember a third of the angels rebelled with Satan and were cast from heaven. This defiled the heavens in God’s eyes.

17-20

17 “I will tell you, hear me;  
What I have seen I will declare,  
18 What wise men have told,  
Not hiding anything received from their fathers,  
19 To whom alone the land was given,  
And no alien passed among them:  
20 The wicked man writhes with pain all his days,  
And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor. Eliphaz takes the gloves off and accuses Job of being a wicked man, which would explain his suffering. ‘Men like you suffer!’

The rest of the chapter records Eliphaz’ portrait of a wicked person-Eliphaz makes the point that Job resembles the portrait of a wicked man.

21-35

21 Dreadful sounds are in his ears;  
In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.  
22 He does not believe that he will return from darkness,  
For a sword is waiting for him.  
23 He wanders about for bread, saying, ‘Where is it?’  
He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.

24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid;  
They overpower him, like a king ready for battle.  
25 For he stretches out his hand against God,  
And acts defiantly against the Almighty,  
26 Running stubbornly against Him  
With his strong, embossed shield.

27 “Though he has covered his face with his fatness,  
And made his waist heavy with fat,  
28 He dwells in desolate cities,  
In houses which no one inhabits,  
Which are destined to become ruins.  
29 He will not be rich,  
Nor will his wealth continue,  
Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.  
30 He will not depart from darkness;  
The flame will dry out his branches,  
And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.  
31 Let him not trust in futile things, deceiving himself,  
For futility will be his reward.  
32 It will be accomplished before his time,  
And his branch will not be green.  
33 He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine,  
And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.  
34 For the company of hypocrites will be barren,  
And fire will consume the tents of bribery.  
35 They conceive trouble and bring forth futility;  
Their womb prepares deceit.” Hey are these things true? Sure.  
Are they applicable to Job? Absolutely not.

Chapter 16 and 17 is Job's response

Chapter 16

1 Then Job answered and said:

2 "I have heard many such things;

Miserable comforters are you all! These are not the guys you want visiting you when you're in the hospital!

3-5

3 Shall words of wind have an end?

Or what provokes you that you answer?

4 I also could speak as you do,

If your soul were in my soul's place.

I could heap up words against you,

And shake my head at you;

5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth,

And the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief. Job is saying if the roles were reversed he'd do a better job of comforting them than they're doing comforting him

6-8

6 "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved;

And if I remain silent, how am I eased?

7 But now He has worn me out;

You have made desolate all my company.

8 You have shriveled me up,

And it is a witness against me;

My leanness rises up against me

And bears witness to my face. Job has been worn thin – his leanness is of spirit, and courage, and faith.

9 He tears me in His wrath, and hates me;  
He gnashes at me with His teeth;  
My adversary sharpens His gaze on me. This is tragic. Job  
views God as his adversary.

There are people who do the same today! They've been through  
so much hurt and pain they view God as the enemy.

10-14

10 They gape at me with their mouth,  
They strike me reproachfully on the cheek,  
They gather together against me.

11 God has delivered me to the ungodly,  
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but He has shattered me;  
He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;  
He has set me up for His target,

13 His archers surround me.

He pierces my heart[fn] and does not pity;  
He pours out my gall on the ground.

14 He breaks me with wound upon wound;  
He runs at me like a warrior.[fn]" Job is accusing God of using him  
as target practice.

**SHOW PIC** It reminds me of the two Americans who traveled to  
Mexico to open a bungee-jumping operation. They got a permit to  
set up in the town square. As they worked to erect the tower a  
large, curious crowd of locals gathered around them to watch.

**CLOSE PIC**

Finally, it was time for a test jump. One of the guys dove off the platform, but when he bounced back up his partner noticed he was a little scraped. His friend gasped, "Oh no, the cord is too long." He tried to grab him, but he missed. The second time he bounced up he had bruises and broken ribs. Again he missed him. The third time the guy was so beaten he was nearly unconscious. This time his sidekick lunged and grabbed him. He asked, "Was the cord too long?" The partner answered, "The cord was just fine, but what's a pinata?"

Job feels like God is treating him like a pinata. He's become God's target. He's been beaten up and has no idea why?

15-16

15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,  
And laid my head<sup>[fn]</sup> in the dust.

16 My face is flushed from weeping,  
And on my eyelids is the shadow of death; Job has the ashen-look  
that death has him in its grip.

17-19

17 Although no violence is in my hands,  
And my prayer is pure.

18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,  
And let my cry have no resting place!

19 Surely even now my witness is in heaven,  
And my evidence is on high. Heaven knows that Job is innocent. If  
he can appeal to the court of heaven he knows he'll be acquitted.  
This is why he wants an audience with God.

20-22



20 My friends scorn me;  
My eyes pour out tears to God.

21 Oh, that one might plead for a man with God,  
As a man pleads for his neighbor!

22 For when a few years are finished,

I shall go the way of no return. Job maintains his claims of innocence. If he can just find a Mediator, an Advocate, someone can take his case before God. Job needs a representative before God.

It's interesting in our legal system, when a defendant lacks an attorney, the court is obligated to hire a court-appointed attorney to represent the accused. And the same is true in God's courtroom. Usually, a public defender is either a rookie or a has-been – but in God's court the court-appointed attorney is the best you can get. Jesus is our Advocate who's been appointed to take our case.

## Chapter 17 Job Prays for Relief

1 "My spirit is broken,  
My days are extinguished,  
The grave is ready for me. He thinks death is around the corner,  
and really, who can blame him?

2-3

2 Are not mockers with me?  
And does not my eye dwell on their provocation?

3 "Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself.  
Who is he who will shake hands with me?

4 For You have hidden their heart from understanding;

Therefore You will not exalt them. This is powerful and often missed when studying Job. Job understood that if God had wanted to inform the hearts of his friends, God was fully capable of doing so. Which means even Job's cruel friends were an aspect of Job's crisis allowed by God.

5-9

5 He who speaks flattery to his friends,  
Even the eyes of his children will fail.

6 "But He has made me a byword of the people,  
And I have become one in whose face men spit.

7 My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow,  
And all my members are like shadows.

8 Upright men are astonished at this,  
And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.

9 Yet the righteous will hold to his way,  
And he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger. Job would himself experience this victory as he endured through his severe and long season of crisis. We'll see this in chapter 42.

Chapter 17 finishes with Job's hopelessness

10-16

10 "But please, come back again, all of you,<sup>[fn]</sup>  
For I shall not find one wise man among you.

11 My days are past,  
My purposes are broken off,  
Even the thoughts of my heart.

12 They change the night into day;  
'The light is near,' they say, in the face of darkness.

13 If I wait for the grave as my house,  
If I make my bed in the darkness,  
14 If I say to corruption, 'You are my father,'  
And to the worm, 'You are my mother and my sister,'  
15 Where then is my hope?  
As for my hope, who can see it?  
16 Will they go down to the gates of Sheol?  
Shall we have rest together in the dust?" You can feel the agony of Job just dripping off of these pages can't you? Here's a man, wrestling with God, trying to understand the why. And verse 15 he cries out, that he's lost his hope.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have<sup>[fn]</sup> peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.