

Job 12- 13:2

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[0:00] It is going downhill. It must be because you have done wrong. It is backward reasoning. Looking at an individual. Looking at what is happening in their life.

And saying now I can see the misery they are in. And it is the assumption that because of this misery it must be their fault. Now this is not something that is unique nor confined to the book of Job.

Because it is just as prevalent today. It is amazing when we open scripture. We are opening in the book of Job the oldest book in scripture. Historically setting. We are opening what is some people consider one of the oldest historical writings in the history of man.

It is most clearly one of the oldest if not the oldest historical writing of poetry in the history of all mankind. And yet there are some phenomenal truths that are declared there.

And there is this same reality that is just as existent today. It is true that Ecclesiastes says there is nothing new under the sun. And so if they have answered Job according to that retribution theology.

[1:08] We call that conventional wisdom. That is why it is still prevalent today. It is still conventional wisdom. You know that if you do bad things you are going to get bad things. That is conventional wisdom. We just understand it.

The book of Psalms contains a lot of conventional wisdom. Train up a child in the way that he should go. And when he is old he will not depart from that. That is conventional wisdom. That is not always an absolute truth.

Because you may train and you may do the best you can. But still they may choose to go wrong. And that is not conventional wisdom does not mean absolute truth.

There is a big difference there. And we need to understand that. Because too often we want conventional wisdom to be absolute truth. But it is not. It is what is normally true.

So be careful in the book of Job. Naming and claiming. Be careful in the book of Psalms. Or even the book of Proverbs. Naming and claiming.

[2:08] Because all of these contain conventional wisdom. There are promises in scripture in which you can put a statement and say yes. That I am going to hold down to. And those are things where God says thus saith the Lord.

Or Christ says this is what I will do. Those are truths. Those are absolute truths. Those are things you can hold on to. But that is not what we find here in this conventional wisdom.

So Job responds to his three friends in three chapters. 12, 13, and 14. In chapter 13 starting with verse 3. He shifts his focus from his three friends.

And he begins to address God. That is a great transition now in the book of Job. We are not going to get to it tonight. But I want you to be mindful of it. Because you will see that. Because essentially what Job says is. What you have told me is of no use to me.

Therefore I will to speak to the Lord God. Now it is astounding. Because everything that Job. The way and the manner in which Job answers his friends. Will be the same way that God will indeed answer Job.

[3:10] The same realities that Job brings up with his friends. Which are absolutely true. Will be the very things that when God does speak. By the time we get to the end of the book.

Around Job chapter 33. And God begins to speak. He is going to say the same thing. But it is Job who is asked for that encounter. It is there we find in chapter 13.

That though he slay me. I will trust in him. And so we see Job in his integrity. We see Job in his. Not in his self-righteousness. But in his declared righteousness.

God has declared that he was righteous. And he was perfect. He was complete. That Job says I will trust him. Even if it kills me. And I have to die in this mentality. But before he longs to speak to God.

God. He first addresses his friends. Not individually. But as a corporate body. And in that address. We see here. Starting in chapter 12. Verse 1.

[4:08] Really the insufficiency of conventional wisdom. Conventional wisdom is insufficient. It falls woefully short. Of the realities and the problem of mankind.

Now while we can hold on to it in personal lives. And say yes this may normally be true. It is insufficient. It is not our be all end all.

So be careful in passing judgment that way. And we'll see it. Let's see the word of God. It says then Job responded. Truly then you are the people. And with you wisdom will die. But I have intelligence as well as you.

I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these? I am a joke to my friends.

The one who called on God. And he answered him. The just and the blameless man.

Is a joke. He who is at ease. He holds calamity and contempt. As prepared for those whose feet slip. Whose feet slip. The tents of the destroyers prosper. And those who provoke God are secure.

[5:08] Whom God brings into their power. But now ask the beast and let them teach you. And the birds of the heavens and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth and let it teach you. And let the fish of the sea declare to you.

Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In whose hand is the life of every living thing. And the breath of all mankind. Does not the ear test words?

And the palate taste its food? Wisdom is with aged men. With long life is understanding.

Understanding. With him are wisdom and might. To him belong counsel and understanding.

Behold he tears down and it cannot be rebuilt. He imprisons a man and there can be no release.

Behold he restrains the waters and they dry up. And he sends them out and they inundate the earth.

With him are strength and sound wisdom. The misled and the misleader belong to him. He makes counselors walk barefoot and makes fools of judges. He loosens the bonds of kings and binds their loins with a girdle.

[6:09] He makes priests walk barefoot and overthrows the secure ones. He deprives the trusted ones of speech and takes away the discernment of the elders. He pours contempt on nobles and loosens the belt of the strong.

He reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deep darkness into light. He makes the nations great then destroys them. He enlarges the nations then leads them away. He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth's people and makes them wonder in a pathless waste.

They grope in darkness with no light and he makes them stagger like a drunken man. Behold my eye has seen all this. My ear has heard and understood it.

What you know I also know. I am not inferior to you. Look at the insufficiency of conventional wisdom.

Job responds to his friends. His friends have been adamant. If you remember, in the progression of his counselors, if you will, they started out with a little bit of softness and discernment.

[7:15] By the time we get to the end of his counselors, they are referring to Job as a babbling windbag who is boasting needlessly and who does not understand the deep things of God.

The last to speak of his counselors declares that God's wisdom is unsearchable, but yet for somehow another this counselor understands his wisdom. He longs for God to speak and to reveal the hidden mysterious things.

And yet since God has not spoken, he is using Job's friends to reveal these mysterious things to Job. And as Job responds to his friends, he reminds his friends that indeed what they are offering to him are not hidden truths.

They are not mysterious in nature. They are not secret. Rather, they are conventional. They are the very thing which all of mankind understands. They are the matter in which he says, So then, and very ironically, he declares with a little bit of sarcasm, Truly, you are the people.

And with you, wisdom dies. And in this sarcastic remark, what Job is saying is, Oh, you are supposed to be the all-wise. Keep in mind, Job is the youngest of the four.

[8:28] The counselors are all older than him. And he is declaring here, So you're the ones who are supposed to tell me. But by the time he ends his response to them in the 13th chapter, he says, Everything you know, I know.

And the heart cry of Job is, Give me something new. Give me something deeper than what I already know. For my circumstances and the trials and the suffering and the misery that I'm in. I cannot answer that with conventional wisdom. I cannot figure it out. And so I need something deeper than what you're offering me. The reality is that each and every one of us enter a season by the gracious, merciful hand of God in which we are formed and fashioned in those deep moments. Those moments of discord. Those moments of darkness. Those moments of really sometimes suffering. Maybe not physically. Maybe it's more emotionally. Sometimes it's mentally. Sometimes it's just psychologically. But there are those moments where God is beginning to form and to fashion us. And he puts us in the furnace, if you will. And it is in those moments that the easy boxed answers really can't answer the question that we are asking. [9 : 50] The conventional wisdom cannot speak to the moment in which we stand. Now we know because we're on this side of the cross. That it is in those moments that Christ is calling us to lean into him.

To draw near him. I am excited as we get to 2 Peter this Sunday. We will be in 2 Peter chapter 2. We'll begin to speak of false teachers and false teaching and false prophets and the reality of their existence.

And the wonderful thing is that in Deuteronomy it tells us how to guard ourselves against that. I'm not going to give it to you tonight. But the answer is really just leaning in. And just be careful who you're leaning into.

And this is what Job is saying. He says, you've come to help me, but you are no help. Because you haven't taken me any deeper than I've already been. And God is really permitting these trials. Not so that God can find out who Job is. Never lose that. God had declared from the very beginning that there is none like Job. He is righteous in all of his ways.

[10 : 58] He is complete. God knew the integrity of Job. And what he's calling Job to find out is Job needs to know the righteousness of God.

And he will never know that through conventional wisdom. For conventional wisdom is insufficient. You do not really truly know the Lord your God by the boxed answers that all humanity accepts. This is why we gain great insight from reading those writings of those who have suffered much. Even those who are not successful in this world.

Those who have walked through the darkest valleys. Some of your greatest hymns and songs and spiritual writings throughout history have been those that were formed and fashioned in moments of darkness.

That was something beyond the conventional. And we see in our text why it is so insufficient. The first reality we see is that it fails to address the individual.

[12 : 12] Conventional wisdom is good for the multitude. It is a great truth that we can declare. We should declare publicly as the book of Proverbs tells us that our congregants as a church ought to train up their children in the way that they should go.

And when they are old they will not depart from it. That is a great public declaration. It is a great public declaration to say that you reap what you sow. It is a great public declaration to say that if there are matters in your life which are results of sin then you need to repent of those and to turn away from those.

Those are also great and private matters. But those box answers really don't do justice to the individual that is suffering. For when we are face to face with someone in a situation that is unique we need not just to give them a scripted answer but rather we ought to address the individual and lean into them and to know exactly what is going on in their life.

That is discipleship. And we ought to seek to address that individual in such a manner because here Job says you're not addressing me with the accusations and the judgments and the answers you're giving.

And he makes this statement. He said am I the one who spoke to God and God answered? Am I the laughing stock of my friends?

[13 : 43] And by the way that's not pride. Job is just declaring a reality in his life. He said I am one we know if we go back and read where he had interceded on behalf of others and God had answered.

He had petitioned the Lord on behalf of his children and consecrated them and set them apart. He had done so for the orphans we'll read that later and the widows and he had ministered to people

and Job here makes a statement that everyone listening to him knows.

He said I am the very one that would speak to God and God would answer but now simply because my circumstances have changed I'm the laughing stock.

You're forgetting who I am as an individual. You're just looking at the appearances of what's going on in my life rather than considering the testimony of my living.

And he takes it a little bit further which really challenges that retribution theology. He said he that spoke to God and God answered back as the laughing stock but the wandering vagabond he declares them as destroyers.

[14:53] It is the literal terminology for those who would go around raiding and plundering and destroying people. He said but the destroyer's tent is secure. So how does that fit into your conventional wisdom that God blesses those who do right and God judges those who do wrong?

I was speaking to God and God answered and now my world fell apart. These people over here are destroying everybody they come into contact with yet their tent is secure. See their children running outside their tent.

See their hands full of their gods lowercase g their gold. See the position they hold. You're not considering the individual when you give me a boxed answer because that doesn't fit our testimony of history.

When you read the testimony of history you will see that there have been righteous individuals that have suffered horrendously and there have been horrendous individuals who have prospered magnificently.

And it leaves us scratching our heads. As a psalmist it cried out when I considered the ways of the wicked and how they prospered and their belly was fat and their mouths were full and yet I was hungry.

[16:03] I was almost in despair as he says later on until I considered their end. In this life retribution theology does not always work because there will always be another individual that you can point to.

Someone that has prayed for years and yet this tragedy still comes. People that have interceded and yet death still comes in place. Sure there are testimonies where God miraculously intervenes but there are also testimonies where he does not.

And what Job says is that conventional wisdom is insufficient for it fails to consider the individual. It doesn't think clearly to address what is going on with the people before you.

We don't like honestly as believers to say that this world's prosperity can be gained by this world's means. That is you don't necessarily have to be a believer to do right and to look good in this world. Because that is us admitting that our hope is not found in this world. There are a multitude of people that are doing all right in this world that are not believers.

[17:19] And God permits them to be secure. And so we have to be careful how we address those who aren't.

It is insufficient for it fails to address that individual but rather seeks to just throw a net and to cast everyone in it. Secondly, we notice that it is found among the basest level of creation.

Job transitions from looking at individuals where he says in verse 7, but now ask the beasts and let them teach you and the birds of heavens and let them tell you or speak to the earth and let it teach you and let the fish of the sea declare to you.

He says all of creation knows this great mysterious truth you're trying to tell me about. You're trying to tell me that if you do good you get good. Well, all of creation knows that.

You're not telling me something that I can't go and look at the earth and say, oh, okay, yeah, that's what happens. It says all of creation knows that God holds its life in the palm of its hands. But if we want to take that interpretation a little bit further, how does retribution theology work among even creation?

[18:33] I know there's some animal people here so let's think about it. It is not the strong that always are the good, right?

It is survival of the fittest. The lion and the lamb aren't lying down together. I mean, the lamb may be lying down but it's because the lion is in the process of eating it. I hate to be really tragic in that but that's why they're lying down together right now.

That sweet, gentle lamb who did nothing but walk around is the prey of the enemy. You say, well, yeah, that's creation, right? So what Job is saying is what you're telling me is if you do good and

you're innocent you're all good but look around and you're saying creation even testifies against that and you're not telling me anything that I don't see.

So we as mankind what Job says must move beyond that base understanding. We alone have the divine privilege of being created in the image of God and being image of God means that we are soul bearers.

We have a soul. We have a mind of Christ. We have in Christ. We have the mind of Christ. We have the ability to think. We are a thinking people which is a glorious thing by the way. We have rationale.

[19 : 47] We can consider. We can contemplate things. We don't have to respond and react but rather we can think through matters. Creation has to react. Creation groans until the day of redemption because it is reacting to man's sin.

It is not the lion that's over there scratching his head going I wish I wasn't this way. No, it is responding to the fall of man all the way back in the book of Genesis and it's groaning is because that is the fall of man and it has to react too.

But man has the ability to consider and to think through and to look at this and Job makes that transition there. He says all of creation knows that the Lord has done this and whose hand is the life of every living thing so God holds the hand of the life of everything in his hand and the breath of all mankind does not the ear test words and the palate taste its food.

So what he is saying is stop for just a moment and consider. Think. What man needs is something that moves beyond base level understanding.

So much of humanity by the way is content to live on the base floor. That God holds the life of everything in his hand okay that's good that he does good to those who do good he does bad to those who do bad and that's it.

[20 : 59] And Job says what we've called we have the ability to consider and to move a little further into that. And this is where the suffering this is where Job is beginning really to open up his understanding.

Because Job if you go back to chapter 1 before all these tragedies hit him would have probably set an agreement with his three counseling friends for that is how he understood the world too.

And now Job says I know all this but this doesn't fit my picture. This doesn't fit what I've got going on so I have to think about it just a little bit more. He says so this conventional wisdom it's insufficient because it is found among the base level of creation.

Conventional wisdom is also insufficient because it favors the wisdom of this world. It favors the wisdom of this world. We have to be careful we'll get to this on Sunday morning about who it is we gather wisdom from.

Who is instructing us? Who is shaping and molding us? The grand argument of Job's friends have been that the wise are the aged.

[22 : 27] Those who have lived longest know the most. Now I'm kind of middle ground in the room I can understand that and I can say that I can say that. And now Job's friends are all older than him and I would clearly affirm the reality that at my current age I know a lot more than I used to.

Hopefully some wisdom has been gained with the passage of years. I know just in my occupation my understanding of scripture has gotten broader and deeper over the passage of years for the Lord has taught me things through my life circumstances and the realities of what happened in my life.

But if we put this in this historical setting we are in the pre-patriarchal or at the most the patriarchal age. So people are living a long long time.

I mean 150 160 170 years. And the people they're learning from I mean we're talking like some of them were not too far removed from Methuselah.

So they had taught to people that had experienced some stuff. I mean you know 900 years you see some stuff. And so they they had heard from sages who had gotten very near creation.

[23 : 57] And some things had been passed down. And there is some truth to this reality for Job says wisdom is with the aged men with long life is understanding.

And I'm sure at that moment his friends were going amen we're all older than you we know more than you therefore you need to listen to us. Now that's conventional wisdom.

The conventional wisdom is that wisdom lies with the old men and the old ladies. people have found in pastoral circles that when I sit in a room full of pastors it is telling I remember as a young guy I

used to be the youngest pastor in our association I was that for a long time I lost that title several years ago but I was the youngest pastor in our association for a long time I didn't say a word I just sat in that room because these guys had so much more time than me.

And I learned so much more just listening to them talk and listening to them converse and now again I'm kind of I'm not even in the middle of the road I'm on the other side of that spectrum now I'm a lot further into it than some of the newer guys and sometimes I don't mean this to be mean sometimes I wish the younger guys would be as quiet as they ought to be.

I do believe there is something to be said as Job says the wisdom is with the aged and long life is understanding. That's conventional.

[25 : 27] You can understand that. One of the greatest things that ever happened to me when I went into pastoral ministry was the Tennessee Baptist Convention at that time it was Tennessee Baptist Convention not Tennessee Baptist Mission Board invited Carrie and I to come into the thing it was called Young in the Ministry so pastors that were the first five years of the ministry and it was we were like in year four so we barely made it in and we got invited to this event it was a two-day event and at that event they talked to pastors and they talked to pastors wives and then they divided them up and they said they put up pastors in a room with a bunch of old pastors and these old pastors would just tell these men they just told us practical things things that seminary doesn't teach you like you know this is what it looks like this is what you ought to do and the pastors wives were with some of the older pastors wives and it was there I don't mind saying this here some of you know that if she can Carrie Carrie stands with me at the door every Sunday if she can and if she's here and if she's not some of you say where's Carrie at and I understand it but prior to that that meeting we would when I dismissed the church again we was like in year four I would go stand at the door everybody leaving

Carrie was chasing kids our kids because our kids were all young and she was trying to gather them all up but at that meeting there were some older pastors wives that told the young pastors wives and Carrie still points back to she said you know what I stand at the door with my man every Sunday she said for because I want everybody in that church no that's my man guess what Carrie started doing the first Sunday we got back standing at the door with her husband every Sunday it's wise counsel it is you know how many pastors have fallen because their wife wasn't standing beside them more than we would want to discuss it's practical in our crazy young family it was hard for her to do that and so she just started letting the kids run around crazy around the church because she said I'm standing beside my man I don't want that to happen she said you know I take that counsel so you know kids were running that's all right let them go practical it is true it was conventional it meant something but look at what Job says though he says but that's not the true source of wisdom because his very next wording is this with him that is with God our wisdom and might and to him belong counsel and understanding Job says while conventionally it tells us the aged and those with long life are the wisest they are not the end all be all

I have had old pastors give me bad advice I have had old pastors which I adamantly disagreed with that I thought were absolutely wrong and I told them as much I've been chastised and rebuked by older saints Job says there are moments in our life where we have to move beyond conventional because with God alone is true wisdom and counsel and strength we love conventional wisdom because conventional wisdom fits with the wisdom of the world the wisdom of the world tells us that those who went before us know what's best the wisdom of the word of God says the Lord God alone knows what's best it is he alone that has true wisdom and true counsel and true strength it is absolutely possible that those who have went before us have been wrong on a number of things it is absolutely possible that those who went before us and set the standards which we hold today may be bad standards we will never know unless we hold them up to the true standard and the true standard is the Lord

God himself conventional wisdom just says do what those who went before you told you to do biblical wisdom says lean into the Lord God for he alone is wise and he is the author of counsel he is the revealer of absolute truth not conventional truth he is the true standard of all things he says it again with him our strength and sound wisdom Job says the wisdom you have normally makes sense but what I need now is a deeper wisdom than that conventional wisdom is insufficient for it favors the wisdom of the world rather than seeking to know God in an intimate manner and finally we see the conventional wisdom falls short for it forces God into a manageable estate do you know why we like conventional wisdom because it means that we have God figured out we can manage

him we can dictate how he's going to respond if I do God do good he's going to bless me as long as I don't do bad he's going to bless me he'll prosper me I don't have to worry about it I've got this God figured out he is now manageable and what Job does at the end of this chapter is he blows the lid off of that he says God is not manageable you can't control him you can't even really understand him look at what he says he says he tears down and it cannot be rebuilt he imprisons a man there can be no release he restrains the waters and they dry up and then in the very next moment he may send them out and they inundate the earth he can bring famine and flood whenever he wants he goes a little further he makes counselors walk barefoot and makes fools of judges those that are wise in this world all of a sudden lose their minds he loosens the bond of kings that is the strongest kingdom in the world may bind something and say I'm going to hold it there but God alone can loosen that bond and then in the very next moment he can tie that king himself up and he binds their loins with the girdle he makes the priest to walk barefoot and overthrows their secure ones he deprives the trusted ones of speech and takes away the discernment of the elders he pours contempt on nobles and loosens the belt of the strength he reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deep darkness into light he makes the nations great and then he destroys them he builds up he tears down man cannot dictate what God is going to do for he is sovereign and his sovereignty determines that he is beyond our control his sovereignty leads us to admit we can never manage him he's not manageable we can declare things that may normally be true about God but we have to say if he wills because he always has the right not to will and for some people that's too much

Job says I don't have him figured out that's why he will say even if he kills me I don't have him figured out I can't manage this God and neither can you neither can I and no one can we can't declare these bits of wisdom and say oh we've got it figured out people want a checklist God takes that checklist and throws it in a fire and burns it up and says you don't need to know my ways you don't even need to know my reasoning what God is saying in all this is you just need to know me and when we accept the fact that he is so far other than us and we begin to know him as such then the rest is in his power for it is here that we see the insufficiency of conventional wisdom we know these things Job says I know all this but it still doesn't answer what's going on in my life for God is something other than that and we find it in Job chapter 12 through 13 verse 2 thank you my brothers

[34 : 47] I got a little long I'm sorry I got