

When You Hit Rock Bottom Job 19:23-27

Words have the power to crush, don't they? The Bible tells us we should be very careful with our words. The Bible talks about the fact that, when we speak, our words ought to be with grace, seasoned with salt that we might minister grace to those who hear what we have to say. The Bible talks in terms of healing words. Words that heal. Words that encourage. Words that build up. But Job is saying, "*Your words have crushed me.*" Job 19:2

The first 19 chapters of Job have been consumed with accusations and assaults by Job's three friends that hits a low spot.

- He is broken financially.
- He is broken physically.
- He is broken emotionally.

In chapter 18 when Bildad snarls in verse 2, "*When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk.*" He's getting very sarcastic and ugly. Down in verse 4 he says to Job, "*Is the earth to be abandoned for your sake? Or must the rocks be moved from their place?*" What he is saying is, "Do you want the world redesigned to suit you? Do you think that God is going to rearrange the whole universe in order to accommodate you? Do you think God is going to change the rules by which He governs this universe in order to satisfy you?" It is very sharp and bitter.

He moves from sarcasm to fear. In a series of vivid pictures in verse 5 and following, Bildad, talks to Job about the death of the wicked. Assuming that Job is a wicked person, he shows him how awful is the death of the wicked. He compares it to several things. In verse 5, he says it's like a light put out, "*The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the flame of his fire shall not shine.*" In verse 7 he says it's like a traveler trapped, "*The vigor of his step is weakened; his own schemes throw him down.*" In verse 11 he says it's like a criminal pursued, "*Terrors startle him on every side and dog his every step.*" Verse 14 – "*He is torn from the security of his tent and marched off to the king of terrors.*" He's talking to Job about the death of the wicked. He's seeking to instill fear in him. He says that the death of the wicked is like a tree uprooted. Verse 16 – "*His roots dry up below and his branches wither above.*" Then he gets very ugly. He gets very, very vicious in his words when he says in verse 17, "*The memory of him perishes from the earth; he has no name in the land.*" He is saying that he'll just die and nobody will ever remember that he lived. His name will not even be spoken. He will be a nobody.

He gets even more vicious and cruel when he says in verse 18, "*He is driven from light into the realm of darkness and is banished from the world.*" Isn't that an awful thing to say to a man who is in the condition of Job? Isn't that a terrible way to deal with a man who is going through the trauma of having lost ten children, having lost all of his material goods, having lost all of his health, and is now sitting on an ash heap expecting to die. Bildad looks at him with all the venom of his soul poured out and says, "Job, you are like one of these wicked and I want to warn you that if you don't get right you are going to be chased out of this world.

Verse 19 - "*He has no offspring or descendants among his people, no survivor where he once lived.*" Job has lost all of his ten children. Now Bildad says to him when it's all over you are going to leave this world, your children are all dead, and the world will be better off because of you. It is a very awful, terrible kind of attack that Bildad makes against Job.

In chapter 19 Job answers again. His answer begins, and as you read the words, you will find that Job just feels absolutely crushed. "*How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern*

alone. If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me, then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me.” Job 19:2-6

There is someone sitting here today, and a word was spoken that broke your heart. There is someone sitting here in this service and someone spoke some words to you and it was just like a sledge hammer that came crashing down on you.

Then in verse 5 he feels trapped by this situation, this trial that's come upon him. He can't find the answer, he can't find the way out, and he feels he is caught. He gives a series of pictures here of how caught he feels.

In verse 6 he says, *"God has wronged me and drawn his net around me."* He is saying that he feels like a trapped animal. In verse 7, *"Though I cry, 'Violence!' I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice."* He said, "I feel like an accused criminal." In verse 8 he says he's like a hemmed traveler. *"He has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness."* In verse 9 he said, I feel like a dethroned king. *"He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head."*

One of the things that happens to people who have tragedy and suffering is that they experience a tremendous blow to their self-esteem and dignity. They feel as if they have been stripped of their self-worth. They feel as if they have been robbed of their dignity.

In verse 10 he says he feels like a destroyed building. *"He tears me down on every side till I am gone; he uproots my hope like a tree. My hope has he removed like a tree."* Then in verse 12 he says he feels like a besieged city. *"His troops advance in force; they build a siege ramp against me and encamp around my tent."* In those days, enemies would surround a city and then build earth ramps up to the walls of that city. Then the enemy army could move all of the heavy armaments up that ramp and into that city. "I'm just a little tent. You're pulling out heavy artillery on a little tent. I'm a nobody, and you are putting all this on me." Sometimes it feels that way, doesn't it? Sometimes it feels like people are dropping a bomb on a mosquito. Sometimes it feels like the load that you bear is far more than you are able personally to bear. That's what Job is saying. I just feel caught.

Then in verses 13 through 21 Job comes to the lowest point in the whole book. These are the words that express the despair and the agony and the depths of misery Job is going through like no other words in the whole book. Verse 13 - *"He has alienated my family from me; my acquaintances are completely estranged from me."*

People have just walked out on him. Verse 14 - *"My relatives have gone away; my closest friends have forgotten me."* His relatives and friends have all left him. He says in verse 15, *"My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner; they look on me as on a stranger."* People look at him like he's a stranger, like they don't even know who he is.

Verse 17 - *"My breath is offensive to my wife; I am loathsome to my own family." He is saying, I have become repulsive to my own wife.”*

Verse 18-19 – *“Even the little boys scorn me; when I appear, they ridicule me. All my intimate friends detest me; those I love have turned against me.”*

One of the things that is a rule in the Oriental lands is that the children are to be very, very respectful of their elders. Job is in such a terrible condition that the little kids in the streets are laughing at him, making fun of him, jeering, taunting him.

My closest confidants, the people who were the nearest to me, my dearest loved ones have walked away from me. Here is a man who is absolutely going through the miseries. Everything has caved in on him. Everyone seems to have walked out on him.

Verse 20 - "*I am nothing but skin and bones; I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.*" One translation renders it, "I'm nothing but a bag of bones and my life hangs by a thread." He is saying, "I'm going to die. I'm not going to make it. I'm hanging on by a thread. I've just survived by the skin of my teeth."

Then in verse 21 he gives his cry of despair, "*Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me.*" He feels crushed, he feels caught, he is in the absolute clutches of despair.

Then in verse 23, suddenly there is a change. After he has gone to the pits he now rises to the heights of faith. It's as if Job hears the sound of music from another world. It's as if Job becomes a spiritual Phoenix rising out of the ashes of his agony and affliction. Look at what he has to say. He feels crushed and caught, but now all of a sudden he feels confident. He is going to climb the heights of faith.

More and more people are becoming less and less sure that they know more and more about anything.

Every time you hear the name Job you can't help but feel a wave of pity come over you. You talk about a man who knew trouble. He lost his family, he lost his fortune, he lost his friends. In the little cemetery behind his house lay the graves of all ten of his children.

Everything that could go wrong had gone wrong. Then out of the black cloud of his life, came a silver lightning bolt of truth that was so marvelous and so wonderful, that he wanted to make sure that what he had come to believe and know to be true, would be written in stone with a diamond pen. What Job is about to say, he wanted to be preserved.

Suddenly, in his hour of helplessness, Job seems to come to the realization that God has everything under control.

"Oh, that my words were recorded, that they were written on a scroll, that they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead, or engraved in rock forever!" Job 19:23-24

What a man says can easily be forgotten, but Job also wanted his words to be published. He wanted what he was about to say to be circulated as widely as possible, and as long as possible. Job wanted to make sure that every generation to come would hear what he had to say.

God granted Job's request, and he inscribed these words in His own Word. The sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the rocks, the hills, will all pass away, but these words of Job embedded in the word of God will last forever. Because what he says is not just essential, it is eternal. It is not just important, it is immortal. Because when it comes to the time of your own death, you had better know the things that Job said he knew.

1. I Know My Soul Has Been Redeemed.

"For I know that my Redeemer lives." Job 19:25

The Hebrew word for "Redeemer" is the word "goel." In Numbers 35:12, the primary role of a "goel" or "Redeemer," was to buy back, or purchase relatives who had become slaves. The "goel" or "Redeemer" was also the one who bought back land which was to be kept in the family. The "goal" was a restorer. Someone who putting back in order. Back in place. Back in its proper condition. But a redeemer had certain criteria.

- One Who Is CLOSE

The meaning of the word "Redeemer" is one who is "a near kinsman, or next of kin." On several occasions, the word is rendered "kinsman" in our English Bible. Therefore, before one could be a "goel" or "Redeemer" he must be close, or next of kin. This is illustrated in the book of Ruth. Boaz, a near kinsman of the deceased Elimilech, buys back a parcel of land for Naomi.

How could Job call God our near kinsman? How could Job refer to God as our "Redeemer?"

How could Job see God as his "goel"?

Without question, from his ash heap in the patriarchal era, Job is looking to Bethlehem where God was "*made flesh and dwelt among us.*" John 1:14

When, where, and how did God become our next of kin? In the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, God became close to us. He came near us when he came to earth to be like us.

- One Who Is COMPASSIONATE

A "goel" or "Redeemer" not only had to be the next of kin, but he had to be willing to pay the redemptive price. In the story of Ruth, there was a nearer kinsman than Boaz; however, the nearer kinsman wasn't willing to pay the price and be the redeemer. That is when Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, stepped in and redeemed the land.

Job not only looks to Bethlehem, but also to Calvary. He sees the old rugged cross where Jesus, our near kinsman, paid the exacted price for our redemption. He not only had it all, but He was willing to give it all, and pay the ultimate price.

We read in 1 Peter 1:18-19 that Christ did not redeem us with "*corruptible things, as silver and gold....but with the precious blood of Christ...as a lamb without blemish and without spot.*"

At the cross, the Lord Jesus became our ultimate kinsman Redeemer. He was ready, willing and able to pay the ultimate price for our redemption. He bought our past, our present and our future. He is the God of priceless redemption.

Job was a redeemed man. He was a man bought by God who had been redeemed from the slavery of sin. This is an incredible statement because Job is talking about redemption, which is one of the great truths of the Bible. Yet, nothing about redemption had ever been published. Job did not have a single page of Scripture to instruct him. Job had never heard a preacher talk about redemption. He had never heard a seminary professor talk about redemption. He had never even opened up a copy of a Bible and read about redemption, and yet he said, "*I know my Redeemer lives.*" Job is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ is presented throughout the Bible as our Redeemer.

There are some who say that he could not have been talking about Jesus, because Jesus was not even alive when Job wrote this. The only problem with that is, Jesus was alive when he wrote this, because Jesus has always been alive. You remember he said to the Pharisees, "*Before Abraham, I AM.*" John 8:58 There has never been a time when Jesus was not alive.

The Hebrew word for "lives" means "lives forever." Jesus lives forever. Jesus was alive before He was ever born, because Jesus did not have His beginning at His birth, because He never had a beginning. "*The world is from the beginning, but the Word was in the beginning.*" John 1:1

The word "lives" is a vegetation term. In Genesis 2: 9, the word is used to speak of how God made all of the trees in the garden to "grow." Christ, like a flower, wilted and died, but He is the Easter lily that bloomed again, and lives forever more.

Job made the Redeemer personal. Job did not say, "I know a Redeemer lives," or "the Redeemer lives," but "My Redeemer lives." Jesus is The Redeemer, no doubt, but, in order to go to heaven, He must be your Redeemer.

The word "*lives*" was often used to describe water that had not become tasteless. It depicts the risen Christ as a fountain. Thus, Christ not only lives as a flower, but as a fountain. He is not only alive, but He gives life. Like a fountain of sparkling, springing water, He gives "living water" to flow from our inner man.

Jesus is the Savior of those who believe. Can you say with David, "*The Lord is My Shepherd?*" Can you say with the Apostle Paul "*He is Christ Jesus my Lord?*" Can you say with Job "*I know that My Redeemer lives?*" Friend, that is what makes all the difference.

2. I Know My Redeemer Will Return and Reign.

"And He shall stand at last on the earth..." Job 19:25

Job prophesied that the same Christ who rose again will, one day, return again. Job speaks of a second coming before he has even seen a first coming. There was no Scripture, there were no seminaries, there was no religious instruction at all, and yet Job said, "*I know that He shall stand at last on the earth.*"

The word "stand," means "that which is set or fixed." Job is standing on the mountaintop of faith, and long before either coming occurred, he could see both comings of Christ.

Job understood that Jesus was coming first to redeem, but that He was also coming to rule. His first coming would result in a resurrection, and his second coming that would result in a reign.

Of the 929 chapters in the Old Testament, there are over 1,800 references in the Old Testament to the second coming of Jesus. There are twenty times as many references in the Old Testament to the second coming of Jesus as there are to the first coming of Jesus. Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament, there are 318 references, or 1 out of every 30 verses.

A Bible-believing preacher brought a tremendous message on the second coming of Jesus from this very text. When he had finished, one of those liberal unbelieving scholars came up to him and said, "I don't believe you can get the second coming out of the Old Testament. " That wise old preacher said, "You sure can't, buddy, it's in there to stay."

Job reveals to us when Jesus is coming, where Jesus is coming, and why Jesus is coming.

"at the last" at the last what? The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:52, "*at the last trumpet*" Jesus will come. Job knew there was going to be a trumpet, and that trumpet was going to blow, and Jesus was going to come.

Job also tells us where He's coming. He is coming back from where He left. Two thousand years ago He ascended from the earth, and one day He's going to descend back to the earth. God revealed to Job that Jesus was coming back to planet earth. It will be a physical coming; it will be a visible coming; it will be a literal coming.

The Bible says history is linear; it is a straight line, and at the end of that straight line you will find Jesus Christ. This world is on a collision course with Jesus. Now part of this world is headed for judgment, and part of this world is headed for joy, but all of this world is headed for Jesus.

Not only is Jesus going to take His stand on the earth, God has revealed exactly where He's going to take His stand. Listen to Zechariah 14:4, *"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south."*

Holiday Inn had planned to erect a hotel on the Mount of Olives at one point. But after sending a group of engineers and geologists to study the site, those experts discovered a geological fault running underneath the Mount of Olives which one day is going to cause it to split wide open. The Mount of Olives is going to split open when the feet of Jesus hit the ground.

The Hebrew word for *"to stand"* also means *"to stand as a victor over an enemy."* It's the picture of a warrior standing over a defeated foe. It pictures a conquering general standing and gazing over the spoils of conquest. When Jesus left this earth, He departed as a crucified Lord. When He returns, He's coming as a conquering King.

When Jesus comes back to planet earth He's not coming to take sides, He's coming to take over. Every king will relinquish his throne, every general will surrender his sword, every monarch will lay down his crown when Jesus comes again. That's why He's coming; to take His victorious stand on the earth.

3. I Know When He Returns I Will Be Resurrected.

Job is not only speaking of the prophetic resurrection of God's Son, but of the personal resurrection of God's servants. He is referring to his own resurrection. Job lays hold of the blessed truth that, because Jesus lives, he will live also.

"And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" Job 19:26-27

Job looks at the stark reality of death, and he is refreshed with the glorious doctrine of the resurrection. This ancient patriarch was able to look not only to Bethlehem and Calvary, but to the empty tomb.

Disease had wracked his body, death had wrecked his home, and Job knew one day he would follow his children and would also die, but he said, *"In my flesh I shall see God."* Job was not only concerned with life and death, he was concerned with life after death.

Job first asked the age-old question in Job 14:14, *"If a man dies, will he live again?"* God answers the question and tells Job exactly what he needs to know about death.

Thanatology is the study of death. There is an increasing interest in death and dying perhaps more than ever before in the history of the world. More books have been written in the last ten years on suicide, out-of-body experiences, and death than have been written in the entire Twentieth Century. So many books and articles are being written now on death that psychiatrists are calling the phenomenon "the gloom boom."

Job told us all we needed to know about death 3,000 years ago. He said that death is simply the destruction of the skin. It is simply the death of the flesh. Death is leaving its footprints in my forehead called wrinkles. Death is leaving its graying color in my hair. Job spoke of the destruction of the skin, not the soul. You see, death is the end of the body, but not the end of the soul. "My outward man is decaying, the apostle Paul said, but my inward man is being renewed day by day." Death kills the body, but it cannot kill the spirit, it cannot kill the soul, it cannot kill the self.

"In my flesh I shall see God." Job is talking about a resurrection. He's talking about a new body, an imperishable body, an immortal body, an incorruptible body, but in a resurrected body we are going to see God.

"Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." Job 19:27

The ancient Egyptians believed that after death their bodies would travel to another world during the day, and at night they would return to their bodies. In order for the person's spirit to live forever, it had to be able to recognize and return to the body. Because if the spirit could not recognize the body it belonged to, it would die. Whenever a body was mummified, it went through a process of seven steps that they called the seven steps of immortality.

2,000 years ago, Jesus proved that the resurrection was not an Egyptian hope, it was a divine certainty, and one day in our flesh, with resurrected eyes, we're going to see God. With resurrected ears, we're going to hear God. With resurrected hands we're going to touch God. With a resurrected heart we're going to love God.

This world is going to get worse long before it gets better. The stock market may crash. The price of a barrel of oil may top \$150. A gallon of gas may soon average \$5. The unemployment rate may hit all-time high. The war on terror may never be won. The threat of nuclear war may become a daily fear. But, I have looked into the face of our Captain, Jesus, and everything is going to be all right.

He is God enough to take care of all of that, and He is certainly God enough to take care of us. Bless His name! The God I know is the God who has everything under control!