

06b JOB

We resume our study now in Job chapter four, looking at the first of three speeches by Eliphaz. This is also the longest of his three speeches, partly because he gives this introduction, letting us know where some of his ideas have come from. It's from his experience.

And it's also from this mysterious angelic visitor who comes to him by night and scares the wits out of him and asks these questions, just like Satan in the garden, just like Satan talking to Jesus, hath God not said, isn't this the way it is? And he insinuates these and you get the idea. And we talked about this a little bit on the break that Satan is not really finished with Job yet. He knows who Job's friends are.

He knows who is likely to come and visit. And with the care and the attention that he gave to the afflictions of Job, this could easily be a part of his preparation. Satan is nobody's fool.

He is no slouch when it comes to planning and preparation and carrying things out. And Eliphaz seems to be particularly susceptible to the wisdom of experience. He has seen people be punished and he had this night vision that he credits a lot.

Now I said that I didn't want to try juxtaposing all of these together, but I do want to turn over to Job 15 just to point one thing out for you, because Eliphaz's next speech is going to occur in chapter 15 and we're going to see this theme recur. Look at chapter 15 verse 14. What is man that he could be pure and he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous.

If God puts no trust in his saints, that's holy ones. And the heavens are not pure in his sight. How much less man who is abominable and filthy who drinks iniquity like water.

And this again is that denigrating view that we see in chapter four. And this really made an impression on Eliphaz when this got whispered in his ear by night. He said, yeah, how can you expect any kind of justice from God? God's standards are so high that no creature can meet them.

If the angels can't meet God's standards, well human beings made out of mud are just a hopeless case. And what is the idea here? This undermines confidence in God. What is universally from Adam to the end of the millennium, what is God looking for from man? Trust.

What does this idea sow the seeds of between man and God? Mistrust. How could I possibly be righteous enough if it truly is? See, Satan has already kind of pushed this good gets rewarded, bad gets punished motif. And that's phase one of the argument.

That's the prothesis of the argument. Righteousness is rewarded. Badness is punished.

So if nobody can truly be good, then God is ultimately going to punish everyone because nobody is good enough to stay in the blessing category for very long. The angels can't even stay in that

category. God judges his holy ones as impure in his sight.

So you don't have a chance down here being made out of dirt. And so confidence is not really confidence anymore because how do I know? In fact, there's a pretty good chance. I'm beginning to think I'm really not ever going to be righteous enough for God.

And that's exactly what Satan argues. It's unfair for God to judge any of his creatures because none of his creatures can ultimately be good enough to meet God's standard. Well, what is the fallacy in that argument? It is not an unreachable standard because there is forgiveness, because there is recovery.

And this is really impugning the quality of God's recovery mechanism. Of course, humans are not going to be perfect. We are conceived in iniquity.

We're born in sin. David himself says he knoweth my frame. He remembereth that I am dust.

God knows that. God isn't expecting beyond our capability. He isn't putting an impossible condition on us because he knows we are going to fail and he has made provision.

This sows the seed of mistrust in God's provision. The sacrifices that Job offered weren't good enough to protect his children. You were Johnny on the spot every time they had a feast, but you must have slipped.

You know, miss one sacrifice. Be a little late with the sacrifice. And God just wipes your children off the face of the earth.

Nobody can be good enough and perfect enough. God's standard is too high. Therefore, why bother to meet it at all? I don't know about you, but I have personally talked to people who say, you know, I've made a lot of mistakes in my life.

And I really I mean, I believe in God and I believe the Bible. I believe Jesus died and all that. But I just don't see any point of pursuing a Christian life because I I'm off to such a lousy start.

There's just no point. I mean, I could never get back to a point where God would really be pleased with me. I'm and by the way, this was somebody in their 20s at the time, 24, 25 year old.

Well, my life's too much of a mess. It's there's just no point. Well, that's just a cop out.

That's blaming God and saying, well, you know, God, the whole God thing really requires somebody to kind of be holy right out of the starting gate. You can't have a bad start. You can't get off on the wrong foot with God.

You know, there's just no point. It is too far behind the power curve. Well, that's just nonsense.

But it's a convenient satanic rationalization to negate the option of pursuing a healthy, growing,

vital relationship with God. And so this is a satanic idea. It comes from the dark.

It's whispered in the ear. The very presence of the messenger instills an unhealthy kind of fear. Not the healthy, holy awe of God and his glory.

And this is a morbid kind of dread that Eliphaz has. And this is the idea that comes from it. Well, back to chapter four.

Now, when Eliphaz continues in chapter five, he has already introduced this idea that you can't really rely. You can't have confidence that you have met the conditions for God to be pleased and for God to bless you. And it's inevitable that you can only balance the basketball on your finger for a certain amount of time and it's going to fall off.

You can only balance your righteousness. And you had a good long spin there, Joe. But now it's fallen off and get over it.

It happens. It's inevitable. The angels can't keep up with God's standard.

So if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who dwell in houses of clay? And this argument really impressed Eliphaz. And he repeats it in his next speech. And wait till we get to his speech in chapter 22.

If you want to see Eliphaz, he seems so wise and so cordial and courteous. And he eases into this speech with Job. He says, well, you know, he begins to ask these questions.

By the end, in Eliphaz's last speech, it bears no resemblance. If you want a fun little excursion, read four and five, read 15 and read 22 this coming week. And you'll see what I mean.

By the time you get to 22, Eliphaz, it's like his keffiyeh has come off his head. You're seeing the real Eliphaz come out. He's a real Mr. Hyde.

Well, he begins in chapter five. After giving this dismal picture of humanity, you know, you strut and fret your hour on the stage and you collapse into a pile of dirt and it's over and nobody cares. That's basically how he ends.

You die without wisdom. You take nothing. You can't.

What is the great hope of believers? Abraham dwelt in tents doing what? Abraham. This is before Job. This is before Eliphaz.

Abraham dwelt in tents. Why? He was waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God. And he expected citizenship and he expected the fulfillment of God's covenant promises.

That's not the message of this angel. You're wasting your time trying to please God because you're going to die and nobody's going to care. And you're not even going to be any smarter than

you were when you were born.

Well, this is a great antidote to Job saying, I'm kind of sorry I was born and that I survived my birthday and that I'm still around. And this, you can see why later on, Job's going to say, you guys are comforters of trouble. Your comfort is just more trouble.

I'm trying to hold my course here. I'm trying to tread the straight and narrow, trying not to get off the path. And you guys are just making things worse.

Yeah, you know, now that you are born, well, it's all pointless. Might as well have not been born. Just going to die.

You're going to be a dumb pile of dirt. Chapter five. Now, remember, Eliphaz is quoting the angel and he's still quoting the angel.

And the New King James, unlike some of your other English translations, does a good job of maintaining these quotes here. Call out now. Is there anyone who will answer you? God's not even paying attention.

You're not even dead yet. God's quit paying attention. Call out now.

Is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? Why would you be turning to holy ones to begin with? For wrath kills a foolish man and envy slays a simple one. Wrath kills a foolish man and envy slays a simple one. Where does this come from? Why is he suddenly talking about wrath and envy? And who is it that's being killed? Well, who has the power of death? Job, Eliphaz is basically implying that Job is the fool here, right? And Job saying, you know, where is the peace that others still have and I don't have anymore? Where are the possessions that others still have? That's one way of looking at this is that he's saying, if you're going to get angry about this and curse the day of your birth, and if you're going to be envious of your former condition or the condition of others like me and Bill, Dad and so on, why you're just, God will kill you.

Doesn't matter how righteous you've been. I mean, this is just nothing but knocking the props of support out from under what little bit of courage and faith and objectivity Job still has. Look, Job, just by what you've said, you've probably ticked God off and he's going to, you know, you're going to be next.

We'll be burying you right on top of your 10 kids. I've seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling places. Sons are far from safety and so on.

Well, Eliphaz is sort of talking about Job by proxy here, isn't he? He says, you know, this wrath and envy, well, that's the product of being foolish and being simple. I've seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling place. His sons are far from safety.

They are crushed in the gate and there is no deliverer. Who just got through losing his sons? Job. And the way you start taking this is, I mean, this is pretty much a personal attack on Job.

But of course, it's couched in third person terms. And once again, Eliphaz, what does he say? I have seen. This is my observation.

I've got this thing figured out. There's no deliverer because the hungry eat up his harvest, taking it even from the thorns. And a snare snatches their substance.

This is a reference to the thieves who have come and taken. Why would the Chaldeans and the Sabians come and take all of this stuff? Well, they either metaphorically or literally, they have a hunger, they have a need. And so even though it's guarded with thorns, you know, they used to weave fences out of thorns and things to try to keep predators out, keep thieves and plunderers and pilferers out.

So Eliphaz is just cruelly reminding Job of the calamities that he's been coping with and trying to deal with the aftermath for the past week. It says, Affliction doesn't come from the dust, nor does trouble spring from the ground. Yet man is born to trouble as sparks fly upward.

It's not the ground's fault, in other words, or the soil. It's once that dirt and soil gets turned into a man. That's when the evil and the trouble begin.

It says man is born for trouble as surely as sparks fly upward. And sparks here is sons of Resheph, literally. And Resheph was an ancient God of the Near East.

There are references to him in the Ugaritic literature. And he was the god of, it's kind of like Thor later on, you know, the hammer, the thunder, the lightning guy, you have Zeus throwing lightning bolts down. Well, he was the lightning, pestilence and flames God, Resheph.

So sons of Resheph are little chips off the old flame block. They're these little sparks or they make these little wavery paths. And you find them referred to other places in scripture as like talking about their rapid and wavering movement in Deuteronomy 32, 24, where God is talking about the discipline that will come on disobedience.

And he says they shall be wasted with hunger, devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction. I will send against them the teeth of beasts and poison serpents in the dust and so on. And he's talking about all these disasters that are going to be heaped on the disobedient.

And he says, a fire is kindled in my anger and shall burn to the lowest hell and shall consume the earth with their increase and set on fire the foundation of the mountains. And you have a reference here to the sons of Resheph, these sparks and flames that are going to spread and travel. It's found in Psalm 78, 48, where he's again, is talking about discipline from God.

And it says he gave their crops to the caterpillar, their labor to the locusts. He destroyed their

vines with hail and their sycamore trees with frost. He gave up their cattle to hail and their flocks to fiery lightning.

And the fiery lightning there is these lightning bolts or these sons of Resheph that are in view here in Job. So he says, you never know where these sparks are going to pop. You've seen sap filled logs as they're burning and it's burning along and it's all calm.

Then all of a sudden you have this and you have a shower of sparks. Well, man is born to trouble. And sooner or later, he's going to pop with a shower of sparks.

And it's just unpredictable. It's there. It's going to happen.

You just don't know when is the idea. So the upshot of Eliphaz's argument here is to recommend in verse 8, as for me, I would seek God and to God I would commit my cause who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number. He's the unsearchable part there is the is kind of the wild card.

Well, you've got to seek God because you haven't been and you have somehow failed to meet God's standard and your only hope is to seek him. And you think, well, now, wait a minute. I thought this was an evil message.

Well, remember, the best and most effective evil is mixed with truth and it's got to sound like the real deal. The worst perversions of Christianity are the ones that talk about Jesus and talk about God and talk about the Holy Scriptures and quote them and talk about the Holy Spirit. And it's all wrapped in the flag of great stuff from the word of God.

And yet when you get to the liquid center of the candy, it's bitter as gall because it's an ad mixture. So seek God and to God I would commit my cause who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number. He gives rain on the earth and sends water on the fields.

This is absolutely true. He sets on high those who are lowly and those who mourn are lifted to safety. This is absolutely true.

This is one of the great truths. You find this in the song of Samuel's mother, Hannah. Remember, she says, God has looked on the lowly and has lifted up my horn and as he's looked upon the humble and the humiliated there, her rival wife had all the kids and she had none.

And she in the song of Hannah and first Samuel, she extols this virtue of God. And this is all true. And Eliphaz is as sincere as he can be.

And this part of what he's saying is absolutely true. In fact, most of what he said is true. It's his application of it under this evil angel's influence that is off because it's like damning with faint praise.

I mean, the faint praise is still praise. You're giving a compliment, but you're saying, oh, well, she has a great personality. I mean, say no more.

If all you can say is she has a great personality, that's usually the code for, well, you know, that's her only feature. And this is what's happening here. He says, well, God will set high those who are lowly and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

He frustrates the devices of the crafty so that their hands cannot carry out their plans. He catches the wise in their own cleverness and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. They meet with darkness in the daytime and grope at noontime as in the night.

But he saves the needy from the sword, from the mouth of the mighty and from their hand. Now, think about it. Think about it.

Let me give you an analogy. Let's say you had a couple in your acquaintance, a mother and father of a child, and that child has just developed some terrible malady. They've got a flaw in their heart muscle or they've got some terrible affliction and they're in the hospital.

And this couple is sitting down there anxiously waiting to see if their child is going to live or die. And it's all hanging in the balance. And you have a fellow believer who comes in and sees John and Mary sitting there in the waiting room anxiously, just, you know, all as concerned as anybody can be over the welfare of their child.

And someone comes in and says, well, you know, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations and all things work together for good and trust in the Lord and be of good cheer. He will strengthen your heart. And are all of those things true? They absolutely are.

But can they be counterproductive when quoted in the wrong way at the wrong time by someone who is insensitive and not really walking in the spirit at the time that they quote them? You can use the word of God like a club and beat somebody's brains out with it with a smile on your face. And some of you have had that experience coming back at you. You've been on the business end of the club.

Well, just remember that as you read this speech of Eliphaz, everything Eliphaz says here is true. But look at who he's talking to. This is a man sitting on the ash heap, scraping his blistered, pus filled skin, making funeral arrangements for 10 children, every child he's ever had.

And Eliphaz says, oh, well, you know, he'll save the needy from the sword and from the mouth of the mighty. And Job's saying, well, where was that salvation of the needy a week ago when all of my servants were slain with the edge of the sword by the Chaldeans and the Sabaeans? Not a one escape to come back and give me the bad news. And here's Eliphaz blithely saying, well, he saves the needy from the sword in the mouth of the mighty and from their hand.

And the poor have hope and injustice. Shut your mouth. Happy is the man whom God corrects.

Cheer up, Job. God's correcting you. Do not despise the chastening.

And the sad thing is every single thing he's saying is absolutely true. And this is a great opportunity for us to realize that it is more than just having the truth or quoting the truth or learning the truth. Truth, any given principle of the word of God, any doctrine, any promise is a truth.

But it is part of a fabric. It's part of a larger panorama, isn't it? And it is set in a context. And there is, as Solomon points out, another very wise man in the Ecclesiastes, Chapter three, there is a time for everything under the sun.

There is a time to gather and there's a time to cast away. There's a time to plant and there's a time to reap. And there is a time to apply these truths about being grateful for the correction of God and not despising the chastening of the Almighty.

He bruises and he binds up, he wounds, but his hands make whole. He will deliver you in six troubles and seven of evil shall touch you. All of these are good things.

But look at the foundation that Eliphaz lays these bricks of truth on. Well, you know, Job, are you really do you have hope in your integrity? Do you really think that you qualify for the fulfillment of these promises? Are you, in fact, one that God can spare from the sword? And the backhanded implication here is, you know, these things are true, Job. And so looking back on your experience over the last couple of weeks, where do you think you stand? Do you really think the Almighty is pleased with you? Or do you think you're in line for correction? And the understood implied argument here is this would not have happened if you didn't deserve it.

You didn't meet God's standard. The angels can't meet God's standard. What makes you think you did? So you must have screwed up.

And the fallacious argument is suffering always means discipline. So you're suffering for correction and you ought to be happy about it. But you've got to accept it, Job.

You've got to realize that you need to seek God. You need to commit your cause to God. Well, this is a much more complex and difficult thing to digest because you can look and this is a function of maturity.

We've talked about this before. When we're a new believer, when we're young in the faith, regardless of our actual age, our tests are pretty simple. See the sin, avoid the sin.

See the good, do the good. And it's a choice between sin and good. Oh, someone lost a hundred dollar bill here.

Should I stick it in my pocket or should I find out who it belongs to? Keeping the money is bad. Returning it is good. And that's sort of the nature of our test.

But as we grow and as we become more mature, our choices become less and less clear cut. And many times, as the Apostle Paul points out, it is a matter of choosing between good, better, and best. All things are lawful, but not all things are edifying.

This is a more sophisticated test. You can see this in the lives of your children as they grow up. Don't touch that.

Don't grab that. Don't do that. Don't run into the street.

It's all do's and don'ts. Things are bad. Things are good.

As your children grow, it's a matter of priorities. And there's nothing wrong with watching a TV. There's nothing wrong with playing a video game.

There's nothing wrong with, you know, playing with your pets or whatever. But is there something that is better at this time? Should you do your homework before you watch the TV? Should you clean your room before you do this? And it's a choice between things that have no element of sin, but yet one thing is better than another at that time. That principle is at work here.

The things that Eliphaz says are true. But is this the time? Is this the occasion? Is this the application? And this, Job is not a book for baby believers. This is not, let's figure out what's sin and what's not.

Let's do the Ten Commandments. This is discerning between good, better, and best. And all Satan has to do is whisper in Eliphaz's ear, well, you know, you can't really expect to figure out what God's going to do.

You can't really expect to meet his standard. And that little element of doubt, that sowing of uncertainty and mistrust is enough to... It's just like we've been doing stuff, building all week, where you want things to be plumb and square. And one little missed measurement, one thing that's an inch off can skew a whole room full of boards.

Everything has to be plumb. And one little bad idea sown in Eliphaz's mind has skewed the application of the good, true word of God so that it is inflicting pain on Job instead of being a source of comfort. So it is true.

But his advice falls in an abrasive way. Well, if it was me, Job, verse 8, I would seek God. And to God, I would... What is the implication here? You know, you must not be seeking God.

You know, if I were you, that's what I would be doing. But, you know, all you're doing is cursing the day of your birth. And, you know, you really ought to be seeking God.

Look at all the good things that God does. Well, this is like salt in the wound. He saves the needy, the poor have hope, and justice shuts their mouth.

Happy is the man whom God corrects. Therefore, do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. And Eliphaz feels confident now in saying, you know, Job, the reason you're having this envy and this spiteful attitude is you just don't like the chastening of God.

God's trying to teach you something here, Job. You need to turn to God. You need to accept this chastening.

And I think I've kind of given you a clue as to what it is. You need to recognize that you're not as good as you think you are. You shouldn't really trust that you just blithely assume that your relationship with God and your sacrifices and your approach to God, that he's happy with you.

And you just don't know at any point the sparks are going to blow. He bruises, but he binds up. He wounds, but his hands make whole.

He will deliver you in six troubles. Yes, in seven, no evil shall touch you. If you're in that happy state that you should be in, no evil will touch you, Job.

Now, that is not correct. He will deliver you in six troubles. In seven, no evil shall touch you.

In famine, he shall redeem you from death. And in war, from the power of this, once again, the sword comes up. Job just lost dozens and dozens of servants to the sword.

They're hacked up bodies. That's other arrangements Job has to make. Somebody's got to go collect those people and give them a, not a Christian burial, a Jewish burial, an Edomite burial, a pre-Jewish burial.

Give them a godly burial. You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, Eliphaz says, as he scourges Job with his tongue. If you're doing what you're supposed to, you won't even hear the sound of my voice, Job.

That's one way he could have said it. And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. What did Job say? My fear has come upon me.

I was afraid my children would be destroyed. They have been destroyed. You won't be afraid.

If you're doing what you're supposed to, you won't be afraid, Job, and these things won't happen. Well, you will laugh at destruction and famine. Come on, Job, let's let's see a smile.

You shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. This is random violence. You shall have a covenant with the stones of the field and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

Now, there is an element of truth in this, in that God had put a hedge around Job. And in general,

it is often the case that in six troubles and in seven, God delivers. And he will hide you in the cleft of the rock and provide.

He's going to do that for Israel in the tribulation. Those who are obedient and flee to the mountains are going to be kept for a time, times and half a time. And the flood that issues from the dragon's mouth is not going to drown them.

You shall know that your tent is in peace. You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss. Now, if you want to talk about salt in the wound, look at verse 25.

You shall also know that your descendants shall be many and your offspring like the grass of the earth. As Job contemplates the ten dead bodies that represent his offspring. You shall come to the grave at a full age as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.

Behold, this we have searched out. It is true. Hear it and know for yourself.

I know it's true. You need to know that it's true. Let me help you, Job.

Let me tell you the scoop, the product of my experience. Well, can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker? That's what all of this rests upon. You can't be pure, Job.

Face it. You're under discipline. And all of this conspires.

You have to look at the effect of the argument. The content of the argument is truth. Unfortunately, the application is not.

It's interesting that in verse 13 here, where Eliphaz says he catches the wise in their own craftiness and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. This is quoted in the New Testament. Paul the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 3.19 quotes this.

The wisdom of this world is as foolishness with God, for it is written, he catches the wise in their own craftiness. That's a quote from Eliphaz's speech. It's true.

But Paul makes a correct application of it, doesn't he? The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Those who think they're wise are going to be trapped in their own human wisdom. That's a good, sound application.

But applying it to Job, well, you thought you were smart and you thought you had it figured out, but you over-trusted God. You were too confident in the provision of God for your sins and you weren't holy enough. It didn't work.

What's the summary of this argument? Job, if you'll just admit your sin, you can be happy again. This can all stop. You've got unconfessed, unacknowledged sin.

And just get over it. It's no shame, Job. The angels aren't pure in God's sight.

So, you know, you can't expect it. Well, the peace that is promised to those who are innocent and those who are faithful versus the terror of the Almighty and the arrows of God that are going to afflict those who are evil. So, you think about everything that's afflicting Job at this point.

He's got the boils. He's got the itching and irritation. He's got great grief from the loss of his family.

He's lost his appetite. He's got physical discomfort. He's got insomnia.

He's got worms in his flesh. He's got the oozing of his boils. He's suffering hallucinations.

It says in 714, his skin is turning black and sloughing off. He's shriveled up. He's going to say in 1920 that his bones are clinging to his skin and his flesh.

And he's got pain. And now he's got his friends figuring that his confidence in God is misplaced. Well, Job is going to begin in chapter six and answer.

So we're in that first third of the first of three cycles. Cause and response. Eliphaz speaks and Job is going to response.

And if you take a look at what he says in the first part of chapter six, he says, Oh, that my grief were fully weighed and my calamity laid with it on the scales. Then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea. Therefore, my words have been harsh.

It says rash, but it has more of the idea. The reason I've spoken these harsh words is look at the quantity of my grief and my calamity. It's bigger than a beach full of sand.

The arrows of the almighty are within me. Where did we see the arrows of the almighty mentioned? We just saw them up here in the speech of Eliphaz. And he talks about the the blast of God that comes on them and the arrows of the almighty that stick in them.

And Job says, well, the arrows of the almighty are in me. My spirit drinks in their poison. The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass or does the ox low over its fodder? Can flavorless food be eaten without salt or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them. They are as loathsome food to me. Well, you see the self-control of Job because his character has been impugned.

His spiritual status has been impugned. His this insinuation and this dark whispering from the angel of darkness. What is that they say? The Jewish people say this all the time from from your lips to God's ears or something like that.

When somebody says something that you want, this desirable, they say, well, from your lips to God's ears. Well, this has gone from the angel's lips to Job's ears via Eliphaz. But look at the way Job starts his response.

He says, look, look at the level of my grief. Look at the level of my calamity. Obviously, God has allowed this.

It is the arrows of the almighty that are in me. And Job knows that God has some part, some hand in this. The terrors of God are arrayed against me.

And he says, it's not the well-fed donkey. It's not the well-fed ox that makes a noise. It's the wheel that has no grease that's going to squeak.

It's when you have a need that you're going to cry out. And he says, it's not out of keeping with normalcy that when I suffer these calamities and have these arrows stuck in me, I'm going to cry out. This is a very tactful rebuttal of Eliphaz, who says, Job, instead of talking about your troubles, you ought to be confessing your sins.

And Job says, I have a right to speak. I have a level of calamity. I have a level of grief.

And it is legitimate. How do you know that your donkey's hungry unless it brays? How do you know that your ox needs more fodder unless it lows? And I have got these arrows and my spirit is drinking in their poison and I'm speaking up. I am legitimately crying out.

But you see the reserve and the balance of Job in response to this really insidious attack via Eliphaz. And Eliphaz means well. But sometimes we mean well and we do more damage than if we had just sat there and been quiet.

Well, this is the introduction to Job's second speech, second of nine. It'll be great when we get to seven of nine, won't it? But it's the second of his nine great speeches. And actually, when you count his response to God, which is two verses and then some more speech by God in the six verses, Job is going to have really a total, if you put those two together, of ten speeches.

Ten is the number of testing, isn't it? You remember it? You will have testing ten days over there in Revelation. Ten is a testing number and Job has to respond ten times. There are going to be nine speeches.

Remember the plagues in Egypt? There were nine plagues and then the tenth was set apart. Well, you're going to have nine friend speeches and Job's response each time. Then God's going to speak and Job's going to have a tenth response.

And it's a beautiful, beautiful picture of God's intimate involvement in the affairs of his people, of his man, Job. And it is measured. It is a measured test.

And that final challenge by Satan, touch him and he'll curse you to your face. This is what hangs in the balance. Satan is still at work trying to make that happen.

Well, this is where we'll pick up next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for revealing to us the fact that our lives are so inextricably connected to a spiritual conflict that goes beyond us and goes beyond the moment and the immediate issues of our lives.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress that truth in our hearts. Help us to remember that our confidence in you is the path to righteousness. It is the means of pleasing you in this life and in the next.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.