

The Book of Job

Lesson 5: Bildad Speaks and Job Replies -- Job 8:1–10:22

There is a kind of friend who arrives at your worst moment with a tidy theology and a hard tongue. Bildad is that friend. Eliphaz at least began with a touch of warmth before he turned the screws; Bildad opens his mouth and the cold air rushes in. “How long will you say these things,” he demands, “and the words of your mouth be a great wind?” (8:2). Job has just buried ten children. He is scraping his sores with a piece of broken pottery. And the man sitting across from him calls his grief hot air. We have all heard sermons preached at people instead of to them, and we have winced. Watch Bildad closely, because the temptation to be right at someone else’s expense lives in every one of us.

Bildad has one idea, and he hammers it like a nail. God is just, therefore God does not pervert justice, therefore your children must have gotten what they deserved (8:3–4). It sounds airtight. The premise is true; God never twists what is right. But Bildad bolts a cruel conclusion onto a holy truth, and the result crushes a grieving father. He reaches back to the wisdom of the fathers, to the searching of past generations (8:8–10), as if tradition settled the matter. Tradition is a gift, but it is not God, and a true thing wrongly applied can wound as deeply as a lie. This lesson asks us to handle truth the way a surgeon handles a scalpel, with steady hands and tender purpose.

Then Job answers, and his reply rises far above his friend’s small certainties. “Truly I know that it is so,” he says (9:2). Of course God is just. That was never the question. The question is how a frail, dust-made man can possibly stand before the God who moves mountains and shakes the earth on its pillars, who commands the sun and seals up the stars, who walks on the waves of the sea (9:5–9). Job is not denying God’s greatness. He is overwhelmed by it. “If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times” (9:3). Here is a man who has not lost his faith but has lost his footing, staring up at a God so vast he cannot find the words to plead his case.

And out of that ache comes one of the most piercing longings in all of Scripture. “There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both” (9:33). Job cries out for a mediator, someone who could stand between holy God and trembling man and bring the two together. He does not have the words for it yet, but his heart is reaching toward something only the gospel will fully reveal. Centuries later the answer to that cry would be born in Bethlehem: “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Job longed for a hand to rest on both. We have lived to see it. Let us walk through these chapters with reverence, and let Job’s hunger become our gratitude.

Group Discussion: Bildad took a true statement (God is just) and drew a cruel conclusion from it (your children must have sinned). As a class, how can we tell the difference between speaking

the truth in love and using truth as a weapon, and what does that mean for how we comfort hurting people?

Personal Reflection: When have you, like Bildad, been so confident you were right that you forgot to be kind? What would it look like this week to lead with mercy before you reach for an explanation?

Read Job 8:1–10:22

Study Questions

1. Bildad insists that God does not pervert justice (8:3) and therefore concludes Job's children must have deserved their fate (8:4). What is true in Bildad's view of God, and where exactly does his reasoning go wrong?
2. Bildad appealed to the wisdom of the fathers and past generations (8:8–10). What place should tradition and inherited teaching hold in your own faith, and how do you keep it from crowding out Scripture itself?
3. Job confesses that no one can contend with God or answer him one time in a thousand (9:2–3), then describes God moving mountains, shaking the earth, and commanding the sun and stars (9:5–10). What does Job's picture teach us about the greatness and transcendence of God?
4. Job feels too small even to answer the God he serves (9:14–16). When has the sheer bigness of God left you feeling small, and did that drive you away from him or draw you nearer?

5. Job laments that even if he were innocent, he could not prove it, and that God is not a man whom he could take to court (9:20, 9:32). What does this reveal about the gap between holy God and sinful, finite man?
6. Job says his days are swifter than a runner and flee away like a passing ship (9:25–26). How does honestly facing the shortness of your life change the way you spend your days right now?
7. In his anguish Job wishes for someone to wash him clean and longs for an arbiter to lay a hand on both God and man (9:30–33). What does this longing tell us about the human need that no friend, no argument, and no self-effort can meet?
8. Job turns from arguing with his friends to pouring out his complaint directly to God (10:1–2). What does it look like for you to bring your raw confusion to God himself rather than only talking about him to others?
9. Job cries out that there is no arbiter between God and man who might lay his hand on both (9:33), and he wrestles with God's overwhelming power and his own helplessness (9–10). Why does mankind desperately need a mediator, and how does the one Mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5), answer the very ache Job could only name from a distance?
10. Looking back across these chapters, where Bildad wounded with cold certainty and Job groaned for a hand to bridge the gulf between him and God, name one specific way Jesus is

forming you through Job's hunger for a mediator into a person who both comforts the hurting and clings to your Savior.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: 1 Timothy 2:5, the one mediator between God and men is the man Christ Jesus, the full answer to Job's cry; Hebrews 4:15-16, our great High Priest sympathizes with our weakness and lets us draw near in time of need; John 1:14, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, God laying His hand on our side of the divide; Job 19:25-27, Job's faith presses forward to a living Redeemer who will stand upon the earth; Romans 5:1-2, through our Lord Jesus Christ we have peace with God and access into grace

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