

The Book of Job Home Group Notes 5
Job 15:1 – 21:34 The cruel words of friends

Set the scene: How easily do you take personal offence in a disagreement or argument? Is this good or bad?

Hear from God: Read Job 16:1-17:2 – share it between those who like reading – this is to feel the mood of the conversation.

All are unimpressed with the other

1. As Eliphaz ends his second speech, what is Job's assessment of his friends?
2. Job knows God is responsible for his suffering but his frustration with his friends is palpable. How would you feel if a friend just shook their head as you talked(4)? How do you feel if friends just talk at you in long bursts? How disappointed is Job at their lack of support (17:10ff)?
3. When Bildad speaks again (18:1-4) can you see the reciprocal contempt? Is there any sympathy?

Repeating the same points only louder

4. The second cycle of conversation shows the three friends repeating and magnifying the same points. Bildad's main point is summed up in 18:5. What is it? Why does it infuriate Job? Are these cruel words (18:5-21)?
5. Job's suffering has been intensified by his friends. How does he implore them? (19:19-22)
6. . His friends' annoying incompetence may have served to help Job think things through. The Lord has brought his trouble. His friends are worse than useless. So God is his

only hope. How does Job say this? (19:25-27). Is it true that your hope in God is stronger when other hope fails?

7. Zophar seems to take personal offence rather too easily (20:1f). Is that something you are prone to in arguments? How can we avoid taking offence and focus on the issues?
8. In 21 Job makes clear he is utterly unconvinced by their insistence that there is justice in this world and the wicked get their just desserts. His last words (21:34) show how Job's conclusion is that their argument is disturbing (not comforting) and just plain wrong. Do you agree?

Apply these things to your life

7. In 19:13-22 Job sounds so lonely. Have you experienced loneliness and rejection in your life? Have you experienced either of these as a result of your Christian walk? How do you handle it? Have you tried relating it to the cross of Christ?
8. In 19:25 Job calls God his Redeemer in an astonishing statement of faith. This is not the well-developed New Testament understanding of redeemer as shown in Jesus. It is like the idea of Kinsman redeemer shown in Ruth. Can you remember what it meant there? Is not Job showing daring faith in expecting God to be like a near-relative, coming to his defence and vindication and restoration?
9. In 20:4ff Zophar is arguing like a stubborn traditionalist. What is the strength and what the weaknesses of the traditionalist? How far dare we think again, and push the boundaries of our faith? What makes people frightened to think deeply of their faith?

What Prayer ideas

- Pray that we may learn to argue with humility and respect
- Pray that we don't just go round in circles making the same points
- Pray for those who are lonely, to know their redeemer