

07b JOB

Let's resume our study now in the book of Job. We have arrived at chapter seven and just by way of quick orientation, Job spoke and unburdened himself about the, oh, you don't want me to call it review. I know, I know.

By way of orientation, Job spoke and declared his life basically meaningless. Eliphaz responded in chapter four and five. And what is the conclusion we drew from analyzing Eliphaz response? He says a lot of good things.

There is truth that's quoted elsewhere in the Bible in his response. But you and I know, and this is something we've reviewed many times, that the Christian life is lived on the basis of two ingredients, two things like the two tubes of epoxy. Remember my example over and over again? You got to have the resin and you got to have the hardener in equal proportion.

You mix that epoxy in equal parts. What are the two things that have to be present in balance in our lives? We need the word of God and we need the Holy Spirit. Now, Eliphaz has got the word of God and it's the true substantial principles.

But what spirit is animating his use of these words? It's that dark spirit by night that came and whispered in his ear and made his bones shake. And we have to ensure, and this was our conclusion from lesson one tonight, that when we are attempting to engage in the expression of love toward a fellow believer, which is ministry, haven't talked about this in a while. What are the three hats that every believer wears? Ministry, priesthood and ambassadorship, priesthood, maintenance of our relationship with God, ministry, one another, as you have opportunity, do good to those who are of the household of faith and ambassadorship, do good to all those who are outside, be ready always to give an answer and so on.

Ministry, priesthood, ambassadorship. Eliphaz in the Old Testament sense is functioning in the area of ministry. There was fellowship.

There was the building up and benefit of like minded believers getting together. And he is speaking the word of God. But the spirit that is animating it is this dark spirit.

And it's a danger. It's a warning for us. Any time, the mildest, most innocuous seeming form of contact between believers, we ought to dedicate it to God.

We take a moment and ask God to bless our conversation, ask God to bless our thoughts, ask God to bless our fellowship, bless our time so that when we do speak the truth, it's not just the truth, but it's the truth in the hands of the Holy Spirit. It is God, the Holy Spirit, that makes God's word effective and applicable. And this is one of the biggest misunderstood areas of Christianity today is there are a lot of people doing Bible study.

I was reading another story. I'll give you just a brief aside here. The authoritative editions of the Greek New Testament that guys like me rely on to preach from is the the Nessel-Halland or the UBS, the United Bible Society text.

For years, the major editor of that was Bruce M. Metzger. He is probably the world's leading authority on New Testament Greek. He was the chairman of a committee that involved Kurt Alland, as in Nessel-Halland, and Matthew Black and several other individuals.

There are about five or six guys on this committee that went through and looked at all the variant readings and figured out what is the best text. Well, that is a very interesting decision process because when you look at the New Testament text, there are a lot of variants. And so there is an apparatus down below that says, well, although the reading that we have chosen to put into the main text is this, here's what Codex Sinaiticus says or the first or second corrector of Sinaiticus.

Or here's what Vaticanus says. Or here's what Ephraimus Rescriptus says. Here's what P47 says.

Here's what some other minuscule papyrus. Here's what the versions say and so on. And there is a science and an art to textual criticism.

And Dr. Metzger is at the forefront, the point of the spear of this whole field. Well, because the process by which this text was determined and the thinking and the weighing of the factors by which they determined what should be in the main text and what should be down in the apparatus as a variant is so interesting, Dr. Metzger published a companion volume to the Greek text and it's called The Text of the New Testament. And it basically goes through point by point all of the major variants and explains how the committee arrived at their choice.

Why did they choose this instead of the other? It's fascinating. It's on the front of my desk. I refer to it all the time.

Well, a new edition of that is about to come out. And for the first time in decades, it's going to have another name on the title instead of Bruce M. Metzger, it's Bruce M. Metzger and Bart Ehrman. Bart Ehrman is now the co-editor of this very important New Testament text reference.

Well, Bart Ehrman used to be a card carrying, fundamentalist, conservative Christian, grew up in the Baptist church, went to seminary, became a scholar of the New Testament text. But as he continued to delve into the text, in fact, while he was still at college, actually, he didn't go to a good school. And he wrote a text critical paper trying to resolve a problem in the gospel of Mark, one that we've already covered and that we had no problem with.

But he got all hung up on it and wrapped around the axle and he submitted his paper. And his professor wrote back on the paper and said, basically, well, you know, Mark might have just made a mistake. This was like at Princeton.

And he said, well, you know, maybe Mark just made a mistake. Well, this one scribbled comment on one paper at college just totally threw Bart Ehrman for a loop. And he said, wow, so there might be mistakes in the Bible.

And so then as he delved into this and looked at manuscripts and papyri and the whole process of copying, he fell for this whole liberal line that it was late, that it was concocted by the church, that it was blah, blah, blah, on and on. Well, he's nevertheless a very, very gifted and intensive in terms of his efforts and his exposure and so on. I mean, he's all over the place in New Testament textual criticism, but he has lost his faith and he is now a self-declared agnostic.

He doesn't believe in the deity of Christ, doesn't believe in the integrity of scripture, but he is now up there with Dr. Metzger deciding what is and isn't the text. And this is the inroads that the whole liberal scholarship deal, you know, the Jesus Seminar, J.D. Crossan and a lot of these other guys who have been naysaying. J.D. Crossan used to be a Catholic priest, but he got out of the priesthood for a couple of reasons.

He wanted to get married, but mainly he decided that the text was full of lies and lies and lies and holes and holes and you know, you go to these schools and you get these ideas in your head and you have no foundation. You have this is my point. The reason I'm digressing here, you can have the word of God and you can be looking right at the word of God.

But if you have not got the cultivated, treasured ministry of God's Holy Spirit in your soul, the word of God alone can turn into your worst enemy. The word of God by itself can become a bad thing, can become a wrong thing. This is Eliphaz's problem.

You can't just have the word. You can't be an academic Christian. The Pharisees were academic believers.

They had more of the word of God than anybody on the planet. And the Lord Jesus came and you know what he said about them, read the woe songs to the Pharisees. Woe unto you scribes, scholars, copiers of the text, Pharisees, Hupokrites in the Greek.

One face in the front, something else behind, the Holy Spirit is not in there. We have to have the ministry of the Spirit in equal measure. We spend time and study the word of God, but that is not enough.

I can teach you everything I can figure out from the word of God, but it does no good if each of us does not take that truth and put it where it is usable by God's Holy Spirit. What is the spirit animating Eliphaz's two chapter response here? It's key. It's critical.

It's right up at the front in chapter four. What is that spirit? Look at it. What does he say? A word was secretly brought to me, verse 12, chapter four.

My ear received a whisper in disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night. What does Paul say in the New Testament? We are not of the night or of the darkness that that day should overtake us like a thief. I can't stress to you, people love to point to these scholars and they say, well, you know, Christianity doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

If you look at it close enough, you do like Bart Ehrman and really get into his foundations. Why? Your faith will just fall apart. You get into it, look at it closely like J.D. Crossan and your faith will just fall apart.

For every one guy like that, there are 50 like Dr. Metzger, like A.T. Robertson, like Daniel Wallace right down here at Dallas Seminary, like W. Hall Harris, like John Grasmick. I could name an infinitude of other Greek scholars who know every bit as much or more than J.D. Crossan or Bart Ehrman. And their faith didn't crumble.

You know why? They have an active, healthy, spiritual life. But without that hunger, that asking and seeking and knocking that is only fulfilled by God's Holy Spirit, the Word of God isn't going to be able to do its mind changing, soul transforming work. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

It takes both of them. Well, this is what Eliphaz has demonstrated for us. He's got the Word, but the spirit behind it is false.

So Job responds and Job says, first of all, you're using the Word of God to try to tell me that I shouldn't be complaining. I should be happy. And you're wrong.

Secondly, you're assuming that this suffering is for discipline. And look at me, I'm sitting here in my righteousness. You have found no fault in me.

You haven't detailed. And this was a good point made on the break. Where is your documentation of the error that I have committed, says Job, that brought about this blight from God on my life? So he says in chapter six, I have a valid reason to complain.

Now, is it sinful to be aggrieved? Is it sinful to be depressed? Is it sinful to be sorrowful? You have to look no further than the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. What did he do as he stood on the Mount of Olives and looked over Jerusalem? What did he do as he stood and looked at Mary and Martha and beyond them at the tomb of Lazarus? Jesus wept. Jesus was sorrowful.

What did he do in the garden the night before he was crucified? My soul is troubled. Watch with me, pray with me. Where did he go? Where did the Lord Jesus go? He went to his father.

He prayed. You have the beautiful expansion of the thinking of Jesus Christ on the cross in Psalm 22. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Look, the Psalms of David are a beautiful expression of the righteous anguish of a believer, either anguished over his own

failures, anguished over the attacks and the abuses of people around him.

The Psalms for centuries have been a great source of comfort because there's nothing sinful and there's nothing wrong with experiencing the gamut of human emotions and of human sorrows. And Job is legitimately, validly suffering. He's lost 10 children, each of them unique, each of them an individual, each of them some person that he has invested.

He and his wife have invested themselves in raising and all 10 of them lay dead and cold. Now, if that's not a legitimate time to weep and to mourn and to suffer loss, I don't know what is. I mean, the other losses pale in comparison with that.

And then to have a miserable life where you can receive no physical comfort, he is physically uncomfortable. And people who are in the throes of the latter stages of cancer, going through great physical pain where there just is no relief and no relief in sight. It is very depressing.

It's hard to be upbeat. And here's Eliphaz, well, happy is the man whom God corrects. Come on.

It actually becomes a satanic attack. Paul talks about this in Galatians. If you don't straighten out your act, if you're not oriented to grace and if you get concentrated on the law, you can be cut off from Christ.

You can be an enemy of the cross as a believer. And that's what many believers do unwittingly. So our application is, remember the equally important measure of the spirit that has to be present when we start trying to apply God's word.

So Job continues now in chapter seven and he says, look, there are times when there's going to be hard service, military service is what this word is often used for. And Job is talking about a servant who earnestly desires the shade in the Old Testament, a servant who earnestly desires the shade. The servants are out there in the heat.

They didn't have air conditioned tractors. They didn't have the kinds of thermoses and things that we have today to try to comfort people who are out there working in the fields. Job knows all about servants who earnestly desire the shade and hired men who eagerly look for their wages.

Weary some nights have been appointed. Remember, my life is a breath. He turns from looking at his physical circumstances to looking at his own spiritual status.

He says, you know, my hope is fading. My zest for life is just about gone. I would just as soon check out right now.

Elderly people reach a point when they can't see and they can't hear and they can't remember and they can't, you know, their world shrinks into just the four walls of the room in which they sit and they say, you know, my grandmother said this many times and she was a believer and was largely content and happy. But she she looked at me many times and said, you know, I'm not

really sure why God keeps me here. And I said, Grandmother, I can tell you why God keeps you here, because you are a shining example of what God can do in the life of a believer.

And every day that your children and your grandchildren and your great grandchildren look at you and see your peace and your example, when we know that you're not feeling good and we know that you can't do things, you are a blessing and you are an example. That's what the the elderly are supposed to do. The older women are supposed to teach the younger.

And she was a beautiful example. Even when she lost her ability to to remember and to to really be totally aware and the outer layers of her of her personality were sort of stripped away, what was revealed inside was the work of God. She was happy and she was polite and she was sweet natured.

And that's why she was still here. God had a purpose, but she didn't understand it. She said, I don't know why I'm still here.

I don't know why God doesn't take me home. I can't go anywhere. I can't do anything.

She used to be so outgoing and take people groceries and then help them with things. And she was very, very busy. And then she just sat and she said, I can't see my purpose.

Job is sitting here and he's accomplishing a great purpose. His life, unbeknownst to him, is going to be in the pages of eternal scripture. But to him at this point, he says, I see no point.

Now, if Job had just, you know, swallowed the cyanide pill at this point and we only had a six chapter long book, really be something, wouldn't it? Job has no idea what God is doing with his life at this point. You and I often have no idea what God is doing with our lives. And we may not know until the judgment seat and until the eternal future, when we get in into the kingdom phase and the kingdom of the father phase.

But that's where faith kicks in. That's where the measure of the spirit, the measure of God's word that we have in our soul, comfort and encourage and strengthen us. And not having seen, we believe.

So Job turns from looking at his circumstances to saying, you know, my days are swift. My life is a breath. My eye will never again see good.

And then he sort of looks at God and he says, even while you watch me, I'm going to be fading away. I will not restrain my mouth. I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

Verse 12, am I a sea or a sea serpent that you set a guard over me? Am I an evil one that you've hemmed me in and, you know, put an oppressive hand on me? When I say my bed and my couch will ease me, I get dreams and nightmares. My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my body. I loathe my life.

I would not live forever. Let me alone for my days are but a breath. This is about as low as you can get.

Now, we pick up in verse 17. What is man that you should exalt him, that you should set your heart on him, that you should visit him every morning and test him every moment? How long? And if this is by way of a prayer, these words are addressed to God. Will you not look away from me and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? I don't even get a chance to comfort my parched throat.

Have I sinned? What have I done to you, O watcher of men? Why have you set me as your target so that I am a burden to myself? Why then do you not pardon my transgression and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust and you will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be. Of course, lying down in the dust is a euphemism for being dead. And this is an expression of despair.

Is it sinful to express despair? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? You remember the Apostle Paul three times praying to God, can you not take away my thorn in the flesh, this affliction, which may well have been actually a form of demonic oppression. So this is Job's advance. He addresses Eliphaz's remarks and now he sort of advances in this last section, 17 through 21, actually 11 through 21, these 10 or 11 verses here, and addresses a cry to God and says, what did I ever do to deserve this? And if I did do something, why didn't you forgive it? I see no option but to lay down in the dust and die at this point because I don't know what I've done wrong and whatever it is, it doesn't seem to be forgivable.

So I just, I don't see any hope. My hope is gone. Well, this is Job's statement.

So now Bildad is going to reply. Let's take a quick look at Bildad. We'll get started on him tonight in chapter eight.

Bildad the Shuhite answered and said, how long will you speak these things and the words of your mouth be like a strong wind? You're a blowhard. Does God subvert judgment or does the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons have sins against him, he has cast them away for their transgression. Now there's a comforting thought.

Well, if God killed your kids, they must've done something wrong, Job. If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty, if you were pure and upright, surely now he would awake for you and prosper your rightful dwelling place. Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.

For inquire, please, of the former age and consider the things discovered by their fathers. For we were born yesterday and know nothing because our days on earth are as a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words from their heart? Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can reeds flourish without water? While it is yet green, is it not cut down? It withers

before any other plant.

So are the paths of all who forget God and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish. Whose confidence shall be cut off, whose trust is a spider web. He leans on his house.

It doesn't stand. He holds it fast. It doesn't endure.

He grows green in the sun and his branches spread out in his garden. His roots wrap around the rock heap and look for a place in the stones. If he is destroyed from his place, it will deny him, saying, I have not seen you.

Behold, this is the joy of his way and out of the earth others will grow. Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will he uphold the evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughing and your lips with rejoicing.

This is the second guy to tell Job, you ought to be laughing. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing. Now, once again, there are a lot of truths that Bildad speaks.

What was the thing that skewed Eliphaz? It was the wrong spirit that motivated those words. What is skewing Bildad's statements? To what authority does he appeal? In other words, Eliphaz appeals to the authority of this spirit by night. What is the authority that that Bildad appeals to? Did you catch it? Inquire, please.

Verse eight of the former age. Consider the things discovered by the fathers. Look at precedent.

Look at history. Look at tradition. When did God ever blight the blameless? Look around you.

What's the majority opinion? What's the what have we inherited from the fathers? What's our tradition? And, of course, in the in the lack of a written Bible, that's basically all you've got. And he says, look, the tradition has no precedent for this. Now, observation, interpretation, application.

We are a strange church by modern standards. You would be amazed if you could overhear some of the conversations I have where people say, well, so, you know, what did you do with your seminary degree? Well, I pastor a small church. Oh, where is that? Well, it's up in Plano.

Oh, but what is it? Have I seen your building? And when I start to get into the details and explain. Hmm. So how many people come? Inevitably.

So how big is your church? Not that big. There is a standard. There is a tradition.

There is an expectation based on experience. Based on what has been historically true, that conditions how people view us. And if you're outside that expectation, if you're outside that tradition, it's no longer a matter of, well, do you line up with the word of God? It's do you line up with tradition? Do you line up with expectation? Do you line up with what is expected? With what

is generally understood? This is the essence of Bildad's analysis, isn't it? Never seen anything like this, Job.

You say you're righteous. You say I haven't done anything wrong. Ask the fathers.

They'll tell you that can't be. You must have done something wrong. God doesn't blight the blameless.

Now, what would you call right around in the ark for 14 months without seeing daylight? What would you call, of course, Job may not have been aware of this and his friends, but what would you call Joseph in his 13 years of experiences in Egypt after he was done away with by his brothers? This happens all the time. And even in the days of the patriarch, Abraham wandered. Abraham had his relatives attacked and carried away into slavery and had to go fight them.

Isaac dug wells and people kept taking them and he had to go dig another well. Somebody took that. Somebody dug another well.

Somebody took that. He had to just keep going further and further into the desert until he got far away from civilization and people quit stealing his wells from him. Those stories were known to these men.

Does affliction happen to people who have not particularly done anything wrong? Of course it does. But Bildad doesn't comprehend that, doesn't see it. He's got his view of what tradition is and eschews his testimony.

Well, there are a lot of fascinating statements in Chapter 8 that we can look at. But let's just take a look for now at this final section. Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth others will grow.

God will not cast away the blameless, nor will he uphold evildoers. Bildad basically is saying, Job, you're throwing rocks at God's justice. You're implying that God is not just.

Bildad started out this whole thing by asking about Job's little speech and saying, what about these windy words? What about these blowhard words you're throwing out here? You're defaming the justice of God, is his basic comment here. How long will you speak and put forth these windy words? Does God subvert judgment? So, based on tradition, he says, Job, you're out of line. You're speaking against God in your complaint, and complaining against God is accusing God of injustice.

Bildad says, our lives are short. You can't tell anything from our experience, so let's appeal to history. Let's go to tradition.

Well, again, Job is going to reply to this after Bildad says, he will yet fill your mouth with laughing and your lips with rejoicing. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling

place of the wicked will come to nothing, or will not be. Well, this is going to provoke a response from Job.

Job says to Bildad, the traditionalist, who says it's not polite, it's not proper, it's historically a bad idea to question the justice of God, which, in fact, Job has not done. But Job answers now in chapter 9, and he says, Truly I know it is so, but how can a man be righteous before God? If one wished to contend with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. Now, Eliphaz's speech has kind of lodged in Job's mind, hasn't it? This is something Eliphaz said.

How can a man be righteous before God? Does it sound familiar? What did we see in chapter 4? Can a mortal, verse 17, be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his maker? Where did that idea come from? The dark side. So, Job says, Truly I know it is so, but how can a man be righteous before God? If one wished to contend with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand. God is wise in heart and mighty in strength, who has hardened himself against him and prospered.

Now, I would take a slightly different view of verse 4 there. You notice you've got some words in italics that says, God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. What Job is talking about, he says, how can a man be righteous before God? If he wishes to contend with him, he couldn't answer him one time out of a thousand.

The idea is, even if he is a man who is wise in heart, even if he is a man who is mighty in strength, let's remember our memory verse of Jeremiah. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the mighty man, let not the rich man, let not the wise man, glory, let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, justice and righteousness in the earth. Well, the wise in heart, the mighty in strength can't contend with him, can't answer him one time out of a thousand.

It doesn't matter how strong you are. It doesn't matter how wise you are. This is talking about the man, not God in verse 4, I would submit.

Who has hardened himself against him and prospered? He, God, removes the mountains and they do not know when he overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth and its pillars tremble. He commands the sun.

He seals off the stars. He spreads out the heavens. He treads on the waves.

He made the bear, Orion, and the Pleiades and the chambers of the south. He does great things past finding out, wonders without number. If he goes by me, I don't see him.

If he moves past, I don't perceive him. If he takes away, who can hinder him? Who can say to him, what are you doing? God will not withdraw his anger. The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath him.

Actually, the allies of Rahab. Rahab is another synonym for this beast, this evil enemy like Leviathan, behemoth, denizen of the deep, Rahab, the dragon. The allies of Rahab lie prostrate beneath him.

What is Job's point here? Bildad says, I think you're speaking against the justice of God. Job says, look, I know all about the justice of God. God is, in fact, just.

No man can stand before him. He is justly angry and the mountains are moved and so on. These first 13 verses talk about the justice of God.

God is right and just. He's the creator. He has the right to be the judge.

There's some fascinating details in here and we're going to look at these a little bit next time, especially verse 9. He made the bear, Orion, and the Pleiades. This is fascinating because it is a very ancient reference to the constellations, to the stars. You think about the time of Job.

This is circa 1500, 1600 BC. And you can look up in the night sky and see these very same constellations to which Job refers. The Bible talks about the bear and the Pleiades and Orion more than once.

And they are recognized as being created by God. And Job goes on to say in verse 14, How can I answer him and choose my words to reason with him? Though I were righteous, I could not answer him. I would beg mercy of my judge.

Bildad says, you're not recognizing the justice of God. Job says, I recognize it all right. And I recognize that I can't answer him.

He is righteous and I'm not. And I understand that. I know that.

If I called and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds. He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness.

If it is a matter of strength, indeed, he is the strong one. If it is of justice, who will appoint my day in court? Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me. Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.

What is Job basically saying here? I know that God is just. And I know that right now, I am out of favor with God. This is the source of Job's confusion.

Because in his own mind and in the minds of his friends, this kind of treatment is normally the result of having transgressed so that justice goes into effect. And Job says, I don't know that I've done anything wrong. And yet I seem to be under judgment.

Hence, confusion. Hence, I just don't see where life is worth continuing. Because if I can't go to God, where can I go? It's an old gospel song.

Where could I go but to the Lord? Well, the Lord doesn't seem to be happy with me at the moment. So if I can't go to Him, now what? And this is a valid point. One thing I'll remind you is that at the end of this book, what is God going to say about these various speeches? None of you has spoken rightly of me except my servant Job.

Why can we so confidently assert that Eliphaz is out of line in what he says? That Bildad is out of line in what he says? And look for the ways in which they're out of line? God Himself has said, none of you has spoken rightly of me. Which is kind of strange because this book is full of ironies and full of almost contradictions, isn't it? Seeming contradictions. Job is a righteous man and yet he's judged.

And he says, I find a contradiction in this. These men are speaking truth that is reflected elsewhere in the Word of God. And yet God says, you haven't spoken rightly of me.

How can that be? Well, that's why this is not a book for the new believer. This is not a book for the intermediate in terms of spiritual growth. We have to have a pretty good frame of reference and a pretty good foundation to grapple with the truths, the concepts, the teaching that is in this book.

This isn't the first place I would bring somebody that's newly saved. But for us, this is going to be a nice steak dinner. To chew through these and to see and to discern the better things.

The Apostle Paul, remember in Colossians where he says, I pray that you will come to know the better things. That you will come to know the difference, that you can discern. He talks about in Hebrews chapter five, those who are mature are ready for meat.

Those who are immature need milk and not solid food. Well, this is solid food. This is a chance for us to exercise.

Again, in Hebrews, it says those who by reason of exercise have their senses sharpened so that they can discern good and evil. Anybody can say, oh, look, there's a lie. Oh, look, there's a falsehood.

Oh, look, that's a misrepresentation. What if somebody is stringing together a series of biblical principles and God says, you haven't spoken rightly. That's the challenge.

That's the thing that sparks my enthusiasm for this study is to look at this book and discern not just what's correct to say, but how should it have been said? How could it have been said so that it would truly be right? So that it would have been blessed and approved by God. We want to be approved by God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed. To rightly divide the word of

truth, not just to have the word of truth, but to rightly divide it.

So we're going to conclude here tonight with Job's response to Bildad. But think about what we've observed in Eliphaz and what we've observed in Bildad and Job's responses. And this will give us a clue as to what to expect when Zophar sounds off in chapter 11.

Job is going to talk here in chapter 9 and chapter 10. And then Zophar is going to speak. And with this precedent from Eliphaz and Bildad, we're going to find that there is a fly in the ointment.

There is something unsavory in the punch bowl here from Zophar as well. And a little leaven leavens the whole lump. One small bad thing can spoil a whole lot of good things.

And it's not a matter of averaging. It's not a matter of the weight of a thing. It is a matter of defilement.

Somebody can be completely clean and with one little finger touch a dead body and they are totally defiled. And these great compendiums of biblical knowledge of divine truth can be defiled by the spirit that is behind them, by the frame of reference that is behind them, such as history in Bildad's case. And we'll see what it is for Zophar next time.

But what can keep us straight? What can help us stay on the narrow road and go through the straight gate? Go back to the basics. Change of mind away from dead works and faith toward God. What does Job say? I don't know what God's got against me.

I don't think I can stand and talk to him. But I don't mistrust him. I don't deny him.

I don't curse him. I still trust him. Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.

And many times when the way seems dark and confusing, what is the mast to which we lash ourselves? I know whom I have believed. And I am persuaded that he's able to keep that, that I've committed to him against that day. Apostle Paul says it.

Job says it. And God says, you know what? Job is the only guy out of these five that has spoken rightly of me. It's okay to despair.

It's okay to question. It's okay to be depressed and to wail and to low like the ox. As long as we keep our faith.

As long as we recognize that God has made provision in his word and in his spirit. Well, we'll pick up here in the middle of chapter 9 next time. Father, thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.

We thank you for these truths and these examples from your word. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress them on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.