

Job 26

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[0:00] We will continue to lift them up in the days ahead. Take your Bibles, go into the book of Job, Job chapter 26. We're in the book of Job, Job chapter 26,!

In the entirety of the book, it is the one chapter that I have been wanting to get to just because I love the beauty of it and I love the power behind it. So we will see that here in just a moment.

The rounds of discussion and arguments with his friends have ceased, so we're done there. Bildad has been the last to speak. We will see a response to that in just a moment.

The third will refrain from speaking. So we are now in just kind of this long discourse of Job, and then we'll find more and more as we get into it.

But I love the 26th chapter, so let's pray. Father, we're so thankful for the opportunity of gathering. We're thankful for the privilege it is to be able to come together as the people of God in the house of God to open up the Word of God.

[1:20] And as always, we ask that you would speak to us with clarity and truth. We pray that as we read it, we would have an understanding, and that understanding finds application in our life.

We thank you for the truths that it contains. We thank you for the challenges that it brings upon us and the encouragement that can be found in it. So, Lord, we pray that you be glorified through our reading and studying of your Word this evening and that all things that Christ be magnified in our lives.

We do pray for our team that has went out from us. We pray for those who are still traveling for safety over their travel, but we also pray, Lord, that you would use them mildly, even empower their fellowship tonight as they're gathering together, not only with themselves but with other believers.

But, Lord, use them in the days ahead and help us not to fail to lift them up in prayer. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Job chapter 26. If you remember the 25th chapter, a very short chapter, just six verses, we'll build that, is seeking to answer Job's longing that is found there.

Job has again repeated the refrain that surely there are evil that exist, and God's not judging them. And we can't use momentary grand displays of God's judgment, such as the flood or the fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrah, to say, well, this is what God always does.

[2:44] We can look at those and say, well, surely this is the justice of God. This is the righteous standard of God. And this is what we can anticipate for those who walk in rebellion and disfavor with the Almighty in the end.

But Job has highlighted that we see quite often, time and time again, those who are not righteous, those who make poor choices, and yet they seem to live in prosperity and comfort.

He has alluded to the reality that their judgment will come in a day, even though if it does not come in this life, that there will be a day of judgment. And that is a hope and anticipation of Job.

He is holding on to his own righteousness. We'll see that a little bit clearer in the 27th chapter. And he has asked the question that if these things are not so, someone please tell me.

Bildad is the one who speaks, but he never answers Job's question. He never declares that Job is right or wrong. He really tries to avoid it. He doesn't have an argument for that question or for the realities that Job has pointed out.

[3:47] So he decides he has to say something. And in saying something, he just really begins to speak about how great and grand God is. Now, that's true. That's wonderful. We want to hold on to that.

But it's not answering the question that Job posed. And he speaks of the greatness of God and the inability of man to really seem pure and clean before him.

And in light of all of this, he says that God is so good and we're a worm and we will never be found clean. And he never answers Job.

We think that it was really just him wanting to say something so that he didn't appear ignorant. But it would have been better for him to sit in silence or to at least admit his inability to answer a tough question.

Now, in the 26th chapter, we have Job's response. But then we begin to see Job's declaration. And I want you to see the greatness of God that is found here as highlighted in the 26th chapter.

[4:44] Then Job responded, He says, I want you to see the greatness of God.

The greatness of God as declared by the man Job. It is really comforting to understand that Job makes this declaration here as a response to and even in light of Bildad's really senseless answer to his question.

And we'll see how they reconcile with one another in just a moment. But before we get into this beautiful poetic display of God's greatness beginning in verse 5, there is first a rebuke of the wise. Bildad is one who has positioned himself as a counselor and a man of wisdom. One who can speak, quote, truth and comfort and solace into the suffering of Job.

He has spoken with harshness from the very beginning. He has spoken with absurdity here in the 25th chapter. And he is bringing this reviling judgment against Job. Job begins his response of the greatness of God with a rebuke.

[7:01] And that rebuke is very intentionally given to the man Bildad. In the original Greek and Hebrew, the wordings here are singular.

It is responding to Bildad. He is not responding to all three of his friends, but he is responding to the one who has just spoken. And he responds with a little irony or tongue in cheek in which he says, what help you are to the weak.

And in his response, we notice how Job even defines himself. He says that he is weak. He says that he is without strength. He says that he is without wisdom and that he is needful of help.

But yet in his rebuke, he says, what help you are. How you have saved the arm without strength. What counsel you have given to one without wisdom. What helpful insight you have abundantly provided.

This is just a grand way of Job saying, Bildad, what you have just said makes no sense. I know everything that you have declared. These things are well known not only to me, but to all who look around upon the face of the earth.

[8:07] And the wisdom which you have just given me has been no help whatsoever. And he is rebuking him in his own wisdom. He said it has been no benefit. It has been no gain.

It has been no help. And as I am sitting here as one in need, yet what I find is I'm not finding what I need from you as my counselor.

And this is the reality that we saw before that it would have been more beneficial for Bildad to sit in silence than it would have been for him to offer useless or needless information.

Now that it is not declaring that the greatness of God that he has painted is useless or needless. But it's saying that it wasn't fitting for the moment. And how encouraging it is to know that if we are to give a word of counsel or a word of wisdom, let us make sure the word we give is a word fitted for the moment.

It is not good just to say something for something's sake. It is not good just to give a word just so that we have a space filled. Sometimes it is better to sit in silence. And the question he asked at the end there in verse 4 is really telling.

[9:18] He says, to whom have you uttered words? That is, who are you seeking to encourage by what you have just said? And even more telling, whose spirit was expressed through you?

He says, who are you seeking to encourage? And by what spirit are you speaking? You are not speaking with the wisdom of man, for all men know these things that you have declared.

And you are definitely not speaking with the wisdom or the spirit of God, for these things are of no benefit to the one sitting before you. The greatest rebuke that can be given us is that we are not speaking truth and love through the spirit of God to the people that God has put before us.

And Bildad here finds this rebuke. And as a matter of fact, I believe this rebuke that Job gives, some commentators think that at this moment Job may have paused to see if the third and final friend wanted to speak.

Because there is a break kind of in the dialogue that he would have said, do you want anything to say? And at that moment that friend would have said, I can't answer because I hear the rebuke given to Bildad.

[10:25] I have nothing to gain nor nothing to offer to the conversation. So we must tread carefully with how we bring, quote, comfort and counsel to situations.

Because if we are not careful, we will find ourselves at the end of a rebuke given by the one who is suffering. But after that, now we dive into this beautiful picture, this beautiful display of the greatness of God.

And this is not unintentional, by the way. For Bildad has just spoken of how great God is. And now Job is going to declare his greatness in even more magnificent paintings.

And he does so with this understanding. That even through all the suffering and the discomfort and the false accusations, even through all the trials and tribulations that Job has experienced, he has not diminished his view of the greatness of God.

He would declare the wonder and glory of God greater than Bildad, who has it all together. He would declare it in such a magnificent portrait and picture that some have ascribed to this being, in these short verses, the greatest portrait of the grandeur of the Almighty.

[11:57] That we find no greater one in all of Scripture than these few poetic verses in which Job has said. And when we let them sink in, we will understand the weight that they carry.

And this display of the greatness of God, Job breaks it down for us in different matters. He says in the first few verses that God is great because of the presence, the omniscient presence that he has. Bildad had said that God reigns the armies of heaven. That he is the ruler of the heavens. And that he is grand and high and lofty and lifted up.

Job acknowledges that. But he also expands that understanding. That not only is he the ruler of heaven, look at what it says. The departed spirits tremble under the waters and their inhabitants. Naked is Sheol before him. And Abaddon has no covering. So not only does he say that God rules over the heavens. Now he's going to go to the other extreme.

[13:05] And go to, he uses three different words to define the place of the departed spirits. He uses the word of the waters. Sheol and Abaddon. The waters being a place of covering.

Sheol being a place of the departed spirits. And Abaddon being a place of ongoing destruction. None of these, just so that we understand and comprehend this, none of these equate to what we would refer to as hell today.

I know in some translations it says that hell is naked before him. But it is not the same word that we have used in the New Testament. Nor has it the same meaning of hell, the lake of fire.

Okay? It's just, use that word in translation because it is kind of picturing this place of torment. But it is not a place of eternal torment. We don't have any words that really relate to this.

We don't have any words of this understanding because we're on this side of the cross. But we are taking it in the context of Job. They knew the spirits went somewhere in the same admittance that those spirits did not just cease.

[14:09] Think about that for just a moment. That the oldest book we have in scripture implies the reality that even the departed spirits are still in existence somewhere.

That man does not just stop at his death. And Job here makes the declaration that God is so great that even the dead, the spirits of the dead, tremble at his presence.

He doesn't just rule over the heavens above. He rules over the depths below. And all is naked before him.

He sees everything at all times. He is the ruler and sovereign of all places and all spaces. He is the ruler of the living.

He is the ruler of the dead. This theme carries on throughout scripture. This is why we have in the book of Revelation the spirits standing before him as he has raised them and coming before him for judgment and separation.

[15:18] Why? Because he is the ruler and he sees all and knows all and all tremble before him. It is his omniscient presence. Not only just confined to the heavens as Bildad has said.

But his omniscient presence of being everywhere at all times and all is laid bare before him. He genuinely knows all. The greatness of God.

But then he begins to depart from his presence and he begins to work of his creative power. He begins to look at creation and declare the greatness of God.

It says he stretches out the north over empty space. Now in our terminology that means little. But in a little reading it means he took the heavens and he stretched out the heavens over nothing.

And it stayed there. The north would just be everything above the pole. All of the stars and the sun and the moon and the planets. All of the heavens.

[16 : 19] He stretched them out. Which by the way we've said this before. Isaiah declares about the heavens being stretched out. Job says the heavens are being stretched out. And you know a few years ago the scientists finally came to the agreement that the heavens are being stretched out.

And we're thankful that everyone caught up with what scripture has been saying all along. But that he stretched it over empty space. Now this is wonderful because what we have is this testimony. And it's from Job.

The oldest book in scripture. That when God began there was nothing. Ex nilo is what we call it. Right? There was absolute nothing. And everything we see above us he stretched it out on nothing. And he just held it there. And then that favorite verse. The second half of that. And hangs the earth on nothing.

Many faiths believe that the earth rests upon something. That there is a pillar.

[17 : 21] Or an animal. Or something that the earth resides there on. But here we have the testimony of Job. In the earliest book of scripture.

That says the earth is absolutely hung on nothing. You say well why does this matter? Because if he stretched out the heavens on a blank space. And he hung the earth on nothing.

What is being implied here is that everything stays in place by the exercise of his own power. That the reason it stays there is because he's holding it there.

He put it in place and it didn't move. And he suspended it. And it stayed placed. And it stayed put. He didn't need something to tack it to. Or to pin it to.

Or to hold it down. He just stretched it out and said there you go. He created it. People say well gravitational pull and all this other stuff right. But it's only because things were revolving around other bodies.

[18 : 24] Which he created as well. And he put them there. And if he had not put them there and hung them on nothing. Then how would they be? It was an empty space when he started. He didn't have anything to hang it on or to place it upon or to build it upon.

He just had nothing. And yet it's there. And we see the magnificence of his creation. But he goes on. And he wraps the water in his clouds.

And the cloud does not burst under them. So in the imagery of Job. As Job is saying. And then we know that all this water is in these clouds. And the water is there. And yet the clouds which seem so light are not bursting.

And they're holding it until they bring it over here. And I love what Barnes said. Even in our day of scientific investigation. When we can understand the water cycle. It is even more magnificent that water evaporates. It's gathered as condensation into the clouds.

And eventually comes to the right combination of crystallization. And it begins down and it rains over here. We may be able to tell you what's happening. But can you understand how it happens? And how in the world this cloud can carry all the rain and the water that is needed over there?

[19 : 32] He says even the displacement of water is magnificent. And the clouds do not burst. He obscures the face of the full moon.

The literal wording there is of his throne. So some believe he is thinking literally here. Job is thinking literally of the throne of God being the heavens. It can be translated also the full moon.

So either way. It is he can obscure what is so bright and glorious. And in a moment we will not see it. He can cover it.

He goes on. He spreads his cloud over it. He inscribes a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light. And the darkness of the imagery he's given here is that of the horizon when you're looking over the sea.

And he says there's this beautiful arch. The sun rises and sets and it moves. And everything is inscribed and it's so perfect. Everything is so orderly. And yet God does that.

[20 : 33] He ignores the sea with his power. He calms the sea. And by his understanding he has shattered Rahab.

Which is this demonstration of evil. love verse 13 by his breath the heavens are cleared a little reading is that by his breath the heavens are made beautiful he adorns the heavens and then he refers to a constellation right after that and his hand has pierced the fleeing serpent so it's a very common constellation known to the people of that time and so what he is saying here is you get the

imagery job is making this this wonderful word picture that god not only stretched out the heavens on nothing that then he made them beautiful and he made them so beautiful that he set images in the stars and he made these constellations and he and he started painting in the heavens and by his breath he made it beautiful he adorned it and surely the heavens declare his glory and the work of his hands proclaim his name and job says we see the display of his greatness it is so magnificent that there's none like him it's not that he rules over the hosts of heaven it's just that he created all of heaven and earth there's no other way of saying it and in job's grasp of the greatness of god has not been diminished because of the suffering in this life he is wonderfully on point with how grand god is but we come to that last verse and it tells us of the limitations of man the limitations of our understanding because when we stand in view of all these things we are and we ought to be in all and what job is trying to do is create wonder in his hearers and the readers of the word wonder that god can make the heavens beautiful and that he didn't need anything to do it wonder that he could inscribe the beautiful arch of the sun and paint the heavens wonder that he could hang the earth on nothing but then he makes this profound statement behold these are just the fringes of his way he says when we look at the glory of god as displayed through his creative power and we stand awestruck at the magnificence he even speaks of the mountains where it says that the pillars of heaven those would have been the mountains that he shakes the pillars of heaven that is a declaration of the mountains for the times would have thought that the mountains were holding up the heavens and that's how they viewed things that they were shaking at the sound of his voice and when he's saying when you're looking grander and splendor and you see all this magnificence even when you can't grasp it and wrap your mind around it these are just the fringes of his power that it's the very tip of the iceberg job does not say this is the extent of his power he says these are fringes this is this is where we're beginning to see his power and we're beginning to see his wonder and we're beginning to see his greatness and all of this fails in comparison to give us a good view why because he says how faint a word we hear of him it is literally this that in all of this wonderful testimony that in all of this and by the way this is why i do not believe that you can come to christ through looking at creation

so creation testifies to the creator creation testifies to the reality but we do not come to salvation apart from the hearing of the word of god and we are not here unless someone preached and they don't preach unless they're sent right you have to have the word of god so we cannot say well if you just look at the heavens and you see that you say well surely there's a creator you can be saved that way no why because job even says here these things all of creation is a whisper is a whisper of how great god is he says like god has something so magnificent to tell us about himself but when we look around all we hear is a whisper how faint the voice and we don't hear it clearly granddaughters want to tell me secrets all the time they want to whisper in my ear and i don't always hear them clearly you know you just want to let pop up let me tell you something okay maybe pop up's hearing is going bad or maybe the whisper is too too silent and it could be a little combination of both i get it but i don't really i said one more time please one more time please and you don't really get it all the time why because it's a whisper now one granddaughter who doesn't like to whisper she likes to yell in your ear i don't have a problem hearing her i can hear her just fine i'll let you guess which one that is some of you know it's okay she's more like her mama than the other ones no i'm just joking jacy it's okay but it is it's a beautiful picture of that right what he is saying is that all of this grand great display is just a whisper of god's power and you say well why doesn't he speak louder well he answers that for us but his mighty thunder who could understand if god was to really thunder out his power we have no capability of understanding that because of our limitations in humanity god whispers to us of his glory his power and magnificence and his greatness is not veiled because he doesn't want it to be known it is veiled because we are limited in our comprehension of it it exceeds us it is so much further beyond us this is why i mean i'm currently reading the book of ezekiel ezekiel is one of the most confusing books of the old testament i'll just go ahead and say it that first chapter when you see the creatures with the four heads and the four faces and the wings and the feet and the wheels inside the wheels and and eyes everywhere light fires of lightning dashing back and forth and the rainbow over and and all this great you know i'm like wow that is what is going on here well what's going on is ezekiel is getting a glimpse i think the whisper may have got just a little bit louder and he is seeing the throne room of heaven and he doesn't know how to explain it why because of the limitations of our understanding have you ever noticed that isaiah chapter 6 in the year of king uziah's death i was called up into heaven and isaiah is in the presence of the father and isaiah is in the presence of the holy and

there's all these wondrous illustrations and descriptions you're like man what's going on here well the whisper got a little louder and go to the book of revelation where john is on the island of patmos and he gets this view of heaven he goes i think it's in revelation 4 begins to be a splendor thing like what in the world is going on here where the whisper got just a little bit louder and the reason it confuses us is it's beyond us we have a hard time understanding man has spent the entirety of our existence trying to figure out what god has been whispering to us all along we still haven't figured out creation and it's a whisper of god's power we spend a lifetime in the sciences and never figured out we can give scientific theories but we do not hand out scientific facts because we theorize about what we think is going on because we never know because we are the limiting factor we are the limitation and the moment that man thinks he has it figured out god whispers again and we go wow i did not understand that and so joe reminds us of the greatness of god and he tells us that the only thing that limits our understanding of his greatness is us now that's probably the greatest rebuke that bill dad could ever have because bill dad thought he had just declared to job that god was so great that man is not worthy of him and job goes you're exactly right but bill dad you don't even have the half of it figured out because he's even greater than you think he is he's even greater than your wisdom believes it is because wisdom says i have it figured out humility like job says we never will for i'm still trying to understand what he's been whispering to me all along because god is greater than our own comprehension all of these things are a testimony sure but they're just the fringe the fact that god created the earth and hung it on nothing and told it to stay there as sm lockridge said and it did it's just the fringe of his power the fact that god started with ex nilo and created the heavens and by his breath he made them beautiful and he adorned them it's just the fringe of his power it's just the french it's just a little bit of a silent whisper of what he can do so why does job not give up in the midst of that struggle is because he understood a little bit of the greatness of god god and he's calling us to do the same now in the very next chapter he will hold fast to his own righteousness he will hold fast to the testimony of his faithfulness but he's holding fast also to the goodness and greatness of god and the two are not in contradiction they're only in contradiction if we're living in open sin and we are deserving of the rebuke and chastisement that we get and then it is befitting of us to repent and turn but if not then we still hold on to the greatness of god even in the midst of very ungrateful situations so we understand here that job does rebuke build that but he exalts the almighty let's pray father we thank you so much for this day we are so thankful for this passage of scripture that reminds us of the fringe of your greatness and we know that if you were to thunder forth your power that none of us could comprehend it in your grace and mercy as a display towards us you show us what we can receive you show us what we can perceive so we thank you for the display of your power we thank you for the display of your greatness and we pray that we would fall in humble adoration before you and that we would continually lift you up in word and in deed and we would seek you and we would long for you and we would crave you more and more each and every day for you are worthy we thank you for the testimony of job that reminds us it is not your limitations but our limitations so may we come before you saying father show us more and more of yourself and we thank you for the blood of christ that has redeemed us and set us free that we may walk before you all the days of our life be with us as we leave here may each day find us growing closer to one another and closer to you and we ask it all in christ's name amen thank you guys you