

Job 15

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[0:00] Amen. In Job 12, 13, and 14, Job has responded and kind of put a cap on what we refer to as the first cycle of discourses between he and his friends.

We know very well because God has given us the revelation in Job 1 and 2 of what has exactly transpired in Job's life. Job was living a normal life. Things were going well, normal by the world's standards, but a very blessed normal life.

With a multitude of children, a multitude of possessions, numerous livestock, he was very wealthy, he was influential. By his own testimony, in which it is acknowledged even by his friends, he was an aid and a helper to people around him.

He cared for the orphan, he provided for the widow, he bound up the sick and the hurting. Job was a man known in society. He was not only a man known in society, he was a man known and loved by his friends, but unfortunately for Job, he was also a man known by the enemy.

Because we know when we read the word of God that there came a day when the sons of God came and stood before him and the adversary, Satan, was there as well.

[1:20] And we understand in its context, in its original wording, that when God says, have you considered my servant Job? That it was not only God bringing up Job, God was revealing the heart of the enemy.

And in its wording, it is, are you in the process of considering my servant Job? Now we take light, or we take comfort in the reality that God not only knows the thoughts of our hearts, but he also knows the intents and the thoughts of our enemy.

And in doing so, he is calling out of the adversary exactly what the adversary was planning and scheming. And the accusation is that Job has a very fluffy faith that he believes because all is well. And God gives him the opportunity. He gives him the freedom to touch all that belongs to Job. And then later on in chapter 2, he gives the freedom to touch Job's physical body, but not to kill him. And Job is taken to the extent. God is testifying to the sons of God and to the angels of the character of Job.

[2:34] He is fortifying Job's character in the midst of the fire. But Job is very unaware of this. He has been declared complete and righteous by the Lord God Almighty.

He suffers. He cries out in the third chapter from the depth of that pain. And in his misery and his friends who have sat with him for seven days. I know we're setting the context a lot, but it helps us to be mindful of it.

They listen to his groaning and complaining and they take offense of that because it does not fit their worldview. What we fail to realize sometimes is the circumstances also did not fit Job's worldview prior to what had taken place.

And so God is expanding the worldview of Job. And in the midst of it, he will also expand the worldview of Job's friends. Because by the time we get to the end of the book, for their restoration to be taken in effect, Job has to intercede for them, the one that they accuse.

In the first round of arguments, the three friends of Job take their turn. Eliphaz, the Timnite, speaks with some kindness, a little bit of softness about him.

[3:48] As we progress, each one gets a little harsher. We take it just for granted that they are speaking in progression of their age.

That is, Eliphaz is the oldest. Therefore, he speaks first. Job is the youngest of them all. We will find that in our text here in just a moment. And then Job responds to them in chapter 12 directly and just tells them, You're really useless counselors.

You're not doing me any good. And then in chapters 13 and 14, he cries out to God. And what we fail to see, because there's some great truth there. There's some awesome teaching there.

But the things that he says in chapters 13 and 14 are very offensive. Nobody's ever said anything like that before. Nobody's really ever even thought anything like that before.

These are before the days of Abram or Abraham. No one is walking in covenant relationship with God. If it is not before, it is during the early days of Abram when Abram is sojourning in the land and just now learning what it looks like to live in relationship with a holy God.

[5:04] And yet Job has spoken freely. And he has spoken things that have really rocked the world of his friends. In chapter 15, we will begin the second round.

The three friends will all speak again. There will be a third round in which the third friend doesn't say a word because evidently he says all he has to say in the first two rounds. And if you remember anything about him, he's also the harshest and the strongest critic of Job.

And therefore, he doesn't kind of wax words. He just tells you what he thinks very quickly. And sometimes what he thinks is very harsh. And as we start this second round, all concern for Job's well-being is kind of cast aside because now they have been offended by Job's approach to God. And I want you to see as we begin this 15th chapter, the failure of the world's view. The failure of the world's view of theology. Everyone has a theology.

The world has a theology. Theology is the study of God. It is what we conceive of or think of the Almighty. Everyone has a theology.

[6:18] The world has a theology, and the world operates by that theology. We refer to it time and time again as retribution theology, which is normally the worldview that most people are born into.

It is a very natural thing. It is something we are conditioned to and by as young children, if we have any type of stable home whatsoever, and even those who have been benefited later on to be brought into some stability of society, it is the world's theology that you do good, you get good, you do bad, you get bad.

We understand that. You know, you do dumb things, you get dumb results. We get that. Those things happen. Sometimes the greatest teacher is the teacher of experience, that when I've done some ignorant things, I've experienced some ignorant fruit from those things.

And that's kind of how the world operates. Even our own society operates that way. And this is the overall theology of the world.

Man loves to think that God is a rewarder of those who do good. And as long as my good outweighs my bad, in the end, it all works out.

[7:29] But there's a problem with that. There's a failure in that, and we'll see it in the 15th chapter. We'll read in its entirety, and hopefully we'll be able to pull these out.

Then Eliphaz the Timnite responded, Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? Should he argue with useless talk, or with words which are not profitable?

Indeed, you do away with reverence, and hinder meditation before God, for your guilt teaches your mouth, and you choose the language of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I, and your own lips testify against you.

Were you the first man to be born? Or were you brought forth before the hills? Do you hear the secret counsel of God, and limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not? Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father. By the way, that's how we know Job's the youngest. Are the consolations of God too small for you, even the words spoken gently with you?

[8:36] Why does your heart carry you away, and why do your eyes flash, that you should turn your spirit against God, and allow such words to go out of your mouth? What is man, that he should be pure, or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Behold, he puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight. How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, man who drinks iniquity like water?

I will tell you, listen to me, and what I have seen, I will also declare, what wise men have told, and have not concealed from their fathers. To whom alone the land was given, and no alien passed among them.

The wicked man rise in pain all his days, and numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless. Sounds of terror are in his ears, while at peace the destroyer comes upon him.

He does not believe that he will return from darkness, and he is destined for the sword. He wanders about for food, saying, where is it? He knows that a day of darkness is at hand. Distress and

anguish terrify him.

[9 : 37] They overpower him like a king ready for the attack, because he has stretched out his hand against God, and conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty. He rushes headlong at him with his massive shield, for he has covered his face with his fat, and made his thighs heavy with flesh.

He has lived in desolate cities, in houses no one would inhabit, which are destined to become ruins. He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure, and his grain will not bend down to the ground. He will not escape from darkness. The flame will wither his shoots, and by the breath of his mouth he will go away. Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself, for emptiness will be his reward. It will be accomplished before his time, and his palm branch will not become green. He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, and will cast off his flower like the olive tree, for the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.

They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity, and their mind prepares deception. Here in this response, what we are reading, and I know it is hard to comprehend at times, and I have the grand benefit that you do not, unless you take the time in preparation for each, to read this over, and over, and over again, and to spend hours meditating upon it, and to think about it, and to write notes, and to go back and forth, and do all of those things, and to really consider it.

[11 : 07] But what we have is really the world's theology being declared for us again by Eliphaz. And if we look closely, we'll see the failures that it contains.

Not failures that it declares, because so much of it seems right, and so much of it seems proper, because, as we normally say, conventional wisdom is appropriate for conventional times.

We normally can't expect that if we do good, we get good. That is conventional wisdom. That is a natural outcome, that you reap what you sow.

We can normally expect that if we do bad, we will get bad, because that's conventional wisdom. We understand those in conventional times. We understand those in normal times, and at most times, so it sounds so right.

But if we look a little bit below the surface, not really stretching the study, not stretching his words, but if we notice what is not available there, and especially if we put this theology in the light of the gospel, and we shine the gospel upon it, we'll begin to see how the world's view fails us as a mankind, and how it fails us as believers, and how we ought to be careful about holding to such a rigid theology.

[12 : 34] Eliphaz is the first to speak because he is the oldest. He is, from what is considered, by the world's standards, a place of wisdom.

Timon is referred to elsewhere, I believe it is the book of Jeremiah, as a place of wisdom. He is a Timonite, he is from Timon. So he is from the wise place.

He is from probably the greatest educational institutes of his day. And not only is he from that city, he is an aged man from that city, possibly even older than Job's father.

We don't know who Job's father is, but we know the length of days during that pre-patriarchal or early patriarchal time of Job, and we can see that these people had lived some life.

And he had lived his life among the hallways of the highest courts of education. He had been taught by wise men who had went before him.

[13 : 31] He had observed, as the classical training would be during that time, a study of observation where one would look upon. And this is why we have such great breaks in their discourses, by the way, because arguments weren't, let's see who can talk the loudest over the other, but rather it was, you take your turn, and then I will respond to how you say, and then you respond back to me.

We would, you know, it was great. It was a kind of a listening, and it was paying attention, and it was holding on to what others were telling. And here we see that Eliphaz had done this for some time.

And he is the first to respond, not to how Job responded to him, but rather his response is more how Job has spoken to the Almighty.

It is a disheartened response as to would you really do that. And the first thing we notice about the world's theology and the first thing that we have to understand, even in our own understanding of conventional wisdom, is that in that worldview, there is simply no place for the doubting.

There's no place for the doubting. Notice what Eliphaz says. Then Eliphaz the Temnite responded, this man from this place of wisdom, should a wise man answer with such windy knowledge.

[15:11] The very first point that he takes up concerning Job is the way in which Job has spoken. That is, he's offended at how Job has responded.

And he's not offended because Job is even called Eliphaz a windbag and a useless counselor. His greatest offense is how Job has spoken to the Almighty.

That Job has felt such freedom, such suffering to say, God, reveal to me my sins, take me to court, let me speak, and then you reply or you speak and I will reply, this is not like you, God, I am righteous.

There's no way that there's no spirit. I do not know of any sin to me, things that we would consider normal, but yet it rocks the world of Job's friends. Because there is no place for doubting here because it is the belief that if I do good, I will get good.

And if I do bad, I will get bad. And so the whole ambition is to ensure that my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds.

[16:33] And I will never doubt that God will reward me. And those rewards, by the way, in that worldview are confined to this life. And there's no place for the doubt that says, but what if I do good and it still doesn't work out?

What if you do the best you can with what you have and in the end it still falls short? What if you have the greatest education, the greatest job experiences, and you make the most money but in the end it's still not enough?

See, there's no room for doubting there because he declares should he argue with useless talk or with words which are not profitable. Indeed, you do away with reverence and hinder meditation before God.

What Eliphaz is accusing Job here of is, Job, the way you have talked to God has cut off all communications. your words have been so rash and so haste you have come to God with doubts and he will not listen to that and you've broken the line.

Now, I don't know about you but I'm thankful that I have a God big enough to handle my doubts and I'm thankful that the book of Job tells us that we can be transparent with the God who created us.

[18:15] That we can go before him in bare bone honesty and say, I don't know why this is happening. It doesn't seem fair.

It doesn't seem right. It doesn't seem to fit your character but oh God, I'm trusting you. I just don't see how it's like you. Now, is that irreverent?

Does that break the line of communication to say, God, your word declares this but my life is showing me this and they're not lining up.

I just want to ask, Father, why? Why? And what Job teaches us is God can handle our doubts. God can handle it because we can doubt and not belittle.

Doubtings do not belittle God. They show your dependence upon him. Doubtings do not manage God's rather your pride and my pride which says I have God figured out is what belittles him and makes him manageable because if I've had him figured out then I never have to come to him with questions.

[19:35] I don't see Jesus rebuking to eternal condemnation and damnation any disciples who ever questioned him. I see him admonishing them why couldn't we cast it up because of the littleness of your faith saying you need to grow in your faith and understanding of who you are in Christ and who I am and you need to grow in that but I don't see him ever eternally chastising them.

I don't see the doubts of his disciples or the doubts of the early church bringing certain judgment raining down upon them but rather I see a savior who can handle that a savior who answers that but in the worldview this rigid worldview of theology there simply is no place for the doubting because if you doubt that that's how it happens if you doubt that good brings good and bad brings bad then you'll just stop doing anything and if you don't believe me read your history because those who have done the most wicked deeds in all of history have been those who have cast off any concern for the good versus bad their doubts were too big for them to manage so they threw their hands up in the air and said

I'll live however I want to live there's no place for doubting there there's no place for wrestling which leads us to the second reality because if there's no place for doubting then there's no relationship to be pursued we form and fashion relationships in struggles and trials and doubts and questions and

right relationships are not formed and fashioned in all peacefulness it is the iron sharpening iron it is the conflict and it is the tension that brings those greatest matters to light and we see this in our text where he says in verse seven were you the first man to be born or were you brought forth from the hills he says Job you're not even old enough to talk like this and you're trying to teach me something and you're trying to teach me some new thing about God that God does not always bless those who do good and sometimes bad things happen to good people and Job you're not even old enough you're just a young whippersnapper he was probably only like 115 you're just a young guy you can't tell me these things

I just made that number up randomly by the way so please don't ever quote that as theology that was just something I pulled out of the air we don't know how old he is we don't know but we do know he's the youngest he's like were you here before the hills were formed and you're not even old enough to speak this because the world's view says this experience brings wisdom and I would say that's right unless your experiences were not good experiences unless that wisdom is not beneficial wisdom I've told you this before the power of music and the power of our past experiences and we did a little trial when we were going to I had the great blessing this year of driving back and forth to Orlando twice it was not a blessing by the way I really didn't like that at all but the first trip down we were going down for the convention and Carrie was asleep and Braden was asleep and that road is just miserable so the driver was trying to go to sleep too and that's never a good practice so finally got Carrie to get up and she was up and so we ran a little trial here and so started scrolling through music and I said pick a genre

I don't care what genre pick a decade turn the music on and see how long it takes me to name it and it blew her mind how many songs I could name in like the first four or five notes and they weren't all gospel songs I said I was a kid who listened to a lot of radio growing up and I'm not going to tell you all of them because I don't want you all to know what all your pastor knows but not all wisdom is beneficial wisdom she said why do you have all this in your head I said I don't know I just experienced it I know them I remember them and I can't get them out that's not necessarily something that's beneficial in my Christian walk but they're there right so sometimes life experiences and so the worldview is wisdom comes in length of life and wisdom comes with experiences and wisdom comes in what you have seen and this is exactly what Eliphaz is saying here you're not old enough to tell me anything Job and he makes this really couched condemnation of Job which we have to be careful with and it says in verse 8 do you hear the secret counsel of [24:32] God the wording there's a really unique word in this original language it means to set up on the cushion with an individual so it is this picture of being at a fellowship meal the cushion that they would recline upon and eat are you invited to God's private cushion that you can sit with him there and sup with him and fellowship with him and that you know things about him that the rest of us don't know that's the accusation are you living so close to God that you're eating together and fellowshiping together and yet you know more than those of us who have lived longer well in the gospel we can say absolutely yes absolutely because the gospel is about pursuing a relationship not just pursuing a length of days and what happens in the world view is there is no relationship to be pursued just live your life pay attention to those around you and see how it goes but in Christ we're called to draw near literally in

Christ we're called to dine with him we're called to fellowship with him we're called to commune with the holy we sing it every week in the doxology praise father son and holy ghost the triune fullness of God that the gospel of John says dwells within every believer Jesus says it is to your advantage that I go to the father for I go to the father he will send the helpmate and the helper that is the spirit and the spirit will make his abode with you a few verses later he says and I and the father will come and tabernacle with you as well and so the wording there is that the fullness of God dwells inside of the believer it has the every believer has the father the son and the holy spirit living within them we are sealed until the day of redemption with the holy spirit of Christ we are loved by the father and welcomed and he sees us in the righteousness of Christ and we have the mind of Christ it tells us later on in the writings of Paul and we know him in this intimate way and we pursue this relationship with him but there's no place for that in the world view of their theology for you can't know the secret things of

God you just have to see how it goes but you do you have the opportunity to sit down on the cushion and die with the almighty every time you open up his word and to see what he has to say to you the secret things of God you go wow look at that I've never seen that before and we cry out to

him and say God show me more of you today we don't see more of him we can observe his ways and his beauty and his creative power and we can observe that through our eyes and we can look around and say man did you see that I love seeing storms come up I love seeing the heavens testify but when you really want to know God you get alone and let him speak to your heart and your soul and then you go wow there's no place for that there's no relationship to pursue in this world because you just do you and if you're good outweighs your bad he is compelled to bless you don't worry about that relationship and that is a failure of the world's theology and since there's no relationship to be pursued it leads us to the next thing is there's no hope for the sinner there's no hope for the sinner

Job has said who can make the clean out of the unclean no one that's a true statement Eliphaz had said in his first argument by the way Eliphaz had declared that man cannot be righteous he cannot be clean and he said that because Job said I'm righteous and Eliphaz said there's no way you can't be righteous and Job agrees with this that no man can make but what Job doesn't do is Job does not cut off the possibility of there being hope he makes an admonition there or admission he makes a statement that who can make the clean out of the unclean he admits I am unclean and I can't make myself clean I am I am filthy and I can't wash myself and no one can help me with that now he says later on he will see his redeemer in the land of the living and there's hope there right there's hope in the redeemer but there's no hope in self but what Eliphaz does is he completely cuts off hope he takes his first argument that there is no man that's righteous none of us are and he extends a little bit further and he says it like this what is man that he should be pure he's saying Job you'll never be pure you'll never be right what are you and I that we think we could ever be pure it's kind of telling though because when Eliphaz says this he is declaring his own condemnation and yet we're supposed to be listening to the one declaring his own condemnation as if he is wise and he says what is man that he should be pure you think we or he who is born of a woman that he should be righteous and what he says is Job we're not going to ever be pure we're not going to ever be righteous why because behold he that is God puts no trust in his holy ones I referenced that a little bit this morning he doesn't put any trust in his holy ones and the heavens are not pure in his sight now I have an argument with that because the heavens are definitely pure in his sight none nothing unholy is allowed in his presence that's why we have the third of the host of heaven cast out of there and it is holy holy holy there the crystal sea is pure the gold on the streets are pure everything is pure all the stones around the foundation of the new

Jerusalem are pure the radiant light is pure the glory of God is pure all of heaven is pure but yet in the world view there's nothing pure in God's sight and it seems as if it is a lofty view that God is so holy nothing is pure in his sight and that seems good that seems kind of high and lofty that God is so pure he sees nothing is pure well if that's the case then there's no hope for the sinner if that's the case if nothing is pure in God's sight then as Paul would say let's cast off all restraint let's eat drink and be merry what is man that he would ever be pure or the one that is born of a woman that he would ever be righteous because man just sips unrighteousness like it's going out of style right man's always constantly doing wrong and if that's the case and throw caution to the wind do whatever you want to there's no hope for the sinner if we're never going to be pure then live however you want to if that's just natural and there's no hope for deliverance from the natural then do whatever you will and live however you would like maybe in the end your good will outweigh your bad but you'll never be pure

[32:07] I agree with the commentation on this by I believe it was Barnes who said the other extremity in this is those that believe that everyone in the end will be saved those who do not believe in any condemnation whatsoever that they just believe in the end that God's going to save everyone that everybody will be in heaven and everybody he said that's the case then why live righteously in this world why live with any kind of care and concern if in the end God's going to save everybody then just do whatever you want to do enjoy your life in the end God's not going to count it against you so we have the two extremes the one that says man will never be pure and the other one that says man will someday be forgiven so there is this universalism on this side that says everybody will be redeemed in the end so you don't have to worry about it you can live however you want to God will make you clean someday and then there's the other extreme that says no man's going to ever be pure and since you don't ever have any hope of being pure whatsoever then don't worry about it don't fret over it don't stress over it don't feel bad because you do bad that's just who you are and right there in the middle of it is Job saying I can't make myself clean I need someone other than me and in the gospel we find the other than we find the Savior who comes to do what

impute us with his righteousness and we are declared pure we are declared holy we are declared righteous we are declared worthy of being in his presence but in this world theology there's no hope for the sinner because your good will never outweigh your bad for you cannot be good and neither can

I there's no hope for that and finally we see in this world's theology and it shouldn't surprise us but it is that there is no joy to be expected now I use my words intentionally we've said this before and I appreciate that I believe I've heard every one of our elders say this same reality in leading in prayer at different times there is a vast difference between joy and happiness a vast difference the world can offer you happiness for it is dictated by your happenings so whatever happens to you can be pleasant in that moment and you can be happy about it there's pleasure that can make you happy and there's all these happiness but the world cannot offer joy and the world's theology never offers joy Eliphaz ends with this long discourse here at the end starting in verse 17 where he says I will tell you listen to me what I have seen I will also declare so there it is there's your theology your worldview I'm going to tell you what I have seen what I have observed what is normally true Job is breaking the mold and nobody wants him to break the mold what wise men have told and have not concealed from their father so he says I'm going to tell you what others have said and I'm going to tell you what I have seen and my observations are clearly true he says and really goes into this long discourse and what he says is that those who set their heart to do wicked all they get is wicked and it's just going to be a downward spiral nothing's ever right now this is kind of telling because of the very first argument Eliphaz is kind of the softest and he asked Job he said Job if you would just confess your sins and repent then God will bless you again and so it's kind of shameful he says Job you've done wrong just talk about what you've done wrong confess it to us and God is constrained to bless you now that that discourse is gone and now he's no longer arguing that what he says is those who do wrong like you've done wrong Job they just set their mind to do wrong and it is just down down down there's no joy their house is dilapidated their cities are in ruin they're just going down and when you read it what you just see is just doom and gloom and destruction and there's no expectation ever of release there's no joy set before them there's no hope for deliverance it is just always going down because the reality is is this world cannot offer joy and this world cannot break the cycle and we know that it is Christ who said on that night of his betrayal my joy I give to you not as the world gives but rather I give be careful how rigid we hold to this world's viewpoint of conventional wisdom because in it we find no place for our doubting we find no relationship to pursue we find no hope for the sinner and there's no joy to be expected it is nothing but tries you may do the best you can and maybe in the end it'll work out for you but what if it doesn't what if it doesn't the gospel tells us to surrender that trying and that effort and to surrender that and to give up the gospel calls us to lay it aside and to cry out to the Lord

Jesus Christ alone for he has already won the victory the world's theology screams different let's pray and we'll be dismissed father we thank you so much for this day we thank you for your word and we pray as we seek to understand it Lord that that understanding would be put into practice through application in our lives Lord that the truths we have seen today both this morning and this evening would not be matters that are just stored in the mind but rather that they would move and transform the heart that it would lead us to walk faithfully before you to lean into you to cling to you with all of our being and it would lead us to be your people not so that it may be easy but that your name may be glorified and we cry out oh be magnified in us Lord Jesus and it's in your name we pray amen thank you guys