

Job 11

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 June 2026

Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] Amen. Go into the book of Job. Job chapter 11. Job chapter 11 is where we are at this evening.! Job 11.

Chapters 9 and 10 have been Job's response to the accusations of his guilt by his other two friends and their admonition to repent.

And if you remember, there's this reality called retribution theology or double retribution theology, which is prevalent in the book of Job and is prevalent among Job's three friends in particular. It really is a theology that is even prevalent today. And the book of Job really is given to us to dispute this retribution theology.

We don't call it that by today's standards. Often we kind of approach it differently, but its mindset and the worldview that accompanies it is very prevalent even in today's time.

[1 : 22] Retribution theology or double retribution theology says this, that if I do not have bad, I am punished and therefore the punishments and the displeasure in my life is a direct result of the bad things I have done.

If I do good, then I am rewarded and honored and therefore the blessings in my life are a direct result of the good things that I have done. Now, undeniably, we do reap what we sow.

So we find that principle in scripture as well, that if we sow sinful behavior, then we will indeed reap sinful outcomes. But there is also the reality that there is suffering in this life that may not be connected to sin in our life or misbehavior in our life.

There's this thing called the fall of man, which has led to the introduction of sin in this world. And the reality that this world has a prince that is not Christ yet.

He has not established his throne upon this world and established his reign over it yet. We are in that waiting period. And so it is really this temptation to look at our lives and say, well, if there is something going on in my life, something that is a discipline or wrong or suffering, then it must be a result of something I have done.

[2 : 45] Or if things are going good, it must be a result of something that I have done. That is retribution theology in a nutshell. The danger in that is that's also how we judge the people around us and how we perceive others faithfulness and how we perceive their walk with the Lord.

And it just comes this reality where much of our judgment and our blessing rest upon our activities. And that's really what is going on in the book of Job.

We have the grand privilege of seeing the picture in its entirety. We see the courtroom in heaven.

We see the scene where the adversary or Satan stands before God.

We see the accusation that he makes of Job's faith. And we see God permitting him to test that faith and to test. But Job's friends do not. Job himself does not.

Job is certain of his own righteousness. He is certain of his own worthiness, not in a matter of pride, but in a matter of confidence and in a matter of certainty.

[3 : 47] He knows of no sin in his own life. Yet, his life is a display of one who is under the judgmental hand of God. This is a patriarchal or pre-patriarchal time in history, which means there are no priests, there's no tabernacle, there's no temple, there's no sacrificial system, there's no law.

So really, you're looking at the book of Genesis, early pages of the book of Genesis, before we get to Genesis 12. So you're actually probably in a time period, if you want to set it historically, between Genesis 11 and Genesis 12, which I know when you open up your Bible, it's just a turn of a page, but you're seeing the time between the fall of the Tower of Babel and the call of Abram out of the land of the Ur-Chaldeans.

There are a number of years that transpired during that time. And it is that time period in which we more than likely find Job. Where man knows there is a God, a creator God, and it is something that

has been passed down from the garden.

Man's life is still rather long of days, and so there is this wisdom that has been passed down. They understand the judgment, the reality of the flood would still be present.

They understand the sacrificial system a little bit. I mean, it is something that Cain and Abel testifies to, and they know. We even see Job sacrificing. But it is the whole relationship with the Lord that Abram will experience when God calls him to form a nation.

[5 : 17] It really answers the question, if we read it in the proper context, why was it necessary for God to call Abram out of the land of the Ur-Chaldeans? Why choose a particular people? And it answers that question for us because without doing so, each of us would be stuck in the mind frame and the worldview of Job and his friends.

We would not know what it looks like to live in a communion relationship with holy God and how then we could live in the midst of our struggles and trials and pains.

We would all be in this point of view going, well, then everything that I do bears weight on what happens to me. And to a point, that does. But we can't take it to its final end, and we'll see that in just a little bit.

So I want you to see, I know we're a long introduction, but in chapter 11, I want you to see the trap of self-righteousness. Because really what double retribution theology does is it leads us to self-righteousness.

It's like, I am blessed because I have done right. I have obeyed God. I have fulfilled the commands. I have lived as I should, even though there were no commands given during this time.

[6 : 27] But I am doing what is right, what God expects, so therefore I am self-righteous. And there's a trap in that. The word of God says, If you would know, direct your heart right and spread out your hand to him, if iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and do not let wickedness dwell in your tents, then indeed you could lift up your face without moral defect.

And you would be steadfast and not fear, for you would forget your trouble as waters that have passed by. You would remember it. Your life would be brighter than noonday. Darkness would be like the morning.

Then you would trust because there is hope. And you would look around and rest securely. You would lie down and none would disturb you. And many would entreat your favor. But the eyes of the wicked would fail.

And there will be no escape for them. And their hope is to breathe their last. Now we find the final of Job's three friends.

I know that there is a fourth one that will speak later on. But he is not counted among Job's three friends. Now there are in each one of his friends a grain of truth.

[8 : 32] There are things in which they declare that are true and right. There are longings of his friends that are answered. Zophar here says, would that God would speak.

And naturally, later on, God does speak. God does declare to Job his glory and his splendor and his might. He does instruct Job of his ways as far as Job can comprehend.

But unlike what Zophar desires, Zophar desires that God would speak and show Job his sin. When God does speak, he shows Zophar his sin. It is almost ironic that the longing of the three friends of Job is answered by the time we get to the end of it.

And yet it is not answered in the way that they had expected. It is because each one of them are approaching with a common worldview. It has been declared, and I believe rightfully so, that Zophar, since he is the last of the three friends to speak, is more than likely the youngest of the three, though he is probably still older than Job.

All these men are considered to be older and therefore wiser because of length of days of their life than Job, ones that can instruct him and minister to him and show him the way in which he should go.

[9 : 47] And since he is the last to speak, he is more than likely the youngest of the three. But he is also the harshest of the three. He gets right to the point, declares Job's guilt, calls him a fool, speaks of him as being one that just uses a multitude of words.

He holds nothing back. There is no concern for Zophar for the suffering nor misery of the ash sheep. There is a proverb I read, I cannot remember where it originated from, that said, the deeper the sorrow, the less the need for words.

There is no concern for that as Zophar looks at Job. He cares little about the misery in which he is experiencing, but he is very abrupt with his words.

Each of the three friends of Job speak multiple times. Zophar only speaks twice. He does not take part in the third discourse in which the other two will.

Some believe it is because Zophar has nothing else to say. There is no arguing with this wild, foolish man. He has already said what he has declared. He is very pointed. He calls it like he sees it, but unfortunately he sees it through the lens of self-righteousness.

[11 : 07] He sees it as one who knows better and more than Job, and there is a trap there. There is a trap that we must be careful of when we begin to perceive the world in this way, and it is something that we have to be intentional about, even in our own lives.

It's easy to point and say, well, that was the problem of Job's friends, but it can also be the problem of each and every one of us. When we perceive those around us who seem to be in the midst of one thing when possibly something else is going on, sure, there are moments where we need to speak the truth, but we understand that it is the truth in love rather than the truth with the intention of hurting.

Even though Zophar speaks some grains of truth, they are definitely tainted by his worldview. Each one of us, by the way, wake up with a worldview, each and every one of us.

It is called, in Latin, since in labium, your situation in life. How you have lived your life dictates and determines your worldview.

That is, the difficulties you've went through, the sufferings you have experienced, the joys in the mountaintops and the valleys, each one of those is filtered into how you perceive those people around you, those people that you allow to speak into your life.

[12 : 26] I have met people before that said, well, I don't want to let anyone influence me. And I said, well, that's really kind of ironic because you are most definitely influenced by the people you put around you.

It is not a matter of if you are influenced, it's a matter of who you let influence you. This is why we have to be guarded about what we read, when we read it, and who we listen to. In today's time, more than any other, there are more voices speaking louder than they have ever spoken, trying to be influencers, not just for the good, but for the bad, and some of them doing it in the name of good. But not all influencers are good influencers. And I don't mean it in the, you know, popular way now. I mean it in the way in which they're publishing and printing. And I've said it before that I appreciate old books, but not even all old books are good.

So we need to be careful about what we allow to speak into our life and to shape our worldview. It is not until we have really formed and fashioned that worldview shall we then introduce people that will maybe challenge our worldview.

Do I read things that challenge my worldview? Yes, absolutely. Why? Because I do not want to be so isolated on an island that I get very narrow-minded in my thinking. We are called to be a thinking people.

[13 : 44] Christianity is unique, and it is unique in that it gives the people the right to think. Every other religion says, obey, obey, obey, obey, obey. Do what we tell you to do, and everything is good.

Christianity, on the other hand, says use your God-given mind because God has created you and formed you with his presence, and you are made in the image of God, and therefore you have the soul capacity, which they refer to, the ability to think and to know and to experience.

So sure, we're called to think, but it is not until we have fashioned our worldview securely can we then begin to introduce things to us that may challenge us because there's danger in self-righteousness.

Job's three friends have gathered around him to minister to him, and unfortunately their idea of ministry is to correct his wrong perception of himself for it is kind of ironic, again, that he is the one who is definitely righteous and perfect as God has declared in the presence of his sons, of the holy angels, and yet his friends think that he is the one among them that is the most wrong.

And man is exalting and really exaggerating their energy to try to correct one that has declared his right. And then you understand it is because of worldview.

[15 : 09] The first thing that we notice about this self-righteousness is especially with Zophar is that it takes offense at Job's assurance.

Zophar is offended at the very assurance that Job has in his own faith. He makes the declaration, shall a multitude of words go unanswered and a talkative man be acquitted.

Job has indeed spoken more than any of them, but if you remember when his three friends showed up for seven days, they sat in his presence and no one said a thing until Job opened his mouth and began to speak.

Each time that his friends speak, Job responds. I love the fact that Job will respond in the 12th chapter and he will look at his three friends and say, oh well, aren't you a lot of help? I'm paraphrasing a little bit.

You didn't tell me anything I didn't already know. And he is reminding them that this wisdom that they claim to have is not a special wisdom given to them that is apart from him.

[16:08] And yet we find that Zophar is offended at the assurance that Job has. And his offense is because what Job professes doesn't match what he sees.

He sees a man that is suffering. He sees a man that is in misery. He sees a man that has lost everything and it is beyond the capacity of retribution theology to conceive of one who is walking in obedience and yet still suffering.

It is cutting off the second half of Hebrews chapter 11. We love the first half of Hebrews chapter 11, the heroes of the faith chapter. Those who overcame by looking unto a city whose builder is not of this world.

Those who overcame the world. Those who shut the mouths of lions. We love the first half of that. But it is the second half that said, but then there were others who were sawn in two, who were killed and crucified and died for this world was not worthy of them.

In my office, I have several copies of the book of martyrs. I opened it up at times so I can understand that Christianity, while it is empowered a lot of people, it has also cost a tremendous amount for a lot of people.

[17:30] But in Zophar's point of view, it is beyond his imagination that God would permit suffering for one who has such a bold assurance as Job.

And he's even offended at the fact that Job talks so much. Why would Job be so argumentative? How in the world could he ever question or challenge the position of God?

And he makes even a false accusation against Job. He says in verse 4, For you have said, My teaching is pure and I am innocent in your eyes. If you were to go back to verse 7 in the chapter that precedes this, Job says, According to your knowledge, I am indeed not guilty.

That word, not guilty, means to have no fault that is known to me. I know that's a lot of wording there. But to have no realized fault. There is nothing that I am aware of that is offensive to you.

But what the accusation that Zophar makes is you have said that you are perfect. Job never said that. But yet, the confidence that Job had in his faith offended Zophar so much that he implied, Job, you are claiming purity and perfection.

[18:55] This is something Job has never said. And he is looking into it a little further. Why? Because he cannot reconcile suffering and God's goodness.

We have the beauty of the New Testament where we read the what ifs. What if God permitted this and what if and all these realities but in their limitation of worldview?

Bad gets bad and good gets good all the time. And what Job does is it challenges that worldview because if we're just completely honest it is how we would love to see it.

That when I give my life to Christ then everything is going to be great. That when I surrender my life to Christ and I accept him as Lord and Savior that I have the one who's conquered in the heavenly host I have the one who is over all and above all and through all and in all.

And we would love to think that it makes everything great. But reality in this life what it does is it introduces us into a spiritual battleground that sometimes will not be great.

[20:06] and there are those who are offended at the assurance of others and Zophar is such a one. And he is offended because he believes that Job's assurance belittles the position of God.

But still even this this self-righteousness it shows us the limitations of man's wisdom. For he says yes but would that God might speak and open his lips against you and show you the secret of wisdom.

What Zophar is implying here is that Job you do not understand God so much so what he says is for sound wisdom has two sides knowing that God forgets a part of your iniquity. So the implication is that Job you're only suffering half as much as you deserve to suffer.

Now there's some truth there too. God in his mercy does not bring the judgment which we are all deserving but what it seems to be implied here by Zophar is that God is only giving you half of what you deserve because you're so wicked and I wish God would just tell you so that you would understand but yet here is Zophar who is not suffering so it seems to say if you knew as much about him as I do then you wouldn't be suffering just like those who say if only you would be a little bit more faithful in prayer or in your word and all these problems would be taken away from you sometimes God heals and sometimes he doesn't and sometimes the greatest healing is when he calls us to glory it is something that we must be careful of because he begins to speak of the greatness of

God and I find this kind of telling that Zophar says can you discover the depths of God and can you discover the limits of the almighty and we know the answer is resounding no they are higher than the heavens it's almost as if he's looking up to heaven saying we can't even see the expanse of that but he's higher than that he's deeper than Sheol he's further than the measure of the earth and grander than the sea we will never comprehend him but in stating this in his own self-righteousness what he is saying is but I know him because it's beyond his ability to conceive of a God who would permit suffering even in the one that has done no wrong the one who says that you cannot discover the limitations of the almighty is the one who seems to imply that I know what he does and how he does it in our own limitations we cannot conceive of this for we do not know his ways are not our ways his thoughts are not our thoughts we understand it we have the beauty of the rest of scripture we have the the beauty of God's full revelation given to us in Jesus Christ and we see the reality of this but then there are times though where we seem to want to mold and shape God and declare that God must behave this way may we never lose sight of the reality that our perception of him is limited by our world view even here in America we are so limited in our world view for we perceive of

[23 : 33] God the way we define him and yet he does things that are beyond and above our understanding even the one who is calling out the greatness of God cannot conceive of a God who would allow Job in his righteousness to suffer that goes beyond his experiences and experiences speak volumes but do not speak complete truth and he says that Job must be an idiot for an idiot will become intelligent when the fool on the foal of a wild donkey is born a man he says Job you're speaking foolishness careful in our own self righteousness when we declare to be the one who know it all and understand it all as Zophar is saying but he has wisdom he says but I know about this God but isn't it amazing that God is doing so much more than what Zophar knows about about the time I feel like I have God figured out I found out that I do not that is just one of the realities that we understand of our own limitations the way we think that we have it all figured out and the way he works we come upon something that challenges us and something that moves us and we understand that we need to come to this place of surrender that he is God and we are not

I was reading today this is kind of makes my mind smoke a little bit but I understand this I'm going to give it to you as best as I can okay do not be so hung up on the sovereignty of God that we reduce the free will of man but do not be so hung up on the free will of man that we reduce the sovereignty of God and I love how R.C.

Sproul put this that God is so sovereign that he works through man's free will and that is that what God has decreed will happen and he can decree that it will happen so much so that he knows you would choose to do it told you to make your mind smoke for just a little bit stay with me and though you are free to make that choice he uses your freedom to accomplish his purposes for he causes all things to work together for good for your freedom is not greater than God's sovereignty but God's sovereignty is greater than your freedom because if our freedom is greater than God's sovereignty then there are some things God cannot control the danger that we think is that if God's sovereignty is greater than our freedom then we are under his control but it is not a conflict of nature because God has created us free but he also reigns as sovereign and he rules in absolute so while we are free to make decisions that sometimes may affect us adversely and we think that we have done things contrary

God is absolutely in control of each and every one of those and he uses them for his glory whether in our life or in the lives of others see what happens when we begin to try to search the limitations of our understanding of God God is so much bigger than we think he is Zophar knew he was big but he was bigger than Zophar thought he was which brings us to this third reality is this trap of self-righteousness is that if we're living in self-righteousness it gives us a very shallow foundation

there's one repeated refrain in the friends of Job and it is the refrain of self-righteousness the refrain of self-righteousness and it is it is really the hope of retribution theology and it is rooted in this one world view that everything that happens to us is all about this world which we can view because notice

I don't write in this Bible but in the Bible that I do write in the one that I mark up I don't do in this one because it's the one that I preach out of so it's a great distraction to me but a circle and underline this word if it is a big word but notice what it says if you would direct your heart right now you and I know you have no ability whatsoever to direct your heart for the heart of every man is desperately wicked and if you were to direct your own heart there's no way you could direct your heart right the direction that you want to take your heart naturally and I want to take my heart naturally is into sin that is our own temptation that is something that we need to understand but the world view that says if I do right I get good thinks that it can direct its own heart we cannot direct our own heart it is above and beyond us that is why we need God to step in and intervene and give us a heart transplant we need this heart of stone removed and to be given a heart of flesh we need a heart that is sensitive to his leading and we need his word implied in our heart but if you could direct your heart right we read this and it's like

[28 : 45] Zophar is telling Job to repent but his repentance is not based upon the faith of another rather upon his own efforts notice what he says if you would direct your heart right and spread out your hand iniquity is in your hand put it far away from you I've tried that friend it doesn't work we need someone to take it away we cannot put it away we cannot clean ourselves up we cannot make ourselves right and do not let wickedness dwell in your tents if you could do all of those things if you could then here's the if then statement then indeed you could lift up your face without moral defect and would be steadfast and not fear for you would get your trouble as waters that have passed by you would remember it if you could only change your heart if you could put all the wickedness away from you then you could walk around in confidence then you would be sure and steadfast this is the heart cry of every individual this is the heart cry of my life before

I knew Christ as my Lord and Savior oh how often I tried the if part if I could just clean my heart up if I could just get rid of this sin if I could just cleanse my tent if I could just take care of all these things then I know I would be okay but the reality is none of us can do the if so we never get to the then none of us have the ability on our own in our ability to take care of our heart and to take care of our tents and to take care of the sin for that is our nature but look how shallow this is if you could take care of that then notice what it says your life would be brighter than new day see the hope the expectation of retribution theology is that your life would be the best life now that sounds a whole lot like something I hear in present day reality you can live your best life now friend I don't want to live my best life now I want my best life to be the life to come and Christ says they've hated me and they will hate you it runs contrary to everything scripture teaches us afterwards but it is the cry of the self righteous

If you get right your life would be wonderful we get right by surrendering our life to Jesus Christ and I've read scripture I've read the testimony throughout church history and so many of those who were right with Jesus Christ their life looked miserable from the world's perspective for this is not their hope this is not their home this is not the world we're looking for but look at the shallowness of this your life would be as bright as the!

day darkness would be like the morning then you would trust because there is hope hope is not found in the ability to clean up our own life and you would look around and rest securely you would lie down and none would disturb you and many wouldn't treat your favor all three of Job's friends have this same refrain clean up your life and it'll be great that's not the hope we're for because life can be great and you can still be going to a place of Christless eternity it is the shallowness on which they are basing their faith verse 20 says but the eyes of the wicked will fail and there will be no escape for them but that their hope is to breathe their last the literal reading there legacy standard has a little reading and I appreciate it but it brings a little greater forward into this it says but the eyes of the wicked will fail and the only hope that they have is that their soul will die that's what it means to breathe their last that the soul will perish here's the reality the soul of man is eternal it never dies so there is no hope even in death just like our reward is not in this life our reward and our hope is not found in this life death doesn't end the suffering or the misery and death is not the closure of any hope or expectation of glory rather it's the introduction into glory now we dare not cast judgment upon these friends for they are learning a lesson

God will restore them through the prayers of Job we understand that Job will pray for his friends and they will be restored and Job will be blessed and God is doing so much more than just working in the heart of Job God is working in the heart of his three friends as well too because I promise you by the time we get to the end book I know their worldview would have changed they will know more about God than they ever had had Job not suffered but do you know what the temptation of Satan was what the accusation not the temptation but the true accusation of Satan was that Job only worships you because he gets a reward in this life and the very thing his friends are asking him to do repent and be rewarded is the very thing that Satan accused him of Job says I will worship though he slay me later on the rewards of this life do not affect our worship it is the worthiness of the one we worship that affects our worship not what we get in return it is his worthiness his position in spite of all that happens to us the good or the bad but the temptation of

[34 : 48] Satan and the accusation is you only worship because it's going good let it all fall apart and you'll walk away thankfully Job does not his three friends seem to think that he has but God is opening up their world view and he's going to show them who he really is this is a grand book of revelation not just to Job but also to his friends and to all the world and it will introduce us I believe into calling Abram so that then the world may know what it looks like to live with a God like that to live in relationship with a holy God who is so much further above and beyond all we could ever think or imagine before we get there we have to understand the trap of self righteousness that Zophar and his buddies have stepped into that it is real easy to think we have it figured out when really we have nothing figured out and we see that in

Job chapter 11 thank you brother