

Job 29

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[0:00] Job chapter 29 is where we will be at this evening. We'll try to make our way through it because I know that we have a business meeting as well. So when you came in, you should have gotten that information.

You should have had the minutes from last month's meeting, the budget and finance report, and end of prayer list. All those things are out there. Thank you, Sean, for having them for us. But before we get into that, we're going to go to Job chapter 29.

That will be our text with one another. Job chapter 29. Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful for just the glorious opportunity it is to gather together with one another.

We thank you for your faithfulness to us. We thank you for the favor that you show us in giving us a time and location and a people together with that we may be encouraged midweek.

We praise you for your word. And Lord, as we prepare to open up your word, we pray that we would understand it. You would give us a heart and a mind to see the truth that it contains. You'd give us lives to desire to apply it for your glory and your honor.

[1:02] And Lord, we ask that it would not just be a collection of information, but rather it would be life transformation as we study the word of God with one another. We also pray that you continue to be with all of our classes from the nursery to the teenagers.

We pray your blessings upon them. We pray that you would minister through the teachers and that the teachers would be encouraged to exalt Christ in all ways and in all manner. We ask that the gospel would be clearly taught and displayed and that boys and girls would know the love of the father found in Jesus Christ.

So in all ways and all things tonight, we ask that you be glorified and honored in our time gathering together. And we ask it all in Jesus name. Amen. Job chapter 29 is where we're going to be.

I'm going to go ahead and let you know that if we separate this text from its proper context, it kind of gets a little distorted. We will not have time this evening to get the entire context of it because chapter 29 is fit in a larger portion of Job's speech.

It is the largest speech of Job in the book. So it covers chapters 29, 30 and 31. Each of the three chapters give kind of a really great division.

[2:12] Chapter 29 is a look back. Chapter 30 is a look at the present. And in chapter 31 is calling on God to pronounce judgment if any of these things are going on. So we could say that it's more of a future tense.

This is one of the transitional periods in the book of Job. We said chapter 28 was kind of a hinge on which things shifted. We do not think or at least I don't think.

Some people do and it's not like it's a major biblical issue. So if you are under the impression that Job said everything in chapter 28, that's okay. I'm not going to throw anything at you. I believe that it is the author of the book who inserted chapter 28 kind of as a transition to kind of remind us, to refocus us of the problem at hand.

The problem is not that Job and his three friends don't get along. Okay, that's not the problem. The problem is not that Job's three friends are all distorted and messed up and they have a bad worldview. Because we find in chapter 1 and 2, we know what happened.

We know what took place. Job is a man living in the favor of God. We'll see that again in just a moment. He is living with the blessings of the Lord God. He is living faithfully before God. And God permits Satan to do what Satan wanted to do.

[3:24] To try and to test and to prove Job and to see if Job would sin in the midst of his struggle. If he would deny the Lord his God or he would disown his faith because it got difficult and hard.

It was a testing not of Job's character because his character had already been affirmed as being perfect, but rather endurance. It is a testing of Job's endurance of the faith.

So the argument that transpires between Job and his three friends are really why is Job entering into this? So it's not a question about why bad things happen.

I know that that's what we want answered. We want answered why do bad things happen to good people? That's a question that gets asked all the time. It is really more of a question about the character of God, where true knowledge can be found, and how we should walk in relation with the Almighty in the midst of those bad things.

And what does it look like to walk before the Lord God Almighty, who does indeed have control of everything that comes our way, even those things that are permitted? It is really the wrestling of where is true wisdom.

[4:35] To put it in a nutshell, do we have God figured out? And if we have God figured out that he blesses those who does good and he judges those who do wrong, then we can fit God in our little box and we can put him in our pocket and then we can go on about our life.

And as long as our good outweighs our bad, then God is sure to bless us. And then we run into characters like Job that was doing everything right and still the whole world fell apart. So it is really the understanding that God is so much greater and grander than us, which is why the 28th chapter swings the hinge and reminds us that wisdom is not found among us.

We are not wise on our own. We can be intelligent, we can be smart, we can gain knowledge, but it does not mean that we are wise. Wisdom is found with the Almighty. The repeated refrain through the books of wisdom in Scripture is that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To have a reverence for the Almighty, a holy reverence that states, He's not like me. He's so much other than I am.

I can't figure Him out. And when we begin to say, I can't figure God out, that's the beginning of wisdom. Because we're not going to have Him figured out. We can have His ways that are revealed to us.

[5:52] We can have some attributes of God that are revealed to us in Scripture figured out. But we dare not say that we know how things work. We have this real clear-cut retribution theology.

This is how it happens. And if it doesn't happen, then something wrong is going on in our life. We dare not do that because Job tells us we can't. So when we get to chapter 29, Job is speaking again.

One of the reasons why I do not believe Job said the contents found in chapter 28 is because there is no introduction that Job said it. We find that introduction in chapter 27, and there's a very clear break there in the 23rd verse, the last verse, chapter 27.

And we see the same introduction found for us in 29, and there is no clear break until we get to the end of chapter 31. So let's just read in the context. And some of you say, does that really matter?

Well, not really, but I'm kind of a Bible nerd, so I kind of wanted to share that with you, okay?

Because now Job is going to speak again. And this will be his final speech. This is his, not his closing arguments. We've already had that. This is his one great lament.

[6:56] Chapter 3 is Job's lament, like, I wish I was dead. I'm suffering so much. I wish I was dead.

And that is how his friends responded and said, Oh, you can't talk like that. Oh, you can't. I can't believe that you would have those feelings and those thoughts.

And that's what started the whole argument process. That was a short lament. This is Job's extended lament. Things have went on now for some extended period of time.

And he's going to give this lament. And what we do not find is the three friends don't speak again, but Elihu does. And he really says what we have found out all along, that sometimes God permits things to happen to test us and to try us.

And then finally the Lord God speaks. And so we hear Job's extended lament. So when we read chapter 29, and I know it's a long introduction, understand that what he's doing, this is just part of it. The 30th chapter is really where it kind of starts talking about. But now look at me, and we're not going to have time to get into that. So long introduction. Job 29. And Job again took up his discourse and said, see, there's the introduction.

[7:58] Oh, that I were as months gone by, as in the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone over my head, and by his light I walked through darkness, as I was in the prime of my days, when the friendship of God was over my tent, when the Almighty was yet with me and my children were around me, when my steps were bathed in butter, and the rock poured out for me

streams of oil, when I went out to the gate of the city, and when I took my seat in the square, the young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men arose and stood.

The princes stopped talking and put their hands on their mouths. The voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to their palate. For when the ear heard, it called me blessed, and when the eye saw it, gave witness of me, because I delivered the poor who cried for help and the orphan who had no helper.

And the blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me, and I made the widow's heart sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me. My justice was like a robe and a turban.

I was the eyes to the blind and the feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know. I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth. Then I thought, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. My root is spread out to the waters, and dew lies all night on my branch.

[9:19] My glory is ever new with me, and my bow is renewed in my hand. To me they listened and waited, and kept silent for my counsel. After my words they did not speak again, and my speech dropped on them.

They waited for me as for the rain, and opened their mouth as for the spring rain. I smiled on them when they did not believe, and the light of my face they did not cast down.

I chose a way for them, and sat as chief, and dwelt as a king among the troops. As one who comforted the mourners. Now if you look just at verse 1 of chapter 30, it says, but now.

But now. So there's a transition. So I want you to see in chapter 29, recollections of the former days. Recollections of the former days from Job, the mouth of Job, as he is just stating his lament. Now, in context, much of what Job states in this 29th chapter is indeed an answer to the accusations of his friends. As his friends have accused him of living in open sin and wickedness, they have said that there are a number of things that he is really guilty of.

[10:24] One of the things he was guilty of is neglecting the orphans and the widows. He has been jealous with his money. He's selfishly hoarding it. He hasn't been sharing his money. So as Job looks back on the past and he recollects his former days, he indeed answers a lot of those accusations and speaks against them saying, this is what I did.

One thing that is very telling in our text is that none of the three friends say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, Job. You didn't do that. So we know they made accusations, but they had no grounds except for Job's suffering to make those accusations.

There was no eyewitness testimony. There was none that could argue with the reality of what Job said. So this, again, just reaffirms for us what we already know.

And the reason we already know, don't lose sight of this, God has declared that Job is righteous and perfect in all of his ways. So no matter what anybody else says about him, God has already said in Job 1 and 2, have you considered my servant Job?

He is perfect in all of his ways. And man has made all these false claims. Man has lied about him. Man has said all these things. Job will respond to those here. Nobody will have grounds for saying, Job, you didn't do that.

[11:36] Nobody can call witnesses to the stand. There's nothing of that nature. This just reaffirms for us that the testimony of God and the observation of man match.

That Job has indeed lived as God says he has lived. And we get that from his recollections of his former days. He is in the middle of a lament. And this lament will pour forth in the next two chapters. He will really be broken over his present condition. He will look forward to the future and he will say, if I have done any of these things. By the way, it's one of the most glorious passages that we find in the Old Testament even as it speaks to slavery.

If anyone tells you that slavery was an accepted practice in the Old Testament, you know, we can get into all that as well. But even when Job says, if I have looked down on my servants and not realized that they were fashioned in their mother's womb such as I.

And he paints this great equality among mankind. Scripture has always elevated humanity, by the way. So even in the midst of his lament, he's still saying great truth.

[12:41] But before he can really show his brokenness, he needs to look back at his former days. And he wants to remind them of who he once was and how he once lived and why this situation is so astounding now.

He introduces this recollection, this reminder of his former days with the favor that he experienced. Some critics of Scripture said, oh, Job is so prideful here and he is so arrogant because look at his boasting and he's talking about how prominent of a position he held and how he did all these good deeds and I thought you weren't supposed to let your right hand know what your left hand was doing.

And yet Job is saying, I sat as a king. But they forget that the first half of this chapter really declares the favor that he experienced. Job introduces all of this former life with this.

Oh, that I were as in the months gone by. And he doesn't begin to speak of his own fame or of his own fortune. Notice what he says. As in the days when God watched over me.

As in the days when God watched over me. When his lamp shone over my head. And by his light, I walked through the darkness. And I was in the prime of my days when the friendship of God was over my tent.

[14 : 00] Notice that. He says when God and I were in such sweet fellowship. And so everything that follows is an overflow of the favor of the presence of God.

Everything that is declared to be a reality in Job's life is a result of the favor shown to him by God's presence.

That God was a lamp over him. A light into the way he should go. That the friendship of God dwelt in his tent. That the Almighty surrounded him.

Before he declares any material possessions. Before he did. Now the only thing he says and my children were around my table. All these things are attributed not to his own work.

Not to his own efforts. He doesn't say anything about the number of deals he made in livestock and how he was selling camels and doing all this stuff here. He doesn't tell you how he made his fortune.

[15 : 07] We know he was wealthy. We know he was wealthy because of the number of animals he owned and wealth is kind of measured in possessions. In the Old Testament we know that he was greatly blessed. He doesn't do any of that.

He attributes every bit of it to the favor of God's presence. This is the oldest book in scripture. And one of the greatest testimonies that we can have of an individual saying the blessings in my life were a direct result of the favor of God.

Now it's even more amazing when we realize this is pre-Abrahamic covenant. You know before God ever said I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.

Before God ever said I will make a great nation out of you. This is before the law. Before the Ten Commandments. The only covenant that is in existence during the days of Job is the Edenic covenant.

The covenant God made with Adam. That the seed of a woman would crush the head of the serpent and the serpent would bruise his heel. That's all he's got. God said he would crush the head of the serpent. And God's a powerful God and I'm going to walk in favor with him.

[16 : 13] And now the favor of God he is walking in friendship with him. Probably looking back to where God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. Right? And he would fellowship with him. And so he was making himself a friend of the Almighty and everything else that comes is a result of that favor.

Here's the favor he experienced. It is the favor of God's blessed presence in his life. He said it was such a favor that my steps were bathed in butter and the rock poured forth streams of oil for me.

That's just the way of saying that everywhere I stepped it was blessed. God's presence. Why?

Because it was the light of the Lord that was shining on the path. And God led him in paths of righteousness and in favor and in the presence and the blessings of the Almighty.

God used this presence. Now Job is really aware that God is still near him. But now in his current position God is near him in judgment not near him in favor.

But he's looking back at the former days and he says the favor I experienced was that the friendship of God was over my tent.

[17 : 39] And that led to the honor he enjoyed. Because the friendship of God was over his tent and he had such favor from the Almighty there was honor because those who walk in favor with the Lord often enjoy honor among men.

Those who are favored by the Almighty do not have to strive to earn honor among men. It is often a result of the honor they get among men.

He says when I went out to the gate of the city so here we see that he held a position of honor. He had honor in his physical positions.

He would go to the gate and he would take his seat in the square. Now to us it means very little to go sit in the gate of the city but to them it was a place of honor. It would mean that he was someone who was making critical decisions for other people.

That he had the honor of holding a position of being one who would sit down. and the honor that was bestowed upon him the young men saw me and they hid themselves. It says the old men arose and stood.

[18:47] The princes would close their mouths and the nobles would hush their speaking. Job was given such honor. And it was simply because he says this honor that I enjoyed was a direct result of the favor I was experiencing.

That God's presence in my life led to honor among mankind. By the way the greatest way to get honor is to walk in favor with the Almighty.

What does it tell us? That even the Lord Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. Too often we are more concerned about our honor among men than we are our favor with the Lord God.

But Job said that this favor I enjoyed led to the honor that I was experiencing here and they were looking at me as one who was revered.

He says for when the ear heard it called me blessed and when the eye I saw it gave witness of me. He says people just wanted to be in my presence. When we contrast that with what we see in the 30th chapter that the young men will scorn him and laugh at him and they will mock him and the children call out to him now he is in a place of dishonor.

[20:10] But here for this moment because the favor of God rested upon him there was the honor of man that was exhibited in his life. And this is another critical critical thing that we must hold on to.

Just because we fall out of honor among men does not mean we have necessarily fallen out of favor with God. We need to be more concerned about our relationship with the almighty than we are our standing among the people around us.

I read today a story I love by the way I love the story of George Mueller if you don't know anything about George Mueller he was a pastor in the 1800s in England that decided that the church had kind of lost the reality that God was still the God of the Bible and that God would answer prayers the way he did in scripture and the church of his day was kind of stagnant so he said I'm going to be that man and at that time they had not that I would ever do this I'm just going to tell you at that time they had a money box in the back and the pastors would always say hey put your money in the box and that's how they raised their salary so what Mueller decided to do is he took the money box this is how he started his walk of faith took the money box out of the church they're working up there and so it was essentially like not taking up an offering they never took up an offering again he said I'm just going to trust the Lord to provide this is how he started his own walk trust the Lord to provide for my needs and he would pray about it pray about it never took up an offering and his needs would be met anyway by the time Mueller died he had started the Bible literacy foundation where they were just giving out Bibles across all of Europe he was supporting a multitude of missions like

China Inland Mission Fellowship of Hudson Taylor he had built four orphanages that by the time of his death he was in his early 90s I think he was like 92 or 93 that by the time of his death they had cared for over 10,000 orphans off of the streets of London because there were all these orphan kids but one thing that Mueller never did is he never let anybody know his needs he would always be transparent with his budget so you have a budget report tonight but the budget report he published was always two years old and he would always show you what God had done but he would never tell anybody what he needed he always just wanted to pray and by the time Mueller died it was calculated that in his lifetime over eight million dollars this is in the 1800s over eight million dollars had been channeled through Mueller's prayers through Mueller's hands to minister to orphans Bible distribution and missions eight million dollars but when they totaled his life net worth they added up all his possessions his entire net worth was eight hundred dollars at his death not very honorable among men he was a pauper for all purposes among mankind but was very favored of the Lord in prayer do not let honor among men be your primary motivation it is a secondary reality of the favor we enjoy from the almighty but it is not the one thing that we are to pursue seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things will be added to you third and third we see

here not only is it the honor he enjoyed it's the work he engaged in Job looks back at his former days and is very specific about the work he engaged in look at what it says I delivered the poor who cried for help and the orphan who had no helper the blessing of the one who was ready to perish came to me that is when someone was starving and when someone had no means they came to me and I blessed them I made the widow's heart sing for joy and I put on righteousness and it clothed me and justice was like a robe and a turban I was the eyes of the blind and the feet of the lame I was the father of the needy and I investigated the case which I did not know I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his mouth here's the work he engaged in the accusation against Job was you've just been hoarding your money and you've been so selfish with it and you could care less about it and that's why God is judging you it's because look how rich you are Job look how much money you got

[24 : 39] I mean look at all these cattle and look at all these sheep and these donkeys and all these things look at everything you have I mean your kids throw a party at everybody's birthday so much so that you have to pray for them because they throw such luxurious parties and look at you're just so selfish and Job says no it wasn't no it wasn't this is what I was doing by the way if you ever want to know why God says that he was perfect in all his ways because look at what he was engaged in with what God favored him with what does it say in the book of Isaiah is this the fast that the Lord requires what is the fast that God asks of you but that you would feed the orphans and care for the widows that you would feed the hungry and clothe the naked and give the thirsty something to drink that you would have concern for those around you that are helpless Job was doing all that he didn't have Isaiah he didn't have the book of James he didn't have pure and undefiled religion and the sight of God is this Job was living pure and undefiled religion that's what he was doing that's what he was engaged in that's why God could favor him because he who is faithful and little will be entrusted with much Job is a testimony of that right and the world is accusing him that he wasn't just because he was prospering but he said this is the work I was doing this is what I was engaged in and nobody stands up to declare that he's lying nobody argues the fact because there is no arguing because I'm sure if they were to go around town and ask everybody yeah he was there for me but also let this set in just a little bit Job had done this for all these people and now in his moment of need nobody's doing it for him so if you wonder why Job is in such despair he had been this for everyone and now he's lost it all his health is falling he is the one that's in need crying out and nobody's helping him there's a lot of accusations coming against him there's a lot of false claims but nobody's relieving his stress nobody but the almighty knows and he will speak he will restore it brings comfort to that that we do not necessarily need man to provide for us for the

Lord our God will be indeed in the end do it but in the midst of it if you want to know why he's so broken why he laments so much is because the hand that he has extended has not been extended back towards him and he can't understand it because this is the work he's been engaged in this entire time in all of this this favor and this honor and this work led him to this confident expectation at the end notice his confident expectation then I thought 18 verse 18 then I thought Paul says it this way be careful when you think you stand lest you fall then I thought I was reading again the story of David God's supernatural deliver some of you just reading that you just made your way through first Samuel you're in a second

Samuel right now and I was reminded in first Samuel if you're going through that yearly reading plan you've read it in first Samuel God supernaturally delivers David time after time again two times Saul is brought before him and the first time David cuts the corner off of his cloak and refuses to kill him the second time David goes and gets the spear in the jug of water remember that all these times that that Saul is pursuing him and yet God is sustaining him and God is keeping him and David is sparing but there's something that happens after that second encounter when Saul leaves you know two times he's been freed and he gave him a spear in his jug and Saul's like I'll never pursue you again now Saul's prone to lie we know that so we don't put a lot of stock in Saul's word so we can't blame David for that but then David does the weirdest thing David flees and goes to king of Kish and he feigns insanity and he goes and lives in that land and he gets himself in a lot of trouble his wives and all of his people's people they're in ziklag they get carried away and he has to fight all this battle and then I ask myself why did David go there and it's because David consulted with himself and David said to himself surely Saul will not quit pursuing me David quit consulting with the Lord

God for just a moment and started consulting with himself Job says and then I thought confidence usually comes the easiest when we consult with ourselves I know what I should do I can talk myself into doing just about anything can't you I can justify anything I do I can be very confident and fairly confident in anything that I think that I ought to do because it's a good thought to me I consult it with myself David consulted with himself and he ended up feigning insanity and he writes these these great psalms about the desperation of that moment we can read that but here it says that Job had all these things going for him and then I thought I shall die in my nest and I thought that seems weird but what he is saying is I should die in peace and comfort and everything's going to be great I mean look around me the lamp of the Lord is over me the friendship of God fills my tents my children are around my table I have a seat in the square at the gate I am a voice to the voiceless I'm helping all these people whooh surely I will die in peace then I thought and I shall multiply my days as the sand and my root is spread out to the waters and the dew lies all night on my branch that's just a good way of saying the favor of

God is so real right now it's never going to stop my glory is ever new with me and my bow is renewed in my hand that's just a picture of enduring strength many people believe that the chapter should end there that the last few verses are an addendum by a scribe or Job could have said them either way it doesn't matter if we were to end the chapter right there in verse 20 where it says my glory is ever new within me and my bow is renewed in my hand he thought that and if we would go to chapter 30 but now or what if we read just a little bit further to me they listened and they waited and they kept silent for my counsel after my words they did not speak again and my speech dropped on them they waited for us for the rain and they opened their mouth in spring rain I smiled on them when they did not believe and the light in my face they did not cast down I chose a way for them and said as chief and dwelt his king among the troops and who comforted their mourners but now but now it's really easy in seasons of experiencing the extreme favor of God and the blessings of the Almighty to convince ourselves that this is how it's always going to be it's really easy to convince ourselves this will never change it's really easy to look at our circumstances and say this is where

[31:57] God's going to keep me and most of the time it's because that's where we want him to keep us that's where we want him to leave us because it's enjoyable we dare not dictate to God what he's going to do with us the rest of our lives because that removes the dependence upon him the book of James says come now you who say today and tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and we will make money and we will store up breath and we will do that be careful when you think that's what you're going to do rather he says you should say if the Lord wills and I know what you're asking you're asking the same thing I would ask why would Job ever think God would will anything else than him staying in that position why would God ever will for everything in Job's life to fall apart the gospel answer to that question is because the will of God for your life is not about this life the will of God has eternal implications and is played out in temporal circumstances why would God permit that because Job learns things about God that he would never learn had he not

Job ends up in a relationship with God that he would have never been in had he not and by the way Job's three friends learn a lot about God if Job had never went through that four lives eternally impacted because God willed that Job not be here the rest of his days as he thought I have found that we must be careful of having too much confident expectations of this is how it's going to always be our confidence needs to lie not in our expectations but in the one who holds the future in his hand and we see that found in Job chapter 29 as Job looks back at the recollection of his former days thank you my brothers may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may