

The Book of Job

Lesson 11: Final Words of the Friends; Job's Defense -- Job 25:1–28:28

Have you ever watched an argument simply run out of road? Voices get quieter, the same points get recycled, and at last someone mutters a short reply and goes silent. That is exactly what happens here. Bildad opens his mouth one final time, and what comes out is only six verses long (Job 25). After all the speeches, all the heat, all the certainty, the friends have nothing left. They came to comfort, they stayed to accuse, and now they fade out without ever helping. There is a sober lesson in that silence for anyone who has tried to fix a hurting person with a tidy theory.

Bildad's last word is not entirely false. He says no mortal can be righteous before God, that even the moon and stars are not pure in His sight, that man is a maggot and a worm by comparison (Job 25:4–6). Take that on its own and it is humbling truth. The problem is how he aims it. He uses a real fact about God's greatness as one more rock to throw at a grieving man, as if Job had never once trembled before the Almighty. Truth can be wielded like a weapon, and we should be honest enough to admit we have all done it.

Then Job rises and answers (Job 26–27). He out-praises Bildad about God's majesty, describing the heavens stretched over empty space and the earth hung on nothing (Job 26:7). He refuses to lie about himself just to make peace: 'Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me' (Job 27:5). Job will not buy comfort with dishonesty. He holds two things together that his friends could not: God is unsearchably great, and Job is not the secret sinner they keep insisting he must be.

And then comes chapter 28, one of the most beautiful poems in all of Scripture. Job describes how men tunnel into the earth for silver and gold, how they overturn mountains and dam up rivers to find precious stones (Job 28:1–11). But then the question turns: where is wisdom found? You cannot mine it. You cannot buy it. The deep says it is not in me, the sea says it is not with me (Job 28:14). Only God knows the way to it. And the chapter ends with the hinge of the whole book: 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding' (Job 28:28). Let that verse stand over this lesson like a lamp over a dark stairway.

Group Discussion: When a true statement about God ('no one is righteous in His sight') gets used to wound rather than to heal, what has gone wrong, and how can we as a class learn to handle hard truth the way a surgeon handles a scalpel rather than the way an angry man handles a club?

Personal Reflection: Job 28 says wisdom cannot be mined or bought, only received from God who alone knows the way to it. Where in your life have you been digging for answers in the wrong mine, and what would it look like this week to seek wisdom on God's terms instead?

Read Job 25:1–28:28

Study Questions

1. Bildad's final speech (Job 25:4–6) insists that no mortal can be righteous or clean before God. What is genuinely true in that statement about God's holiness and human frailty, and where does Bildad misuse it?
2. Bildad used a real truth as a weapon against a hurting friend. Where have you caught yourself using something true to win an argument or wound a person rather than to help them?
3. In Job 26:7–14 Job describes God hanging the earth on nothing, binding up the waters in clouds, and stilling the sea. What do these images teach us about the kind of God we are dealing with, and how should that shape the way we speak about Him?
4. Job said he refuses to gaze at God's greatness from a distance only; he wants to know Him. When you consider the vastness of God's power over creation, does it drive you to worship, to fear, to comfort, or to indifference, and why?
5. Job declares, 'Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me; my righteousness I hold fast' (Job 27:5–6). How is Job's refusal to lie about himself different from the self-righteousness his friends accuse him of, and what does true integrity require of us?

6. Job would not purchase peace by confessing sins he had not committed. Is there a place where you are tempted to say what people want to hear instead of telling the truth, and what is that costing your integrity?
7. Job 28:1–11 pictures men tunneling, blasting, and damming rivers to find silver, gold, and gems. What is the poem teaching by contrasting all this human ingenuity with the search for wisdom?
8. Job 28 asks repeatedly, 'Where shall wisdom be found?' Where have you personally been looking for wisdom (experts, the internet, your own reasoning, success), and how has that search measured up?
9. Job 28:28 says, 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.' What does it mean to fear the Lord, why is this the hinge of the entire book of Job, and where is real wisdom finally found?
10. Looking across Job 25–28, name one specific way the Lord Jesus, who became wisdom for us (1 Corinthians 1:30), is teaching you to fear God and depart from evil this week.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: 1 Corinthians 1:18–31, Christ made unto us wisdom from God, where the true treasure of Job 28 is finally found; Proverbs 9:10, the fear of the Lord as the beginning

of wisdom, echoing Job 28:28; Romans 3:9-20, no one righteous before God in his own strength, the truth Bildad half-saw; Job 38:1-7, God's own answer about creation that dwarfs both Job and his friends; James 3:13-18, the wisdom from above that is pure and peaceable, the opposite of the friends' weaponized words

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