

**The Weekly Word**  
April 23-29, 2018

Oh, I hope spring arrives soon. The weather will be what it will be but God's Word is eternal. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

**Monday, April 23: Job 10- On the right track...**

What an interesting book Job is. It begins with a glimpse of God in the 'heavenlies'. Then it shifts to earth and we walk with Job through horrors of loss and intense pain. We sit with Job as friends comfort him. Then words are exchanged, accusation of sin from his friends, 'explaining why he is in the state he is in.' Mourning and pain flow from Job's lips and the more his friends push the more Job pushes back his innocence.

*I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul. I say to God: Do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me (1-2).*

*If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished. If I am guilty—woe to me! Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction. If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me. You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me; your forces come against me wave upon wave (14-17).*

As I was listening to Job's reply today... As I was drawn into his pain and outbursts. I could easily understand his cries. I, too, could have said those things and I would have likely been less restrained. Why me? What have I done?... Name my charges. Tell me...

Next thing I know, I found myself wondering what God was thinking as He listened in. [I understand that these thoughts move beyond the text, they are pure speculation on my part, Still I lingered with these thoughts for a while.]

What was God thinking as He watched and listened from His perch unnoticed by Job and his friends?

I imagined God crying. His heart breaking for his child. Was Job guilty? Of some things, certainly. No human is perfect. We have all crossed the line into sin. Still I imagine God's heart breaking. I imagine God's growing frustration with the friends and how they are perverting truth and heaping coals on Job. I imagine God whispering, hang in there... mercy will come.

I also imagine God thinking, 'Devil, you fool. You fell for it. I will be vindicated and in the future you will be vanquished. As you missed this one, so too you will miss the defining gambit when Mmy Sson, Mmy only Sson comes. You think you know so much, but what you don't know will be your undoing.

Slowly another thought formed in my inner being. What does my imaginings about God say about my understanding of God? Hmmm...

I see God as a caring, grace-filled Father whose wisdom is the undoing of evil...

Although I have much still to learn about my God, I think I am on the right track...

*Oh, Lord, I bless You for these times when I can sit and ponder and think and be with You. Praise be to You, Father, Jesus Holy Spirit, One God, eternal, magnificent and wonder-full. Through Jesus, my Lord, I pray. Amen.*

## **Tuesday, April 24: Job 11- God the master designer...**

Zophar reminds us of some profound truths about God. *“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea (7-9).*

God’s ways are so much higher than our ways. In our wildest most advanced thoughts we cannot approach the wisdom of God. This is true.

As I sit in stillness this morning with nature waking up around me it is good to be reminded of the greatness of God. Even as the collective brainpower of humankind gains understanding into nature and answers some of the mysteries of past ages, there is so much that we do not know. And we have yet to mine the mystery of beginnings. All our theories begin with something; where, however, did the something come from???

I am thinking about the collective human knowledge, even less, no one person knows all of the collective knowledge accumulated by humanity.

All of this is to say I sit and marvel at God... His wonder.

A little over a week ago my wife planted tiny seeds starting our summer garden. After just a few days of water and sun tiny sprigs began pushing their heads through the soil. Oh, science can explain the process, but did it really just happen and evolve without any mastermind behind architecting the grand scheme and the various systems?

A ministry I work with is building a chapel on a mountainous retreat center in North Carolina. Hours and hours have been spent with architects, landscape architects and others to create a building that fits the land and draws us to God. It didn’t just ‘happen.’ As I look out to nature I see the hand of the grand architect, God, and I am so thankful and blessed that God’s ways and thoughts are higher than mine or even the collective human brain power.

I fall before God, joyfully worshipping Him Who is supreme, eternal and approachable through faith in Jesus.

*Alleluia... God, I praise You. Alleluia... God, I worship You. Magnificent, eternal, all wise and all knowing, I surrender all to You. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.*

## **Wednesday, April 25: Job 12- Our Redeemer Lives...**

Job utters one of the great descriptions of God’s sovereignty and power. Job gets it. The Lord God is above all things. His will is displayed ever before us.

*“To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his. What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; those he imprisons cannot be released. If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land. To him belong strength and insight; both deceived and deceiver are his. He leads rulers away stripped and makes fools of judges. He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. He leads priests away stripped and overthrows officials long established. He silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty. He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light. He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he makes them wander in a trackless waste. They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards (13-25).*

As I read Job’s words and read them again I tried to allow them to sink in. I want to allow them to take root in the depth of my being.

I may not fully understand God and His ways, but I can appreciate God for whom He is... God. And His ways are inscrutable. I, a mere human being, can never fully understand or comprehend His ways.

I can, however, surrender to them.

Job maintains his innocence –maybe he is a bit too self affirming –still he understands and more importantly acknowledges that God chooses the way each person walks.

Even as I write, questions float in my thought... tensions between free will –my ability to choose my destiny –and God’s sovereignty. By all accounts in this book Job was a righteous man, still all these calamities befall him. He chose well but evil befell him. God had other things in play that no human could factor in. Job had no clue he was the king in God’s chess match with Satan. All may have looked lost, but the ultimate victory would be the Lord’s.

I switched to my own life seeing these connections...

Live righteously, loving God and loving others.

Remain faithful through life’s storms; refuse to curse God

Speak truthfully as best you can all the days of your life

And know our Redeemer lives... Yes, Jesus lives.

*I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender. I surrender all. Gladly and with a grateful heart for all You do and all You have done for me Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, I surrender all. Amen.*

#### **Thursday, April 26: Job 13- Trust in God...**

The chapter speaks loudly about the heart of Job. He wants a hearing before God. He wants to state his case and then let God judge. Amazingly his reverence for God has not waned but remained steadfast.

Verse 15 captures the flavor of the chapter. *Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.*

How many times during a trial or difficult time do I long for a face to face with God.

Though he believes he will be vindicated, Job’s desire is to speak directly with God. What touches my heart is that Job is willing to accept whatever God says. His hope in God remains strong. *Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.*

To my thinking that is faith.

Chapters ago his wife counseled him, “Curse God and die.” He would not do that then and still he will not. Job trusts God. Job trusts in God. This has not changed despite the horrors he is going through.

Will I be likewise faithful? Will I continue to trust God and trust in God no matter what His hand allows to come my way? I pray so...

*Oh, God, Job stood on the rock of faith... Job hurt, he wondered, he wanted answers but he never stopped believing in and serving You. I pray for the faith to hold on, ~~f~~ For the spiritual strength to never let go and to be a man after Your own heart. Through Jesus, my Savior, I pray. Amen.*

#### **Friday, April 27: Job 14- Serving and loving God is its own reward...**

After reading the chapter my thoughts are all over the place. There was no sweet spot in the chapter for me.

Lord, what part of this word will draw me to You? I sit still. I wonder. I ponder Your servant Job. He has faith in You, truly uncompromising faith in You. He does so, it seems to me, without an understanding of life everlasting.

*But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep (10-12). That last clause, I guess, leaves open the possibility of an afterlife; it is certainly not a clear endorsement of such. And the entire tenor of his words seems to infer a belief that once in the grave that is it for a person.*

If I am reading Job correctly he has incredible faith in God without any hope of ultimate redemption, which is all the more amazing to me. I know we all see through a glass dimly (1Cor 13:12) ~~a.~~ And none of us understands perfectly. Missing eternal life is a pretty big miss and still he is faithful.

I am encouraged by Job and the thought that serving and loving the Lord is its own reward... eternal life and other blessings are icing on the cake.

*Lord God, thank You for You. I love You for who You are. Bless and praise You, Lord. Through Christ, my Lord, I pray. Amen.*

### **Saturday, April 28: Job 15- How do you measure faithfulness?...**

Eliphaz again has partial truth. He gets that mortals are not pure. *“What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water! (14-16).*

Still he is stuck on the notion that life and success are indicators of one's piety. Live well and you will prosper, defy God and you will have torment of life. Since Job is being tormented then he must have sinned; God is punishing him.

When I put this in writing it seems simple to see the fallacy of this theology, but yet, this thinking still has a grip on many. We observe it in the so called 'prosperity gospel'... God wants us to name it and claim it. God wills that all His people will prosper, which means 'do well financially and materially'. We can even observe it in people who set up certain tithing equations. If I tithe or give X, God will give me Y.

While these understandings of God might make sense in a prosperous country like mine, they are impossible in impoverished countries where survival rather than 'prospering' is the life hope.

God's voice bids me to examine my own thinking. Have I, in any way, slipped into some manner of thinking that faithfulness to God is the path to happy good life? If so, I must purge that thinking because it is a poor measurement.

Did Jesus measure His faithfulness by the good life?

Did Peter or Paul or any apostle measure their faithfulness by the good life?

NO. Fruit of righteous is a better measure.

So I am duly warned. Because which measuring stick of faithfulness you choose to use...

*Oh, God, to be found, ~~faithful~~ that is my desire. Guide me and help me to stay strong in You. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Sunday, April 29, 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](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

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