

When God's Way Seems Unfair

Job 9:1-10:22

- A. Job's desire was to be righteous before God though making his case seemed hopeless **1-3**
1. Bildad had argued that God never perverted justice by blessing wrongdoers or rejecting the blameless (8:3,20)
 - a. What made this all so hard for Job was that he had believed what Bildad said; he knew it was true (2)
 - b. He had believed that suffering was the result of sin and that health and wealth were marks of the righteous
 2. Job had believed what Bildad said, but then something had happened; a blameless man had suffered terribly
 - a. He believed what Eliphaz said, that the innocent do not perish (prematurely), until calamity reached him
 - b. Then the question Eliphaz had asked came back to him, 'Can mortal man be in the right before God?'
 3. Because he thought of himself as righteous, Job wanted to bring his case before God to set the record straight
 - a. But his very next thought was, What would I say? Who could bring evidence that God had been wrong
 - b. The Lord would make his case and not one in a thousand would be able to refute his testimony
 - c. Job wanted to hear the Lord declare him to be righteous, but changing God's mind was not likely
 4. While he sees his case as hopeless, it is important to note that what Job wanted most was God's approval
 - a. He was not seeking to regain his property, reputation or family, but for God's justification
- B. There were a number of hurdles to cross that made prevailing against him in court impossible **4-20**
1. His wisdom and power made him a formidable foe in any arena **4-10**
 - a. God has a wisdom so deep, so profound, that Paul is lost in wonder thinking about it **Rom 11:33**
 - 1) Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?
 - 2) What information could we bring that he did not know? What tactic that he could not prepare for it?
 - b. It is not just that he has the intellect to outwit us, he has the power to enforce his judgment on us
 - 1) How do you stop One who has the power to move mountains, shaking their very foundations (5-6)
 - 2) His power is such that it extends even to the heavens above so that he can darken sun and stars (7-8)
 - 3) In contrast to the ever stable mountains are waves of a never still sea, but he is in control there too (8)
 - 4) So vast is his wisdom and power that he set the distant stars in place just as he wanted (9)
 - c. Truly the Lord is wondrous in power so that its extent cannot be measured, his miracles uncountable (10)
 - 1) And while this is a great comfort to the saints, to one trying to overturn his verdict it was disheartening
 2. His divine nature made him seem to be an unapproachable God **11-13**
 - a. To best the Lord in an encounter seemed impossible, but to even step onto the battlefield seemed hopeless
 - b. How does one stand before God to change his thinking when he cannot be perceived by any of our senses
 - c. Should the Lord decide to snatch something from us who can even catch him to ask what he is doing
 - d. Even the mightiest of the heroes or villains of legend can't stand up to him; they cower in fear of his anger
 - e. This is not the kind of God that has an inviting presence that encourages men to approach him
 - f. Even if Job thought there was a possibility of proving God was wrong, how could he meet with God
 3. Even those who were truly innocent could not expect to prevail if he was intent on condemning them **14-20**
 - a. While God's power, wisdom and inapproachable glory cause us to bow in wonder, they discouraged Job
 - b. Taken together they meant that though innocent, reversing God's judgment against him was impossible
 - c. Even if he could force him into the courtroom Job had no real hope God would engage him in debate
 - d. Job believed God's response would be to crush him, multiply his wounds, overwhelm him with misery
 - e. Though he believed himself innocent, Job felt as if anything he said could and would be used against him
 - f. Where was justice to be found in all this when his courtroom opponent was the Almighty himself
- C. With the odds overwhelming against him, Job comes very near to outright calling the Lord unjust **21-24**
1. The Lord's apparent utter lack of concern for the suffering of a blameless man leaves Job in despair
 - a. If God does not care about him then what point is there in him caring about his life?
 - b. He despises his life that means so little to God; it seems to have no value to the One that matters most
 2. He bluntly, carelessly and yet clearly states that God is unjust: he destroys the blameless and the wicked
 - a. It makes no difference whether one tries to live an upright life; everyone's end is the same **Ecc 9:1-3**
 - b. God mocks the despair of the innocent in that he does nothing to help them in their undeserved suffering
 - c. As he looks about and sees injustice in the land he has to ask, Is that not the work of the sovereign Lord?
 - d. Given his situation Job is having a very difficult time concluding anything other than that God acts unjustly

3. There is hope for Job though because he does not just throw up his hands and give up on finding answers
 - a. He continues the questions looking for an answer to how his struggle with God and faith can be resolved

D. Possible ways out of this terrible dilemma Job found himself in **25-35**

1. Job felt a sense of urgency in finding a solution because life was quickly passing him by **25-26**
 - a. With the use of three images Job describes how quickly his life seems to be racing to its end
 - b. It is not just that it is moving quickly for him, but that it is filled with such misery
 - c. It flies past without joy, like a frail boat made of papyrus, like a prey that falls violently to an eagle
 - d. There is a sense of futility; Job feels that when he could be doing good things, he is watching life fly by
 - e. He wants answers to his questions about his innocence and God's justice, and needs them quickly
2. His first option was just to give up on trying to justify himself, smile at life and move on **27-29**
 - a. So how should he react to the tragedy that has befallen him? How is he to handle himself in such misery?
 - b. The first option is to grin and bear it, put a smile on his face and accept what is happening without question
 - c. He did not see this as a real possibility though because he really did dread what the future held for him
 - d. He did not think things would just work out but was convinced God would never change his guilty verdict
 - e. To continue to press forward in his desire to change that verdict thus made no sense at all
3. Next, he gives thought to purifying himself, though no details as to how he would do that are given **30-31**
 - a. Perhaps if he examined himself again, offered more sacrifices, redoubled efforts at purity he could be clean
 - b. Before he even heads down that road though he stops because God would always find something wrong
 - c. He could not think of anything he could do to achieve greater purity because he did not know his sin
4. Finally he expresses his desire for a mediator who could stand between him and God **32-35**
 - a. His insurmountable problem was that God was so much greater that Job could not even stand before him
 - b. Job needed an arbiter who could understand the position of the transcendent God and finite man
 - c. He needed a referee who could stand between the two combatants, God and Job, and separate them
 - 1) With someone who could remove God's punishing blows for a bit to give him a little respite
 - 2) Job felt that he could then speak up and be heard, present his case so that at least God would listen
 - d. As things stood, Job's situation was hopeless because there was no mediator, no solution to his dilemma
 - 1) We sometimes do not stop to realize how great is our blessing to know Jesus Christ, our Mediator

E. Because any effort to clear his name seemed pointless, Job can only ask questions of God **10:1-22**

1. First, Job wanted to know why the Lord was so vehemently opposed to him **1-7**
 - a. With no answers from God and no comfort from his friends, Job gives up on trying to be considerate
 - 1) He is bitter about the turn life has taken, he knows God is behind it and does not know why
 - b. Like his friends, Job assumes his suffering is God's punishment of sin; he wants to know the charge
 - 1) He goes beyond the mere fact God has seen sin where there is none to questioning God's motives
 - 2) He asks if the Lord takes pleasure in oppressing the innocent and approving the evil of the wicked
 - 3) He wants to know if his own perception of God's goodness and justice has been utterly off the mark
 - c. It seemed to Job that God's judgment was no better than that of humans whose mortality limited them
 - 1) Our eyes can see only the outside of a thing so that we can often miss what is in another's heart
 - 2) Our days are numbered so that we do not have time to examine things as thoroughly as God does
 - d. But, God was not human and thus knew that Job was innocent yet continued to persecute him
 - 1) Worst of all, when the final Judge of all creation is determined to harm you, no one can deliver you
2. He then asks why God even created him since his only intent seemed to be to find cause to punish him **8-17**
 - a. Job concurs with the psalmist who wrote much later, 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made' (Ps 139:14)
 - 1) 'Your hands shaped me and made me' also reflects the psalmist: 'you knit me in my mother's womb'
 - 2) Job confesses God as his Creator, as the One who ordained his days, and who showed great kindness
 - 3) Rather than shoring up his weakened faith though, these things only confused Job all the more
 - 4) Did God create him just to destroy him? Did he mold him from clay only to turn him back to dust?
 - 5) In Job's mind it would seem that the answer to both questions was a disturbing 'Yes'
 - b. Job's experience told him that God had created him just to find sin in his life so he could punish him
 - 1) Whether Job sinned or not ('even if I am innocent') his fate was sealed; God would punish him
 - 2) The Lord would find some new witness to testify to Job's failures and his anger would only increase
 - 3) Job accepted that if he had sinned he deserved his fate, but he knew of no sin that deserved his suffering

3. Finally he asks the Lord why he will not just leave him alone so he can find some joy before he dies **18-22**
 - a. God had been kind; Job had known years of prosperity but he would gladly have given them all up
 - b. His suffering and disgrace at being seen as a sinner was so great he wishes again he had never been born
 - c. He asks that God would just leave him alone, quit watching him looking for sin to punish him for
 - d. Maybe without God's eye on him he could have just a brief time of peace before he left this world behind
4. The question that comes to our minds as we listen to Job is, Is the Lord unjust in how he dealt with Job
 - a. We know that he considered Job blameless and that Job suffered to prove something to Satan
 - 1) This would make God unfair or unjust only if he owed Job a life of privilege, wealth and comfort
 - 2) We know better than Job, though it is hard sometimes to live with, God's promises are not all earthly
 - 3) God was not unjust because he has other purposes beyond making life easy for us here in this world
 - 4) God cannot be unjust for that is contrary to his nature; he is the standard for what is just, not our ideas
 - b. One other question arises in light of Job's questions about God's character, Were these questions sinful?
 - 1) We know two things, the first being that God finds grumbling worthy of punishment **Num 14:26-30**
 - 2) The second thing is that the Lord welcomes his people to express the doubts, anger, confusion, etc
 - 3) As we see in many of the psalms, he invites his people to come honestly to him in prayer
 - 4) We are free to come to him with our questions, but only if we believe he is there to hear and answer
 - 5) Job's words tell us he was not sure God was listening, that he was dangerously close to unbelief