

Friday, October 19, 2018

Accusation

Job 7-8

But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. Job 8:5-6

Another friend speaks to bring clarity to Job's situation. Again, it comes as an interruption, but this time also as an accusation. Job has moved into a deeply personal conversation with God asking, "Why do you not pardon my offenses and forgive my sins?" Bildad takes it upon himself to answer for God. Job is clearly the reason that God has not extended restoration and forgiveness. Job has not pleaded with the Almighty in the right way. Bildad has a commitment to the retribution of God. In his understanding of God, wrong acts bring God's vengeance. That is what happened to Job's children. He calls on Job to look at history and see that what he says is true. If Job can bring himself to a place of blamelessness before God all will be restored.

How many times do I allow my theology to become an accusation? There is a place for me to speak truth in love into the heart of a friend—and it is important that I do so—but it must not come as an accusation that is based on my observation. I must be very careful not to make assumptions based on appearance and in so doing miss the heart of what is happening.

Dear God, give me sensitivity as to when to speak and when to be silent. Help me realize the times that my words are an accusation and then search my heart for the motives behind those comments. Help me hear the hearts of people in conversation so that I am kept from making assumptions based on appearances. Please keep me from preconceived notions. Amen.

Saturday, October 20, 2018

Arbitrate

Job 9-10

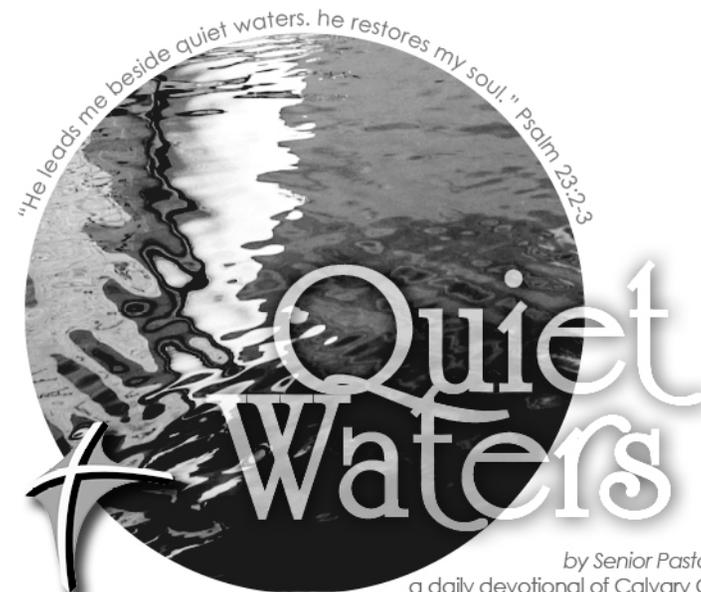
If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot. Job 9:33-35

In Job's reply to Bildad, he agrees that God will not reject a blameless man, but then ponders the idea of exactly how it could happen that one would be able to find that righteousness before God. Job is not privy to the conversation between the accuser and God. He does not know that God has seen his righteousness. Here Job is asking that he might be publicly declared righteous. He knows that he has lived a righteous life. Yet even in that life, he realizes he has fallen short of the standard required by the righteous Judge. He realizes he needs the Judge to declare him righteous, but he knows no way to come before that Judge and, even if he could, he does not know what he would say. He longs for an arbitrator, someone who could mediate between God and him. Then he would be able to plead his case and request the mercy of this powerful and righteous Judge.

How many are those whose hearts have yearned for an arbitrator between themselves and God so that they could talk to Him directly? For many, this comes as a selfish request. For some, as with Job, the request comes from a genuine heart with a desire for peace with God. Romans 5:1 declares that we have the peace through Jesus. God has provided what Job desired.

O LORD, thank You for providing a mediator between us. Thank You for declaring me righteous in Your sight because of the finished work of Jesus. Thank You for peace with You. Amen.

October 15 - 20, 2018



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, October 15, 2018

Purim

Esther 9-10

These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants. Esther 9:28

To this day, this edict is observed by the Jewish people. It is a time of joyful celebration. It celebrates the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies and their sorrow was turned to joy, their mourning into a time of celebration (9:22). This is the celebration of Purim that occurs one month before Passover. The name Purim derives from the word *pur* which means a lottery, the method that Haman used to select the date for the planned destruction. It celebrates the hand of God (though not mentioned) in suddenly turning the planned events into His favor. To this very day, Jews meet on Purim eve and Purim day to listen to the reading of the scroll of Esther (*Megillah*). Then comes a time of great celebration, eating, and merriment. There is a festive family dinner, fulfilling the decree to have a time of feasting. This continues as a celebration of the realization that it was “for such a time as this” that Esther was brought into the palace. God worked through the faithful obedience of an orphaned girl to save His people.

God can work through me as well. As I surrender my will to His in obedience, I will see Him work in and through my life.

Dear God, I praise You that You are a God who protects His children. You watch over Your own and when it appears that all is lost, You are still working Your plan. Thank You for Purim and for the reminder of Your power and might and love. Amen.

Tuesday, October 16, 2018

Worship

Job 1-2

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. Job 1:20-22

The accuser has come before the Lord and indicated that the reason Job was so upright was because of the material blessings that God had bestowed on him. The accuser declares that if those blessings are removed Job will not be the same man. The verses above reveal that that was not the case. When wave after wave of distressing news came to Job, he tore his clothes and fell to the ground—not in mourning, as might be expected. He fell to the ground and worshiped! At this point, reading his declaration reveals that he knows God’s nature and his character. He also knows that God is the source of all there is and that anything he has or had comes from God. It is this assurance in his life that allows him to worship at a devastating time. Later, when even his health is affected and his wife encourages him to curse God, Job seeks to bless God and praise His name.

Do I realize fully that every single thing that I have has come from God and belongs to Him and I am merely a steward entrusted to care for them as long as he determines I should?

Dear God, Thank You for entrusting me with Your things. Forgive me please for the times I have forgotten whose they are. Remind me to hold loosely that which I can lose so that I can hold tightly that which I can keep—You! Amen.

Wednesday, October 17, 2018

Lament

Job 3-4

What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.” Job 3:25-26

It is hard to read this chapter and many that will follow. Job uses a language that is uncomfortable because it is misunderstood. It is the language of lament. Lament is a language that reaches out to God. In his book *A Sacred Sorrow*, Michael Card has said: “*Though it may seem profoundly counterintuitive, lament and despair are polar opposites. Lament is the deepest, most costly demonstration of belief in God. Despair is the ultimate manifestation of the total denial that He exists.*” As the lament of Job is read, one can sense the sorrow, yet also the longing for God in the midst of the pain. It is not that he is in despair. This lament comes following an extended time of silence before the Lord. The language of lament is uncomfortable and not understood. Reading Job’s laments will allow one to learn this language and to use it to actually draw nearer to God in the midst of pain—in the valley of the shadow of death. It is there that this language allows one to seek the presence of God. Job knows God. He worships God. These words of lament do not change those truths—they are the vehicle that allow him to live within them.

I need to learn this language and the difference between lament and despair.

Dear God, thank You for the language of lament and for all the times I see people using it to draw near to You. Help me learn this language so that in times of confusion I can draw nearer to You as I pour out the heart of my pain to the only One who can hold it. Amen.

Thursday, October 18, 2018

Interruption

Job 5-6

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: “If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking?” Job 4:1-2

Job 5 contains the continuation of the comments of Eliphaz which begin in chapter 4. He starts his commentary with a powerful question, “Who can keep from speaking?” The answer implied is that no one can help themselves but to respond and move a person as quickly as possible out of the language of lament. The problem is that such responses are really just an interruption into the dialogue between Job and God. Eliphaz will begin talking about God as a topic that he is able to explain. These words will stop Job from talking to God. When the friends first came they spent seven days quietly with Job. In many ways, it is here we find the example to emulate. Eliphaz tells Job that he is reaping what he has sown (4:8). He speaks for God. He interrupts the conversation. He would have done better to realize that the person who should keep from speaking was himself.

How many times have I interrupted conversations with my eloquent explanations? How quick am I to move people out of conversations they are having with God, when what I really need to be doing is sitting with them as they journey through the time of lament in which they may find themselves?

Dear Lord, teach me the art of silence. Help me be very sensitive to the times that others need me to just listen to their cry of pain. Forgive me for the times I try to move people too quickly from the places that You are working in their lives. Amen.