



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

Job is the oldest book of the Bible, so when we behave like characters in the book, we can find comfort knowing “they did it first” a long, long time ago.

Over the past seven decades, I have been hospitalized at least six times ranging from three to sixty days. And though I observed, often with amusement, the difficulty people can have when visiting the sick, none of them ever came close to the behavior of Jobs “comforters.”

Let’s face it; we often don’t know what to say to people who are suffering. When it comes to teachers, there are models and there are anti-models. We can learn from both and Job’s friends serve well as anti-models.

In our texts, we first encounter Eliphaz. He approaches Job cautiously and seems to be saying, *if I have a word with you, are you going to bite my head off?* That is where he should have stopped. He goes on to say Job has had a word of comfort for others, but now that it is *his turn in the barrel*, he is discouraged. Take your own medicine is not really comforting.

In the seventh chapter, Job begins to describe some of what is happening to him and it is not pretty. Then along comes Bildad in chapter eight. “*Does God pervert justice?*” he asks. “*Does the almighty pervert what is right?*” Of course these are rhetorical questions to which the answer is no, but we always want to know the *why* of things. The assumption here is that Job deserves his misery...*good things happen to good people; bad things happen to bad people.*

Based on that assumption, Bildad offers Job the cure...repent and get right with God. It escapes Job, Eliphaz and Bildad that there is a cosmic struggle going on over which we humans have no control. At the height of his misery, Job has but two things and they both serve him well...faith and patience.

— Joe Groves, First Church member

A Family Affair

Today is Mother’s Day, a special day dedicated to honoring our Moms (or people in our lives who care for us...grandmother, Dad or other special person.) Even though Mother’s Day was not around in Biblical times, the idea of honoring Moms is found in Scripture. Read Exodus 20:12 together. This verse is right in the middle of the Ten Commandments, or the rules that God gave to Moses for the Hebrew people to follow. They still apply to us today.

Using this commandment, think of ways you can honor your mother. Is it by listening and obeying? Is it by helping cheerfully? How do you show love and honor? You may have your own ideas.

Another scripture that can help us with celebrating Mom is Proverbs 31:28-31. In verse 31, this Proverb tells us to “reward her for all she has done.” How can you reward, or return some of the loving kindness, that you receive from your Mom? If you have siblings, brainstorm ideas that you can do this week to celebrate your Mom (Dad, or other mother figure in your life).

Dear God, thank you for loving us. On this special day, we thank you for giving us Moms who take special care of us. Show us how to honor and love them today and every day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Jennifer Hall, Director of Children’s Ministry

Monday: Job 4:1-5

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. But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged: it strikes you and you are dismayed.”

- What has been the lowest point in your life?
- Were you able to accept criticism at that time?
- What was said that was helpful? That was not helpful?

Tuesday: Job 4:1-5

Can you think of a teacher (not in the formal sense, but in the sense of anyone you might have looked up to) who served as a good model?

- What did they model that helped you?
- How about an anti-model? What did you learn from that person to avoid?

Wednesday: Job 7:1-10

Read Job 7:1 - 10. This is quite an accounting by Job about what he is experiencing.

- Has it ever made you feel better to know that someone else has had it worse?
- If you had been visiting Job and he had laid this on you, how would you respond?
- What constructive thing could you say or do?
- Would you try to inject humor into the equation?

Thursday: Job 7:1-10

At the height of his misery, all Job had going for him was his patience and faith.

- How are your faith and patience holding up?
- What can you do to strengthen them?

Friday: Job 8:1-7

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: “How long will you say such things? Your words are blustering wind. 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 will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and up right, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be.”

- Bildad wants to know why Job is experiencing such terrible things. When things are going badly, is it helpful to try and answer why? Can you accept the fact that why might never be known?
- Bildad seems to think he knows why and advises Job to just repent. So he places the blame on Job. Can you accept that sometimes there is no one to blame?
- When does it help to be able to place blame? When does it not help much to know why? When does it help a lot?
- How often do you see your misfortune as a moral failure? Explain.