

"How Long Will You Torment Me?" (Job 4-31)

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Preacher: William HC

[0 : 00] So real exciting service ahead. So Pastor William this week is preaching from Job 4 to 31.

So that's 27 chapters that I'll read through right now. So open your Bibles. No, I'm kidding. We're doing Job 4 to 5 only. So that's just a few minutes.

And then Pastor William will go through the rest of the 20-something chapters. So yeah, turn your Bibles to Job 4. And we'll see what Job's friends, what kind of cool things they have to say.

So Job 4. Okay. Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied, If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?

But who can keep from speaking? Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled. You have strengthened faltering knees.

[1 : 03] But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged. It strikes you, and you are dismayed. Should not your piety be your confidence, and your blameless ways your hope?

Consider now who, being innocent, has ever perished.

Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil, and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they perish. At the blast of his anger they are no more.

The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken. The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered. A word was secretly brought to me.

My ears caught a whisper of it. Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people, fear and trembling seized me, and made all my bones shake.

A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice.

[2 : 06] Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his maker? If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth?

Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces, unnoticed, they perish forever. Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom? Call, if you will, but who will answer you?

To which of the holy ones will you turn? Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed.

His children are far from safety, crushed and caught without a defender. The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. Yet man is born to trouble, as surely as sparks fly upward.

[3 : 14] But if I were you, I would appeal to God. I would lay my cause before him. He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. He provides rain for the earth.

He sends water on the countryside. The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success.

He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away. Darkness comes upon them in the daytime. At noon they grope as in the night.

He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth. He saves them from the clutches of the powerful. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth. Blessed is the one whom God corrects.

So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up. He injures, but his hands also heal. From six calamities he will rescue you.

[4 : 13] In seven no harm will touch you. In famine he will deliver you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes.

You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the wild animals. For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. You will know that your tent is secure.

You will take stock of your property, and find nothing missing. You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth. You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season.

We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it, and apply it to yourself. Welcome Pastor William. Thanks Isaac.

Please, if you have your Bibles open or on, please. Yeah, we're going to be doing a bit of scrolling today. So, yeah. But hopefully it will be fun. But, in the meantime, let's pray, and ask God to speak to us this afternoon.

[5 : 24] Father, every part of your word is breathed out by you. It is so special. And so we don't want to miss out what you have to teach us from this rather long section of Job's story.

And so would you be with us? Help us to learn both the good and the bad of the arguments that Job's friends makes. And ultimately, help us to see how we can better understand our world as a world with spiritual battles.

A world of final judgment. And a world that has innocent suffering. Father, be with us now as we hear from your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Last month, on the 28th of May, almost one million Kiwis tuned in to watch this show.

Right? The Friends reunion show. Now, some of you already know what this is. But actually, there's a whole generation that have no idea. Right? Believe it or not. Friends is a sitcom.

It's a TV show. A comedy that ran for 10 seasons. Right? And it was about six friends trying to navigate life in New York City as young adults. It's kind of, they describe that phase of life where friends felt like family.

[6 : 32] Yeah? And I don't know if you've seen the show before or even caught it on TV once or twice. Maybe some of you see yourself as a Monica or a Rachel or a Phoebe.

Maybe there's a Joey among you that's still trying to find a date. I don't know. So, I watched a reunion show with Cheryl. And one thing I learned from the show, besides how much people age after 17 years, actually, Friends is still a global phenomenon.

Believe it or not. It is still, through reruns and Netflix and translations into dozens of languages, it is still a very popular show. And I was fascinated.

In one clip in the reunion show, the Korean pop stars, BTS, they shared how they learned English and how to do relationships through watching episodes of Friends.

You know, I'm still curious how, what it sounds like, you know, like, to say, how are you doing in a Korean accent? But, I mean, they will know. I won't. So, Friends has just been part of people's lives still.

[7 : 34] Right? And it still is. And it's not just English or relationships that people have learned from this show. Right? Friends taught millions of people all kinds of things. Right? Good and bad.

I mean, how not to move a couch upstairs. Right? Check. You know, we learned that one. How do we laugh over fat-shaming others? That's a sad one. Right? Check. We learned that.

How not to spell days of the week. Yep. Learned that from friends. And yet, how to normalize sex and pornography with just putting a laugh track on? We learned that too from friends, didn't we?

And so, whether we realize it or not, we've learned a lot from friends. Right? Both the good and the bad. And so, now I want to ask the question, what can we learn from Job's friends? So, we've got to move from New York City, right, back to the land of Uz, where we've been camping out these last couple of weeks.

So, apologies if you just joined us this evening. We are right in the middle of a series going deeper into pain and suffering. So far, we've seen the riddle, right, of righteous Job.

[8 : 37] Wealthy man, well-loved by all, suffers terribly. We saw that in chapters 1 and 2. And then last week, we just sat with him in his brokenness as he poured his heart out, unfiltered.

He cursed the day he was born. He's lamented all the trouble that's fallen on him. And he cried out to God, right? Remember that question? Why is light given to those who are bitter in soul?

And now, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, they don't have the same ring, right, as Joey Chandler Ross. But what both sets of friends have in common, I want to submit to you, is that we can learn from them, both the good and the bad.

So, I want you to hold on to that, okay? We're going to learn good things, but also lots of bad things that we need to not take in as well. So, bear with me, bear with us as we go through this section. And so, to help us make sense of Job 4 to 31, I'm just going to do three things. I'm going to sketch out the arguments of Job's friends over the 27 chapters. After we've kind of sketched out, I'm going to point out what's both the good and the bad from them.

[9:41] And then finally, we're going to spell out a few things that I think we, as PCBC English, can unlearn from them. We'll cover that more later. I mean, just like a reunion show, right, it can only say so much about a 10-season show.

We can only say so much this evening about Job 4 to 31. And really, the best thing you could do after this is to go and read Job 4 to 31, okay?

You will then get much more out of it as you read through these chapters over. Think of this as kind of like, this is the Lonely Planet tour guide, and you're going to go and dive into this amazing part of God's Word together.

And in your own time. Let me read again Job 4, verse 1 to 2. This is Eliphaz, the Temanite. He says, If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?

Who can keep from speaking? You see, imagine you're Eliphaz, right? You're sitting there. You've sat there with the two others, right? Silently for seven days. And after hearing Job say such raw, messy things in chapter 3, I think they can't hold back their thoughts any longer.

[10:49] Okay? They've come all the way from, you know, ages away. Much further out of each, probably. And from here, Eliphaz kicks off what's three rounds of debate over 27 chapters.

So here's a diagram just to try and help you kind of orient yourself. But basically, in round one, okay, we just heard Eliphaz talks. And then Job responds in chapter 6 to 7, back to Eliphaz.

And then Bildad, number 2, friend number 2, he speaks. And then Job hits back, right? That's chapters 8 to 10. And then chapter 11, Zophar. Okay, friend number 3 jumps in.

Job counters, right? From 12 to 14. And then you think that's it. But then from chapters 15 to 21, there's a whole other cycle of, you know, the three friends each having another go.

And then Job responds. And it seems like by chapter 22, where you get a third cycle of it, Eliphaz and Bildad, they're furious with Job. Yet they have one last go, trying to talk some sense into him.

[11:47] And then actually from chapters 26, right through till 31, it's actually all Job talking. So actually, you know, Job's friends, you know, we're going to talk about Job's friends a lot, but actually Job talks just as much as well.

But we'll get more into that next week and the week after. And so let me state the obvious, right? This is a long section. It's a long debate. And I think in our world, it's easy for us to go, give me a tweetable summary.

Don't give me the endless arguments. But in his wisdom, God left for us 27 chapters of a long argument. And so I think one reason for this is this.

There is no instant working, I think, through some of these questions. Okay? We can instant do everything. We talked about that last week. But I think with grief and pain and suffering, sometimes you need to talk it out, and it will take a long time, maybe even your whole life, to work things out. Let's zoom in, though, on Eliphaz's kind of situation. I wonder when you heard Isaac read out his first argument, how many of you thought it sounded quite reasonable?

[12:57] Be honest. Imagine if you had to put a tick next to everything true that he said. I think we'd be going quite a bit. I mean, let's hear his argument again.

Let me read 6 to 8 from chapter 4. Should not your piety be your confidence, and your blameless ways your hope? Consider now, who being innocent has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?

As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. So here Eliphaz, he's well aware of Job's blameless ways.

There's a very special word, the word blameless. It appeared at the very start in chapter 1, where Job was described as a blameless person. But then Eliphaz, even though he recognized Job, you're a blameless, you're a man of integrity.

But I'm going to quickly move to my wisdom now. And then from verse 8, he just says, As I have seen those who plow evil and those who sow trouble, reap it. So, translation, as I have seen, in my world, it's the wicked people who suffer.

[14:03] It's the wicked people who suffer. They feed their minds of junk, they get junk back. They're mean to people, God is mean back to them. This is kind of Eliphaz's argument. Despite the fact he's using beautiful poetry to say it, it boils down to this.

His argument is this. I've seen wicked people suffer. So, if you suffer, Job, you must have done something wicked. You see?

So, that's really, you know, if you're trying to lay it out logically, that's Eliphaz's argument. That's why, at the end of chapter 5, he said this, right? Verse 17 of chapter 5.

Blessed is the man whom God corrects. So, don't despise the discipline of the Almighty. And he's so confident that actually, at the end of it, he kind of says, we have examined this, and it is true.

So, hear it and apply it to yourself. Okay? Here's someone who really thinks his wisdom is all that. Essentially, right? His argument, I've seen wicked people suffer. Since you're suffering, you must have done something wicked.

[15:06] Eliphaz isn't the only one who might say this. I don't know if you've ever heard. Maybe from other worldviews, maybe you believe in the idea of karma, right? Maybe you might chalk up your suffering as a consequence of someone else's wrongdoing or sin in a past life.

Some of you might have family who blame evil spirits, right? For bad things, or bad feng shui, or social media, right? For all your problems. Now, Eliphaz's argument is slightly more hurtful, though, right?

Because he actually says, you, Job, must have done something bad. Not anyone else. You did something bad. Therefore, something bad is coming back to you. In the sound of music, Maria sings the opposite, right?

She's standing there in front of this beautifully, handsome-looking captain, who's falling in love with her. And she says, like, somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good.

So, that's the opposite version, right? And so, when Bildad speaks in chapter 8, he actually says pretty much the same thing, right? As what Eliphaz did.

[16:06] But he does it also in reverse, as I just mentioned. All right, let me read 8-3, and you can kind of see for yourself. This is chapter 8, verse 3. This is Bildad speaking. He says this. 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. But if you look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now, he's going to rouse himself on your behalf.

He'll restore to you, to your rightful place. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous your future will be. This is what's called the prosperity gospel.

Have you heard of that before? Okay. You may have actually seen it on TV. Someone might preach something like that. If you live a good life, pure and upright, God, he has no other choice but to rouse up like a genie and bless you and give you lots of stuff.

You'll flourish till the end. And then the reverse, right? If your children are dead, it's because they did something wrong, didn't they? How cold and callous is that, right, from Bildad?

[17:05] But actually, we hear that a lot. And maybe you've actually heard someone say that to you, or maybe you said that to someone. It's totally illogical in one sense, but it is totally missing the mark in another sense.

It is not wise, right? So let's add Bildad's kind of contribution to Job's friend's wisdom. And we see it like this. I've seen wicked people suffer, right?

If you suffer, you must have done something wicked. And so Bildad's contribution is this. So be good, then God will bless you. Okay? And then when Zophar chimes in, right, chapter 11, it's kind of more of the same, but he's slightly sharper.

So let me give you an example. This is Job 11, verse 5 to 6. And he says this. You see what Zophar's done there?

He's actually gone even further. He actually openly accuses Job. You must have sinned. You must have sinned. Right? Bildad, at least, he's a bit more discreet, right? Maybe it was your kids that did something wrong.

[18:17] And Eliphaz, at least, he was suggesting in chapter 5, verse 18. Maybe God will cause pain, but maybe he's going to make things better. He can bind things up. Zophar has less subtlety. He just says, maybe God's forgotten some of your sin. You see, in Zophar's world as well, right, if God is absolutely wise, absolutely in control, then to be a just God, he has to punish the bad people.

He has to reward the good. And so that's why Zophar is so fierce, right? And he actually even challenges Job to repent, right? Zophar says this in chapter 11, verse 13. But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind.

If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my—sorry, I've read the wrong one. Zophar 11, verse 13 says, Yet if you devote your heart to him, that's it, and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that's in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift up your face without shame, right?

You will stand firm and without fear. So that's Zophar's call, right? You need to repent, then God will bless you, right? So this is the logic of Job's friends.

[19:29] Add it all together, God is—you know, he's wise, he's sovereign, okay? And I've seen wicked people suffer. If you suffer, Job, you must have done something wicked. So you need to repent.

You need to be good now, and maybe God will bless you. No, actually, surely God will bless you. And so imagine this. You're Job, right? And you haven't done anything wrong, okay?

And so that's what you say, okay? And so every time these friends suggest that he's done something wrong, Job hits back. He says, no, I haven't been—you know, I haven't done anything wrong.

I'm not being punished for a sentence. And as he keeps saying this, his friends, as they keep holding to this logic, they get more and more furious, right? And they get mad, actually, to the point that by the end of their kind of spiel in chapter 22, right, even Eliphaz starts to—he starts to make up some sins, right, that Job must have committed, right?

He's kind of like this. He was like, let me read it for you. Is not your wickedness great? This is chapter 22, verse 5. Are not your sins endless? He says to Job. You know, you demanded security from your brothers for no reason.

[20:38] You stripped men of their clothing. You left them naked. So it's not enough, right? You know, he's so furious that Job won't admit any wrong, that he starts to make up some stuff.

Oh, you're rich. You must have hurt someone in the process. You must have sinned. So that's Job's friends, right? You know, on and on they go, right?

And, you know, nine of their chapters worth of rubbish, shall we say. And yet, except it doesn't always sound like rubbish, does it? It'd be easier if what they said was completely false, right?

It'd be easier to be able to say, oh, yeah, okay, let's discount Job's friends and what they say. But the tricky thing is with wisdom and with trying to detect false teaching, a lot of it will seem true, won't it?

And so now that we've kind of sketched out, hopefully, the arguments for you, I hope that makes sense. Now that I've sketched that out for you, let's at least consider what is the good and the bad in their thinking.

[21:39] And the easiest way, I think, is to point out the good is to look at each part of their thinking again, right? So, for example, point one, is God wise and sovereign? Yes, absolutely. In fact, that is actually the foundation of this whole book.

We saw that even Job held on to this, even in his suffering. And the friends, even though they repeat this truth and they kind of use it in a really cold way back at Job, it is biblical.

All right? Point two, do wicked people suffer? Yeah, they often do, right? Often do. And in the grain of God's world, sometimes, right, if you smoke like crazy, you're going to get lung cancer, right?

If you drive really dangerously, you might get into an accident, right? In God's world, it is wired in a way that wicked people do suffer, right? Even Psalm 1, 5 says, Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous.

And so, even when Eliphaz says something like, you know, don't despise the Lord's discipline on you, we can actually say, yeah, that's kind of true, you know? If we are God's children, sometimes there are times in our life where He is giving us something for our good, to train us as children.

[22 : 49] So, yes, there is some truth in what God's friends say, and we need to acknowledge that. It's no good if we just say everything is wrong. And yet, and yet they are still wrong, right, overall.

Because in Job's friends' efforts to preserve God's fairness and justice, very true, they have now claimed that when someone suffers, it must be because they've sinned.

And that is false. That is false. When a building collapses, right, or an earthquake happens, and someone stands up and says, that is judgment for someone's sin, that is the dumb logic of Job's friends.

Okay, even Jesus, right, in Luke's gospel, He will not go that way. He will refuse to play that game. When a victim of sexual abuse speaks out, and then anonymous trolls start to cry out, well, serves you right, you are asking for it.

Okay, that is the crazy, hurtful logic of Job's friends. You see? I don't know, when an auntie tells you, you know, you've got to pray more, you're doing something wrong, because why are you still single, whatever.

[23 : 57] That is the ignorant logic. No, that is the ignorant logic of Job's friends. Okay? Well, maybe if you have a friend who is suffering deep depression, and maybe they have asked you once or twice before, why do I feel this?

I must have done something terrible. Why has God done this for me? And if you answer back and try and respond, maybe you are in danger of going down the sad logic of Job's friends.

Okay? So when these four points, they may seem logical, they may seem watertight, but in the real world, this is not right.

You need to know that actually this is twisted logic. This actually is logic that has the accusers, Satan's fingerprints all over it. Okay? Because this is the wrong conclusion to make from someone's pain and suffering.

Job's friends were wrong. And look, Job himself knows they are, right? Because as he replies to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar over the 18 chapters, he tells us as much, right? And look, Job at first, okay, his first replies, he's still pretty down in the dumps, okay?

[25 : 11] He's still feeling like he's not sure he's got much to live on. But then as his friends keep winding him up, actually, he starts to give back. And actually, some of the fiercest words, I think, come from Job himself, right?

Check out chapter 6, verse 15. My brothers, they are as undependable as intermittent streams, okay? It's like, friends, you guys aren't friends. You're like showerheads that don't work properly. Job 16, 2 to 3. Miserable comforters are you all. Will your long-winded speeches never end, right? I mean, translation would be like, will you shut up already? You're not helping.

And then finally, like Job 19. Verse 2, this is where the sermon title comes from. How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Why does Job do this?

Job fights back because his friends are cruel. And they may sound logical, but they're wrong. They have poured out false accusations. They made wrong conclusions. They've asked him to repent for sins he hasn't committed.

[26 : 11] And so, friends, to say Job's trials must be punishment for his sin is terrible and it is sinful. Okay? Job's friends, they may have good theology, right?

They may have good theories, but they misapply them to Job with no sympathy and with no love. And part of walking deeper, okay, into pain and suffering, whether for yourself or for a friend, is this truth.

If you and I want to suffer well, I think there might be some things we need to unlearn. Right? We may already have some bad friends theology that we have to replace with true wisdom.

So, in this last part, let's spell out, I think, some ideas we need to unlearn from Job's friends.

Unlearn from Job's friends. Okay? And this is really a summary of what the friends have believed, right, that we need to unlearn.

I've adapted this from Christopher Ashe. He's got an excellent commentary and a summary on this. But I think there are at least three key truths that Job's friends believe, right, that we need to unlearn.

[27 : 15] Okay? That we need to say that's not right. So, the first thing that Job's friends believe, I think, is this. There is no spiritual battle, right? There is no devil. There is no Satan. There is no Satan. Because as you read Job 4 to 31, Job's friends speak of God a lot.

But they never mention the accuser. Never. Not once. We already know that actually he's actually there, right, at the very start. Job's suffering is part of this unseen cosmic battle, right?

But to Job's friends, all evil just comes from people behaving badly. And so that's why they're so quick to accuse Job of sin, right?

Because he must have done it. No one else could have been behind it. But the Bible says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil. And actually, even Job, as he fights back, as he replies, right, through his long replies, he actually name drops these weird creatures like Leviathan and Rahab and Behemoth.

Okay? We don't fully know what he had in mind, but these were ancient beasts that kind of symbolized chaos and evil. Definitely spiritual side to it. Okay?

[28 : 28] So deep in Job's worldview, there is a spiritual battle between good and evil. So he knows this. And look, piece of piece of English. We mustn't over-spiritualize everything, okay?

Right? If you get hurt, you don't always have to say, you know, a devil made me do it. You know, Martin Luther was like that. He was a little bit over the top. Well, yet, as Christians, we do need to believe evil doesn't just have a human dimension.

It's a spiritual one as well. Do you understand? Okay? There's a holocaust. Maybe it's not just one guy behaving badly. Maybe there's something demonic behind that worldview, for example.

So as we bind up real wounds, as we pray, as we try and, you know, get alongside people, we need to remember there's a spiritual battle. So bring your spiritual armor. Bring your spiritual weapons with you.

When you're getting around someone who has just lost a relative, you can offer to pray. You can offer to bring them the comfort of God's spiritual wisdom.

[29 : 28] Don't just stand there and then pretend that you're just a secular counselor. When you stand with someone with real suffering, you should pray too. Plead for God's Spirit to empower you.

I think that's at least one way that you will not sound like Job's friends when you walk with someone. Okay? So unlearn this first idea that there is no spiritual battle, okay, in good and evil.

The other, I think the second idea we need to unlearn from Job's friends is this, that there is no final judgment. You see, over Job's friends' nine chapters, they talk as if judgment is here and now.

I wonder if you noticed, right? The wicked are punished in this life. The righteous are blessed now.

That's why they're so hard on Job, right? Okay? Because to them, God is just like a vending machine or an Uber Eats driver.

You just press the button or you tap the thing and out comes blessing or cursing. There is no waiting. There is no waiting for them. Life is just here and now. And if we're honest, I think this is where we fall.

[30 : 35] I think a lot of us live each day like there is nothing beyond the here and now. There is no final judgment. And so we make life choices. We make career decisions. We prioritize our time and our friends and our money.

We balance our budgets based on just advice from people who only live for the here and now.

Right? We live as if there is no life after death. Max out your mortgage now.

Don't worry about it. Or buy another toy now. Sleep with your boyfriend now. Okay? Look, our Job's friends, they may not give long-winded speeches like this.

But they love to clickbait us, don't they? Right? On social media. Maybe they sing into our headphones. Maybe they tag you in another wise meme about here and now. But in the real world, okay?

In God's world, blessings don't always come in this life straight away. Yes, the Bible teaches us, right? That we will reap what we sow. Galatians 6, 7 to 10.

[31 : 34] But it is at the proper time that we will reap a harvest if we don't give up. You see? And in the real world, okay, judgment delayed does not mean that there is no judgment coming.

Every unrepentant murderer, child abuser, heresy teaching pastor, you and me, we need to stand before God one day.

And we may be punished. Or Jesus will be punished in our place. Right? Judgment is coming. And yet it's not always here and now. I mean, you think of Jesus' parable.

He once told it this way. How the wheat and the weeds, they grow up beside one another. And you're like, oh, how am I going to find what to harvest and, you know, cook for dinner now? Well, you just got to wait.

You got to wait for them to grow. Until the final harvest. The final judgment. There is a day coming. And Job's friends, they are wrong to assume there is no waiting for God's justice to come. [32 : 34] Okay? One author, he famously put it this way. Suffering. It's a megaphone that says to a deaf world, wake up. This world is not our final home. But if you only see your life and your struggles in the here and now, then you're as thick as Job's friends.

And you will not suffer well. Okay? I mean, listen instead to Job's wisdom. He says this. Job 13 verse 15. Though he slay me, yet I will hope in him.

I will surely defend my ways to his face. He's looking for that day. He's longing for that day. Job 19, 25 to 26. He says this. I know that my Redeemer lives.

And that in the end, he will stand on the earth. After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God. Now look, Job, for all his good words here, he doesn't actually come through his trial flawlessly.

God is going to need to humble him. And we'll look at that more next week as the debates progress, right? But at least he's gone from wishing he was dead to fighting, now even protesting, right?

[33 : 45] His situation. Wishing he could stand before God in court and argue his case in writing, as it says in Job 31. And look, that's because deep down, Job is clinging to something so crucial.

There is going to be a final judgment. I'm going to have my day in court, Job says, and believes in his heart. And if Job will wait for a final judgment, so should we.

One pastor actually put it this way to me once. To be a Christian is to learn to wait. Right? We are saved, aren't we? By Jesus. But yet we are not home. We are united with Jesus, right?

But yet we are not reunited with him physically. Romans 8.22 reminds us that all creation is groaning as we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

And so one thing at least we can learn from suffering is this. It is not pointless because one thing it does, at least, is prepare us to meet our maker. And so we need to unlearn that wisdom that there is no Satan behind evil.

[34 : 51] We need to unlearn this stupid wisdom that there is no waiting for judgment, that here and now is all that matters. And finally, I think, the final idea we need to unlearn from Job's friends is that there is no such thing as innocent suffering.

That's what Eliphaz said, right? Chapter 4, verse 7. Consider now who, being innocent, has ever perished. They could not stand Job saying that he was righteous because if the righteous suffer, then their logic falls apart.

And yet to that question, who, being innocent, has ever perished? The Bible's final answer is so clear. On the cross, the innocent one perished for the guilty.

Right? Jesus Christ, he did no wrong. He bore no guilt. Yet in God's wisdom and providence, he was also falsely accused by a bunch of wise guys.

He was abandoned by his friends. He was tormented. He was stripped naked. He was abused. He was murdered. He perished so that we might not perish.

[36 : 07] That is the gospel. And you see, Job, look, Job couldn't have known this at the time, right? And yet his innocent sufferings had a point. It showed God's wisdom far more deeply than his friends' long, verbose words, didn't it?

Have a look at it again. Because the Redeemer, right? Because the Redeemer, right, that Job longed for is now fulfilled in Christ.

That advocate, that close friend that Job really needed, okay, amidst his silly friends, we now know in Jesus Christ. At the cross, friends, we see innocent suffering.

And we see spiritual powers defeated. And we see proof of a final judgment to come. And most of all, we see at the cross, a true friend.

A friend who would willingly lay down his life for sinners, for friends, for those he loves. There is no greater love than this, right? So Jesus is the friend worth turning to, worth running to, worth confessing our sins to.

[37 : 22] And can I encourage you, if you've never done so, cling to Jesus as your friend. Cling to the life he offers beyond here and now. Right?

Friends, in Job, and most of all in Jesus, we know there is a place, there is a point to innocent suffering. And from there, we learn God's wisdom, don't we?

We get his friendship. And in Jesus, we see what truly sits at the heart of the universe. Let's pray. Father, through Eliphaz, we were asked, consider now who, being innocent, has ever perished.

And Father, thank you. Thank you for Jesus. Thank you that he perished, that we might not have to.
Thank you that he is a friend that sticks closer than any brother or sister could.
Help us to run to him, to cling to him, to be with him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.