

Kick Them While They Are Down

Job: View From The Ashes series #4

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. Before I begin, it's November, October is over. So I just want to say thank you from Leisa and I from the bottom of our hearts. Thank you so much for your calls, your texts and your cards. We greatly appreciate you. We know we are appreciated, but we love you all. Thank you so much.

Today we're going to continue our series in the book of Job. kicking them while they are down. You ever felt that? You ever wanted to do that? Mercy. Years ago, Chuck Swindoll shares ... There's a point something happened to him and he shares it in one of his books where he was called to go and speak at a conference and Chuck Swindoll is a noted author and minister. He's since passed, but I think it was probably in the 80s or early 90s. He was speaking at this event and. On the first night he meets this couple. They seem to be very sweet and charming and everything. But then as the week goes by, as he's speaking at this conference, he notices that the husband tends to look a little drowsy and just within 10 minutes of him speaking, he falls asleep. As a speaker, rude. And then again, I'm boring, so I know if he falls asleep, I understand. So this experience though, he gets begins to irritate him. It's like, why is this guy falling asleep in front of my lectures? Anyways, by the time they meet at the very end of the conference, the final meeting, he was convinced that he was only there because his wife wanted him to go. Okay. He's busy, he's even a real Christian. And at the conclusion, as he goes up, he's meeting them and he says, he's about to say goodbye. His wife points out. Thank you so much. My husband has been looking forward to this for some time. You are his favorite author. You are his favorite pastor. And Chuck Swindle in his head, well then, I was falling asleep in my lectures. Then she points something out. My husband has cancer and the treatment leaves him drowsy and he wants to fall asleep. But he loves you are his favorite Bible teacher. He wanted to meet you and to hear you no matter what. Chuck then silently in his head starts to rebuke himself. He said, I stood there all alone as deeply rebuked as I have ever been. What a dangerous thing it is to judge others.

As we've been going through the book of Job, just to give you a little bit of a highlight, Job is a man from Uz. He was very wealthy. He had a large family. He had 10 kids. He was married. He had a lot of land. He had a lot of livestock. He was a very wealthy man. In a matter of moments, his life turns upside down. His children are killed. All of his animals, either killed or taken away, his laborers are gone. Everything that he had known in an instant is gone. And obviously, at this point, if you lose, especially your children, of all things, he's deeply depressed. He mourns for a week. At the same time, his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come together and agree, let's go and join Job in this time of need. And so they sit quietly for a week. Eliphaz of course, then gets up after a week and he starts to share with them. He's probably the gentlest of all the three, but basically what he basically comes out with is, so what'd you do? That earned all of this horrible stuff to happen to you. And after he's done, their friend, their mutual friend, Bildad joins in.

So I want to go to chapter eight now. Let's go to Job chapter eight, verse one, and we'll read the first seven verses, okay? These are some of the verses. If you're online here, maybe if you want to take a screenshot so you can go back. These are not all of the verses, but unfortunately we just only have so much time. But go ahead and read these, and if you can, maybe read the whole chapters. just for better context, okay? But in Job chapter eight, verses one through seven, we find Bildad, the Shuhite. He replies, "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind. Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? When your children sinned against Him, He gave them over to the penalty of their sin." Rude. "But if you will seek God earnestly, if you will seek God earnestly and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now, He will rouse Himself on your behalf and restore to you your prosperous state. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be."

Now, Bildad is working on the assumption of cause and effect, okay? Something bad happens, what was the cause? What was the beginning, the origination of why this all happened? Much like Eliphaz did as well, not knowing in the bigger context, spiritually, what's happening, right? For those of you maybe who are not aware of this story, the accuser, we sometimes call it the devil, goes and accuses God that, God, you're too fair. If, for instance, somebody... were to, their life were to turn upside down, they would curse you. And who does God name? Job, okay? And the first time God says, okay, here's Job, go ahead, do your bidding. The only thing is you can't, what could he not do? Couldn't touch Job, he couldn't physically harm him. So again, he takes the kids, he takes everything. Comes back. And guess what? Does Job curse God? No, he doesn't. He's saddened, maybe upset, but he doesn't curse God. Now, of course the accuser then goes back to God. Well, yeah, but you didn't let me get to go, you know, and actually hurt him. I'm pretty sure if I physically hurt him, he'll turn his mind, he'll change his mind. So then of course God relents. And what does the accuser do? He gives boils, he physically harms Job and in spite of the pain and the great itchiness, because as it says, there was a broken pot and he takes the broken piece of pot and starts to scratch himself. Yeah. Does Job curse God? No. In fact, Mrs. Job, she basically says, will you just curse God already? And I mean, if I was Mrs. Job, I'd be upset too if I lost all of my children. How could Bildad, and I'll add Eliphaz as well, how can Bildad be so certain that Job did something? You know what they say about certainty. As soon as you're so certain about something, what happens? Something to the opposite effect happens, right? You're so certain that A is gonna match up with B, and yet there's always a slight variable that can change everything upside down.

Elmer Smick speaks to this part where he says, but an arrogant certainty that Job's children got what they deserved and that Job was well on his way to the same fate. This is the smug, it's the arrogance that he's emphasizing about Bildad, and I would even say Eliphaz. The lesson that we must learn is that there are people in the world and that they do their heartless disservice to mankind under the guise of being the special friend of God. Is it possible that maybe even in our own desire to try to do what is right, is it possible that we could totally not speak of God and do harmful damage to others in the words that we share with other people? How many of you unfortunately have been hurt by a brother or sister in the church? It hurts. In fact, if anything, that's probably the thing that hurts the most is because you're supposed to be able to trust our brothers and sisters, amen? And when it goes sideways, when you realize, oh no, wait, we are, I forgot, we are still broken people. Now I'm not trying to speak badly of Eliphaz and Bildad here because they were trying to do what they genuinely thought was right at the time.

Now let's continue. Let's jump to chapter 25. Okay, let's jump to chapter 25. And I want to read the first six verses. And there's, as you read Job, you kind of realize, man, this is really wordy. Sometimes, you know, we look and we see, we realize what, what kind of genre is being used here? Is this poetry? Is this a story? Is it prose? Is it a song? All right. Verse one, Chapter 25, verse one, Bildad continues on, he says, "the Shuhite replied, Dominion and awe belong to God. He established His order in the heights of heaven. Can his forces be numbered? On whom does his light not rise? How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of a woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal who is but a maggot, a human being who is only a worm."

And so Bildad, he's building on Eliphaz's position and he's arguing that at the end of the day, God is what? God is just. And so any calamity, any horrible thing happens is because of somebody's wrongdoing and the laws of nature. But yet we see, has Job done anything wrong? Not yet, no, he hasn't. Tom Brady once, I think earlier this year, I think it was in April, March or April, sometime in the spring, he went on the Deep Cut podcast with Vic Blanz. And here he shares how, I think the biggest problem with a lot of kids these days, it's all about them, their brand, their social media. He's referring to football players, okay? When it's about me and then not about us, well, there's no way to succeed as a team if all you're doing is thinking about how selfish it is for you to get the attention. And then Vic, he responds with, yeah, it's cool to show the world how great you are. The most inspiring thing is to show how great... you can make others. Later on, Brady points out, that's the point of life, is that if we, is what we could do, how do you help other people finish the race?

Now in our Christian walk, okay, in our Christian life, we're all quote, running the race as Paul points out, right? Is it a long race or is it a short race? Is it a sprint or an ultra marathon? Ultra marathon, it feels like. Marathon is only 26.2 miles. Ultra marathons can be up to anywhere 200 miles, maybe even longer if you really love pain. But are we in this race by ourselves? Normally we would think yes. We would just say, let's all run from A to B. Tour de France is different. You have a team of eight people, all sacrificing for generally one leader. They'll get the bottles, they'll get the food, they'll ride in front to block the wind. Everyone sacrifices themselves for that one leader. And it's hard work, and especially when you don't win. How do you think the team feels when the star rider doesn't perform and win? Hmm. We're not like that. We're called to run the race together, to support, to uplift, to listen, to care. And is Bildad and Eliphaz doing this? No, they're judging him.

Like Eliphaz, Bildad's lack of humility and compassion undermines his argument. You can't help somebody if you're simply just hitting them with a hammer or a mallet. Doesn't work that way. Number one, make sure, have they even asked, is he okay? Doesn't sound like it. So when you're so certain, you get humbled.

Now let's go back to where Job responds. Let's go back to chapter nine. And if you're wondering, why are we jumping back and forth? Well, within the book of Job, there are three different sets of conversations that the three friends share in Job response. Okay, let's go back to the first series of discussions. Chapter nine, let's read the first three verses and then we're gonna jump to 29 through 35, okay? All right, chapter nine, verse one. It says, then Job replied, indeed, I know that this is true, but how can mere mortals prove their innocence before a God? Though they wish to dispute with them, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand. And so as Job has previously mentioned, like, I don't even have an audience with God, I don't even have an opportunity to ask

questions. Why is this happening? What have I done? Because what is he hearing from God? Now, let's jump to verse 29. He's not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. If only there was someone, to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, someone to remove God's rod from me so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of them, but as it is now, strands with me. I cannot.

What's interesting about this very passage is that, despite all of the pain that Job has endured and all the frustration, he recognizes that God is what? God is all powerful. Okay? God is all knowing, God is omnipotent, God is all powerful. Job simply just wants to try to understand what is going on? Have I truly done something? But yet, you see a little bit of fight in him. He's very defined. He's like, what have I done wrong? And just as I mentioned last week, look, if I did something wrong, please, I'm not, I'm open to like, okay, if I did something wrong, please explain it to me. And Job, I mean, they're obviously, they're not of any help. All they're doing is dumping more onto him. And so Job is wondering, like, he's agonizing. I mean, how can I bring, or should I even bring this case before God? He's not sure of what the outcome could be if he does talk to God. In spite of that, though, he still trusts. Has he cursed God yet? He hasn't cursed God yet.

Okay. I want to jump to chapter 19 real quick. Okay, let's read this one of the last passages that we'll look at. Job 19 verses one through six. Okay. He's gonna respond to his friends, okay? Job 19 verses one through six. Then Job replied, How long will you torment me and crush me with your words? Ten times now you have reproached me. Shamelessly you attack me. If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone. If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me and use my humiliation against me. Then know that God has wronged me and drawn his net around me. Think one of the lessons that we can take from this passage is this. When you're up, your friends know who you are. When you are down, you know who your friends are. See the difference? When you're up, your friends know who you are, even if you may become famous and popular. Your friends, your siblings, they know who you really are. You're not special. I love.... I love.... That sounds harsh, but, you know, you realize it's kind of true. It's like, look, you could be this fancy person. You get all the money, you could have all the wealth and all the influence, whatever. I still know you for who you are. And you haven't changed. You hope, right? You would hope that they stay grounded. But it's also true when you're down. You know, those who will stand by you, true friendship doesn't kick you while you're down. Amen.

Listen, true friends, listen here. So choose wisely who you share your struggles with. Choose wisely who you share your struggles with. Go to somebody you trust or advice or just listen. Because somebody may wanna listen to you, but they don't have good intentions. Unfortunately. Choose wisely. So. I do believe that followers of Jesus, part of the responsibility is to make a difference in people's lives. Was Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar making a difference in Job's life at this point? Not really. They were only adding on the coals to his life. And making a difference in people's lives have different forms. It could be as simple as just being kind and listening, helping them out, driving them to the store, helping them on a project at work. Mowing somebody's lawn.

I've gone down this rabbit hole the last couple months of just people, like good people, wanting to mow people's lawns and taking care of houses that have either been abandoned, or they just, the individuals who live there, they just physically cannot maintain their home. There's one particular channel, I think it's called Flawless Cleaning, where he started out as somebody who pressure

washes roads, concrete. And now... with his dad and his uncle and a few friends, they've done transformations of backyards, yards that have overgrown, they cut everything down and they rebuild the fences. And now when they have friends as well, who can do roofing, all kinds of little things that significantly impact. In the last couple of years, I've learned of like how to literally maintain a building. And it's a lot of work. It's scary when you don't know how to do it. And... One of the biggest concerns is finances. How am I going to afford to pay somebody to do this? How can we make a difference in people's lives? How can we help others in areas where they cannot help themselves or do something because they either they don't know how or they don't have the money to accomplish that task?

Passage that we have studied many times, but I think it's a good reminder, and especially in the time that we're living in, is this, Matthew 5, okay? Let's just go there real quickly. Matthew 5, chapter, Matthew 5, and I want to specifically look at two, a couple of verses actually, two points. The verse 13, okay? Many of you have probably heard this passage. Verse 13. Matthew 5.13. We all there? Okay, you are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses saltiness, how can it be salty again? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. What's the point of salt? Why is salt important? Obviously it makes our food taste better, right? I sometimes joke I love to eat food with my salt. I love salt. But it's also, they use salt to not only season, but to preserve food. But salt is mainly known for it being able to taste better. To make something that may not taste as great, either more manageable or taste amazing.

I remember some time ago, I was just making broccoli. Look, I'm not a fan of broccoli. But my life was changed when I realized you could roast broccoli, and all you need is just some good salt. And when I brought... charred broccoli out of the oven and add a little extra salt, it blew my mind. It's like, I could actually eat broccoli with a burger instead of fries. It was that good. Okay, I know that's a bold claim. It's a bold claim, but I would rather have that broccoli than Burger King's fries. That's a fact. And Jack in the Box, I just don't care for their fries. I'm sorry. But I love. roasted broccoli because it tasted so good when the salt hits your tongue it just like They didn't break. They didn't break. It tastes amazing. Oh, and I ate the whole bag. How many have eaten one pound of broccoli once? It tastes great. Tastes amazing.

Now, the other parts of this passage. Verse 14, you are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under the bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand and gives light to everyone in the house in the same way. Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. If you've ever been lost in the dark and you see light, what do you wanna do? You want to walk towards that light, right? Imagine losing light for a couple of days, and then you suddenly see maybe a house on a hill, the light flickers on, what do you want to do? Well, I want to go over there so I can charge my phone. Or see light, read something, right? Because all the power has gone out. And when you see something, bugs, when they see light, they're instantly attracted to it. And so I think that it's important that as followers of Jesus, we have to remember what's our purpose to be the seasoning to draw people in. But also bring them hope, because what does light do? It brings hope, especially when it is very dark. There's been a theme that I've been thinking about recently is that do we live in times of light or do we live in times of darkness right now? Sometimes it bends towards darkness. And I want to counteract that, especially as a church in Downey or wherever we live. I want to be pockets of light. May our homes, may our cars, places, the spaces that we work in everywhere we go. May we be a

vessel of light. People are searching for hope. People are upset. People are wondering what's going to happen. And what I will say is that no matter what, God will reign supreme. Just as we learned in Daniel a couple months back, Daniel served several administrations. And sometimes he was threatened, he was loved, he was threatened by the outside people. His life was at stake several times. But was God faithful to him, Shadrach, Meshach, and Avendigo? Absolutely. Did he bear pain and sadness at some points in his life? Yes, he was not immune to hardship and trouble. But at the end, God reigned supreme. So let us not be like Eliphaz and build that and so far. Let's build people up.

As you reflect, who is that friend that was a source of encouragement and walked you through difficult season of your life? Okay, I've asked this before, but I want to ask you who is that friend that was a source of encouragement and walked you through a difficult season of life? To send you off with the challenge, smile. It's much easier. I hope it's easier to smile. It takes more muscles to frown, okay? So unless you want to work out your muscles and be a frowning person, bring light. My friends, may we be a source of encouragement. And even when the darkness seems so dark, remember, morning is still coming. And in that morning, there is hope. May you go with grace, may you go with peace, may you go with confidence. Smile and encourage. May be the seasoning, the salt and the light around those. True change comes by those around us.

Father in heaven, thank you Lord for you are good and your mercy endures forever Lord. Forgive us Lord of any shortcomings that we have Lord. We know that through you all things are possible. Thank you for all the things that you're doing in our lives and Lord, be with the things that are in our hearts that we either can speak openly about or maybe the things that we cannot quite yet. We know that you are a God who is faithful. May we continue to walk together, to continue to love each other and to proclaim you. And when we are challenged, Lord, help us to lift one another up to continue to pray for one another. Thank you for this beautiful group of people that are here who want to serve you in Jesus name. Everybody said Amen.

Grace and peace, everyone.