

Job 27

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, go into the book of Job, Job chapter 27. Job chapter 27 is where we will be at this evening. We'll look at that 27th chapter in its entirety. Job chapter 27, it's one of the hinges in the book of Job. There's a transition point here. We'll see it by the time we get to the end of it. You'll understand what I mean.

So it is a marked transition period. We have those throughout the book of Job. The first two chapters kind of stand alone. There's this marked transition because we are introduced in chapters 1 and 2 to the scene in the courtroom of heaven.

And we understand the setting of what's happening in Job's life or what's about to take place in Job's life. In Job 3, we begin Job holding fast to his integrity. And we have the arguments and all those cycles that are going on there.

But Job chapter 27 is, again, another one of those markers in which we are bringing this portion to a close. We're going to start another one. Chapter 28 is kind of like a transition chapter. You'll see why here in just a moment when we get to it.

We'll kind of point towards that tonight, but we won't read it. But anyway, that's where we're at. Job chapter 27. Let's open up with a word of prayer. Father, we're so thankful. We're thankful to be able to gather together with one another. Lord, for the encouragement that comes from this midweek service, from the fellowship that we can enjoy with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

[1:31] And we pray that it would be a strengthening of our faith, a strengthening of our focus and commitment. We pray that it would cause us to grow together in Christ's likeness, that you would open up your word and help us to understand the word of God, help us to grasp its truths, but also, Lord, to have the hearts and minds to be willing to apply it.

We do pray for all that we do pray for all that's going on with our wants and our children and our youth. We ask as each week, we ask that Christ would be magnified, that our teachers would be encouraged.

We pray that throughout this place, that the glory of Christ would be what is put front and center and that we would all draw closer to you in our daily walk.

We ask your leading tonight, Lord, as we open up this book of wisdom, we know that true wisdom comes from you and we ask for that.

We ask for discernment and understanding and Lord, we also ask for a willingness to live as you have called us to do and we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

[2:42] As we've been making our way through this section in the book of Job, we have seen that we have been in the midst of observing an argument. Some commentators state that probably by this time, there is no longer just Job and his three friends.

We know that there is a fourth one that is there as well. We are introduced to him later after Job's extended speech. But many believe that there has probably been a small crowd gather around the ash heap, if you will, because Job and his three friends, his counselors, his comforters, have been in an extended discussion about their worldview and about what is going on in Job's life.

Job was a well-known individual. He would have been known in the community. He would have sat at the gate of the community. He would have been one that everybody was astounded at what had taken place.

And surely everybody would have been curious to find out why these matters had taken place. And so now, as the crowds are probably gathered around and they have been discussing going back and forth in a very controlled and very moderate style with each taking his turn, which has led some to think that it is kind of a made-up story.

But that was very customary, by the way, for the people of that day. You have your turn. I have my turn. And we'll all go around. And things have been going according to custom. Now, we are at the point where Zophar should share his third and final remarks.

[4:18] Zophar does not share as Job responds to what Bildad has just said in chapter 26. Zophar restrains himself. He has nothing to say, really, because Job is just given an undisputable reality that is before them every day.

Something in which Bildad has tried to respond to really flippantly and did not do a really good job at it. So, Zophar takes the wise course, which sometimes it is wise, just to be silent.

And so, since Zophar does not give his third and final response, Job will bring the argument to an abrupt end. So, as we look at the 27th chapter, I want you to see the argument's abrupt ending. That this is the end of the discussion of Job and his three friends. The next time we are introduced to the three of them will be when Job is asked to pray on behalf of them and God restores them. The fourth individual of the crowd there will speak to all of them collectively and give his wisdom and his perception. But this is the abrupt ending of the argument.

[5:26] An argument which, by the way, we come to no desirable end. There is no clear-cut conclusion. And the argument has been about why is Job going through what he's going through?

Why has he experienced such loss and such tragedies and such suffering and such pain?

According to the worldview of that day, it was clearly because Job was a man of great sin.

Job has held fast to his own righteousness and he has declared his own innocence over and over again. This runs very contrary to the perception of not only his three friends but everyone around him, everyone of that day.

And it makes no sense. And this is the reality of the argument. We are trying to figure out why Job is going through what he is going through. And they are doing it not knowing what we know took place in chapters 1 and 2.

But even though we know it, the question still begs to be answered. Why would God permit it? Why does he allow Satan to do what Satan desired to do?

[6:43] It was Satan who had Job in his heart already. Don't forget that. When God says, have you considered my servant Job? The reading, the literal reading there is, have you set your heart upon my servant Job?

Satan, have you been looking at Job and considering him? Are you already setting your attacks against him? And then God permits him to do what he had been thinking about already.

And the grand question is, why? And here Job will bring that argument to an abrupt end. And we'll read chapter 27. It says, Then Job continued his discourse and said, As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul, for as long as life is in me and the breath of God is in my nostrils, my lips certainly will not speak unjustly, nor will my tongue mutter deceit.

Far be it from me that I should declare you right till I die. I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go.

My heart does not reproach any of my days. May my enemy be as the wicked and my opponent as the unjust. For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, when God requires his life?

[7:59] Will God hear his cry when distress comes upon him? Will he take the light in the Almighty? Will he call on God at all times? I will instruct you in the power of God.

What is with the Almighty I will not conceal. Behold, all of you have seen it. Why then do you act foolishly? This is the portion of the wicked man from God and the inheritance which tyrants receive from the Almighty.

Though his sons are many, they are destined for the sword, and his descendants will not be satisfied with bread. His survivors will be buried because of the plague, and their widows will not be able to weep.

Though he piles up silver like dust and prepares garments as plentiful as the clay, he may prepare it, but the just will wear it. And the innocent will divide the silver. He has built his house like the spider's web, or as a hut which the watchman has made.

He lies down rich, but never again. He opens his eyes, and it is no longer. Terrors overtake him like a flood, and a tempest steals him away in the night. The east wind carries him away, and he is gone.

[9:03] For it whirls him away from his place, for it will hurl at him without sparing. He will surely try to flee from its power. Men will clap their hands at him, and will hiss him from his place.

And with that, the argument is ended. Job brings the argument that has been going on for a number of back and forth, and an extended period of time here to an abrupt end.

And he does it with kind of his final words. By the time we hear Job speak again, and you need to understand this, Bible scholars and commentators are out.

Is the 28th chapter the words of Job, or is it the words of the compiler of the book of Job? Is it the author's interjection into the account as it leads up to the 29th chapter, where Job once again begins to speak?

I tend to lean towards that interpretation, that the 28th chapter is the author of the book, who certainly is not Job, who is writing this kind of intermission, if you will, in the book.

[10:14] And then Job resumes his speech in chapter 29. The reason I take that place is because the 28th chapter does not introduce itself with an often repeated refrain, then Job said, or then Job spoke, or then, so it is the author, whoever it is.

We do not know who the author of the book of Job is, who is interjecting a break for us here, because when Job speaks again, it is no longer about the argument. It is his discourse, his extended discourse, on the ways and the power of God, and him trying to figure out what we would discuss in the 28th chapter.

But here, Job brings the argument between he and his counselors, or his comforters and friends, to an abrupt end, and he does it with just a number of ways. He continues to repeat the same thing he has said over and over again, but then there's a very difficult portion at the end of this chapter, which we must deal with.

But before we do that, we need to understand the conviction which he clings to. Notice the conviction which Job clings to. We've tried, in our understanding of Scripture, to know that there is a major difference between being convinced of something and having a conviction of something. You can be convinced in your mind that a reality is so. The book of James tells us that the demons believe in God and shudder or tremble. They are convinced of the existence of God.

[11:43] They understand the reality of God, and they know that he is there. There are a multitude of people around the world that are convinced about God. There are people that acknowledge that surely there must be a higher power, or there must be something to put all this together.

But they do not necessarily have a conviction of God. They do not have the conviction that he is the Lord God Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, the one who spoke us into existence and therefore sent his son to redeem us, that it is he alone that can save us, and he does it through taking on human flesh.

They do not have the conviction that would change their life because you can be convinced of something and make no changes. But if you have a conviction, then you have to change. And here we understand that Job is living in a matter of conviction.

He has not yet convinced his friends, but their lack of being convinced does not affect his conviction. Something that is very clear in Scripture that we need to understand is that the people of God have always been called to be people of conviction.

Why? Because there will be people in the world, sometimes even those friends of ours, who will question who we are and why we do what we do. And the only way we can be ready to give a defense for the hope that we have in Christ and to be ready to answer why we take the steps and we live as we should is if we are people of conviction.

[13:12] Job has a conviction which he is clinging to. It says, then Job continued. This word here is different. It doesn't say Job responded. It is that Job continued. This is what leads us to think that at the close of the 26th chapter, Job would have paused and given Zophar time to speak.

Zophar did not speak so then he continued to speak. He continued to tell forth his discourse and said, as God lives. Now this is not just a flippant terminology because Job is now inducing an oath wording here.

He is calling an oath upon himself and he is basing what he is about to profess upon the very existence of the Lord God. He says, as surely and truly as God lives who has taken away my rights and the Almighty who has embittered my soul.

So he is calling an oath upon himself. He has such a conviction. He has come to this place where he said, as God is my witness and as surely as he lives and if he is not, it is implied in the wording

and the phrase, and if he is not, let him strike me.

He is taking it to the uttermost level. He says, it doesn't matter what you think. It doesn't matter your feelings. It doesn't matter what you're convinced of. It doesn't matter what you declare to be true in your own eyes.

[14 : 48] As God is my witness, he says, for as long as life is in me and the breath of God is in my nostrils. This is really telling, by the way, because two times in this chapter in just a few short verses, Job will attribute that God is the giver and sustainer of life.

And so what he says here, as long as my breath is within me and as long as the Spirit of God is coming out of me. And when he makes this statement here where he says, and the breath of God is in my nostrils, that word breath is a very different word.

It literally means spirit. As the Spirit of God is in my nostrils. And what he is declaring here, keep in mind, this is the oldest book in Scripture, right? He is using the same phraseology that we find in the book of Genesis where it says that God breathed life into Adam.

More than likely, Job would have had people talking to him and word would have traveled across the generations and say, yeah, we came into existence because God breathed His Spirit into us.

So what we find is that Job is attributing his existence, the very existence of his life, to the reality of God's Spirit sustaining him and keeping him alive. It will be Job who says that if God calls His Spirit back to Himself that all men would cease, that all people would die.

[16 : 14] And so here, he is making the statement. He said, not only as long as I am alive, but as long as I am being kept alive by the Lord God who has breathed His life into me, my lips will certainly not speak unjustly.

Nor will my tongue mutter deceit. He says, I'm not going to say any differently no matter what anybody thinks about me, no matter what anybody says about me, no matter how more anybody sees me, no matter anybody else's opinion about me.

Why? Because conviction is not concerned about opinion. Conviction is concerned about truth. And he makes this statement, far be it from me that I should declare you right till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

He says, it would be easier if I just said, you know what, you're right, but until I die I will not put away my integrity. And then he makes the next statement, I hold fast my righteousness.

Here's the conviction of Job. Job knew he was living in integrity and he knew he was living with righteousness. Not because of pride, but because of a relationship with the Lord God who was sustaining him.

[17 : 36] Friend, listen to me, man and circumstances may take everything in the world away from you. It took the family away from Job, it took all the possessions away from Job, it took his most intimate relationships away from Job when his wife looked at him and said, curse God and die.

It took his standing in the community away from him because no longer would anybody even look at him without being on board in him. It took his friends away from him, it took all of his financial prosperity away from him.

The circumstances and the trial took everything away from Job but the one thing it could not take away from Job was his integrity and his righteousness because we can only give that up ourselves. No matter how much the enemy attacks you, no matter how much Satan hurls abuse at you, no matter how many trials and tribulations you face, he cannot take the integrity and righteousness you have before the Almighty.

You have to give that up. And Job said, I will not do it. Sometimes we have to endure it, sometimes we have to go through it and sometimes we have to sit in the middle of it and that may be all we have.

[18 : 48] But if the conviction we have is when we cry out and say, God search me, oh Lord, try my desperate heart, let me know if there be any wicked ways within me and if God has declared us clean, do not let the enemy convince you are anything but clean.

And if the enemy is sitting on your shoulder trying to tell you you're worthless but God says, you are my precious child, do not let him take that integrity and righteousness away from you.

Hold on to it, cling to it, because it's the truth of the word of God. It was Job who said, I would position myself before the Almighty and let him say about me what he will.

I want to hear what God says about me, I care less what you say about me. The world was judging but Job was living by conviction. How do we endure trials? How do we endure struggles?

How do we endure the most difficult seasons we will ever go through is we will not let go of integrity and we will not, we dare not let go of righteousness because we belong to him no matter what anybody else thinks.

[19:54] That's conviction because there will be times where everybody around us may doubt us. Everybody around us may talk about us, they may say other things, they may put us down, let it happen.

you hold fast. We can't let go of who we know we are because the moment we begin to let that go, the enemy is rejoicing.

What was the purpose behind all of Satan's attacks on Job? He wanted to see Job give up his integrity and righteousness. He said the only reason he has it, God, is because you blessed him. Job says, I don't have it because he's blessed me because even when the blessings are gone, I'm still holding on to it. We'll get to that in just a moment. This is the conviction Job clung to.

What convictions do you cling to in the midst of the storm? What are you holding on to? If it's anything that you have done, any work or effort you may have put forth, anything that you may have accomplished, it will crumble.

[21:06] But what are you clinging to when it gets bad? What convictions do you have? And here's the convictions. Secondly, we notice in our passage starting in verse 12, the condemnation of the godless.

One of the accusations that Job's friends made against him was that he was condoning the godless, that he was speaking favorably of them. And they declared that he was doing so simply because they believed that Job himself was godless.

And when Job would say, well, look at all their prosperity, look at all the good things they enjoy, look at everything they're going through and God does not judge them. So the temptation for them was to say, well, see, Job is saying they're okay, there's nothing wrong with them.

But yet Job leaves no doubt here because he declares condemnation. He says in verse 7, may my enemies be as the wicked and my opponent as the unjust. By the way, this is kind of recurrent of the Psalms we read, right?

The Psalms of judgment that we would like to see God do. And now we understand he's on the other side of the cross. He knows nothing about the Mosaic law. He knows nothing about sacrifice.

[22:11] He knows nothing about forgiveness. He knows nothing about grace. He knows nothing about mercy. He knows nothing about any of those things, right? He knows that there is a holy God who is sustaining him. So he literally asked, by the way, in case there's any doubt about it, the people he's aiming this remark at in verse 7 are his three friends and whoever else is gathered around him.

The wordage tells us that. He is speaking about the people around him. So he says, may my enemy be as the wicked and my opponent as the unjust. So he says, what I'm about to declare, if you are really against me, I'm going to trust that God would make you like them.

For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, when God requires his life? So here we begin to see the condemnation of the godless. The first condemnation we find is that they have no hope.

hope. It was Barnes who said what Job is referring to is not only just the godless but also the hypocrite because in light of the context he's talking about his friends who are promoting godliness but they're doing it in a very ungodly fashion.

They are promoting self-worth but they alone are not really the ones worthy for the only one that is righteous in the whole multitude of them is Job. So this is the hypocrite or the godless individual and what he is saying is what hope do they have?

[23:36] And when he speaks about hope he makes the second mentioning of the reality that God is the giver and sustainer of life because what does he say? What hope do they have when God requires their life?

The literal reading would be requires their soul. There will be a day when God requires the soul of every individual. and he says and on that day the godless or the hypocrite have no hope.

The overarching condemnation is there without hope. Why? Because it says will God hear their cry? If the hypocrite or the godless are crying out to God in that moment will God hear their cry? Job has been one by the way who was a man of prayer. His friends had accused him of not really crying out in holiness but God had said I hear him over and over again.

We see this throughout the book of Job and what Job says here is one of the condemning matters of the godless is that God doesn't hear them. Will God hear their cry in that moment?

[24 : 38] It is a great gift of the almighty by the way that he hears us. He hears our cries and it gives us hope.

Verse 10 Will he take delight in the almighty? There's a lot in that verse right here. Here's the question for the godless or the hypocrite.

Will he take delight in the almighty? What your delight is or what you find delight in is a testimony to the true character of our heart.

And Job asked a very probing question here. Will he take delight in the almighty? Job is delighting in the almighty and yet if you look at the judgment of his friends and you look at the world view that was accepted by the majority of that time the delight was really found in the blessings of the almighty not the almighty?

Even in today's time we have to ask ourselves in what do we truly take delight in? Is our delight found in his blessings or is it found in his person and who he is?

[26 : 17] could we like Job make the declaration when every blessing of the almighty is taken away from us and no quote unquote benefit from being righteous seems to be obvious in our life if our life testifies otherwise would we still delight in the almighty even if or as he would say elsewhere though he slay me is he alone our delight or is it what he brings us that is our delight see the godless can delight in the almighty's blessings I mean who doesn't delight we find in the book of we find in the new testament that the rain falls on the righteous and the unrighteous that every man enjoys the sunshine and every man enjoys the blessings of creation testifying we understand that we understand that the godless can delight in what god provides and take no delight whatsoever in god himself but it is the godly who know that their delight is in the almighty himself even if he doesn't provide anything else even if the prayers aren't answered or the blessings don't come or the trial is never stopped is he our delight i believe there are moments in each one of our lives where god allows us to get to the place of self-inspection where we find out what are we truly delighting in are we delighting in him are we delighting in what we get from him because the godless find no delight in the almighty but those that are his know that he is the treasure that is hidden in the field with a pearl of great value and great price he is the precious possession as the psalmist says the nearness of god is my greatest good he is our delight my prayer over the last few days god help me delight in you even if nothing else happens may my delight be in you and in you alone that's a dangerous prayer i believe because sometimes he removes the other things so that we can find out if that truly is our delight but job asked a very penetrating question because one of the condemnation of the ungodly is that they have no delight in the almighty but they rejoice in what he brings he says will he call on god at all times because if he is our delight then at all times not just in the hard times or difficult times or the trying times we will call upon him here is the condemnation we find of the godless in verse 12 job says behold all of you have seen it why then do you act foolishly or why do you give vain counsel and this brings us to the third and final thing of the chapter and that is the conflict with which they wrestled admittedly starting in verse 13 and going to the end of the chapter in verse 23 it is very difficult for interpreters to find out what exactly is going on you say well why is it so difficult because everything that job says in 13 through 23 his three friends would nod in agreement go amen we've been saying that all along well that's what we've been trying to get across to you job

I'm glad you're finally getting it and so biblical interpreters have tried to reconcile this in a couple of ways I'll go ahead and tell them to you we're the Wednesday night crowd we don't mind studying it just a little bit stretching our minds and thinking through these matters some uncomfortable for us and so people know that people!

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all of this now that's a possibility and I don't pull far away from that one because that word could be there it could fit in the original language that he could just be by the way in closing arguments it was never uncommon as a matter of fact it was always very common for me to repeat back to you everything you've just said me some of us do that in arguments all day did I just hear you right did you just say this this this this this and this and and some would think well that's what Job is doing Job's saying you've been speaking all this foolish stuff because what you've been saying to me is all of this but then here's another thing I want you to consider and I know what you want to say is pastor just tell us what it says well that would be good but then we wouldn't have to lean in and think

a little bit what if for just a moment Job was living in the same world as his friends and he had the same view that they did now that's not a far stretch as a matter of fact it's probably very accurate what if Job very accurately says God will judge the wicked which is exactly what these verses say that the enjoyments of the wicked will not last forever what if God what if Job's worldview going into this mess was that God blesses the righteous and God judges the wicked and that was conventional wisdom and what if Job is wrestling with that reality in his own life because he knows based upon his own conviction that there's nothing unrighteous in me that God is such a just and holy God he will judge the wicked he will not allow them to prosper he will not allow them to continue on because God is good and this is the very thing that Job is wrestling with because what he is saying is

I agree with you that that's normally right but in my own life there's something different in my own life there's there's this anomaly that I can't figure out and I can't understand it and I don't know why it's happening and so when we get to the end of the argument what we find is that that Job is saying the conflict is not just with me and you the conflict is also internal because I'm wrestling with the very same things that you're saying to me that everything we know about God is that God shows favor to the righteous and God condemns and judges the wicked Job knew about the flood Job knew about Sodom and Gomorrah Job knew about God's righteous standard right Job knew about all these things and so what Job is saying is I'm wrestling with this too and I can't figure it out and the argument ends here

[34:58] I don't have the answer for I know who I am and I know who God is and yet here I am in the midst of it and I have no answer now I will go ahead and tell you that's probably my interpretation and the reason I lean that way is because of the 28th chapter the best commentary on scripture is what?

scripture don't ever take the text from its context the 28th chapter follows the 27th chapter pastor it makes sense well yes it does but it not only follows it because it's chapter 28 it follows it because we are left at the end of chapter 27 with Job saying I don't know I don't have the wisdom to figure this out and the author of the book of Job whoever it is it chooses to interject chapter 28 here because chapter 28 is all about wisdom where can we find wisdom?

man has accomplished a lot it would tell us the 28th chapter is astounding by the way because it talks about the industry of man it talks about mining ores and going to the depths of the earth and swinging in caverns I mean it's amazing you know we seem to think that man was some Neanderthal not doing anything but when you read Job the oldest book in scripture they're digging out of the ground these precious metals and all these ores and it talks about all that and it says but we can't find wisdom there look at everything we can do but we can't find wisdom so chapter 28 is all about wisdom it's about trying to figure out this problem how can I be living faithfully and still experiencing tragedy?

I'll go ahead and give you a teaser because chapter 28 ends exactly where the book of Psalms begins the beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord your God and to obey him in all your ways what's the remainder of the book of Job about?

fearing God and obeying him and then God speaks because God is the author and the source of wisdom he is the only one in the room who knows what's going on not even Satan really knows what's going on he is the all wise one he is the possessor of wisdom it tells us he holds wisdom and what chapter 27 tells us is at the end of the conflict Job needs wisdom we know it because we've read ahead what he really needs is the Lord God but in the midst of it he says I can't figure this out because I agree with everything you've told me but I know who I am and I'm in the middle of the conflict I believe any other interpretation of the 27th chapter is trying to reconcile the internal conflict that is going on inside of Job because how many of us when we're going through it even when we're holding to conviction are not wrestling on the inside doubting and questioning and wondering [38:40] God acknowledges that and what he is going to tell us is you don't have the wisdom to figure it out when we say why is this happening you can do a lot but you are not the possessor of wisdom I am and that's why the book of Job is really constantly pointing us to the almighty not to our circumstances and we find the arguments abrupt in here in Job chapter 27 thank you my brothers side note we've got to get a taller stool up there because I can't see you over the monitor anymore so when I say thank you and I don't see the I don't know if the cameras went off or not you're away away away