

JOB: Man Of God
June 12, 2005
Message 3

INTRO: We have come to chapter 3 in Job. It is worthy of note that from 3:1-37:24 is written in Hebrew poetic style. If you are using the KJV you will not be able to see it. Most newer versions, though I do not encourage the use of most of them, will show this section in poetic form.

I have a long introduction this morning in which I will cover chapter 3. And then a few short points in which I will cover chapters 4-14. So let us begin the introduction by briefly reviewing the first two messages. In our first message we saw what was happening in the life of Job and then by divine revelation we were allowed to see what was happening behind the scenes. While Job is living a godly life, a spiritual battle is raging between God and Satan in the life of Job. And so we saw that Job lost all his possessions. In the second scene, we saw Job lose his health.

And now Job's friends have come to comfort him, but they have not yet begun to counsel him. They did not even speak yet because they saw his grief was great and they could not bring themselves to begin to tell him what a sinner he is because he is all broken up. And so Job opens the door to conversation in 3:1-26. Job 3:1-10 was read for us earlier. In short, what Job says is, "I wish I had never been born."

In Job's circumstances, as is often true for us when undesired things happen, he said, "Why?" Listen to his "whys" in 3:11-26 (read underlined words).

Now let me prepare you for the next several messages. They will not be pleasant. Before we proceed with Job's dialogues with his miserable comforters, let me tell you what I think the purpose of the book of Job is. I believe the book reveals that a spiritual tumor may have been growing in Job that he was not aware of, but God saw it. And God, out of His great love for Job, mercifully revealed it to Job, took care of it, and restored Job to spiritual life and vitality. This tumor, had it been left, might well have ended up destroying Job.

As I have studied this book, and considered the possibility that it might be the first Bible book written of the 66, I

have asked myself, "What is so important about the book of Job that it was either the first or one of the first Bible books in existence." As I considered that question, and the view I was coming to that God removed a tumor from Job that was developing into pride, I began to consider that God was showing man in this book, how huge and prevalent the sin of pride is in man. It was the sin that took Lucifer, one of the highest ranking angels in heaven. It is the sin, that is about to consume Job, one of the best men who ever lived. And if this sin is so powerful, so inviting, so hard to recognize; then you and I must learn to walk humbly with our God, or we too may become a spiritual disaster.

Now I must say one word here. There are various reasons why God allows difficult circumstances or suffering in life. Job's friends seemed to think there was only one reason, and that was to draw man to repentance for wrongdoing. Here in Job, it seems to me to be more what I would call preventive maintenance. God will deal with something in the life of Job before it becomes a sin problem. There are other reasons given in the Bible why people suffer as well. When Jesus was told in John 11 by Lazarus' sisters that he was sick, Listen to what Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified." In John 9, Jesus and His disciples saw a blind man and Jesus' disciples asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" And Jesus said, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in Him." So let us not make the same mistake as Job's friends, and let us be comforters to others, not their judges.

Now I propose to you that when God said to Satan, "Have you considered MY servant Job" He was not asking for trouble. I believe God saw something in Job that was leading to spiritual pride or self righteousness. So God allowed Job to lose all his possessions, and then his health. Still Job did not come to see himself. And so the Lord will allow him to go through a test that will begin to reveal the nature of Job. It is the test of human relationships, or we might call it peer pressure. It is simply amazing what is revealed in our lives by our relationships one with another.

Let me tell you what happens many times when God uses human relationships to work in our lives. We want to move to some place where people are angles and we can get along with

them all. L.E. Maxwell taught that we are always ready to pack up our bags and move along and he would say, "Unpack your bags, this is life." Let me add though, that there are perfectly legitimate reasons for moving or for changing churches or for changing jobs. But if I am running from what God wants to do in my life, then I must meet the same thing wherever I go. One of our men has mentioned this saying to me several times: *Wherever you go, there you are.*

And now, as Job speaks with his friends, though they misdiagnose his problem, what God is seeking to bring out in Job will surface again and again. I wonder, may it be that this series comes now because God wants to reveal to me or you some hidden issue of the heart; some issue that we have or will yet fight against until we are brought into submission to God? If so, then may the Lord have His way.

We have seen Job's trials by his circumstances, and I have suggested that he has not yet seen what is happening in himself. Now he will be tested by man. And when this happens, almost immediately the problem surfaces, and it will again and again, before he finally is brought to deal with it. So we begin this section by looking at his dialogue with Eliphaz.

Job's testings began by circumstances. First he lost all his possessions and then his health. And now he is sitting in the dust and scraping his oozing sores. And then three of his friends come to comfort him. Job has opened the way for them to speak and they do so. Each man gets three turns, except for Zophar. Zophar gives up after two. And so we look at round one which begins with Eliphaz the Temanite, probably the oldest, most mature man.

B. By Man (3:1-37:24)

1. Round One (4:1-14:22)

a. Eliphaz (4:1-7:21)

And so we begin by considering Eliphaz' analysis of Job's problem as found in (4:1-5:27). Now I will not give these arguments in detail, and that for two reasons. First, because it would simply take too long. And second, because I must admit I do not understand all the details.

(Read 4:1-7) "Job, you have comforted many people. You have strengthened many a weak hand. Now you are in trouble, and you are troubled. Is not your good life your hope? Are you actually as good as you think? Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?"

In other words, Eliphaz is saying, "Job, you are sinner. Just admit it. Therefore, I have some advice for you. 'Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. He has hurt and bruised you that He might fix you up. So, Job, confess your sin and God will take care of you" (5:17-18).

Job's answers Eliphaz in (6:1-7:21). So let us briefly consider Job's reply to Eliphaz.

(6:1-4) My grief is unbearably heavy. Oh, if people would but recognize how great my grief is. God is using me for target practice and I am stuck full of His arrows.

(6:5) Am I crying for nothing? You think I'm just a wimp? Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass? No, it doesn't and I wouldn't complain if I had no reason.

(6:6-7) Your words to me Eliphaz, are as tasteless as the white of an egg or life flavorless food without salt, and I won't eat them!

(6:8-9) Oh, that God would do me a big favor and let me die! I want out of here!

It is at this point that Job begins to argue that he is a good man. (6:22-24) "You, Eliphaz, you say I am a sinner. Did I ever do this or do that? No, I did not. I am a good man. I would never do that." And so he says in verse 24, "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; Cause me to understand wherein I have erred." Job is saying, "If I have sinned, just

show me what I have done." Now look at what Job says in verse 29-30 (read).

Well, let's listen to Job; let us hear his words and feel with him by reading 7:3-5, 13-21. What is Job's conclusion? "My trouble is great, and yet as far as I know, I have not sinned. I am righteous. And God, if I have sinned, why don't You just pardon me and get on with it?"

It is the process of divine surgery that we are witnessing. See the doctor with his scalpel? See that tumor, with roots reaching into hard to get at places? That is the picture. Oh, what unpleasant places we are in. Nor has Job yet begun to see it; but he has begun to reveal a problem.

I wonder, may God be working in my life or yours? Are we fighting some issue and we are arguing our own righteousness? Maybe there is some issue God wants us to surrender on, but we are not yet ready to confess our wrong.

b. Bildad (8:1-22)

In 6:26, while Job was talking to Eliphaz, he said, "Do you intend to reprove my words, and the speeches of a desparate one, which are as wind?" I think the last clause should read, "...and the speeches of a desparate one as wind?" You think my words are as empty as the wind? (Now read 8:1-2). What Bildad is saying is, "Come on Job, you old windbag. You speak much but your words are as empty and void as a strong wind!"

And then Bildad goes on like this, "Does God exercise crooked judgement? Or does God have crooked righteousness?" (8:3). The answer of course is a resound, "No!" (Now read 8:4-7) Job, if you were not a sinner God would not be doing to you what He is doing. So just repent and get right and all will be OK.

Job answers Bildad and says, "So you say I have sinned and therefore I am undergoing these things." (Read 9:21-22). Bildad, your theology does not compute. You say God only does things like this to the wicked. Well I am righteous and He is doing it to me. Therefore your theology is wrong.

c. Zophar (11:1-14:22)

I'm not sure how Zophar got into this group of counselors. I see him as a bit crude and a man you would like to stay away "Zo Far" as you could (read 11:1-3). Now listen to him in 4-6 (read). Zophar is saying, "Job, for the kind of sinner you are, you're getting off light!" Listen to him in verse 12!

Now what I see, is that God is probing, probing; trying to get Job to see something. So he lets men like this search the heart of Job. Will Job stand up to wrong counsel? Will he in the midst of stress buckle under? So listen to Job in 12:1-2 (read and comment).

(Read 12:3-6.) I am mocked by my friends. I am just and blameless and my friends laugh me to scorn. I am a light to you. I have wisdom for you, but since you are at ease, you despise the light. If you were in some trouble, if you were experiencing some calamity, then you would see the wisdom of my words. You say I suffer because I have sinned. Listen to me, "The tents of robbers prosper, and those who provoke God are secure, and their security is in things that God by His providence has provided for them by His own hand."

Now let me just briefly comment on chapter 13 (read 13:1-3). "What you know I know too. I am not inferior to you. But I would like to talk to the Almighty. I would like to reason with Him! You guys are no match for me. I know everything you know. I would like a match with God. I think I could enlighten Him on a thing or two!"

Now look at 13:15. This is a well known verse in Job, but the translation of the first part of the verse is very difficult. It may read, "Lo, He will slay me, I have no hope..." But in the last part of the verse Job says, "Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him." If I come before God, I will be able to defend myself before Him." Then in verse 23 he is speaking to God and he says, "How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin." As I see it, in Job's view of his life, there was nothing he had not taken care of. He is challenging God to name something in his life that is not in order. Ah, what reveals a man more than his own words?

CONCL: And so, in conclusion, I have suggested to you that the purpose of the book of Job is to reveal how God uses life's trials to reveal a spiritual problem or something that may develop into a spiritual problem. The Lord has allowed Job to lose all his possessions and his health. And now he is being tested by his friends.

Let me summarize round one as I see it. Job's friends have said: Job, you are suffering because you are a sinner. Confess your sin and all will be OK. And Job's answer is: I am righteous and so my suffering cannot be for that reason. Furthermore, sometimes sinners enjoy health and they live long and spurn God, so your theology cannot be right.

God uses many things to speak to us. Has He been speaking to you? There are things in the lives of believers that are extremely hard for even God to get out of us. And the process is often very painful. Would we rather that God did not touch these areas? Or would we choose that He should do whatever He needs to, to get them out of our lives? Recently, while listening to Lou Sutera preach, he used a very interesting phrase to describe the work of revival. He said revival is painful, but peaceful. I wonder, are you or am I resistant at some point where God is working in our lives? Has God touched some thing in our lives? Maybe He has touched it again and again, and I am arguing with Him about it?

My wife mentioned something that Lou Sutera said as well. He spoke of Frieda Teichrobe, a lady later much used by

God. And Frieda Teichrobe said at one point, "I was afraid God would stop speaking to me." Why was she afraid of that? Because when I harden my heart long enough, there comes a time when He will speak no more.

Recently someone told me of a lady on the James Dobson radio program. She was shopping when the barrel of a revolver was shoved in her ribs. The man was wanted on many counts and now had her in her car. And she began to witness to him, and he told her she was to stop talking about this. And she said, "You be quiet." And she proceeded to witness to him. He was converted. He went to prison and later requested to see this lady. She was not too interested until one of the prison guards said, "You go see her. I wasn't convinced either until I saw and heard him." She went and he said to her, "When I hijacked you, do you remember the time I put my hands up?" And she said, "Yes, I remember." And he said, "I heard a voice say to me, 'This is the last time I will call you.'"

Would you be ready to say this morning, "Lord, speak to me through the book of Job. I do not want some wrong in me to be let go. If you clearly reveal something in my life, I will obey You on that thing."