

The Weekly Word
April 30 - May 6, 2018

April showers bring May flowers... hopefully some warmth comes with May as well.
Now may God bless you as you read His Word. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, April 30: Job 16- Encouragement v. condemnation...

Job begins his rebuttal with an interesting observation.

Then Job replied:

"I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing? I also could speak like you, if you were in my place; I could make fine speeches against you and shake my head at you. But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief (1-5).

As I read Job's words, the thought that came to me goes like this, "When someone is in pain, don't lecture, encourage. Keep your words few. Comfort should be your aim."

Whether his friends were right or wrong what mattered most, and what Job did not receive from his friends, was comfort. All their words were stealing the life from Job and making matters worse.

I began to replay in my mind the conversation flow up through chapter 15. As his friends pressed their case that Job must be at fault somehow, Job's rebuttals grow stronger pushing him closer to the precipice of dismissing God or declaring God unjust. Fending off all their talk Job was sounding more and more arrogant and self-promoting.

Instead of letting Job grieve or cry, he was having to defend himself. He couldn't even vent.

Thinking about Job's comments caused me to replay my conversations with friends who are in pain or are scared. I am wondering if I was an encouragement. Did I help or hurt?

Job gives a powerful perspective on coming along side someone facing difficult times!

Oh, God, let Job's message seep in. Soften my heart and my need to be 'right' and give me empathy for others in pain. Lord, may my few words be words of life...

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, May 1: Job 17- Is there someone who needs a friend?...

Job is a broken man. Apparently the trials of his life and the words of his friends have taken their toll. *My spirit is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me*, he cries out in verse 1.

Despair is overtaking him...

Even the best of us can fold under life's pressure. Even the most faithful person can lose hope. This seems to be Job's lot.

How sad Job's situation. It is in moments of despair that we need our friends the most. And as Job noted last chapter what we need from friends at those times is encouragement. Sadly his friends seem to be doing just the opposite.

I am wondering if there are friends of mine who need a pick me up. I am wondering if the Lord is providing this insight because there is someone in my circle who needs a friend, a positive word, a smile, a hug...

Oh, Lord God, help me to be empathetic toward my family, friends and acquaintances. Lead me, Oh Holy Spirit, to bring salve for their wounds and peace—Your peace—to their heart. May I be a friend in the best sense of the word. Lead me Lord to be Your hands, feet, mouth and heart to the hurting world around me. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, May 2: Job 18- Exposed...

How the words of Bildad must have torn at Job's heart. They are not words of comfort, nor encouragement or even care. They are accusations. Little wonder Job grows more and more defensive.

Be honest. Who says things like this to someone hit with disaster beyond his or her control?

When will you end these speeches? Be sensible, and then we can talk (2). And then from his mouth flows this 'talk.'

"The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out; the flame of his fire stops burning. The light in his tent becomes dark; the lamp beside him goes out. The vigor of his step is weakened; his own schemes throw him down. His feet thrust him into a net; he wanders into its mesh. A trap seizes him by the heel; a snare holds him fast. A noose is hidden for him on the ground; a trap lies in his path. Terrors startle him on every side and dog his every step. Calamity is hungry for him; disaster is ready for him when he falls. It eats away parts of his skin; death's firstborn devours his limbs (5-13).

From beginning to end this is a gut punch. I was particularly appalled by the final comment I quoted. *Calamity is hungry for him; disaster is ready for him when he falls. It eats away parts of his skin; death's firstborn devours his limbs.* It seems to be a particularly sharp spear aimed at Job himself. Remember Job has running sores all over his body eating away his flesh, which he scraped with broken pottery for some 'relief.'

Then after a few more hits, Bildad closes with this comment:

He has no offspring or descendants among his people, no survivor where once he lived. People of the west are appalled at his fate; those of the east are seized with horror. Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man; such is the place of one who does not know God" (19-21).

Again all Job's children have died... it doesn't take a literary critic to understand that Bildad is calling Job an *evil man... who does not know God.*

I wanted to cry with Job. I wanted to shove a sock in Bildad's mouth to shut him up.

My last reaction while possibly being 'right' is not righteous. I am exposed for who I am... a sin filled person, desperately in need of a savior.

Job is far more gracious than I am.

I sit here this morning humbled by my sin and need.

Oh, God, my humanity is weak. Only by Your grace. Only because of Your love. Only because of Jesus can I dare enter your presence and speak with You.

Thank You. Bless You. Halleluiah. I am alive because eeeeeeeef You. Amen.

Thursday, May 3: Job 19- My redeemer lives...

In verse 11, *His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies* (11) Job declares that God burns against him... his evidence the pain and trouble he is in. This seems to wreak of the same theology of Job's friends, that life's circumstances indicate God's pleasure or lack thereof. This caused me to realize that Job's understanding of God is a mixed bag, part is accurate

and part not. Job is human! We all see through a glass dimly (1Corinthinas 13:15). Still Job clings to faith in God.

This discourse includes one of Job's most famous lines. *I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. 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!* (25-27)

I know that my redeemer lives... I cannot read those words without hearing the song My Redeemer Lives by Reuben Morgan.

He lifts my burdens. I'll rise with Him. I'm dancing on the mountain tops to see his kingdom come. My Redeemer lives. My Redeemer lives...

Halleluiaah, my Redeemer lives. Even though I do not have perfect understanding, the understanding I have, by God's grace and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within, is enough for me to hold on and keep the faith, no matter my circumstances.

I will sing with Job and Reuben...

My Redeemer live... my Redeemer lives.

Oh, God, I am so blessed that You my Redeemer lives... Through Jesus I pray. Amen

Friday, May 4: Job 20- Soaring the heights of mercy...

And so the story continues, "second verse same as the first." Job and his friends are set in this reoccurring loop. Good people prosper. Wicked people eventually are exposed. Job, the fact that your life has totally fallen apart means you are exposed. You must be a wicked person, 'fess up.

Such is the fate [your fate, the horrors that have befallen you] *God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God* (29).

My heart is heavy bearing this thought. I can only imagine the weight Job and his friends felt living in a time when this was the understanding of God!

I am so glad that I live under the New Covenant, under the message of Jesus, which proclaims...

It is true that we ALL have sinned and that God punishes sin. BUT God has paid the sin penalty for all who put their fate in Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to pay the cost of sin... my sin, your sin, the sin of the world. The penalty has been paid; all one needs to do is receive the gift of forgiveness, freedom and redemption from Jesus... to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and believe on Him in their hearts and salvation comes to them (read Romans).

So where I began bearing the weight of life under the yoke of performance and perfection or God will get you. I finish soaring the heights of grace and mercy, where God redeems me through the love and sacrifice of Jesus, who is God incarnate who lived among us for a while (see John 1:1-2, 5-vv)

Oh, Jesus, I am so thankful and full of blessing because You came, died and were raised to life again, canceling my debt of sin. Oh, Father God, thank you for willing from the beginning of time that salvation could be found in Jesus, Your son, our Lord. Oh, Holy Spirit, thank You for opening my eyes to the truth of Jesus and enabling me to receive the wonders of salvation and for walking with me the road of discipleship.

Bless You, Jesus, Father, Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Saturday, May 5: Job 21- Can anyone teach knowledge to God ...

Job continues his dialogue with his friends rebutting Zophar's latest assertions. In short Job replies, looks around. Some wicked live a full life while some good folks die in despair...

This certainly is true today. Earthly prosperity is no indicator of faithfulness to the Lord.

As I scanned the chapter a second time my eyes and heart were drawn to verse 22. A simple statement about God, *Can anyone teach knowledge to God, since he judges even the highest?* It was an open door to pondering and meditating upon the greatness, the bigness, the transcendence of God.

Recently I have been reading “The Deepest Well Healing, the long-term effects of childhood adversity” by Nadine Burke Harris, MD. This is not a Sunday leisure read. Rather it chronicles Dr. Harris’ fascinating journey exposing and then charting a way forward in treating the long-term effects that severe adversity wreaks upon children. In this book I was exposed to the concept of epigenetics. Significant adversity can alter a person’s DNA causing generational changes. I do not understand this science enough to explain it.

What hit me as I read was the complexity of the human body and the interplay between one human bodily system and another system as science learns more and more about the amazing complexity of the human body. For me these learnings reinforce my appreciation for and admiration of God who designed it all in the first place. The more complex and interrelated all these systems are the more appreciation I have for God as the Creator. To believe that all these systems within systems ‘happened’ through the chance of evolution independent of God is foolishness to me. The Mac computer on which I am typing right now is evidence of intelligent design. No one in their right mind would say it just ‘happened’ through some random circumstances.

I have also read recently biographies of Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Edison and Nicolai Tesla. Their brilliance and hard work shaped our world with incredible art, inventions and technological advances. Everyone who looks at the Mona Lisa thinks about the brilliance and ability of Da Vinci. Art historians explain the way Da Vinci mastered perspective and studied human anatomy so he could render the curl of the human lips in a smile. Design demands intelligence.

The more I read and discover the complexity of our world and the human body the more I believe in God. I marvel in God being so far beyond me (us) as humans. My heart cries with Job, *Can anyone teach knowledge to God...*

I look out my window upon nature and see the Lord’s handiwork. I look at my hand as it types and I see the Lord’s handiwork. I recall the Aurora Borealis I witnessed in Iceland and see the handiwork of the Lord.

To ponder the greatness of God puts my heart at rest, Thanks to faith in Jesus I have experienced God’s love, forgiveness and care. I am at ease placing my life and my eternal life in God’s hands.

Thank you, Job, for sparking these meditations on the wonder of God.

Praise and bless You, Oh God—Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. Halleluiab. Amen.

Sunday, May 6, 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.