

Job 18-19:6

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[0:00] So I'll start in 18.1, and then we're going to read into 19, verse 6. I'm going to stop it right there at the 6th verse, because the 19th chapter could stand on its own feet, if you will.

It's so powerful in there. But I don't think we catch the weight of what's going on in the 18th chapter until we kind of begin to see Job's reply in the beginning of the 19th chapter.

So hopefully you'll understand why we're doing that, when we open it up with one another. But let's go to Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you so much for this day, and we're thankful for the opportunity to gather together.

We're thankful for fellowship. We're thankful for your leading and your providing of this place and this time. And so now we pray that you be with us as we open up the Word of God, and we pray that it would be the Word of God that would speak truth into our hearts and into our minds.

And Lord, that it would shape our thinking and grow us more and more like you. Lord, we pray that the truths we learn from Scripture would become a reality in our lives.

[1:04] We pray that the application of them would bring glory and honor to the name of Christ. And Lord, we pray that they would bring comfort and stability in the chaos of this life.

So Father, we thank you. We thank you for your concern and your love for us. We thank you for this divine opportunity. And Lord, we pray your blessings over all that takes place in this place tonight. For those working with our youth and children, as always, we ask that Christ would be magnified among them. Lord, in particular, I pray, I know our children are working their way through the wonder of your creation of male and female.

So I pray that you would just speak truth into that. And I pray that you would be glorified in all you do. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Somebody said, what in the world?

Yeah, our elementary school kids are working their way through New City Catechisms. And so tonight they're asking, why did God create man?

[2:02] And part of that answer, not only just to glorify him and praise him and serve him, but part of that is, is that he also made us unique, male and female. He made us unique and uniquely fit and uniquely gifted.

So anyway, there was a reason behind that praying. But anyway, I'm so thankful for that. So anyway, we're in Job 18. We're going to start in verse 1.

Let's kind of set it in context. This is the second round of Job's discourses with his friends. Those discourses kind of came to this grand head in its conclusion. The first round is like, you know, Job, maybe you've done something wrong in your life.

All these things have fallen apart. And you just need to repent. And you need to turn from those things. And God will bless you. And Job finally just, he responded to each one individually. And then he responded to all three of them corporately.

And in a nutshell, Job's like, you know, you guys are just winbacks. You're worthless counselors. You're not doing any good to me. You're not telling me anything I don't know. You're not telling me anything I haven't experienced. And you're not speaking into my unique situation.

[3:01] And so then we start around again. And now all concern and compassion have kind of been thrown out the window. We are about to see Bildad's response.

Eliphaz has already spoken for the second time. Bildad's going to speak here for the second time. And what we understand is their reasoning has not changed. Their perception has not changed. But their compassion has diminished. Now it's even a little bit more pointed in their accusations that they bring against him. And in the realities of their worldview that they suggest.

So we're going to see that Bildad's second response here. Still responding to the atrocities that they see taking place in Job's life. Why is Job walking through this?

We know. We have the privilege of having the courtroom of heaven opened up. And we're going to. We'll know actually. By the time we get to Job 19.6.

[4:04] It's going to say something crazy that Job will say. God has held me captive. God has ensnared me. And that God has brought this calamity upon me. And that's going to seem blasphemous to the ears of his friends.

But we know the reality is that's exactly what God is doing. And God is validating Job's integrity and his righteousness. He is validating it to the sons of God.

And even the accuser of the brethren. That is Satan himself. But the whole while that God is working to validate his faithfulness.

He is discrediting him among his friends. Because they don't understand what's going on. They don't realize what's happening.

No one does. Not even Job. Job is standing strong in his profession of not having any revealed sin. Not saying he's perfect. But having no known sense to confess.

[5:02] But to his friends that makes no sense whatsoever. And so he is being publicly discredited. Until we get to the end of the book. Where God restores not only him in personal relationship.

But restores his character among his friends. And among those around him. But here we start in 18.1. Then Bildad the Shuhite responded. How long will you hunt for words?

Show understanding. Then we can talk. Why are we regarded as beast? As stupid in your eyes?

Oh you who tear yourself in your anger. For your sake is the earth to be abandoned.

Or the rock to be moved from its place? Indeed the light of the wicked goes out. And the flame of his fire gives no light. The light in his tent is darkened. And his lamp goes out above him.

His vigorous stride is shortened. And his own scheme brings him down. For he is thrown into the net by his own feet. And he steps on the webbing. A snare seizes him by the heel.

[6:01] And a trap snaps shut on him. A noose for him is hidden in the ground. And a trap for him on the path. All around terrors frighten him. And harry him at every step.

His strength is famished. And calamity is ready at his side. His skin is devoured by disease. The firstborn of death devours his limbs. He is torn from the security of his tent.

And they march him before the king of terrors. There dwells in his tent. Nothing of his brimstone is scattered on his habitation. His roots are dried below. And his branches cut off above.

Memory of him perishes from the earth. And he has no name abroad. He is driven from light into darkness. And chased from the inhabited world. He has no offspring or posterity among his people. Nor any survivor where he sojourned. Those in the west are appalled at his fate. And those in the east are seized with horror. Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked.

[6:57] And this is the place of him who does not know God. Then Job responded. How long will you torment me and crush me with words?

These ten times you have insulted me. And you are not ashamed to wrong me. Even if I have truly erred, my error lodges with me. If indeed you vaunt yourself against me and prove my disgrace to me, know then that God has wronged me and has closed his net around me.

I want you to see this evening the sour fruits of suffering. Last time we were together, we looked at those realities that are only forged in suffering.

Those things that give us competence in speaking truth to one another and speaking truth to others. We saw the reality where Paul says in 2 Corinthians that we comfort those with the comfort with which we have been given.

And we comfort those who walk through any trial or tribulation. And Paul is declaring there that because we have been people of suffering and people of trial. And we have found great comfort in the comforter of our soul that we are so prepared to be able to extend comfort to others that are walking through any trial or any tribulation or any struggle.

[8:18] And we have correlated that and seen in the life of Job that there are some realities that are only forged in the fire of suffering.

There are some truths that we can only learn and grasp and really work out through the midst of that suffering as we see God persevere in the midst of that.

We often do not see them until after the fact as Paul would say they had already received that comfort. But along with those fruits, those things that are forged within us, there are also sour fruits that are the product of suffering.

Things that if we're not careful and we're not guarded against. Those things that will come to be that will cause disruptions in our own life. It will cause disruptions in the way we minister to others. And it is a reality that we always need to keep in mind. As we have seen the book of Job, we are looking at the fact that sometimes God puts us before people that are walking through trials and tribulations.

[9 : 22] Sometimes we are those people and we do not always know the reasoning behind them. And from the story of Job, we have the confidence, as it would say in 2 Peter, that we have the confident assessment that God is faithful and his faithfulness endures to the end, even if we don't understand it.

But if we are the friends who are walking with those, then we ought to be careful. We ought to guard how we bring comfort and consolation during those times.

We have acknowledged and admitted that we do not think the three friends of Job came with a spiteful heart, so to say.

They did not intend to come and to dispel everything that Job says. They did not come to ridicule him. Their intention was to come and comfort him.

Their intention was to come and bring him solace. But after witnessing him and being appalled at the horrendous effects on his life, they jumped to conclusions, and the conclusions were well-grounded in their life experiences.

[10 : 30] They were well-grounded in the realities that they had lived out and those before them had lived out. It was really the shaping and forming of their society and the shaping and forming of their worldview in which it acknowledged this is how we perceive this situation.

Looking at Job, they were certain that since he was going through a time of curses and a time of discipline, then there must be sin in his life. We have called that retribution theology.

It is a theology that so many of us still adhere to today, even if unknowingly. It is how we dictate our lives. It is conventional wisdom. It does make sense that if you do good, you get good.

If you do bad, you get bad. That is conventional wisdom. We understand that. We accept that. But we have to be careful in making a rigid appearance to that.

So whether we are the ones going through the trial or we are the ones setting with those going through the trial, then we need to be careful of the sour fruit that can show itself in suffering.

[11 : 36] The first thing that we notice here in the text before us is that one of the fruits that come out of suffering is division. Division is quite often a byproduct of trial and tribulation.

It can form and fashion a group of people together, people that go through these trials and tribulations, in particular the church. When we read church history that have suffered so horrendously, the church is really strengthened during those times of trials.

The church is undergirded with the support of Christ. And as we find in the early pages of the book of Acts, the church can rejoice that it was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.

And they find strength with one another in their fellowship. But then also there are those moments when the suffering of the individual can bring such testing of relationships that it eventually would lead to division.

Bill dad, again, do not lose sight of the fact this is a friend of Joe. These are not enemies. These are not people who are unfamiliar with his former life.

[12 : 40] They they know his wealth. They know the possessions. They know his family. They know that he ministered to those at the gates of the city that he defended the orphans that he cared for the widows.

All those things that are testimonial. They were his friends, friends enough to meet at a particular place and travel. It is implied in the writing some distance to go be with him, friends enough to sit in silence for seven days and to wait for Joe to breach the conversation.

But yet by the time we get here to the second round of discourses, Bill dad says, how long will you hunt for words, show understanding and then we can talk?

Why are we regarded as beast as stupid in your eyes? We cannot help but notice in the interchange between the two parties, the one side being the three friends and the second side being Job.

And we do know there will be a fourth speaker. Eventually God will be introduced to that as well. But here in the first portion of the book, we cannot help but notice the division that is creeping in between Job and his friends.

[13:52] At each moment, there is a misunderstanding. And each side is holding vigorously to their stance. And it is a division because of the unknown.

Job is experiencing this personally. His friends are receiving this second-handedly coming from Job, not walking through it, but yet thinking they know what is going on.

So we ought to be careful how much opinion we bring into our comfort. And as we do that, we understand that division is a tool of the enemy to create discord and even greater harm.

Some of the testing of Job is not all that we can see. Some of the testing of Job, I believe, is even his friends become divided from him.

Those that were the only ones. His wife said, curse God and die. Then his friends came to bring great comfort. And because of their worldview and because of their perception and because of their opinion, the enemy brought discord among the friends.

[15:12] When we're speaking to individuals, it is easy to come with our perspective. It is easy to come with our thoughts.

One thing that we have to be careful about, and I remind myself of this all the time, may our counsel be confined to Scripture. Because then if it offends, it is not us.

May our counsel be confined to Scripture. But if we give an opinion, may we also be bold enough to say, this is my opinion or my understanding.

This is how I perceive it. Not saying, this is what it is. Dogmatism. Dogmatism always brings division.

It has brought division throughout the church and church history. It has brought division throughout families. It has brought division within individuals' lives. We ought to be those who can stop and say, this is how I see it.

[16:27] Help me to see it differently. I know that seems so simple, but it is a reality. Because most of the time, division takes place because matters are left in the dark.

And until those things are exposed, and until they're brought to the light, then there can be no reconciliation. There can be no peace. There can be no understanding here. So one of the sour fruits of suffering, of trials and tribulations, and even the struggles in your life, is that the enemy will use it to bring division, where we know that God is not a God of division.

It is the prayer of Christ, let my people be one as we are one. And may we be those who understand the difference between opinion and conviction.

Opinions are based upon what you think is so. Conviction is based upon what the Word of God says is so. We can disagree on our opinions.

We can disagree on our perceptions. But we have to stand true on our convictions, on what the teaching of the Word of God is.

[17:40] And so we see here this fruit of division. The second fruit that we notice that is produced, and it can be sour.

It's not always sour, but it can be sour to some. And it depends on which side of the spectrum you're on. This is a fruit that Job most desperately wanted to see happen. And this is one that his friends were really guarding to ensure that it did not happen, and that is disruption.

It is the disruption of the norm. It says here, starting in verse 4, Oh, you who tear yourself in your anger.

So he's clearly addressing Job here. You who are so mad, and you're just raging, and you're mad because all this is going on. And he asked two questions. For your sake is the earth to be abandoned, or the rock to be moved from its place?

Now, essentially what he is saying here, what Bildad is asking Job, is Job, are you so special, and your circumstances so unique, that the norms of the world should stop and adjust according to you?

[18:48] Job, is your trial and struggle so different from everything that's been seen throughout the history of man? Job, is it so different that that foundational element to society, the rock, has to be adjusted because of you?

Now, the reason this brings disruption is because their world was confined to the reality that those who do good are blessed, and those who do bad are judged and cursed.

And therefore, to be the unique one, to be the one who is suffering condemnation, yet having no wrong displayed in their life, would disrupt the entire worldview.

And that's exactly what God is doing, by the way, but they don't understand that. Sometimes God wants to disrupt our perception so that we can understand him a little bit greater. Sometimes God

wants to disrupt what we believe is a rock-solid foundation so that we can come to a greater understanding of who he is and the reality of his existence.

But Job's friends are guarding this because it rocks their world literally. Their entire world is based upon this principle because if that principle is not true, then why am I compelled, or why must I do good?

[20 : 14] And if that principle is not true, then as Paul would say later on, then let's eat, drink, and be merry. Let's live however we want to live. Let's do whatever we want to do.

And that's why we understand this is conventional wisdom. It is conventional wisdom. So it is true, but it's kind of got an asterisk beside it. That means it is normally true and acceptable reality.

But our whole world does not rest upon that fact. Our world rests upon the fact that there is a sovereign, just, holy creator that will someday hold all men accountable to their relationship with him, not to the deeds they have accomplished.

And that is far different. See, the disruption that's taking place here, that if the world is indeed so rock-solidly built upon the foundation of Job's friends, then the question begs to be answered, who needs to be in relationship with God anyway?

If God is going to bless me if I do good, and if God is going to judge me if I do bad, then as long as he stays up there, and I do more good than I do bad, then I'm okay.

[21 : 26] What need do I have to be in relationship with him anyway? Why do I need to seek him? Why do I need to know him? Because if there's bad things in my life, all I need to do is clean it up.

I don't need to rely upon him. I don't need further revelation of him. Because I just need to do more good than I do bad. As long as my good outweighs my bad, in the end, I'm rejoicing.

This is the conventional wisdom that still exists today. And this is why there's so little pursuit of a living, powerful relationship with a holy God.

Because ultimately, we don't need it. But what God says is life doesn't always fit in that nice, neat little box. Sometimes you go through trials that you don't understand.

Sometimes you go through struggles that you don't realize. And the greatest thing you need is what we will get to in the 19th chapter here. It's why I stopped short. Where Job says, But I know that my Redeemer lives.

[22 : 36] That though he slay me, I know that I will see him in my flesh in the land of the living. The best verse, in my opinion, in the entire book. And what pushed Job to that reality was I'm walking through something I don't understand.

I'm walking through something that I don't know. But what I do know is this. And the only way he was able to know that is because his world was disrupted. The blessings were removed.

The favor was no longer there. And so he's learning things that are only learned and fashioned in the middle of that fire of suffering because it disrupted everything he thought he had under control. If these struggles and these temptations, all these things had never happened, if Job still had all of his livestock, if he still had all of his children, if he still had all of his wealth and his health and all these things, then Job's world would have just continued on the same way and the same way and the same way.

And he would have never known the depths of God he knows at the end. Because by the time we get to the end of the book, God never tells Job why, but Job is content not knowing why because he knows who.

[23 : 54] And that's a depth we can only get to when our worldview is rocked. And it's not that we're so special that the rock has to be moved or the world has to be changed for us.

It's that God so loves us and cares for us and pursues us that he brings us to a place of desperation where he disrupts what we think is normal and he disrupts what we think everything is.

And he calls us to lean only place that we can. He leads us, as the psalmist would cry out, to a rock that is higher than us. And we lean desperately upon the Savior.

Now that's a sour fruit to eat because when you think you have it all figured out and then the bottom falls out of it, you realize you don't, so you need to go to the one who does. But it is a fruit that is only born during moments of suffering.

It is the disruption. And third and finally in our passage, it is the bulk of the 18th chapter and we see the effect of it in the first six verses of the 19th chapter and that is the fruit of disgrace.

[25 : 07] Job spends the majority, the overwhelming majority, actually it's verses 5 through 21 of the 18th chapter, he goes on a rant.

And his rant is really just declaring what it looks like for the wicked. And he starts speaking of the fact that the wicked are on this path of no return, that everywhere they go there's a trap and he gives like four to five different images of them being ensnared and caught in a trap and their feet lead them that way.

And he's just really going on this long discourse about the wicked is walking down. Notice when we saw Eliphaz's response to Job's rebuttal and now we're seeing Bildad's second response to that rebuttal.

Neither one of them give room any longer for repentance. Neither one of them say, well just turn and God will bless you. What they're both declaring is that you're on a path of destruction and its only end is death.

And it's just really speaking and saying, okay Job, but this is what's going on. And all of the innuendos, if you will, and all of the little nuggets that he puts in there makes it very clear that he's talking about Job.

[26 : 22] Right? That his lamp would go out, that the light above his tent would disperse. One of the older commentary speaks to the reality that during that time and even in today's time, hospitality was very, very important to the people group.

And to be hospitable to strangers, they would keep a lamp lit or a candle lit and the light would always be there to show that you're hospitable and you're welcome. And if your light was put out, essentially, I mean that you can't even be hospitable anymore because nobody wants to be in your home.

By the way, nobody wanted to be in Job's home. I mean to be in Job's home, everything was dying. Who wants to be there? Right? And he's like, Job, you can't even be hospitable. You can't even extend the greatest mercy. And you're just being entrapped and eventually you're going to die and it's just going to get worse and worse and worse and worse.

And then he says, the wicked go down a path and their roots are dried up and their branches are cut off and their offspring are dead. Well, there's no doubt he's talking about Job here, right? And then they'll die and nobody will remember him.

His name will be gone forever. He'll be buried and nobody will care. But here's the question. Is any of this helpful?

[27 : 31] Or is this just bringing greater disgrace to a hurting individual already? Is any of this helpful at all?

Job cries out. He says, how long will you torment me? Notice, here's part of the suffering of Job. We looked at it just a few minutes ago in the division, but it is the disgrace that is being heaped and heaped and heaped upon him by his friends, though he knows he is doing no wrong.

But what they perceive doesn't match what he's declaring. And they're bringing further disgrace. He says, your words have tormented me and crushed me.

You crushed me with your words. These ten times you've insulted me. You are not ashamed to wrong me. Now, keep in mind, by the time Job says this, Job has said some things in haste.

It's not everything that Job says, we say, oh, that's absolutely right. Sure, we can admit that. He gets really mad at God. It's okay to say things in haste. It's okay to kind of question at times. It's okay to just kind of be a little upset and God can handle it.

[28 : 50] We always say that. God's big enough to handle it. But Job has also said something like this, God, make known to me my sin. Show me where I have wronged.

So, keep this in mind. It's not like Job is in pride declaring that he is perfect. Job, in honesty, is going, I do not know anything I have done, but God, if you will, just speak it and show me what I have done wrong.

Just like God never tells him why he does this, God also never reveals a sin of Job that would have led to this.

Now, he does say, Job, you don't know what you're talking about. You don't know who I am, but he never reveals, Job, all this happened because this wicked thing you did, which is what all his friends said. So, there's no sin revealed.

And he's opening himself up to the inspection of God. He's even asked his friends, tell me what I've done wrong and nobody has said. So, this isn't pride.

[29 : 57] They say, well, surely you've done something wrong, but tell me what? I don't know. Look at my life. Be honest with me. Tell me. So, he's put himself before his friends. It's not like he's hiding in a corner over here allowing no one to speak to him.

But then he says, but even if I have sinned, if I have wronged, then that's mine. Even if I have truly erred, then my error lodges with me. He says, so here's the thing. Here's the assumption Job's saying. He says, say that I have sinned. Say that I have done wrong. Well, that's my fault. That's my blame. Your job as a counselor is to restore and redeem and build me up.

In the New Testament, it would say this. What? Snatching them out of the fire, hating even the garments that are made filthy by the sin.

But loving the sinner. Sure, we ought to turn them back and restore them. Two times in the New Testament, it says, love covers a multitude of sins.

[30 : 58] And it says it once in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 10. Love covers a multitude of sin. Love covers the sin when the sin is exposed and revealed and admitted and confessed.

It is not the judgment for the sin that covers it, but it is the love and the overwhelming reality of restoration. It is the job of those counselors to restore, not to disgrace.

Now, that doesn't mean we don't speak the truth. Love does not shy away from the truth. As a matter of fact, love does nothing but the truth. And it is always going to declare the truth, even if it hurts.

Why? Because you love the sinner enough to tell them the truth. Love them enough to declare truth. Hating even the garments spoiled by the fire.

But trying and seeking to bring no disgrace to the individual, it's a hard line. But too often, what happens is in the midst of trials and suffering is that we heap disgrace upon torment.

[32 : 15] Because we don't always understand, we don't know, and so we begin to speak down about the individual rather than to speak into the individual and about the issue.

may we guard ourselves from the sour fruits of suffering. May we seek to be people of reconciliation, not people of division.

May we be people who long to have our world disrupted if it means that we get to lean more into the holy God who's the creator and sustainer of it all. And may we not be those who bring disgrace, but rather we are exhibitions of grace.

And with the love which we have been given, we display that love to others. That Christ loved us while we were yet sinners, but he never left us there. And he loved me enough, and I told someone recently, the most offensive things that have ever been told me, the thing that has offended me more than anything else, is the Bible.

It has cut to the very heart and the quick of my being. It has rocked my world. The same book that tells me that I am his beloved, the same book that tells me he loves me, is the same book that cuts me.

[33 : 34] And I love the imagery we get in the prophetic writings where it says that he wounds, but heals. Wounding us, but healing us.

The healing doesn't come until the wounds have already been applied. And so we don't want to be people that bring disgrace.

We want to be exhibitions of grace, but grace that is connected to truth, that can restore when the wound is felt.

Job feels the pain, but his friends are doing nothing to restore the man because they're still caught up in the situation. The challenge for us today is to look beyond the situation and to see the individual.

And as we see the individual, to pray for the individual and say, Lord Jesus, help me to handle this the way you do. And we see that recorded for us in Job 18, 1-19, 6.

[34 : 44] Thank you, my brothers.