

The Weekly Word
April 16-22, 2018

Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, April 16: Job 4- False Truths...

'Pop theology' abounds in every age. It can be devastating, especially with vulnerable and hurting people.

Job's friend, Eliphaz, was doing more and doing better for Job when he was silent. These words won't make an anthology of encouraging words: *Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? (7)*. Really, this is the first thing you say to someone who has buried his entire family and lost his entire wealth??? Besides being insensitive, it is not true. It probably was classic 'pop theology' in their day. Let's face it, it is a pretty good belief for people who are living!!!

I don't think too many believe this today. But we have our own pop beliefs.

- God helps those who help themselves.
- If you only had enough faith God would heal you
- Prospering is a sign of God's pleasure.

Problem is they simply are not true.

Considering the rampant nature of 'pop theology'. I found myself thinking about the only defense against these nice sounding false beliefs and that is God's truth.

Knowing the Word, reading and studying and spending time in God's Word is our only defense against falsehood in any form.

I know my understanding and theology isn't perfect. I am a mere human being. However, the better I know God's Word, the better protected I am from the blatant falsehoods of 'pop theology' and the latest gibberish from most self-help gurus.

Lord, I pray that Your Word, taken into my life, will shield me against the onslaught of godless banter in my world... I also, Lord, that when I go to comfort a friend, I will give them my presence and offer them Your hope and Your Word rather than drivel. I pray this in the name I bear, Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, April 17: Job 5- Standing before God...

We are all imperfect. As Eliphaz' discourse continues he hits a few notes correctly even though his general thrust misses the mark.

But if I were you, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. He provides rain for the earth; he sends water on the countryside (8-10).

We can always go to the Lord. His door is open. No matter where we have been or what we have done God will meet us there, if we are willing to turn to Him. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11) is a case in point. When he came to his senses and turned for home, the father (God in the parable) ran to him with love and open arms.

This is not to say that we will find ourselves justified for our actions before God. God, after all, is just and sin will be punished.

Thanks be to the Lord, He graciously planned a way out from under our sin, belief and acceptance of the once for all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Jesus paid the penalty our sins deserved by dying on the cross. And everyone who repents from their way of life and puts their faith and trust in Jesus will find the mercy of God in open arms of acceptance. This is the Good News of the Gospel.

Wow, my thoughts slid a long way from Job... I wouldn't want to make my appeal to the Lord without the covering of Jesus because I would be found guilty! And being found guilty in God's court is a scary thing.

Thanks be to the Lord for Jesus and His sacrifice... In Jesus I have found my Savior and my reconnection with God, the Father.

Oh, God, I do not deserve the mercy You have shown. I do not deserve the ransom Jesus paid for my life. You are so good. I can never repay You for all Your goodness to me. I bow to You and offer You my all. Like the 'little drummer boy' I will give You my heart.

Thank You Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, for loving and saving me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, April 18: Job 6- Truly a man of faith ...

What a faith filled man... Job is in the depth of pain. Pain I cannot imagine. His word sends chills up and down my spine. *If only my anguish could be weighed and all my misery be placed on the scales! It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas— no wonder my words have been impetuous* (2-3). He continues to attempt to express his level of duress. I shudder at his honesty. His ability to use words to invite me into his horror.

His climax is not a crescendo of agony, but one of honor and faithfulness for his God. *Then I would still have this consolation— my joy in unrelenting pain— that I had not denied the words of the Holy One* (10).

The moment I read verse 10, I thought Job truly was a man of faith. God knew what He was doing when He mentioned Job to Satan.

I don't understand all the 'ins and outs' of the book that bears Job's name. How does Satan get to stand in God's presence? How God could be incited against Job? However, what I do get is the amazing faithful stand of Job. Even in his intolerable pain he will not break faith with his God.

Job, for certain, is not perfect, but he is faithful and that is something I can ascribe to be...FAITHFUL.

Lord God, I do not know the path You have laid out for me. I do not know what lies ahead. Still I speak my prayer to You... May I be ever faithful; may I be ever true to You. May my life, in some way, shape or fashion, bring glory and point honorably and lovingly to You, my Creator, Maker, Savior and Friend. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, April 19: Job 7- Honesty...

Honesty. The word honesty scrolls across my thoughts as I ponder the chapter I have just read. Job is crying out to God honestly. He is in pain. In agony he cries to God. Like a giant 'WHY' this chapter drips with pathos.

I haven't endured anything like what Job is enduring. Is honesty confined only to pain? Am I as honest with God as Job was?

I am wondering if my conversation and prayers to the Lord are muted compared to Job. I am wondering if I make my prayers more civil or less joyous than what bubbles within me.

God handles Job's cries. God can and would handle my honesty, anyone's honesty.

My thoughts review my prayers... am I honest with the Lord? If not, why not? And since I am not fully honest with the Lord, why not? What is blocking me from baring my soul with the One who knows it already anyway?

I do not know. I am not sure...

God pulls me close... He is beckoning me.

God is beckoning you... to be honest with Him about anything and everything.

Oh, Lord, my God...

Friday, April 20: Job 8- What we believe matters ...

It is one thing to try to point a person to the Lord. It is quite another to guilt them and belittle them. I found Bildad's words condescending and certainly not life giving.

Two aspects of his comments were particularly troubling... The first is that it seems to be built upon the words of men. Verses 8-10: *Ask the former generation and find out what their ancestors learned, for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow. Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?* While there is certainly wisdom in realizing we –whatever generation we happen to represent –are not the end all of history. People before us have wisdom they can share with us. But, if I am hearing Bildad correctly, he seems to be referencing human wisdom rather than the wisdom imparted by God and preserved by men.

A world view built on the best human wisdom is built on sinking sand, rather than the firm foundation of truth –God's truth. And this leads directly to my second problem with Bildad. He appears to be operating from the foundation that human success is THE measure of faithfulness before God. By his theology today, being a millionaire or billionaire, shows you are blameless before God. *Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of evildoers* (20). What he is saying is something like, 'Job, if you were blameless these tragedies would not have happened to you.'

But worldly success is not an indicator of faithfulness and blamelessness. If that were true, none of the apostles could be considered faithful and blameless. Even more importantly, Jesus wouldn't be faithful or blameless either, just look at His life and how He died!

What we believe matters. Bildad may have thought he was right. However, his understanding of life and how God works was faulty and caused him to miss read the situation and deliver harsh words to Job.

What we believe matters... which is why listening to and learning from God's Word, the Bible, is so important for life.

Am I building my life on human wisdom or on God's Word? Are you?

Think about it.

Lord, help me not to simply read Your Word but to take it into my very heart and soul and build my life upon it. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, April 21: Job 9- Job gets it!...

Job is a man way ahead of his times. It is amazing how much he truly understands. He gets the plight we humans are in. We are not God. How can we even presume to stand on a footing

with God that we could argue ourselves into God's good graces? The Lord God is so far beyond our comprehension, who are we to stand in His presence?

I am amazed at Job's wisdom as he answers his friend. *"How then can I dispute with him [God]? How can I find words to argue with him? Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy (14-15).*

Job gets it. How can we mere mortals stand in the presence of God and win any argument? We could never answer God. Our humanness is no match for His godliness. It is crazy even to think that we could stand in God's court and win!

As insightful as Job's understanding is, he just blew me away when he continues. *If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, 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 (33-35).*

Although he is not quite describing Jesus and the role Jesus plays, Job definitely understands the need for Jesus. We need a mediator! And who could stand in God's presence and be God's equal besides God Himself. Oh, the wonder of Jesus –God in human flesh who takes our place.

This is where Job doesn't quite fathom the full mystery of God –not surprisingly, by the way, Job is human!

A mediator needs to do more than level the field so we can have our day in court. Jesus, the mediator between God and man, takes our place! He stands in for us, giving us His righteousness and taking on our sin which he pays for with His life on the cross.

As I round up today, I am amazed at Job's insight. Even more I marvel at the love of God and the wonder of Jesus who is both mediator and 'stand in' for me, for you, for everyone who believes.

Oh, Jesus, thank You!!!! In Your name I pray. Amen.

Sunday, April 22, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.