

**Third Presbyterian Church  
Tuesday Bible Study  
Job Sermon 7 – Lesson 7  
Truth Responsibility**

**Job 8:1-22 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Then Bildad the Shuhite replied: <sup>2</sup> "How long will you say such things? Your words are a blustering wind.

<sup>3</sup> Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right? <sup>4</sup> When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin. <sup>5</sup> But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty,

<sup>6</sup> if you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. <sup>7</sup> Your beginnings will seem humble, so prosperous will your future be. <sup>8</sup>

"Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned, <sup>9</sup> for we were born only yesterday and know nothing, and our days on earth are but a shadow. <sup>10</sup> Will they not instruct you and tell you? Will they not bring forth words from their understanding? <sup>11</sup> Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh? Can reeds thrive without water?

<sup>12</sup> While still growing and uncut, they wither more quickly than grass. <sup>13</sup> Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. <sup>14</sup> What he trusts in is fragile; what he relies on is a spider's web.

<sup>15</sup> He leans on his web, but it gives way; he clings to it, but it does not hold. <sup>16</sup> He is like a well-watered plant in the sunshine, spreading its shoots over the garden; <sup>17</sup> it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks and looks for a place among the stones. <sup>18</sup> But when it is torn from its spot, that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.'

<sup>19</sup> Surely its life withers away, and from the soil other plants grow. <sup>20</sup> "Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evildoers. <sup>21</sup> He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. <sup>22</sup> Your enemies will be clothed in shame, and the tents of the wicked will be no more."

## Questions

1. What is our responsibility to know/understand/vet the source of information we receive/react/respond to?
  - a. Why is it dangerous not to exercise this responsibility to know the source?
2. What do you see as our responsibility in holding and sharing the truth to others?
  - a. If we are sharing truth, why is it important not to be too emotional and especially not angry?
3. As we grow in being responsible with sharing the truths as we minister, discuss the following checklist
  - a. Is the information to be shared true?
  - b. Is my motive in sharing this information pure? (is it for the person's betterment or just my ego)
  - c. Is my sharing of the information necessary?
  - d. Is my sharing beneficial?
  - e. Do I have the right to speak this truth?
4. Respond to this statement from the sermon: When we try to beat people into a traditional mold, it's not the mold that breaks but the person is left broken.
  - a. Why is this important as we seek to win people to Christ?
  - b. Does this mean the church should not have behavior boundaries or some standards? Why or why not?
  - c. We are to come as we are, but not stay as we are!! How do we balance this with encouraging positive change in the lives of others?
5. Bildad implied that not only Job had sinned but had forgotten about God. How and why do we forget about God in our daily lives? What are the characteristics of a person who has known God but lives as if they have forgotten about God?
6. Assume you are Bildad in someone's life. What would be your words of ministry for your friend who is suffering? Please if possible, base your response over the revelations from our study for the past few weeks.
7. It's easy to assume that God is punishing someone for sin when bad things happen to them. How have you learned that God does not punish us for sin however there are consequences to our sin?
8. How can you guard against judging others?
9. What is one thing you can do to remember God in your daily life?
10. Share your takeaways from the lesson/sermon for this week.

### *D. Bildad's First Response: Job, You Suffer Because of God's Justice and Because You Have Not Repented, 8:1-22*

(8:1-22) **Introduction:** most people—believers and nonbelievers alike—think they are fairly good people. They may do a few things wrong here and there, but in general they consider themselves *good people*. They reason, then, that good things should happen to them, at least for the most part. They may suffer some hardships along the way, accepting that difficulties and problems are a part of life. Nevertheless, their belief is that they deserve good things. This reasoning, like the arguments of Job's friends, is based on the idea of divine justice or *retribution*, that is, that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people. The problem with this thinking is simply that it does not hold up under close scrutiny. It is not true for everyone; nor is it true all the time. Many people suffer for no apparent reason, and there is no way to explain their suffering. For example, consider these three facts:

- ⇒ Good intentions do not always produce good results.
- ⇒ Bad consequences can result from good behavior and motives.
- ⇒ Dishonest and unjust people often get ahead while honest and hardworking people fall behind.

The fact that we want to believe in instant justice and total fairness is understandable. These beliefs provide comfort and a sense of security in this uncertain and anxious world. We desperately want to believe that justice and fairness will prevail—if not in every situation, then at least in most. The truth, though, is that these concepts cannot be relied upon, not all of the time. They cannot be universally applied. In fact, they often fall very short of explaining why many people suffer.

This was the case with Job. The concepts of justice and fairness—the idea of God's righteous judgment against sin—did nothing to explain Job's suffering. But Job's friends could not come to terms with anything else. They could not envision any other reason for Job's suffering than sin. In their opinion, there had to be some major sin or wrongdoing in Job's life that caused his suffering.

In this passage, the reader once again confronts these stubborn beliefs. The second of Job's three friends to come to his side, Bildad, accused Job of sin. Bildad was likely younger than Eliphaz since Eliphaz spoke first. However, Bildad's response was much bolder and more pointed. Like Eliphaz, Bildad used imagery to support his arguments, but he was much more direct and forceful in his accusations. He sharply rebuked Job for speaking irreverently and for questioning God's justice. He also accused Job of sin and called on him to repent. From Bildad's perspective, sin was the only possible reason Job could be suffering so severely; therefore, Job needed to repent if he wanted to be delivered from his suffering. If Job truly repented, God would either restore his health and prosperity or prepare his heart for death. This is, *Bildad's First Response: Job, You Suffer Because of God's Justice and Because You Have Not Repented, 8:1-22*.

#### **1. (8:1-7) Think about God's justice.**

Bildad called on Job to consider two significant questions: the first centered on man's righteousness or innocence; the second on God's justice in punishing the wicked. Bildad was not really seeking answers to these questions. He believed the answers were quite clear. Shockingly, Bildad went so far as to accuse Job's children of sin! In his mind, sin was the obvious reason Job's children had died. They had been judged by God. Note the Scripture and outline:

Bildad first asked Job, How long will you (Job) claim to be blameless, innocent of sin (v.2; see 7:20-21)? Second, Does God pervert justice and fail to do what is right (v.3a)?

The first question challenged Job directly. Bildad pressed Job about how long he had been maintaining his innocence, how long had he continued to claim he was blameless (v.2a). He believed Job had failed to admit his guilt for far too long. Hence, it was time for Job to stop the denials and to acknowledge his sin.

Bildad called Job's claim to be innocent of sin nothing more than a *blustering* or *strong wind* (v.2b). In addition, Job's complaints about suffering so much were empty, accomplishing nothing. Bildad's attitude was that Job's complaints were unjustified because Job was undoubtedly guilty of serious sin. God would never allow his dear friend to suffer so severely if he were truly righteous and innocent of sin. Along with everything else, Bildad was now accusing Job of lying. But keep in mind that Bildad was trying to stir up Job to repent, for God could never restore Job nor prepare his heart for death as long as he refused to confess his secret sin.

Thus, Bildad asked Job another question: Did he (Job) believe that God ever perverted justice? Did God ever fail to do what was right (v.3a)? Behind this question was Bildad's belief that God always blesses the innocent and executes judgment on the guilty. If God allowed the righteous and innocent to suffer, He would be perverting justice, failing to do what is right. Because of his own conviction, Bildad expected Job to believe as he did. Of course, this was a dangerous assumption to make for two reasons. First, Bildad was claiming to know the mind and ways of God. Second, he was basing the very salvation of a man's soul on whether or not he suffered on earth. It is a fact that the righteous and innocent suffer here on earth, sometimes even suffer severely (see note—[Jb.4:7-11](#), pt.c, for more discussion). Yet in Bildad's thinking, God would never allow the innocent to truly suffer. This was a limited and naïve perspective at best.

Sadly, Bildad continued on with his accusations against Job and displayed an unbelievably insensitive heart. He dared to bring up the death of Job's children and to use their deaths as an example of God's justice. Remember, all ten of Job's children had been killed when a tornado or strong wind collapsed the house in which they were celebrating a family occasion. Bildad, therefore, declared they must all have been guilty of serious sin. From his perspective, God's judgment could be the only explanation for their tragic deaths. Since suffering was evidence of God's punishment and punishment was proof of sin, then Job and his children had sinned. That was Bildad's basis for argument.

After Bildad's brief but sharp accusations, he boldly called on Job to repent. Keep in mind that Job had no reason to repent, not at this time. He was not guilty of any known or deliberate sin. Still, Bildad was absolutely sure of Job's guilt. In light of this, he called on Job to do exactly what any person who is guilty of sin should do: seek the Lord and pray for mercy (v.5). According to Bildad, if Job would repent—turn away from sin and live a pure and upright life—God would have mercy on him (v.6). The Lord would restore him to righteousness, or his rightful place, a place of blessing. Along with Job's personal restoration, the Lord would restore his prosperity (v.7). Bildad even claimed that Job's wealth and happiness would be greater than before. It would be so great that it would far exceed his former wealth (v.7). Why Bildad believed this—whether from experience, observation, or what he thought was a special insight from God—we do not know. More likely, Bildad was speaking from the conviction of his own heart and embellishing his argument for dramatic effect.

**Thought 1.** Scripture teaches that we are to correct, rebuke, encourage, and teach one another. Scripture also warns us, though, that we are to *speak the truth in love*. It was here that Bildad miserably failed Job. He was insensitive and callous to use Job's children as an example of God's judgment. Just reminding Job of their deaths at this time was shameful enough. But Bildad heaped burning coals on Job's pain and added insult to injury. Even if Job and his children were guilty of sin and even if the children had died due to God's judgment, actually saying this to Job showed poor judgment and was sorely lacking in love.

God's Word teaches that love must be our motive when correcting or rebuking others. The truth, even if painful, must be spoken in love—that is, with gentleness, discernment, understanding, and compassion. Doing so is the mark of true friendship, and it is what believers are called to do.

**"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" ([Ro.12:15](#)).**

**"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" ([Ro.15:1](#)).**

**"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" ([Ga.6:2](#)).**

**"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph.4:32).**

**"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" (Heb.13:3).**

**"Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous" (1 Pe.3:8).**

## **2. (8:8-10) Consider the wisdom of our ancestors: They say that God is just and that people suffer due to their sins.**

Bildad encouraged Job to consider the wisdom and understanding of former generations. They had taught that God is just, that He punishes the wicked and blesses the innocent. Therefore, people suffer when they sin, and they flourish when they live righteously. Bildad believed this teaching; to him it was plain and simple and could not be contradicted. This was the wisdom handed down from generation to generation, from parents to their children and to their children's children. This is the essence of Bildad's present argument.

Bildad urged Job to consult the wisdom of the ages because life is so short there simply is not enough time to gain true wisdom. There is not enough time to gain the knowledge needed to live well or to live righteously (v.9). A single person's or a single generation's wisdom is limited due to the brevity of life.

Note, however, this critical fact: by appealing to former generations, Bildad was assuming that their wisdom and teachings were correct, true, and all-inclusive. For this reason, he was confident that his judgment of Job was true, for it agreed with the teachings of former generations.

Bildad's advice to Job to learn from prior generations was not necessarily wrong, but it was certainly not complete. Bildad was assuming that what prior generations had taught was always correct, always true. Of course, this is not the case. Error and ignorance, faulty logic and biased teaching get passed down from generation to generation just as easily as does truth—perhaps even more so. Scripture teaches that real truth and real wisdom come only from God and that true, reliable teaching comes only from God's Word. No generation or accumulation of generations can come up with a comprehensive package or system of truth. Only God is omniscient. Only He knows the truth of all things. All human beings are imperfect and fall short of God's glory (Ro.3:23). Therefore, all are prone to error and—due to their sinful nature—usually pass down much more worldly wisdom than godly wisdom. This is exactly what Bildad was doing. He was communicating some truth and some half-truths, and misapplying the truth as he understood it.

**Thought 1.** Bildad called on the alleged wisdom of former generations and came up with the same thinking that is so prevalent today. That is, if someone suffers, especially severely, then he or she must have done something wrong. This proves just how ingrained Bildad's type of thinking is in the human heart and mind. Very few question this kind of logic, but it is a prime example of worldly wisdom. Just because it has been handed down from generation to generation does not make it right. Man's wisdom—no matter how old it is or who it came from—is far inferior to God's wisdom. Man's wisdom is imperfect because the human race is imperfect. Man's wisdom is, in reality, incomplete and full of errors. On the other hand, God's Word gives us great confidence in the Lord's wisdom and His ways:

**"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Ro.11:33).**

**"*As for* God, his way *is* perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he *is* a buckler to all those that trust in him" (Ps.18:30).**

**"The Lord *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps.145:17).**

**"For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa.55:9).**

**"Who is wise, and he shall understand these *things*? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord *are* right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein" (Ho.14:9).**

### **3. (8:11-19) Know the destiny of the godless: They will perish.**

Bildad used three different pictures to describe the fate of the godless—those who forsake or oppose the Lord. Through these pictures, he accused Job of hypocrisy. By Bildad's standards, Job was a hypocrite because he insisted on his innocence and would not admit the unconfessed sin in his heart. Bildad accused Job of forgetting God and trusting in the unstable things of the world. He actually compared Job's suffering to the destiny of all who forget God and live hypocritical lives: they perish because they admit no wrongdoing. According to Bildad, hypocrites and the godless perish like withering reeds—reeds with shallow roots in the heat and dryness of summer.

The three images or pictures Bildad used were the papyrus plant or reed, a spider web, and a lush plant with shallow roots. Each picture was meant to expose another of Job's failures, his supposed errors. Bildad made three charges against the hypocrites and the godless, those who forsake the Lord:

Papyrus needs plenty of water to survive, which is why it grows in marshes and bogs. Without the nourishment of water, papyrus withers and dies. Bildad compared those who forget or forsake God to papyrus (vv.11,13). When a person forgets God, he or she loses the nourishment—the food and blessings—of life. They perish like papyrus, which withers even faster than grass (v.12). Their hope and confidence quickly fade also, because they trust in the wrong things (v.13). Their confidence is in the things of this world instead of in God. This was a direct thrust at Job, a charge against his character. Bildad was accusing Job of forsaking God and trusting in his own righteousness and innocence.

Bildad further accused Job of clinging to his innocence like a spider web. By analogy, Bildad argued that a person's claim to be innocent of sin is as fragile and unreliable as a spider web. If you try to grab and cling to a spider's web for support, you will surely fall. And if a man trusts in his own innocence, he will also fall. Thus, it was Bildad's position that Job was guilty of false trust and misplaced confidence; he was trusting in his own innocence rather than repenting and pleading for God's mercy.

Next, Bildad accused Job of being shallow and unfruitful. Consequently, he would be cast away and replaced just as new plants replace others that have died. Bildad saw the godless as lush plants with shallow roots. These plants may look healthy and fine, but their roots are shallow and in rocky soil. Soon, the lush plants will perish in the heat. They will wither and die like the papyrus without water.

Bildad seemed to be suggesting that Job was placing his roots—his confidence and hope—in infertile soil, namely, his claim to be innocent of sin. Bildad added that the godless live shallow, risky lives that must soon end, like the plant with shallow roots. And like this plant, the godless will be replaced by more fruitful individuals just as new plants grow in the place of those that perished. This was a strong warning to Job: if he continued to insist that he was innocent of sin, he would continue to suffer and soon die.

What audacity! Note again that there was a ring of truth to what Bildad was saying, just as there was with Eliphaz. But the truth was being misapplied and badly handled. What the two friends had said so far sounded high and noble, yet the plain truth was that it had nothing to do with Job. Job was innocent of deliberate and willful sin. No accusations or highminded arguments were going to change that fact. Job could not be legitimately ranked with the godless, for he had not forsaken the Lord. Nor was he trusting in his own innocence for God's salvation, deliverance, and healing. Neither was he denying the need for God's mercy and deliverance. He was merely complaining about his pain and wondering why he was suffering so terribly. Furthermore, these complaints were entirely understandable, even justified responses for a person suffering such torment. Job was not even wrong in questioning God, in asking God why these things had happened. As a matter of fact, his friends should have done the same, that is, prayed and asked for wisdom. Instead, they

counseled Job by encouraging him to repent of any sin he had in his life. Their counsel had actually slipped over into accusations that he was suffering because of some major sin. True, they were insisting that Job repent of his secret sin out of deep concern for their dear friend. They were thoroughly convinced that God would restore or prepare Job's heart for death only if he was cleansed from all sin. Therefore, it was out of their grave concern that their counsel become somewhat argumentative and disturbing. However, Job was not guilty of deliberate sin; therefore, he had no need to repent. He was not suffering because of unconfessed sin in his life.

**Thought 1.** Bildad was wrong about Job, but he was right in what he said: the godless—any of us who forsake God—will perish.

⇒ If we turn away from God, we will wither away and perish just like the papyrus.

⇒ If we trust in the fleeting and unstable things of the world, we will collapse and fall.

No matter how healthy or strong we believe ourselves to be, if our roots are not grounded in the Lord, we will be uprooted. The Lord will disown us. We will be doomed to eternal separation from God and eternal death.

**"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro.3:23).**

**"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death [physical and eternal] passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Ro.5:12).**

**"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro.6:23).**

**"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb.9:27).**

**"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Re.21:8).**

**"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Eze.18:4).**

#### **4. (8:20-22) Place your hope in God and repent.**

In concluding his counsel, Bildad encouraged Job to place his hope in God and repent. He was thoroughly convinced that his friend was suffering due to serious, unconfessed sin in his life. With that in mind, Bildad offered three reasons Job needed to turn back to God.

The implication of Bildad's statement is clear: if Job were truly innocent, he could trust God to deliver him. But, since God had not yet delivered Job, Job must still be guilty of sin. Accordingly, God continued to reject his friend. Why? Because God is just and only punishes the guilty. And by all appearances, Job was guilty. Therefore, Job needed to renew his hope in God and repent.

Job could trust the Lord for deliverance because of God's wonderful promise. Those who repent are assured forgiveness and deliverance. The Lord even promises to fill the repentant with laughter. Of course, the laughter and joy would be due to God's forgiveness and deliverance. God would abundantly bless Job and set him free from all suffering and sorrow.

Bildad's reference to *shaming enemies* suggests the idea of protection and perhaps even vindication. In other words, if Job would repent, God would protect and vindicate him in the midst of all who opposed him. God would also destroy the property (tents) of the wicked—another reference to God's protection and deliverance. If the wicked were destroyed, there would be no one to harass or cause Job to suffer like the thieves who had earlier stolen all of his property (1:13-17). Again, Job must first renew his hope in God and repent if he wanted to secure God's deliverance and protection.

**Thought 1.** Repentance is necessary to receive God's forgiveness and deliverance. Bildad did not err in stating this truth. But he did err in applying it to Job, for Job did not have hidden sin in his life. Nevertheless, every

person needs to understand the critical need for repentance. As stated earlier, without true repentance, a person is doomed to hell, to an eternity of life without God. Yet God desires to save every person on earth. God's Word calls every one of us to repent of our sins, to turn away from all sinful, evil, and corrupt behavior. We must turn to God and cry out for His forgiveness if we wish to be delivered from the corruption of this world. God's Word could not be more clear:

**"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Ac.3:19).**

**"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Ac.8:22).**

**"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit.2:12-13).**

**"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God" (Ps.42:11).**

**"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa.55:7).**

**"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Eze.18:21).**