

CCF Study Notes
Tuesday 7 AM Study
19 September 2006
Job 26-31

Before beginning to read from Job let's spend time in prayer, considering how we ought to live in the fear of God. Let us ask God to help us to do the following:

1. **Help** the powerless by Spirit-directed counsel and encouragement,
2. **Consider** the wonder and beauty of the providence of God in creation,
3. **Speak** rightly of God's justice without regard to our own circumstances,
4. **Seek** God's wisdom instead of pursuing man's wisdom,
5. **Remember** how God worked in our lives in days past,
6. **Cry** out to God and seek the fellowship of God's people in times of trouble, and
7. **Shun** all lusts of the flesh, which are an affront to God.

Job gives the last and longest of his discourses having silenced his three friends. When we come to the end of self, we are then able to live always in the presence and fear of God. What does it mean to practice the presence of God? Job deals with this subject under several headings. We must first see God as being ultimately good, not just ultimately powerful. His Spirit flows through us to make us a blessing to those around us. Second, we must speak rightly of God and of God's absolute holiness and justice. Bitterness toward God is pure selfishness and utterly futile. Third, we must fervently seek God's wisdom for skillful living. Man's wisdom is not enough. Christ is the repository of all the treasures of wisdom. Fourth, since God has worked in our lives in days past, we can trust Him to finish the work He has begun. Fifth, when the entire world turns against us then we must cry to God. We draw close to God in the fellowship of other believers. Sixth, we must abandon worldly things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These are the works of "Self" and they break fellowship with God.

There is no power in me or in my spirit that I could help others. But God provides wonderfully in all that He does. By the Holy Spirit God makes the ugly things beautiful and the weak things powerful. As in Romans chapter 7, the secret is to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. When we walk in the flesh God is awesome and frightening in His infinite power. When we walk in the fullness of the Spirit the power of God flows through us to bring blessing and beauty where there was pain and chaos.

God is alive! We live in God's presence. We must speak rightly of God, glorifying God in all our words. There is no place for complaining in our lives. In particular, God is perfectly just. Satan tempted Eve by questioning God's justice. To this very day, the same tactic is central to all temptation: question God's justice. Why is the "problem of suffering" such a difficult issue for Christians? A righteous person suffers in this fallen, sinful world. God must explain His justice and goodness in allowing suffering. Remember that this is the underlying plot of the entire book of Job. God is deeply involved in Job's trials and God's reputation is on the line

every time Job speaks. God's reputation is on the line every time we speak of Him as well! God is with us in the trials as well as in the good times.

We are studying the Wisdom Literature of the Bible. Job and his friends are searching for wisdom. They search everywhere for wisdom. Where can we find wisdom? One of the basic tenets of our civilization is the wisdom comes through education. More people have gotten more education in recent days than ever before. Yet wisdom seems to be as scarce as ever today. Why is this so? Wisdom comes from God! In Christ we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:1-3) The fear of the Lord is wisdom. To depart from evil is to show real understanding. Some would say that the wisdom of Job is irrelevant today. The truth is that the fear of the Lord and shunning of evil is more important than ever as the end of all things draws near. The essence of living in the fear of the Lord is living in the continual awareness of God's presence and nearness.

When we are suffering, we often forget our own past. God had blessed Job and worked through Job's life. God had given Job the righteousness that comes by faith. God had given Job wisdom, authority, and the ministry of comforting those who mourn. Has God suddenly stopped working in Job's life? It is very unlikely! Rather, Job knows what we know: that God always finishes the work He begins. (Philippians 1:3-7) We can look back and see what God has already done in our lives. Present circumstances are suddenly of no real concern to us. We know that God is with us and will finish His work in us.

Job is suffering alone. Many people are mocking Job. When a righteous person suffers they often find themselves suffering alone. People turn on those who are suffering severe trials. A person who suffers must be a sinner! Not so! When the world turns on us then we must cry out to God. God fails to answer as quickly as we expect or in the way we expect. We lose hope and begin singing the blues. Has God abandoned us? No, God is still with us. God is carrying us through our trials.

The world offers many pleasures. These pleasures soon turn into affections which encroach on our love for God. God stripped Job of everything that he might have been tempted to set his heart on. Yet Job's heart was set on none of these things. Job's heart was set on knowing God, and on living for God. We see God's miraculous work in making us new creatures in Christ. The old affections no longer hold us. All we seek is fellowship with God. All we seek to do is glorify God. We have become new creatures in Christ Jesus!

P.S. Recordings of these studies in John, the Prophets, and Job and copies of these notes are now available on a new website at <http://www.jstoker.name> . A podcast is also available there or at <http://feeds.feedburner.com/CCF-T-Podcast> .