

The Weekly Word
May 7-13, 2018

Welcome to May. Moms have a blessed day this Sunday. And may reading God's Word bless everyone. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, May 7: Job 22- God did not let go...

Reading Eliphaz's response makes me feel a bit like I am experiencing 'Groundhog Day' over and over again. Eliphaz and his friends keep saying the same things only making them more pointed. There simply is no evidence that Job did the things listed in verses 6-9.

Lord, where is the kernel of truth that can carry me for the day? Where O Lord is a word from you?

All I can fathom is that even when lies are told about you (or to you), hold on to the Lord. Don't give up on God even when people speaking the lies are God's children. God knows the truth about you.

Lord, this chapter raises memories from my earlier life. You were there, when others left me and allowed untrue gossip to be spoken about me. I thank you, Lord, that You stood with me and never let me go. Praise You, Lord. Praise You. Amen.

Tuesday, May 8: Job 23- To melt into God's embrace...

Job longs and cries out for his day in God's court. His deep yearning is to speak his case before the Lord, believing he will be exonerated. He believes he has kept faith and lived as God would have him live.

Pondering this, I recognize that Job may be a bit overconfident he could argue his case and win before the Lord. However I am touched by his desire to meet God because Job comes at this from a posture of faith and trust with reverent fear. I was impressed with how Job concludes:

But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him; when I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me. Yet I am not silenced by the darkness, by the thick darkness that covers my face (13-17).

Job understands God is God. He just wants his day in court.

Who of us hasn't wanted to know the answer to some burning question... why something has happened to you or someone you know. Is that substantively different from Job's request to hear from the Lord? I am not sure it is.

As I listen to Job I hear a person of faith. To stand in God's court is to acknowledge God at some level. Job has not written off God, he wants to face the Lord. Job has not denounced God, he wants to stand in His presence. Job has not cursed God, he desires a hearing with the Lord. From my vantage point this grows from trust and respect...

How deeply do I trust and respect the Lord? This question alters the direction of my time with the Lord. With it God rotates my perspective from looking at Job to examining myself.

Do I trust the Lord with my today and tomorrows?

Do I run toward God or away from Him when adversity strikes?

Do I seek His presence?

These are facets of faith in God... Aren't they?

As I ponder, God pulls me close. "You are mine." I hear Him whisper. I melt into His embrace...

Words do not come as I seek to pray. His presence envelops me. I am His.

Thank you, Lord, I manage to pray...

Wednesday, May 9: Job 24- Laid bare before God...

Reading Job's rant, which encompasses most of this chapter, I thought he could be describing a scene from today's news headlines. Child exploitation, abuse and misuse of the poor and disenfranchised, cheating, stealing, lying.

Apparently life hasn't changed in millennia!

Somehow we think modern people are better humans than 'savages' of the past. Seems to me the facts don't bear this out. Job's lament about the evil deeds of people of his day could be a lament of the evil people of today. In some countries there may be better policing and jurisprudence but even that doesn't stem the tide of violence and oppression. Gun violence, human trafficking, drug related violence and theft, rape, live on in even the most technologically advanced and wealthiest countries of the world. Often they are hidden, but when these come into the light we are shocked by its pervasiveness... example the #metoo campaign exposing many 'respectable' people in lofty places for exploiting women.

Seems clear to me that education, scientific, cultural and political advancement haven't cured the ills deep within the human soul. If we can take an advantage over someone else and the risk seems to be worth the reward, then we do it, even when the advantage puts down or uses the person.

Job opens the chapter: *Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?* (1). Surely he is lamenting that he cannot stand face to face with the Lord. His opening sentence however misses the mark. God has sent a time for judgment. It is not during one's lifetime but upon death. Human rules have jurisdiction during life, but upon death God's court takes jurisdiction. And things we may have gotten away with in the human court will be laid bare before God who knows all, including the intentions of our heart!!!

Some abusive men may not be exposed through #metoo. Some evil doers get off on a technicality or have the resources to buy their acquittal in a human court, but that will not be the case before God at His tribunal. The New Testament is eminently clear. Hebrews 9:27, *people are destined to die once, after that face judgment.* And the only defense we can have in God's court is Jesus standing in our place... and that happens when we place our trust and faith in Jesus and follow Him as a disciple.

I am so grateful for Jesus... my Savior, my Lord.

Sometimes in worship we simply sing the name of Jesus... my heart is singing that right now.

Jesus... Jesus... Jesus...

Thursday, May 10: Job 25- So true...

In this brief chapter Bildad speaks words that shoot straight to my heart.

“Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. Can his forces be numbered? On whom does his light not rise? How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot—a human being, who is only a worm!” (2-6)

Yes, yes, yes... my heart sighed. Truth. The Lord God is above all. He alone is sovereign and pure. No matter how ‘good’ I might be I can and never will be perfect and absolutely pure.

I understand the imagery of humans as worms and maggots in Bildad’s words, however, humanity is the crowning glory of God’s creation and the one creature with whom God can and does have a familial relationship. Humanity is created in God’s image.

I sat and pondered the greatness of the Lord... the wonders of creations, His creation. I scanned the history of God’s revelation to humanity as I remembered the flow and breath of God’s Word from Genesis through Revelation. I toured with my mind’s eye God’s amazing gift of salvation in Christ Jesus.

God, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit, is good and mighty and sovereign and majestic and all-wise and just, merciful, grace-filled. And above all God is love.

I delighted in God and in my relationship with God as Father through faith in Jesus Christ, my Lord. I sat still realizing God is with me in the person of the Holy Spirit.

‘Amazed’, ‘loved’, ‘delighted’ are words that fill me as I contemplate the greatness and wonder of the Lord God Almighty.

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul and all that is within me bless His Holy name. Amen

PS: Holy, one more aspect of who God is I neglected to name above... and there are so many more.

Friday, May 11: Job 26- Blown away...

Job’s final words in the chapter launched my morning musings... *Who then can understand the thunder of his power? (14c)*

As soon as I read those words my thoughts churned. God is so big so ULTIMATE, who can comprehend the Lord?

Isaiah was correct when he records God’s words, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).*

God is so completely other. My mind shifts to the opening words in the Bible, Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* In the beginning God created...

The Holy Bible is clear... God is the ultimate being. God is the cause of all that is. God is from eternity to eternity. We humans are created beings. As much as we may strive to know and understand the workings of the universe, we are one with it. We are part of created order. God alone stands apart, above, beyond creation.

While it is good to work to understand God, this is in part why God gave us the Bible. We can never know completely as God knows. Even if we were to perfectly master the entirety of the Bible that is only a sliver of knowledge of and about God. How can anything created contain that which is not created, but always was?

I admit my mind is exploding even as I try to attempt to put words to my thoughts about God. I resonate with Job, *Who then can understand the thunder of his power?*

I do not despair in my quest to know God. Instead I am heartened because the God of the universe has given me enough so that I can put my faith and trust in Him. And in doing so I become part of His family where I have access to the beyond-everything-God as a son.

Wow, blown away!!! God invites me in to His family. Joy floods my soul. The One I cannot ever fully fathom invites me, mere humble, nothing me, into His family. Like I said, ‘Wow blown away!!!

Amazed, I sit in Your lap, my God. Profound words escape me. To be Yours. I praise You and thank You for inviting me into Your family. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Saturday, May 12: Job 27- ...

My heart and soul is weary with the reading of Job. From verse 11 onward Job seems to believe, as his friends do, that the wicked will get their just deserts in this life. This seems to be the same thinking that led his friends to call Job to repent. According to them the calamities that befell Job are indicators of his wickedness.

If only it were that simple... love and serve God and all the blessings of this life come upon you. Do wickedness and God’s vengeance will fall on you. Life isn’t that simple. By this equation Jesus must have been wicked because of the end he met. We know that is not true. Throughout history some of Jesus’ saints have prospered and others not. And the book of Revelation speaks of the tribulations that will come upon the saints, not to mention the various NT Epistles that speak to the tribulations befalling the church (see 2Thessalonians 1:4, James 1:2, 1Peter 1:6 & 4:12 as examples). The same could be said for saints throughout church history, some prospered in an earthly fashion and some did not.

So at least to my mind and reading Job, his friends are a bit off here.

I found no devotional strength in these words, so I went back and started reading again.

The early words of the chapter brought some hope of nourishment. Job begins with this comment to his friends. *As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my life bitter, as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked, and my tongue will not utter lies. I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity (2-5).*

He will not give up his innocence. And he remains adamant that he is getting a raw deal from the Lord. Possibly, even probably, this comes across a tad self-righteous. Be that as it may, Job sets a boundary stone that he will not cross, *as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked, and my tongue will not utter lies.*

I find this a powerful statement; doubly powerful given it is spoken by a man in torment. I am never at my best or my most faithful when I am in pain or tired. Job is suffering much more than I ever have and still he guards his mouth and bridle his tongue.

This stands a powerful example for me.

Even in pain, even in the midst of trial, even feeling forsaken, I can remain faithful. As I type these last words, the image of Stephen at his stoning comes to mind (Acts 7:54). From Stephen’s image I bounced to Jesus on the ‘forgiving those who crucified him.’

I can remain faithful; the Spirit that was alive in Jesus and Stephen is alive in me!!

Lord God—Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit- I am Yours forever... I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

Sunday, May 13, 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.