

31a JOB

This is Friday, January the 5th, 2007. We continue tonight our study in the book of Job. We're in chapter 40.

Very interesting section dealing with behemoth and Leviathan, these supposedly mythical creatures, tells us something about the modern day world in which we live, even though these creatures are probably extinct. Let's take a moment as we begin to exercise our individual priesthood. Each of us as a believer has the opportunity to go directly to God.

Don't need any intermediary. Don't need a human priest. Don't need a red hot telephone.

Don't need a wireless bubble. All we need is the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. That is his proper function.

He is the means of communication between us and God. And it's important that if we're going to spend this time looking at God's word, that the time be profitable. And the way to ensure that that takes place is to look to God's grace and God's provision so that things which normally wouldn't make sense to us as corrupt and fallen human beings are sensible, comprehensible, because they are made so by God's Holy Spirit.

Shall we pray? Father, we are thankful that we have been given these days to live on this earth, to learn, to exploit the opportunities and the potential that you have given us as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that it is our primary mission to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Savior, not simply to be evangelists or to be some sort of blessing to the world, but primarily as preparation for things which are to come, to increase our understanding and appreciation for you, your character, your purpose and your plan, and most of all, for your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that as we study this section of your word tonight, that God, the Holy Spirit will minister to our hearts in such a way that we will accomplish those goals and we'll leave here better equipped and better prepared for every good work.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. I was reviewing this section by going back to the beginning after Elihu finishes his introduction.

Do you remember the structure of the book? Two chapters, God and Satan. Job suffers his disasters. The three friends show up, got 30-something chapters of give and take between the friends, Eliphaz, the Temanite and I, Bildad, the Shuhite, Zophar, the Amathite, and after they have exhausted their view, Elihu speaks up, the fourth friend, the fourth man in the fire, as it were, and he speaks, as it were, as a shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

He clarifies, he prioritizes, he makes things clear. The initial question in the book, think about this because we're about to wrap up this book and it's important as you wrap up and you say, well, did I get the answer to the question, is to understand what was the question. You ever had a big,

long thing and then, you know, you're trying to explain, somebody says, now what was the question again? And you're like, well, what is the question in the book of Job? What is set up at the beginning? Everybody knows the story of Job.

Bad things happen to him. He's sitting in the ash heap trying to figure everything out. And his friends, the way it is set up at the beginning, especially with his friends, is one of two things is true.

This is the tension that's set up and Satan suggests this as well. One of two things is true. Either God is not just or Job has sinned.

Right? Isn't that kind of what the whole beginning boils down to? Look at these terrible things that have happened to a righteous man. So either God isn't playing fair. Here's a guy that did everything right and he still got hammered or Job didn't do everything right.

He's actually a sinner. Well, Satan tends to lean to the former view. There's really not justice here.

You're, you're bribing Job to be righteous. Take away the things that you're bribing him with and he'll curse you to your face. This is Satan's argument.

You are buying Job's faith. You're buying Job's loyalty with these blessings. And isn't this the argument that a lot of people give today about Christianity? Well, you're, you're weak.

You need a crutch. You need something to prop you up. And that's why you go to religion.

You go to, they call Christianity religion. They say you've got to be religious because you're too weak to make it on your own. And so you're superstitious.

You're in these old myths, you know, et cetera, et cetera, the same old stuff. And basically what they're saying is, well, God is giving you this thing that you really, really need so that you'll be his little factotum on the earth. You'll be his little follower and his disciple and you'll be a Christian and you'll be good and do all these things.

And then God is going to bless you. And it's sort of a bribery scheme. You'll be good.

God will bless. I'm going to go to church and whatever kind of church it is. Maybe it's a candle lighting church.

Maybe it's a praying church. Maybe it's a go knock on doors church. Maybe it's a sit there and sing praise songs church.

Maybe it's a study the Bible church, but whatever kind it is, you go and you say, well, see, I'm showing up and doing my part and this is going to be kind of put in the nickel, get out the coke. You know, I put in my little thing and God's going to bless me. Satan says, this is the only reason

Job is doing the God thing and making sacrifices is because he's getting all of these benefits.

And if you cut the benefits off, why he'll leave and go look for some other God that'll do a better job of providing these things. So Satan indirectly is attacking the justice of God and the righteousness of God, because it's really not fair for God to give to some and not to others. Why are there poor people? You know, here's Job and he's kind of got this inside deal with God and it's kind of not fair.

That's one aspect. And we've talked about some of the other aspects of what, of what Satan's trying to do with God, trying to call his justice into question. Because of course, if God's justice is questionable in one case, then maybe God's justice is questionable in another case, like condemning Satan for doing his own thing.

So this is a, you know, Satan's no dummy. He's got an agenda. So that's one side of it.

Either with these bad things happening to good Job, and especially from a human perspective, either God is not fair. And you hear that argument all over the place today, I've cited to you many times, you can find it all over the internet, go look up the skeptics Bible, go look up atheists.org and all the rest of these places. And what do they say? Belief in God is foolish, because look at all of the problems in the world today.

Look at all the suffering, look at the war, look at the poverty and the starving children and abuse and shootings and horrible depravity all over the earth. What's if there was a God, and if he's righteous, then then he's kind of like a broken God, there's something the matter with him. Because if he's righteous and good, how come he doesn't fix all of this stuff, or prevent it from ever happening in the first place? There's something wrong with God, either he's not powerful enough to implement good in the world.

Right? He's just can't, too many people, too many criminals, you just can't keep track of them all. And they, it all gets away from him. So he's in that case, he's not worth worshiping, because he's not much of a God, he's kind of weak and powerless and running around trying to clean up after the fact, or he has the power.

And he's just not doing it. And therefore, he's not really as righteous as he makes out because he lets this stuff happen. He could stop it, he could fix it, and he doesn't.

So either way, he's not a God worth worshiping. This is the atheistic, humanistic, secularistic argument. If there were a God, as you claim, oh, Christian, what's the matter with him? Look around.

Well, same thing in Job, either God is not fair, or God is fair. And this, of course, is the Bildad Zophar Eliphaz argument. God is fair.

And Job, you need to fess up, you have actually done something wrong, and you're being punished for it. And you just won't admit it. It's some kind of a secret thing that we haven't found out about yet.

But if we investigate you long enough, we put our agents to work and our detectives, we'll eventually find out what you did. You've been unkind to the poor, or you've got some insider trading going on, or you've embezzled, you've done something. And that's why God is hammering you.

Well, what's the truth of it? Now that we've come through 40 chapters, what's the truth? Is God unjust? No. Has Job sinned? No. The problem has been falsely set up.

It has been fallaciously presented. There is a third option, in other words. And you have to watch for this, because when people start talking about Christianity, about the Bible, about evolution versus creationism, and this sort of thing, they will often frame the discussion in such a way that you have two choices, and neither one of them is right.

Well, either evolution has accounted for life on this earth, and we have a very, very old earth, billions of years, and this, you know, Big Bang, cosmos, galaxies, formation of the planets, the earth, the organic goo, and, you know, lightning struck, single cells formed, life evolves. That's either it, or it's your biblical explanation, which says that God created the planet only 6,000 years ago, and he just made the universe appear old. He made the background radiation that the telescopes and things have picked up.

He made it appear that there was a Big Bang 14 and a half billion years ago, when there really wasn't. He made it appear that the earth is very old with these sedimentary rocks in the Grand Canyon, and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. This is the choice that is given you.

Both of those are wrong. Life did not come about by evolutionary means. There is no science to support that.

If you actually know what science is and look at it, there is speculation, there is hypothesis, there is theory, there are fragments of evidence that are puzzle pieced in at convenient places to make that argument, but there is no science for molecular self-organization. Intelligent agents trying to create DNA in the lab under the conditions that supposedly existed on the old earth can't do it. If you can't do it trying with your hundreds of scientists over a hundred years now, how do you expect it to happen accidentally down in the pond? With intelligence and with science and test tubes and microscopes and all kinds of chemical knowledge, science can't make that happen.

But we're supposed to believe that it just happened accidentally. So that's one view, and it's wrong. Life did not come about by evolution.

Science can't offer any explanation. Look closely. They say it happened.

Ask them how. There aren't even any good hypotheses for that. So that's incorrect.

Neither is it true that God created everything 6,000 years ago and then deceptively made it look older. The proposition has been framed falsely. There is a third alternative.

What is it? Well, we've been through the book of Genesis together, and we know that, yes, the universe pre-existed Genesis 1, 2, and following. The whole first chapter of Genesis picks up long after the universe was in place. The sun and the moon and the stars were not created in chapter 1 in that chronology.

They are mentioned as having been created, but they're not created on the fourth day. That's just a misunderstanding of Scripture. What did happen 6,000 years ago is that the finished form of life was in place.

When Adam and Eve were in the garden, everything was finished. Do we totally understand the timing and the chronology in Genesis chapter 1? No, nobody does. There's a lot of speculation about it.

It's pretty tough to say that everything took place in literal 24-hour days. It's equally tough to say that it took place in day ages. It's equally tough to say that there's a gap theory and that there was a previous creation or another creation.

The Bible does not make an attempt to be a science book on the origin of all life. What does it provide? It provides a sequence. It says that life began in the sea and occurred later on land, and science has verified that.

The order in which these things are given in Genesis is scientifically accurate. The fact that things reproduce after their kind is accurate. The nature of life on this planet pre-flood is difficult to document scientifically because we don't know the extent of the devastation on this planet, but science has confirmed that just as the Bible says, there was originally a single continent.

Genesis teaches that God caused the dry land to appear in one place, and later on after the flood, the earth was divided. You've got that whole Pangea thing. Scientists have looked at the continental plates, tectonics, and all the rest of it, and yes, there was a single continent that spread out.

So in terms of sequence, in terms of origin, in terms of causality, who is responsible? Who caused life? Who is the originator and the designer? What is responsible for the corruption that we see around us? Why is there genetic deformities and diseases? Why are there problems? You've got all kinds of, you know, five-legged cows, Siamese twins, genetic disease, and so on. Where does that come from? Is that a part of the original design? No, it is not. That is a result of

occurrences that are documented.

So there is a third alternative. It's the biblical alternative, and it comes by carefully studying the word of God. Now, here we are in the book of Job, and at the beginning, it's pretty much set up that, well, God either, if you're truly fair and if you take away your unfair bribing of Job, why, we'll see how things really pan out.

The option that God is not fair isn't valid, nor is it fair to allege, as Job's three friends do, that he is a sinner. There is a third alternative, and it's pertinent. And the reason I belabor it a little bit is this comes up in discussions and comes up in the realm of ideas today, because people say, where is your God? If you believe in this God, and if Jesus Christ is his son, and there's this whole thing, why is there so much evil in the world? And it's tough to even get a legitimate discussion going because there are so many wackos in the world.

Poor Pat Robertson has unburdened himself with some more thoughts this past week. And, you know, Jesus said, in the latter days, a man's enemies are going to be those of his own household. And, you know, Christians in the modern day with friends like Pat don't need any enemies because he will sink us all by himself.

But laying aside the obvious absurdities of, you know, God punishing the far off lands with tsunamis and so on, to properly frame the discussion, it's important. If there really is a God, it would be nice to know that he's there and kind of get prepared for what's coming up and not be caught unaware. So what about these arguments that say, if there were a God, he wouldn't let the world be the way it is? That's what you have in the book of Job.

If there is a God and he's fair, this stuff wouldn't be happening to you, Job. So there's either something wrong with you or there's something wrong with God and so on. Well, what both of these scenarios leave out is that God has a purpose in allowing things to run their course for a certain space of time.

And this is important individually. It's important nationally. It's important historically.

It's important biblically, any way you slice it, you've got to take a longer term view. This helps politically. We only have a certain amount of information.

Matthew's been holding forth on this this past week. We do things in our international policy. We go to Iraq and we invade.

We go to Afghanistan and we do things. We go places and we do things. And there's a certain amount of information that is given to the press, a certain amount of justification, a certain amount of factual basis is given.

And a lot of people say, I don't buy your facts. I don't agree with your facts. I don't think your facts justify your policy, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't think there were weapons of mass destruction anywhere near Iraq. I don't think we're ever going to be able to set up a democracy. I think it's a horrible waste of resources and lives to be in Iraq, et cetera.

You hear this all the time. Well, as an example, and I'm not flogging politics here, I'm not a political arguing guy. I believe what I believe and everybody else can just go in the handbasket for all I care.

I don't try to argue anybody out of their politics or into politics, but I will say this. It ought to be evident to anyone who is calm and objective that there is a lot we don't know. There is a lot of intelligence.

There's a lot of information that is classified. You can't release it. You can't talk about it.

When you're sitting around playing cards, you're going to make decisions and you're going to lay down certain cards and you're going to pick up certain cards and you're going to ask for certain cards from the dealer based on what you know about your hand. Other people are going to speculate and try to figure out does he really have three aces or not? Well, you might be bluffing and you might really have them and your behavior, if you're careful and you don't have too many tells where you start sweating when you have a good hand and you start sighing when you have a bad hand and that sort of thing. But as they say, you play your cards close to the vest and you try to to give off neutral signals or if anything, a very subtle signal like, oh, I don't think my hand's very good and get people to pitch into the pot and then you suddenly lay down all these cards and scoop it all in.

But you don't tell people everything you know. This is true in romance. This is true in I mean, if you are wanting to lure somebody in, you don't lay everything out on the table at the first go.

You don't show everybody all of your school pictures. You don't introduce them to everybody in your family. You don't show them all your talents and say, oh, look, I play the accordion.

And I mean, you just don't do that. You keep some things back. You dish your things out in an intelligent and provocative fashion where somebody says, I'd like to know more about this person.

That's interesting. You know, you you have strategy and you manage information in a strategic way because you have a purpose. Our government, God bless them, has more information than what they release to the press.

Yes, we have a whole system of, you know, confidential secret, top secret and several levels above that. And those of us who have been privy to top secret information know why it is top secret. It keeps you from becoming dead when you're out there amongst your enemies and they happen to find out the exact range of your artillery piece.

And so they backtrack and shoot at that range when they know you're shooting maximum range and kill you. And so you don't tell them what your absolute max range is. And then they don't know how far you're shooting and so on.

There's a reason. Now, this is a long way around to the point. God has information that he's not sharing with us in the same way that our government has information that it's not sharing and can't share.

They may know all about certain things related to weapons of mass destruction, related to terrorism, related to the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. Matthew made a good point earlier this week. Suppose, just for the sake of argument, that our government knows exactly where Osama is, has got him in the crosshairs.

He's in cave 12 in such and such a ridge of such and such a mountain range on the border of Pakistan. He's right there. We know exactly where he is.

We also know what radio frequencies he's using and what brand of cell phone he's using. And we're listening to everything that he says. And every time he sends out his little people, we're privy.

And amazingly, five years have gone by and we haven't had any successful attacks on American soil since 9-11. Hmm. Wonder why that is.

Some kind of way we seem to find out just as these guys are coming across the Canadian border. And, and there are things that we will never know about because they get quietly nipped in the bud and it never hits the press. Now, what's the matter with our government? Can't find one little towel headed man off in the jungles of... And so what do you want the government to do? Oh, guess what? Here he is.

And so we take him or we bring him in or we close the rocks down on his cave. And so what happens? Our enemies form a new network in different places with different cell phones and different frequencies that we know nothing about. And by giving out what we know, we shoot ourselves in the foot.

And next thing you know, this new brand of network has done us damage and has done us harm. The people at the top levels of our government know this. And so they keep certain information to themselves.

They give the appearance that they don't know certain things that they certainly do know. They protect their sources. They maintain levels of intelligence.

And people who have had any acquaintance at all with intelligence know that this is how it works. It's like a chess game. It's like a card game.

And you have to pretend a lot of things so that you can accomplish your longterm goals. It may appear that you're dumb. It may appear that you're inept.

It may appear that you don't know things that you ought to know. And your enemy will then underestimate you and come to find out you weren't as dumb as you looked and they lose. Well, this is the nature of things in the world.

And anyone with objectivity and a lick of sense doesn't believe that the New York Times and the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal and some of these other major news organizations with their opinion and editorial pages have everything figured out and that their analysis is valid because they're working with maybe 20 or 30 percent of the salient facts. They are often drawing the exact conclusions that we want our enemies to draw because this advances our interests. Now, what does that have to do with Job? What has God said since he showed up in the whirlwind? You remember, I went back and read all of these statements by God again this week and I read them again just on the way over here.

In chapter 38, the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge, rendering opinions and asking questions without having all of the facts? Now, prepare yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer me. And then what God does is he details the nature of the universe, the founding of the universe, the fact that there are sentient creatures, that there is light and darkness and a conflict between the two.

There are chaotic waves and there is land and there is a division between the two and God sets the boundaries. There is different kinds of precipitation. Sometimes it's gentle rain.

Other times it's hail. God decides when he's going to treasure up the hail for the day of battle and so on. Who decides when and where it's going to rain, when and where it's going to lightning, when and where these things are going to take place.

In other words, what is the thrust of it? What's the big idea? If you just read it as Job heard it when God spoke it, what do you come away with? There is a lot that God knows that I as a human being don't know. Now, if you're in a political discussion and you say, well, our government knows a lot that they're not telling, the people say, you can't prove that. I think they're just as dumb as they look.

And we know everything they know. And they're just inept, bumbling fools. And they've mired us in a bad war, et cetera, et cetera.

Well, if you're in the government, if you're a senior cabinet member, if you're the president or the general in charge of the forces in Iraq or whatever, and you get this criticism, you have a choice. You can say, oh, yeah, and spill everything you know. Or you can quietly shoulder the abuse, take the heat and stay your course because you know what you're doing and you have a purpose.

You can't vindicate yourself. Think about the Lord Jesus Christ, all of these people spitting on him, pulling out his beard, slapping him around after he was arrested and just before he was crucified. They nailed the Son of God to a cross.

These are disrespectful, insolent, bitter, mocking, cruel, hateful people. We've all known people like this. And you take guff off of these people and pretty soon you say, oh, yeah, I mean, I took guff from a guy one time I was standing in line, happened to be out in the middle of the basketball court with like 300 witnesses.

But somebody kept giving me guff and giving me guff and I was just brushing it off. You know, I was just, yeah, it's not worth, you know, consider the source, et cetera. But it got under my skin.

And the person said one certain thing that just set me off. And I just turned around and cold cocked him right in the nose, knocked him flat. Boy, it felt good.

But now I'm down on that level. I've lost my self-control. I've left, I've departed from my purpose.

I've embroiled myself in a thing that isn't good. It's satisfying, but it doesn't really contribute to the purpose, it doesn't contribute to the goal. In one sense, anyway.

So here's the thing. Do you really want our government to cave and say, OK, we're unclassifying everything. All you reporters, come on in, spill it to the world.

Let's tell the terrorists everything they need to know. Look, we really did have a reason for going into Iraq. And here it is.

If they don't do that, people are always going to say there was no reason. You're just making that up. That's hypothetical.

Right. Back to Job. God is not telling Job, you know what, Job, here I am in the whirlwind, you know, everybody be quiet now.

I'm going to speak. I've listened to you for 38 chapters now. Be quiet.

Here I go. Satan came up here and I said, look at my, I mean, God doesn't read the assembled company here, Job 1 and 2, does he? He doesn't tell them. These guys probably never knew Job 1 and 2. What does God reveal? God basically says, I am the God that created this universe.

I am the God that set its limits and its bounds. I created the sentient beings who were there at its founding, who sang together when I laid its foundations and hung the earth on nothing. Trust me.

That's what he says, right? That's the thrust of it. Where were you when I did all of these things? You don't know what I know. If I have the power to create this, you've got to trust me.

And there's a sense in which you can apply this to other things. Parents don't always explain to

their children. Maybe they don't have time.

Maybe they don't have patience. Maybe they just don't have opportunity or it's too involved. It's over their head.

And a parent says, look, I want you to sit in this chair while this guy with the gloves sticks a needle in your face and turns this drill thing on and chips away at the enamel of your teeth. So be quiet and do what he says. And the child is like, I can't believe you're letting someone stab me in the face, grind away parts of my body I've had for years.

What is the matter with you? You're letting this guy hurt me. You're letting this guy, you know, put me in this scary situation. A lot of times it doesn't actually even hurt.

But you know, it's the anticipation. It's the it's the vibration. It's the the unpleasant prospect of thinking you might get hurt.

And a parent can't always say, come here, Johnny, let me spend the next three hours explaining the whole field of dentistry to you. It just says, sit down, shut up. It'll be over in a minute, and it's going to be in your long term benefit.

And what happens? Child has to trust the parent. Patient has to trust the doctor. Citizen has to trust the government that we elected and that we put in place.

If they give evidence of malfeasance, if they show themselves to be squirrely, OK, now haul them out to justice, vote them out, get somebody else. But don't sit there and constantly speculate and and trump up and assume the worst. They're duly elected, support them and give them the benefit of the doubt.

This is what we used to do in warfare. I will predict to you that we will never again as as America, as the United States, we will never again win a war, never, because we will never again have a war where we don't have the press out there feeding images back. The whole reason you feel the military and send them away from your shores is to do the ugly business of warfare, not in front of your children, not in front of your wives and mothers.

You send men generally out there to do the gutting and the fleeing and the destroying of your enemy. They come back home and you have a one war. That's what happened in World War One.

That's what happened in World War Two. It didn't happen in Korea. It very much didn't happen in Vietnam, and it'll never happen again because beginning in Korea and starting for sure in Vietnam, that's when we had TV cameras dragging the war into our living rooms, demoralizing the public so that they no longer trust the government.

What is Satan going to do to us as believers? He is going to constantly drag ugliness in front of

our eyes. He's going to televise badness to demoralize us and to destroy our faith in God. Why would a just God let this happen to you? Satan has been working through the arguments of Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar essentially to say, either you screwed up and you say you didn't.

Well, the only other option is that God is not fair. And in either case, it's a bad deal. Job says, I haven't screwed up.

This is some mysterious God that I can't figure out. I don't know what I've done and he's going to hammer me and he's not going to tell me he's just going to leave. Well, that's depressing.

Or he's not a God worth serving and that's depressing. And people are going to turn in other directions. Well, it's every man for himself.

God helps those who help themselves. So thanks a lot, God, but I think I'll take it from here. Demoralization and eroding trust.

This is what happens in relationships between people. Yes, you have people who are a couple. They're dating, they're engaged, they're married.

And there is implicit in that relationship, trust. I trust you. What's the worst thing that can happen? You know, they have people who get jealous, who are insanely jealous, who watch to see if anybody is looking at their husband or their wife.

This is more often men, you know, if they think, well, my wife is a gorgeous babe and oh, I think you looked at her one second too long or what happens? And people say, well, this ought to be a compliment because I love her so much, I don't want anybody looking at her the wrong way. No, what you're saying is I don't trust her. I've got to keep her away from anybody that takes a second look because, you know, something bad will happen.

She has no integrity. She has no standards. If I don't keep these guys away, why all will be lost? Trust is the foundation of good relationship.

You have to trust. Parents have to trust their children. And the way to trust your children is to raise them trustworthy.

And when they show themselves to be untrustworthy, no more trust. If a spouse shows themselves to be untrustworthy, one of two things happens, either the relationship dissolves or you have to rebuild that trust. You have to start over and rebuild.

It's a great advantage if you're believers and you do this because you've got the word of God and you've got a spiritual dynamic that can rebuild things that there's no human ability to build. But the best ideal thing is if you are young and you have an understanding of the way things work, you will pursue your own spiritual life and you will look for someone else who is doing the same. Then you have integrity.

Then you have a basis for building that trust because it doesn't just depend on, well, you'll be trustworthy as long as you love me. But if you quit loving me, then you probably won't keep your promises. You won't be nice.

You won't be faithful. And so then you're worried about, well, I've got to maintain this person's love. The great thing about a growing, healthy Christian is that their integrity and their trustworthiness is not based on who and what you are.

It's based on who and what God is making them. They have an integrity that they carry around with them and they are trustworthy in all of their dealings. And you see it reflected in every area of their life.

They're faithful. They don't cheat on their homework. They don't say they'll do a thing and then not do it.

They're faithful in their place of business. They are faithful to their friends. They don't take cheap shots at their friends behind their back for the sake of a laugh.

This is one of the most common things you see now is people are so hung up on humor and wanting to make a joke and wanting to entertain that they'll make their friends the butt of jokes. And when that the one friend that's not there is the one that's going to get lampooned so that we can all laugh. And then when that friend's there and one or two others are missing, why now they are the butt of jokes.

That is not trustworthiness and you will not find people of character. You will not find Christians with integrity doing that to one another. That's why the Bible talks about Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Would you really sacrifice your family on the altar of humor or on the altar of trying to get in good with friends and belittling and making fun and mocking? Well, this happens all around us today. What is the point here? There has been an attempt and these viewpoints expressed by the three friends are aspects of a satanic re-weaving of who God is and what he does. It's got a lot of truth in it, but it is a selective truth and it presents a false conclusion.

Just like when we only get part of the information from the government, it can make you think that things are not as they really are. And it comes down to who do you trust? Who do you believe? I personally think that things are not as our press likes to make them out to be. And as a lot of people make them out to be and say, oh, we have made such and such mistake and we have such and such problem in our foreign policy.

I know from experience, having been involved in some overseas conflict 20 years ago, that there is a lot the American public does not know and cannot know if we are going to be doing things in the Middle East. You just can't say what you know. And what you can say isn't always going to

leave the right impression.

For the time of Job's suffering, what is known of God and what has been said doesn't reflect the reality, doesn't reflect Job chapter 1 and Job chapter 2. And what it boils down to is, Job, do you trust that God is fair and that God knows what he's doing, even though you are currently experiencing a big paradigm shift here? Things don't seem like they're working out right. And the issue, the whole issue is faith. Is Job going to cling to God and say, I trust him, I don't understand this, it doesn't make sense to me, but though he slay me, yet will I trust him? Remember Job saying that? Though he slay me, I will still trust him.

That's why God is going to say at the end of this, Job is the man that has spoken of me rightly. We have to choose our friends and choose our partners in life carefully, because they need to be worthy of this kind of trust. We want to be people that are worthy of that kind of trust.

You know, be not unequally yoked together. If you want someone who is trustworthy, if you want someone who has integrity, if you want someone who will stick with you through thick and thin, you know, a great example of this not long ago was Mrs. Christopher Reeve. Do you remember that? When he was a big, successful, good looking actor, and then he went over the head of that horse and broke his neck and was a quadriplegic and his wife could easily have skied out and she stayed with him.

She cared for him. She was devoted to him and was still in love with him right up to the day he died. And she died very shortly thereafter.

And I think that is a wonderful example of someone who clearly loves based on who and what they are. And wouldn't we all like to be that person and wouldn't we all like to be in relationship with someone like that? Well, that's the great thing that being a Christian gives us because we can't manufacture that ourselves. It is something in the true sense that God manufactures in us through his word and through his spirit.

And you are doing exactly the right thing to nurture that process and further it by coming to Bible class and listening regularly to the teaching of the word of God because that is the power. The word of God is alive and powerful. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction so that the man of God becomes complete.

It says perfect in the Old King James, but it means whole, entire, lacking nothing. That's what integrity is. Integrity is something that is whole, structurally sound, thoroughly furnished for every good work.

You can't just wish for it. It's like wishing to be thin or wishing to be in shape. You have to do those things that bring it about.

And studying the word of God, meditating on it, thinking about its applicability day by day,

decision by decision, priority by priority, relationship by relationship, that's what brings it about. This is what Job has done, and this is why he's got what it takes in his soul. He's not just sort of a remarkable guy that just happened to be born with a great love for God.

Job built this structure in his soul. And this is what the whole reason I've gone this long roundabout way here in the first session is to say this, this is what God is appealing to now in these speeches. When God says, I will question you and you will answer me.

Why does God say that? I will question you, you will answer me. Not verbally, but you're going to find the answer to what I ask in your soul. Because it's already there.

You don't test students over things they've never learned, right? Unless it's an assessment to see what you need to teach them. Questions are designed to elicit answers that you're supposed to already know. And when God says, I will question you and you will answer me, and then he goes into these dialogues, he is reminding Job.

He's saying, look, think, you know this answer. Why does Job know? God doesn't say, now Elihu, Bildad, Zophar, you guys listen up and answer me. They don't have the answers in their soul.

Job does. How did he get them? The same way you and I are getting them. Daily meditation on the truth of God, incorporating it into thinking.

And it's a tremendous, incredible asset. We're going to see how Job winds up. And it's a picture of how the believer in God is going to end up because of that faith, because of that consistency, because of knowing those answers, enduring through times that don't seem to make sense and getting to this great, great place.

We'll pause here and take a break. When we come back, we'll get to the specifics here in Job chapter 40.