



"The Folly in the Fellowship"

Job 22:1 – 26:14

October 25, 2020

We are going to open God's Word and receive its message from the book of Job. The title of this morning's message is *The Folly in the Fellowship*. We are going to take a good look at the failure of Job's friends in the midst of his profound suffering and pain.

We recall that here in the pages of Scripture, Job is presented to us as a godly man. He would be an Old Testament saint saved by grace. He was a man who walked in the ways of the Lord. It is stated that Job was blameless, upright, that he turned away from evil, and that he feared the Lord. Job was a godly brother in the Lord.

We saw how Job was a very rich man and a family man. In the midst of all these things, satanic accusation were brought against him and Satan said, He only worships You, God, because of what You give him. If you took all this profound blessing away, watch Job curse You to Your face.

So the Lord allowed that test and all that Job had was stripped away from his life—his livelihood, his children, and his health. They were all taken from Job. Then Job continued on in faith, trusting the Lord even though, as we have seen at times, his faith was troubled and he was raw. There were difficult and painful things occurring inside of Job.

Meanwhile, we have seen that Job's three friends came. First, Eliphaz. Then Bildad and Zophar. They all came together and came on the scene like the three magi; like three wise men from that area in the east. They were men of means and they were men of wisdom.

Job's three friends came and surrounded Job. Everything looked so promising at the beginning. They came and they sat with Job in silence for seven days and seven nights on the ground. Can you image their presence with him with the intent of bringing him support?

However, after those seven days, Job finally broke the silence with an outburst of lament. We saw that after all of the suffering that he had experienced, he cursed the day of his birth. Job challenged the fairness of the Lord in what was happening in his life. As we see with Job, even godly people who are walking the path of God can have vexation getting stirred up inside of them in the middle of their suffering.

But with Job challenging the fairness of God, his three friends were stunned. They could not let it fly. From there, we have close to thirty chapters of dialogue between Job and his friends, where they end up relentlessly asserting a doctrine of Divine Retribution against Job.

We are privy to the inside information that Job was a servant of the Lord, pleasing to God, blameless His sight. But their worldview dictated that anytime somebody suffered calamity, it was because God was judging a specific sin in their lives. So they pressed, and they pressed, and they pressed, and they pressed in an ongoing way. We see this laid out before us.

This morning we are going to see some of the highlights of what Job's friends said to him. We are going to see some of their greatest hits. Pun intended. As we do, we need to be asking: what kind of church do we want to be?

This is a message that is primarily directed to the company of believers in the local church. How do we wisely console one another in the sufferings that we experience in life? With these three men before us, we are going receive example after example of what I think not to do.

You will recall that several weeks ago we read a portion of the opening dialogue of these friends given by Eliphaz. He seems to be the most prominent among them. He spoke longer than the others, and he spoke first in each round.

We saw how Eliphaz opened up as a polite Evander Holyfield. He might have been tactful but in the end, he hit hard as he told Job that all of his suffering had come down upon him because of something he had done.

Then Job continued after that with words of lament. Job declared, I have not denied the words of the Holy One. I am truly seeking to walk in His ways. None-the-less, the arrows of the Almighty are in me. God has made His mark.

Now we are going to see how the second friend spoke up in Chapter 8. We are going to read what Bildad had to say first. What Eliphaz declared as a principle, Bildad asserted directly in application to Job.

1. Bildad brought this close to home. (Job 8:1-7)

8Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

**²How long will you say these things,
and the words of your mouth be a great wind?**

³Does God pervert justice?

Or does the Almighty pervert the right?

**⁴If your children have sinned against him,
he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.**

**⁵If you will seek God
and plead with the Almighty for mercy,**

**⁶if you are pure and upright,
surely then he will rouse himself for you
and restore your rightful habitation.**

**⁷And though your beginning was small,
your latter days will be very great.**

So Bildad opened his counsel to his friend Job, and I would say that he did so with all of the sensitivity of a jack hammer. Picture the scene that is before us. Here we have Job sitting on the ashes of the ruins of his life.

For all the pain that Job was feeling physically with loathsome boils that he scrapped with a shard of pottery, the emotional and psychological torment was even greater still. His appearance was altered. He was suffering.

As Job's heart ached for his children, we find him pouring out his heart in songs of lamentation before the Lord. And Bildad spoke up and said, How long will this wind emit from your mouth? You are nothing but a windbag, Job.

That is how Bildad began. Did he not?

**2”How long will you say these things,
and the words of your mouth be a great wind?**

Bildad called Job a windbag! Then Bildad proceeded to assert their theology, the same theology that these men relentlessly advanced through this book. What we see in what Bildad said here and throughout this book, seems like a strange blend of Retribution Theology and the Prosperity Theology.

It was all black and white to them. It all boiled down to some very simple facts. Whenever an individual suffered extraordinary loss or these kinds of calamities came upon any person's life, it was because the hand of the Almighty was judging some kind of heinous sin. Every time!

Likewise, if somebody came into uncommon blessing, it was because they had done something to earn the favor the Lord. God was pleased so He was prospering them. The basic premise of all this is: bad things happen to bad people. Good things happen to good people. God makes sure of it.

So that is what Bildad was asserting. He began asserting this in the most tender part of Job's heart. Bildad started by sticking his finger into the wound of Job missing his children. Bildad was basically putting forth that there must have been some kind of serious, serious iniquity in their lives, that God would bring this upon them.

Bildad did not know that! The picture would seem otherwise. Job was a man who was so careful to watch over his children, and they were responsive and respectful when Job called them after each birthday celebration to observe the burnt offerings for sin.

Job offered the burnt offerings, not because he knew of any clear manifestation of sin in their lives, but because there was the possibility that there was a resentment toward the Lord within them. Yet, here we have Bildad saying, Surely it is because there was some heinous sin.

Then Bildad turned it to the other side. It is almost like a prosperity gospel works-righteousness type of a situation where Bildad said, But if you will be pure in your behavior, the first season of your life will seem small in comparison to how greatly the Lord will reward you later in life.

There is a worldview here that says that the circumstances of our lives, they correspond one to one on whether we are sinning against God or walking in a way that is pleasing to God. That is the worldview that is here. It is a worldview that is very popular in the world today as well.

This view extended into New Testament times too. Do you remember the story in John Chapter 9, where there was a man born blind? What did the disciples ask? What did his parents do or did he somehow sin in the womb? They tied his blindness to particular aspects of sin.

Do you remember at the end of the book of Acts. Paul was shipwrecked and went to get a bunch of twigs and sticks to throw into the fire, and out came a viper and attached itself to Paul's hand. The people of Malta said, Oh, he is a sinful man that this happened to him.

There is this tendency in our lives too. Whenever we pass into a season of suffering, there is a tendency even among the people of God to say, What did I do to have this happen? The problem with this kind of understanding and theology is that it turns the Living God into something of a slot machine. You input the relevant behavior and pull the crank, and out comes either good or bad, based on what you put in.

That would be a nice, clean, easy understanding of the moral universe that does away with all the question of why, but that is not how it works. The fact of the matter is that all across this world in this dark age, you see wicked people that seem to be prospering and living comfortably all through their lives.

Meanwhile, some of the godliest people that we will meet, sometimes they experience difficulty and pain and suffering that is deeper than we can imagine. Sometimes it is the godliest people that suffer the most, and often it is that suffering that makes them so tender and godly.

So there are purposes that God has in the hardships and in the pain of His people. There could be an entire constellation of reasons why we enter into hardship. There are many good things that God is doing through them, so we can't just simplify it.

Sometimes if people are walking in rebellion against the Lord, He brings chastisement and judgment to them in this world. But that's not always the reason for suffering. Therefore, we must be careful and we must be cautious and we must be humble as we seek to come along side each other with sympathy, understanding that not all of our pain is rooted in sin.

I would even go as far as to say that most of our suffering may very well not be God judging some sin in our lives. It is God shaping our character into the likeness of Christ, so we must be careful about this Retribution Theology.

We continue and from here and see that Job responded to Bildad. You will recall how Job added the language of the subpoena to his lament. In his profound grief mixed with vexation, Job felt

that he was being wronged by the Lord. And Job wanted to go to court and he wanted God to explain what was happening to him.

Job was persisting that he had been walking the path with the Lord. Then Zophar said no. So now we go into Chapter 11 and we see how Zophar responded. Basically, what Zophar had to say is this: Job, buddy, you got off easy, so you better stop it. You deserve more than you got.

2. Zophar says “You deserve worse.” (Job 11 1-6)

11Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

**2”Should a multitude of words go unanswered,
and a man full of talk be judged right?**

**3Should your babble silence men,
and when you mock, shall no one shame you?**

Can you imagine Zophar talking like this to a man like Job who had been through what he had been through? Verse 4:

**4For you say ‘My doctrine is pure,
and I am clean in God’s eyes.’**

5But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you,

6and that he would tell you that secrets of wisdom!

For he is manifold in understanding,

Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.”

Zophar was saying, Job, in the broad scheme of things, even given all that had fallen upon your life, you should be thankful because you deserve more than what you have gotten. No that God exacts less of you than your guilt deserves.

I’m going to tell you this: As I reflected on that final statement at the end of Verse 6, theologically there is some truth to that.

6...God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.

For those of us who have studied the holiness and the righteousness of God and understand His infinite holiness and have also understood our sin and how each one of us has in this life rebelled against the rule of God, how dare we sin against Him. That becomes an unthinkable offense.

I have heard this said on multiple occasions. Whatever happens in this life, whatever suffering we experience, we deserve Hell. What we experience in this life is less than what we deserve. So what Zophar resonates.

Here is one of the ways that Job is such of a challenging book: You have statements that ring theologically true, but you have good things stated at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and in the wrong way. That is something that we are seeing right here.

Again, we are talking about what kind of church do we want to be and how do we counsel each other through the things that we face that are painful. Now imagine with me a brother in the Lord. He is somebody who has come to understand his sin and has looked to the sacrifice of the Messiah.

He has been humbled before the Lord by the Spirit and he is responsive to the Savior. He is a man who is growing in holiness, pursuing God's ways. Let's say that tragedy befalls this man's life in the form of an accident that occurred on one of the highways of Southern California.

His wife was out with their children. In that accident the life of his wife was taken. The life of his teenage daughter was taken. The life of his ten-year-old son was taken. In response, his heart is breaking. In response, he is in anguish.

He has the response of turmoil inside of him and he is lamenting and casting his cares upon the Lord. He is angry and upset and raw and hurting. He is saying to the Lord, I don't understand this. Why did this have to happen. I am questioning this.

Is that a time for a brother or sister in the Lord to say, Well, let's just remember that in view of how you are talking to the Lord, remember what we all deserve is Hell and you should be suffering more than you are suffering right now.

Is that what we say at a time like that? I'm not going to say that to you at a time like that. I hope you won't say that to me. I don't want that to happen. That is not how we console each other when life hurts. Wouldn't it be better at a time like that to go into the truths of Romans Chapter 8, to remind our brother?

Whatever you are experiencing even as you are casting your cares to the Lord, nothing, no nothing will separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Not tribulation, not distress, not persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger or sword, or traffic accidents.

Nothing is going to separate you from your Messiah, even when your heart and soul is filled with this kind of pain. Even when we hear them saying things that are uncomfortable, there are times to assert the gracious love of God in the midst of our suffering.

Job had lost everything and Zophar told him that God exacted less of him than his guilt deserved. But Zophar was not done. He had more to say. With this kind of love in his heart, he then gave Job a good prescription to make things better.

3. Zophar promises better days (Job 11:13-18)

**¹³If you prepare your heart,
and stretch out your hands toward him.**

**¹⁴If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,
and let not injustice dwell in your tents.**

**¹⁵Surley then you will lift up your face without blemish;
you will be secure and will not fear.**

**¹⁶You will forget your misery;
you will remember it as waters that have passed away.**

**¹⁷And your life will be brighter than the noonday;
its darkness will be like the morning.**

**¹⁸And you will feel secure, because there is hope;
you will look around and take your rest in security.**

Zophar was saying, Job, here is another reason why you should be thankful. First of all, in the calamity you are not getting as much as you deserve. There is truth to that, but it is not a timely truth.

Zophar went on, The second reason you should be thankful is because you can move on from all of this. If you shape up before the Lord, you could be blessed and put all of this behind you. Sure your life is in ruins, sure you are sitting on the ashes of your son's home, sure your wife is in a total crises of grief and faith, sure your children are dead, sure you are covered in sores, but you can just go back to the Lord and all of this will be like water under the bridge. Your life will be so bright again.

What?! No!! Look at how Zophar began this. Look again at what it says in Verse 12. Zophar was saying, I have wisdom for you, Job. There is so much wisdom I have for you. Verse 12:

**¹²But a stupid man will get understanding
when a wild donkey's colt is born a man!**

I'm trying to get all this across to you, but you seem to be a little bit dense and thick-headed, Job. So it would seem that when monkeys fly, that is when a bonehead like you will get all of this. Can you believe this piece of work? We can be so strong in our principles that we forget mercy and love. We forget how important it is just to identify with suffering.

I have heard people in their suffering say a beautiful thing, but that same thing should be used with caution when speaking to somebody else in their suffering. I've sat with joy as I have heard men and women in this church in their pain say, The Lord is seeing me through and I know this too shall pass. Amen when the Spirit brings that realization to us.

However, when you have somebody in the open sores of their suffering, maybe that is not the best time to tell them that this will pass in response to their anguish. In response to their anguish, perhaps what we say is, This is indeed a shadowed dark valley. This is painful and you are not alone. And you simply weep with those who weep.

In the midst of suffering you find that there is so much effectiveness that comes when people will just sit on the ground in the dirt with people in their pain. Then, by the healing grace of the Lord, there will come a time when the light begins to get shed. But how important it is that brothers and sisters in Christ sit with each other even in the darkness. Zophar did not quite get that.

We move into the next round of dialogue which is more like a debate. This is contained in Chapters 15 through 21. Here is just a few of the greatest hits as we pass by this. Eliphaz opened up by saying, It was some kind of hidden sin that brought all this upon you, Job, so now let's talk about the hidden sin in the past. You are just sinning against the Lord with your speech, and you are making it worse.

Then the next round Bildad spoke again and he spoke of the Law of Retribution as a natural law that was integrated into the experience of earth like one of the natural laws of nature. He was saying, So you are an innocent sufferer? Give me a break. Shall the earth be forsaken for you? Shall the rock be removed from its place for you?

Then go into what Zophar had to say. One of his real gleaming highlights was when he described in his view what happened to the wicked. He was saying, Do you want to know what happens to the wicked, Job? Even though they may mount up prosperity for a time, it is going to be brought down soon enough. Their wealth is short-lived, like yours!

Zophar said in Job Chapter 20 and Verses 6 and 7:

**⁶Though his height mount up to the heavens,
and his head reach to the clouds,
⁷he will perish forever like his own dung;
those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'**

Zophar was saying, In the end, the wicked may seem like they flourish, but in the end they disappear and they perish. They are reduced to dung.

So here Zophar was getting scatological, not eschatological (end-times), he was getting scatological and was telling Job, You are among the wicked. You are going to perish like your own dung. You as good as your own feces. In the end, your life is going to amount to a pile of excrement.

That was how committed to his principles Zophar was. Dude, be quiet! You were so wise when you sat in silence. Now Spanish is not my primary language. I only know tiny portions of it but— ay de me – oh my!—fits here. We are seeing the folly in the fellowship right here. Zophar did not give restraint to his lips. He did not allow love to be a guard over his speech.

We continue and go into the final round and I will give you a quick highlight from Eliphaz. Eliphaz and his approach to Job in Round 3 is contained in Job Chapters 22 through 26. Eliphaz slandered Job at this point.

Eliphaz spoke open falsehood against Job. Look at what it says in Job Chapter 22 and Verse 5:

4. Eliphaz slanders Job (Job 22)

⁵Is not your evil abundant?

There is no end to your iniquities.

⁶For you have exacted pledges of your brothers for nothing and stripped the naked of their clothing.

⁷You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.

Verse 9:

⁹You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed.

Eliphaz was saying, Job, you have been totally abusive to a great company of needy people. Eliphaz was slandering Job. He was breaking the 9th Commandment—bear no false witness against your neighbor.

Do you remember weeks back how Eliphaz opened his dialogue with Job tactually giving expressions of the godliness of Job's life. Early on in Chapter 4, Eliphaz said, Job, you have upheld the weary with your words. You have held firm those with feeble knees. You have strengthened weak hands.

Eliphaz recognized the godliness of Job's life but through all this, he was so committed to his erroneous principle that any suffering in this was the direct result of God's punishing an act of sin, that he began slandering Job with his accusations.

We see how sometimes we can become so committed to certain principles that they will lead us into sin when we don't apply those principles with wisdom. That is what happened here with "wise" Eliphaz, who had such dignity in his opening remarks.

We now get to the final portion of our passage this morning. This is the final word from the three friends and it is from Bildad in Job 25.

5. Bildad taught some maggot theology (Job 25:1-6):

25Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

**²"Dominion and fear are with God;
he makes peace in his high heaven.**

**³Is there any number to his armies?
Upon whom does his light not arise?**

**⁴How then can man be in the right before god?
How can he who is born of woman be pure?**

**⁵Behold, even the moon is not bright,
and the stars are not pure in his eyes;**

**⁶how much less man, who is a maggot,
and the son of man, who is a worm!"**

This is Bildad's closing word. What is very interesting is that is the closing word of the three friends. It is the last they said.

We must notice something structurally that is very interesting in the book of Job. Bildad was the second friend who spoke in each round. His first speech was twenty-one verses. His second speech was twenty verses. Now his third speech was cut down to five verses, much shorter.

What we also find is that in the previous cycle of each of the three men spoke. But in cycle three only two men spoke. Zophar did not say anything else. So the whole symmetry is upset. Why did that happen? I think there are two possibilities.

One is that they were the one's who were the windbags, and they ran out of wind. Job outlasted them, because Job had a lot more to say. His friends had said their peace and they had exhausted their so-called wisdom and had nothing else to say. That may very well have been the case, based on what we hear from another onlooker who was there later on, Elihu. He went after Job's friends.

The other possibility is that Job was done with them. He was finished. Job was fed up. Repeatedly the three were telling Job that he was a windbag. Then Zophar told him he was like his own feces. Finally, we have Bildad telling Job that he was just a maggot, just a worm.

Job was done with it all. Did you notice the forcefulness of how Job came at his friends after this? Do any of you like sarcasam? Then you like might like Job! Job 26:

26Then Job answered and said:

²How you have helped him who has no power!

How you have saved the arm that has no strength!

**³How you have counseled him who has no wisdom,
and plentifully declared sound knowledge!**

**⁴With whose help have you uttered words,
and whose breath has come out from you?**

Job was using sarcasam right here. We must be careful with sarcasam. Sarcasam can be fun when it is not personal between agreed upon parameters between people. However, whenever you are attacking somebody with sarcasam, that is sinful.

Bildad was saying, Who can be pure in the sight of God? Who can be right in the sight of God?

**⁶how much less man, who is a maggot,
and the son of man, who is a worm!"**

Once again, we have things here in the counsel of the friends that resonate within the hearts of those who have studied Scripture and have looked at their own condition; when we know that we are unclean in sin. Somewhere this kind of language resonates deeply. Who am I before the holiness of God? Who am I?

This even comes out in a very, very popular hymn that has been sung through the centuries. In 1707 a man named Isaac Watts wrote a song called *Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed*. We have sung that song here at Bethel Grace during communion and Good Friday services.

What is interesting is that Isaac Watts' lyrics has been edited or revised through the centuries. In view of what Bildad said, here is the lyric I have been thinking about. Some hymn books have it like this:

Alas, and did my Savior bleed
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
To such a one as I?

To such a one as I. You will find that in the hymn books of liberal mainline denominations that are more and more talking less and less about sin. Then there is another version of that lyric that is common in the evangelical world.

I listened to the song this weekend and here is how that rendition of the same song goes:

Alas, and did my Savior bleed
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such sinners such as I?

Now at least they use the language of sin. But still, that is an adapted version. Reflecting on the profound holiness of the Living God and his own unclean incapable state before the holiness of God, how did Isaac Watts put it?

Alas, and did my Savior bleed
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a *worm* as I?

So we have a godly man, Isaac Watts, penning lyrics, while thinking about the holiness of God and about the fallen sinful state where we have sin that touches so much of us inwardly. Total depravity is the doctrine.

Watts' was saying, Would this Savior have His head bruised for a worm like me? Probably reflected from the Messianic Psalm 22 that pictures Christ on the cross, where in His suffering He said, I am a worm and not a man. Jesus came into the lot of fallen creatures like us.

So the language resonates. The Doctrine of Total Depravity is biblical. We are fallen in iniquity and not until we confess our sin and wretchedness and need before the Lord, can we be made aware and be brought into the salvation that King Jesus has brought.

That being the case. That being understood, what kind of church are we to be? When is it right to assert the doctrine of sin? When might it be wise to counsel with other aspects of the full counsel of God's Word? When somebody is suffering profoundly in vexation, so raw and in such pain, is that the time to employ maggot theology?

What kind of church do we want to be. We are talking about the company of believers. Imagine a sister in Christ, saved by grace and looking to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. She knows she is a sinner and she has confessed it, and she is growing in the ways of the Lord. She is walking the path of sanctification with God.

Let's say that there is within this woman's heart a longing to be a mother. Let's say that this woman suffered a series of six miscarriages. Each time there was a life in her womb and she loved that baby. But each time the little life within her ended prematurely.

Let's say that in the midst of all this anguish, there came another pregnancy. This pregnancy was brought full term. This pregnancy brought a precious healthy baby girl. Everything was going so well. Mom and Dad loves this child. They enjoy the infancy and the child grew into her toddler years.

Then this little girl begins experiencing some of kind rash and itchiness on her legs that will not go away. She got it checked out by a doctor and the doctor did some blood work. They receive the devastating news that their baby girl has leukemia, and their hearts are crushed. Their world is filled with pain.

Things like this happen. This is not just fiction. Things like this happen. Things like this happen in the company of believers. Sometimes Christians who have the Spirit, they can have this kind of anguish and pain before the Lord. And sometimes even in their lament, they get mad at God.

Imagine this woman saying, Lord, here I am living in this nation with person after person cutting the life out of their womb, and I have lost six, and the one that was born has been taken. Let's just say that this sister in Christ is suffering in anger before the Lord.

Is that a time when one her sisters in the Lord comes beside her and tells her, Well you know what? Here is another example that we are all sinners and in the end, we are all just maggots before the Lord in our sin.

Is that the time? No! I would say that there is a time to come along side a person with sympathy and with love, with the reminder that life is precious in the sight of God; that there is a sanctity about each human life, and that this child is someone that is precious in the sight of God.

According to my understanding of things, those little ones, those innocent souls, are reckoned innocent according to the book of Ezekiel. Even though they are cut short in the womb, they go straight into the presence of the Lord of lords. It is the same with the little one who would die before their understanding of their sin before God. There is a time for us to console; to just sit in grief with the people that we love.

It has been said that the highest form of biblical love is agape. Going into New Testament times, there are different Greek forms of love. Phileo is that brotherly warmth, where we just like each other. There is a warmth that we have.

There is agape love which is that unconditional commitment to serve and benefit the one that we love. Agape is service oriented. I can't remember if I read this somewhere or if I came up with it myself, but I think there is another form of biblical New Testament language of love that people don't always recognize as love.

I think this might be the highest form of love of them all. It is the Greek word, koinonia. The word is often translated *fellowship*. The meaning of koinonia is that you enter into suffering; you enter into a situation; you enter into joy; you get into the boat with somebody.

You are in the same boat! That is what koinonia does. You mesh life, so that the joy of the one is the joy of the other; so that the grief of the one is the grief of the other; so that we rejoice with those who rejoice and so that weep with those who weep.

We need to be careful in the midst of the suffering that we are sure to face in this world, that love and mercy makes a guard over our lips. We just suffer with each other in these times of profound pain and loss. That is what fellowship is.

We are capable of going in ongoing patterns of sin. According to my reading of the New Testament, sin is not just a before Christ thing. We still have the residue of sin and we still sometimes obstinately sin against the Lord. And we need to correct and at times rebuke each other when we are walking in ongoing defiant sin.

However, oh let us be discerning because not all suffering is rooted in acts of sin. Not everything that we experience that is painful is chastisement for particular areas where we are disobeying the Lord.

Sometimes there are times of pain and suffering in our lives that may be too deep for us to comprehend even in this life. God's wisdom is unsearchable. The day will come when we will see how God was weaving it altogether according to a glorious purpose that will blow our minds.

We need to have sympathy in the fellowship. The greatest expression of fellowship in the universe, in all of history, was when Christ came into the world. Christ has loved us with koinonia fellowship. He entered into this world even becoming a human being.

He is Theanthropos, God-man! He has shared in our humanity, living in this cursed world. He shared in our suffering. He shared in the curse. He has tasted of pain. There is a sense in which He has shared in our sin, because not being a sinner Himself, our sin was placed upon Him. He even bore our sins in His body on the tree.

Jesus has identified with us. He shares with us His life. He shares with us His resurrection. He shares with us His Kingdom. All of this is of grace. Brothers and sisters, Bildad was asserting his thoughts at the wrong time. He had profound things to think about at the right time.

Those question right in the middle of his final speech were the most important questions ever. Job Chapter 25:

⁴How then can man be in the right before god?

Righteousness is required to enter the kingdom of righteousness

⁴...How can he who is born of woman be pure?

Purity is required to live in a kingdom of holiness. But then how can we who are impure and unrighteous have it?

Amen, hallelujah for the fellowship we have in Christ who is the one and only! Thank Jesus, that His blood washes His people clean of their sin; that He purifies them with His cleansing agent, His very blood.

Praise God that He adorns us and covers us in the robes of His righteousness. He who shared in our condemnation and took the wrath of our sin, now bestows upon us His exaltation. We are joined with Christ through faith as joint heirs in His Everlasting Kingdom.

I have multiple bibles and where there are questions like these—how can a man be made right before God; how can he who is born of a woman be made pure—you will see where I have written Jesus! Jesus, that is how!

In Jesus we have a Savior from sin and we a sympathetic High Priest, who understands and is so very patient in the midst of the suffering we go through. In our suffering, He is attracted to us all the more because that is the nature of God's gracious and divine love.

It is the same way when our children suffer. I remember when my boys were toddlers and they were foul in their suffering of painful things. Doctors. Hospital rooms. And my heart ached for them even more. That is just a reflection of the love that God has for His people.

I pray that this provides perspective for us as we think about how to counsel one another through the things we face. We believe in the full counsel of God's Word. We believe in everything that it says, and we know that there is wisdom in applying certain portions of Scripture at certain times. May the Spirit of God give us that understanding.

Let's close in a word of prayer.