

Message #8

Job 4:1-5:27

We are entering another time of the Olympics. I love the Olympics. I love the competition and I love it when one of our American athletes wins the gold and stands on that podium and they play our National Anthem. One of the most moving moments of Olympic history was the moment when Muhammed Ali held the torch that would light the Olympic flame. It was moving, but it was also sad. It is a sad thing to look at a man who was once so vibrant and strong and now he can barely move. He is just a mere resemblance of what he once was.

That is what Job's friends saw in Job. Job's three friends cared about God and they cared about Job. They had come a long way just to be with him because they loved him. They had seen this man in his prime and now they were seeing him in his pain. He was completely deteriorated and a mere resemblance of what he once was.

If you can find a friend who loves God and loves you and will stick with you and never say things that drain you or drag you down, you have found a very rare friend. Paul had that with Timothy. David had that with Jonathan. Job didn't have that.

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had sat at Job's side for seven days and seven nights and never said a word (Job 2:11-13). They cared and they cried. Now they would speak. It wasn't necessarily wrong for them to speak; it was that they used their speech not to comfort Job, but to say a bunch of stupid things to Job. Instead of speaking like a comforting counselor, they spoke like a bunch of clowns.

Eliphaz was the first to speak. He was from Teman, a place, according to Jeremiah, that was one time supposedly known for its wisdom (Jer. 49:7). Eliphaz was probably the oldest of the friends (15:10), and with age is supposed to be some wisdom. As we analyze Eliphaz' first response to Job, there are seven things to observe:

- 1) Eliphaz truly cares about Job.
- 2) Eliphaz truly knows much about God.
- 3) Eliphaz is very sincere in what he says.
- 4) Eliphaz is very emotional about the situation.
- 5) Eliphaz says what he truly believes.
- 6) Eliphaz says many things which are true.
- 7) **Eliphaz does not say what is right before God.**

This leads us to a very important point—just because a person is caring, emotional, sincere, and really believes what he says, does not mean it is right before God. Emotional appeals and emotional surges prove nothing.

Notice carefully Job 42:7, Eliphaz specifically is named and made God very angry and does not say what is right. Although there is much truth to what Eliphaz says, it is not the whole truth and it is right in this kind of thing where Satan can really attack a faithful man of God.

WHEN A GODLY PERSON IS SUFFERING, FRIENDS MUST BE VERY CAREFUL IN WHAT THEY SAY EVEN IF THEY ARE VERY CLOSE, CARING FRIENDS; FOR IF THEIR COUNSEL IS NOT CORRECT, GOD'S ANGER WILL BE TURNED AGAINST THEM.

When we talk to one or about one who has been greatly used by God, we had better weigh our words carefully. Eliphaz would have been far better off to have said, “Job I don’t know what is going on here but I do know you are a mighty man of God.” But instead of that, he takes off on his verbal tangent as if he really knew the mind of God. He will address Job two more times– (Job 15; 22).

I would hate to be some counselors who counsels people with stuff that is half-biblical and half-humanistic psychobabble. This kind of talk can anger God.

Now all three friends make the same three and the same wrong assumptions:

- 1) God always sends good to the good and evil to the evil;
- 2) Great suffering is always the result of great sin;
- 3) Repentance will always move God to lift the great suffering.

In **verse 2**, Eliphaz feels as though he must speak to Job. He feels as though he cannot refrain from speaking. He also feels that Job will become impatient with what he has to say even though Job, by God’s classification, is the most patient man on earth (James 5:11). What we may observe from this verse is Eliphaz’ feelings are wrong. Instead of Eliphaz being slow to speak (James 1:19), he felt like speaking and this will get him into serious trouble.

There are six forms of communication that take place between Eliphaz and Job:

COMMUNICATION #1 – Eliphaz’ commendation of Job. **4:3-4**

Job was a man who had been greatly used by God to influence many people through his godly admonitions. The word “admonished” is one that speaks of correcting by giving instruction (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 354-355). When other people had been struggling and hurting, Job had been there to instruct them, to strengthen them and to help them. He pointed them to God and had been mightily used by God. We would ask where were all of these people he had helped? When he needed them, they were nowhere to be found.

COMMUNICATION #2 – Eliphaz’ criticism of Job. **4:5**

Eliphaz takes it upon himself to criticize Job for being impatient now that trouble has hit him. The word “impatient” is one that means Eliphaz is accusing Job of being totally fatigued or wearied (*Ibid.*, p. 426). The word “dismayed” indicates Eliphaz is accusing Job of being terrified to the point of trembling (*Ibid.*, p. 104).

We may ask so what if Job was fatigued and weary and scared, who wouldn't be? So what if he is? There is nothing wrong with that and he should not be criticized for it.

COMMUNICATION #3 – Eliphaz comforts Job. **4:6**

Eliphaz reminds Job of his fear of God and the full integrity of his spiritual life. This part is true, Job did still fear God and Job still had his integrity and Job could still trust God.

COMMUNICATION #4 – Eliphaz counsels Job. **4:7-11**

Now Eliphaz decided it was time for him to lecture Job on the topic of suffering. He doesn't specifically point his finger at Job, but he certainly would depress Job by his lecture.

Eliphaz reminds Job that no innocent or upright people die (**4:7**). He goes on to tell Job, from his observation, only those who are evil reap evil (**4:8**) and evil people always perish from a judgment of God (**4:9**). Evil people roar and appear powerful for awhile just like a lion, but in the end they are destroyed by God.

Now this counsel is stupid counsel because it is filled with many wrong assumptions about Job and about God. Sometimes godly people do suffer. Sometimes evil people are not immediately destroyed. Sometimes innocent people do die—look at Calvary and look at the One hanging on that cross. Eliphaz does not know what he is talking about.

COMMUNICATION #5 – Eliphaz communicates his vision to Job. **4:12-5:7**

Eliphaz not only says he has personally observed these things (**4:8**), but he also says he has received a divine revelation of vision (**4:13**). Eliphaz now is not only giving his opinion, he is claiming his opinion has been divinely inspired.

He says this word was brought to him, it was whispered in his ear (**4:12**). He says it came at the time of “deep sleep” (**4:13**). Those words “deep sleep” imply something caused by God, such as the deep sleep concerning Adam (Gen. 2:21), Abraham (Gen. 15:12) and Saul (I Sam. 26:12). Eliphaz is claiming this same kind of divine action happened to him, which it didn't.

Now what we have here is either Eliphaz is blatantly lying or he did get some vision, but it wasn't from God. I believe this is the case. He did have some dream, probably some satanic dream and he decided it was God speaking to him.

In this vision a spirit-being passed by Eliphaz and spoke to him (**verse 15**). The spirit brings a message to Eliphaz which is totally depressing and communicates eight very negative concepts about God and man:

False concept #1 - No man can be just before God. **4:17a**

No man in and of himself is just in God's sight, but God has provided a means of justification, which the vision leaves out.

False concept #2 - No man can be pure before God. **4:17b**

No man in and of himself is pure, but God can declare one righteous and pure and he leaves that out.

False concept #3 - God puts no trust in His servants. **4:18a**

This is false because God has so much confidence in Job that he boasted about him in front of Satan and all the angels.

False concept #4 - God is against His angels. **4:18b**

It is true that God did take action against 1/3rd of the angels who fell, but not against 2/3rds who didn't.

False concept #5 - God is against all of mankind. **4:19**

This is totally distorted. All of mankind turned against God and God in His grace makes a provision for all of mankind. God's Word makes it clear that it is God who cares for man, not man who cares for God (i.e. Ps. 8:4).

False concept #6 - God destroys all of mankind. **4:20-21**

Eliphaz is saying God just permits all humanity to be destroyed like a collapsing tent and die without any real wisdom. The truth is, God permits man to live and has given His Word to give wisdom.

False concept #7 - God will not answer your prayer. **5:1a**

I agree with Dr. Francis I. Anderson who says, "...Eliphaz' next word is a terrible blow to Job. He says that it is futile to call out in prayer for no one will answer. This is not a general statement, for Eliphaz himself has just claimed to be the receiver of a private revelation" (p. 116).

False concept #8 - You cannot turn to God. **5:1b**

The Hebrew word "Holy-ones" (gadashim), is a word used to refer to Persons and things most holy. If this vision is coming from Satan, he is acknowledging the plurality of the Godhead right here and his inference is no man can turn to any member of the Godhead (*Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 725).

Now Eliphaz gives three reasons why man cannot turn to God:

(Reason #1) - Because God is grieved by the foolish man and slays him. **5:2a**

The word “vexation” is one that speaks of a displeased, irritated grief that is provoked to take offence and action (*Ibid.*, p. 409).

(Reason #2) - Because God is angered by simple man and kills him. **5:2b**

There is not one hint of grace and there is no hope of salvation in this speech of Eliphaz. This vision presents man as one who cannot turn to God because he is such a sinful failure and loser.

(Reason #3) - The foolish man who takes root in God is a foolish man who is cursed by God.
5:3

This is a very twisted and distorted communication that is coming from Satan. The fact is, Satan is the one who caused all of these negative things, but he is diverting the attention of this and blaming it on God and Eliphaz is Satan’s mouthpiece:

Eliphaz implies that God has cursed him in five ways:

(Way #1) - His sons are far from safety. **5:4a**

Job had lost all of his children and they were not kept safe and Satan is blaming God.

(Way #2) - His sons are oppressed in the gate. **5:4b**

The oppression that hit Job’s children, who were respected, came as a curse from God.

(Way #3) - His sons have no deliverer. **5:4c**

No one delivered his children.

(Way #4) - His harvest is stolen. **5:5**

His business had collapsed.

(Way #5) - His trouble comes from God and is deserved. **5:6-7**

Eliphaz is insinuating that Job deserved this and that he received this vision from God to tell Job that.

Just because someone says they get a message from God doesn’t mean they do.

COMMUNICATION #6 – Eliphaz confers with Job. 5:8-27

Eliphaz takes it upon himself to confer with Job what he would do if he were in Job's shoes—
Eliphaz would go to God and plead his case. **5:8-19**

Eliphaz is falsely assuming Job has a case to plead. He is assuming Job has done something that deserves all of this heartache. Eliphaz brings out six facts about God, all of which are true.

(Fact #1) - God does great and wonderful things. **5:9**

(Fact #2) - God refreshes the earth. **5:10**

(Fact #3) - God helps the humble. **5:11**

(Fact #4) - God stops the proud. **5:12-14**

(Fact #5) - God delivers the poor and helpless. **5:15-16**

(Fact #6) - God delivers the repentant. **5:17-19**

If the person who is being disciplined by God will repent, God will come to his rescue. Just as God inflicts trouble on one who is rebellious, he can lift trouble when the person repents. **This is all true, but it has no connection to Job or what is happening to Job.**

Eliphaz then takes off on a verbal tangent of how God disciplines and blesses people. There are eight ways God disciplines His own and delivers his own:

(Way #1) - He disciplines and delivers from famine. **5:20a**

(Way #2) - He disciplines and delivers from war. **5:20b**

(Way #3) - He disciplines and delivers from verbal attack. **5:21a**

(Way #4) - He disciplines and delivers from violence. **5:21b**

(Way #5) - He disciplines and delivers from fear of wild beasts. **5:22b-23**

(Way #6) - He disciplines and delivers from loss of possessions. **5:24**

(Way #7) - He blesses one He delivers with a large lineage. **5:25**

(Way #8) - He blesses one He delivers with a long life. **5:26**

Eliphaz says to Job, this is the way it is; you need to listen to this and know it and apply it to yourself. Turn from your sin—God will lift the discipline and deliver you.

The problem here was that Job was innocent. He was not under discipline. He did need deliverance because he was under satanic attack. Eliphaz is way off base and he makes God angry.

There are five lessons to be gleaned from this text:

- 1) We must be very careful what we say to our good friends about God, for God is carefully listening. Good friends are sensitive, sympathetic and supportive.
- 2) When someone says God told them to do something or say something—we must always square it with God's Word.
- 3) We must be very careful about saying that God led us to do something or say something, for it may not have been God at all.

- 4) We must always realize that when a faithful brother or sister is suffering, they may be under terrible satanic attack.
5. Our counsel to draw close to the Lord and stay faithful to Him is always right. We should all ask are there sins in our lives that would merit the discipline of God?

There are many religious people who will tell you they feel as if they have figured out the way to be right with God. They are pious and convincing, but they are not telling the truth because there is only one way and that is believe on Jesus Christ.