



God's Wisdom & Suffering (Job 28)

Saw this from a FB friend, about the flooding, it's relevant for Job...

WHERE IS GOD? He is on the Eternal Throne.

WHAT IS HE DOING? Preparing to...

...vindicate the oppressed.

...avenge the innocent.

...comfort the helpless.

CAN YOU TRUST HIM? Yes.

Faith: trusting God's wisdom *even* when we don't understand it.

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ **so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.** ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, **“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”** 1Co 1:22-31

Big Idea: God is God, and I am not; so, when I don't understand I trust God's wisdom.

“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? ¹³ Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living. ¹⁴ The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’ ¹⁵ It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. ¹⁶ It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire. ¹⁷ Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. ¹⁸ No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls. ¹⁹ The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold.

²⁰ “From where, then, does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding? ²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of all living and concealed from the birds of the air. ²² Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’ ²³ “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. ²⁴ For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. ²⁵ When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, ²⁶ when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, ²⁷ then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. ²⁸ **And he said to man,** ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’”

Big Idea: God is God, and I am not; so, when I don't understand I trust God's wisdom.

God's Wisdom & Suffering

1. Perfect wisdom escapes us (vv. 12–22)
2. Only God is fully wise (vv. 23–28).
3. Three wise reasons we suffer (ch. 32–37).
4. Christ, the Wisdom of God (1Co 1:24, 30).

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It's possible to seek knowledge and miss wisdom.

- i. Wisdom is not found in the land of the living (v.13).
- ii. No amount of wealth can purchase it (vv.15–19).
- iii. Death and destruction have only heard rumors of it (v.22).



“The Velvet Sun Downs”

True wisdom cannot be **bought**, **found** in nature, or **acquired** through human means.

We're not as wise as we think we are (ch 4-20).

¹¹ Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him... (2:11-13)

[Then they make a lot of incorrect assumptions...]

“...the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has...” (42:7-9)

3 things that *sound smart* but aren't always.

- i. **Eliphaz:** Wisdom from Experience (Job 4–5; 15)
"As I have observed, those who plow evil reap it" (Job 4:8).
- ii. **Bildad:** Wisdom from the Past (Job 8; 18)
"Ask the former generation and find out what their fathers learned" (Job 8:8).
- iii. **Zophar:** Harsh, Rigid Morality (Job 11; 20)
He weaponizes God to make his point: "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?" (Job 11:7)

Eliphaz: Wisdom from Experience (Job 4–5; 15)

Appeals to tradition and personal observation. Experience-based advice that ignores deeper realities.

Claims the innocent never perish: "As I have observed, those who plow evil reap it" (Job 4:8).

Error: Assumes suffering always results from sin.

Today we say: "You must've done something wrong."

Bildad: Wisdom from the Past (Job 8; 18)

Defers to the wisdom of the ancestors: "Ask the former generation and find out what their fathers learned" (Job 8:8).

Describes the wicked as always punished, implying Job fits that category.

Overreliance on tradition without listening to the heart of the sufferer.

Error: Generalizes ancient wisdom without compassion or nuance.

Today we say: "This is how it's always been."

Zophar: Harsh, Rigid Morality (Job 11; 20)

Demands Job repent and claims God has even forgotten some of Job's sin.

He's the guy that weaponizes God to make his point: "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?" (Job 11:7)

Error: Truth without grace.

Today, this is legalism. Legalism—truth without love that causes harm instead

of healing.

Share your wisdom, but don't be a jerk.

- i. Hold your convictions with humility.
- ii. Avoid sacrificing grace on the alter of *being right*.
- iii. Sometimes sympathy and comfort mean more than advice (2:11-13).

Perfect wisdom escapes us, so, when you share your wisdom, don't be a jerk about it.

2. Only God is fully wise (vv. 23–28).

²³ “God understands the way to it, and he knows its place.

²⁴ For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. ²⁵ When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, ²⁶ when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, ²⁷ then he saw it and declared it; he established it, and searched it out. ²⁸ **And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’”**

We don't know *pure* wisdom, but God does...

- i. God understands the way to wisdom.
- ii. God sees all things for all time.
- iii. God embedded his wisdom into creation.
- iv. Seek to understand God and become wise.

God sees all and established wisdom when He made the world (vv.23–27)

Only God understands the way to wisdom (vv.23–27)

Only God sees all, knows all.

Wisdom is embedded in the structure of creation—set by God.

Proverbs 9:10 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Fear and Obedience (v.28)

"The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding." (v. 28).

Fear of the Lord = reverent trust, awe, humility before God. Also, actual fear because we know God's power and control over all things.

Turning from evil = practical obedience.

Wisdom is not just intellectual, it's also relational and moral.

In the modern world we seek knowledge and miss wisdom.

We learn fact, even about God sometimes, but miss how to apply those truths with compassion.

Job's friends miss the point when they claim

God is God and *I am not*.

- i. Wisdom isn't just intellectual, it's relational and moral.
- ii. Fear of the Lord [that leads to trust], is wisdom (v. 28a).
- iii. Turn away from evil and find understanding (v. 28b).

3. Three wise reasons we suffer (ch. 32-37).

Lessons from Elihu

- i. God teaches us: by his word and by suffering (33:14–19).
- ii. Sometimes, suffering is to save, not punish (33:17).
- iii. There are dimensions of godliness we can only learn through suffering (36:6-15; 1 Pt 1:6-7; Jam 1:2-8).

4 Reasons to listen to Elihu:

- 1. He arrives on the scene after everyone else has spoken (32) with a different perspective than Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Job.
- 2. He has 6 chapters. The misguided speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had been getting shorter and shorter and shorter ... They ran out of words, he's just starting.
- 3. Job repents from the things Elihu criticizes (40, 42).
- 4. God rebukes Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (Job 42:7), but not Elihu.

Three reasons for suffering:

- 1. God speaks to man: by his word and by suffering (33:14–19)
- 2. Sometimes, suffering isn't to punish, but to save.
 - "That he may turn man aside from his deed, and cut off pride from man, and keep back his soul from the Pit." (v. 33:17).
 - "The pain he causes is like the surgeon's knife, not like the executioner's whip."
 - Piper
- 3. Suffering Refines the Righteous Sinner (36:6–15)
 - Elihu teaches us that there is such a thing as a righteous person who still has sin that needs to be revealed and rooted out.
 - To call a person righteous (Job 1:1) does not mean that the person is

sinlessly perfect.

vv. 36:6-7 sounds like Eliphaz: the wicked suffer and the righteous prosper. But v. 8 shows a difference, the righteous are far from sinlessly perfect.

Suffering Refines the Righteous

Affliction makes a righteous person sensitive to his remaining sinfulness and helps him hate it and renounce it.

Suffering opens the ear of the righteous (v. 10).

Psalm 119:71, "It was good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."

There are dimensions of godliness that the righteous can only learn through affliction.

4. Christ, the Wisdom of God (1Co 1:22-30).

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God... ³⁰ And because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, **“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”**

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Those who love God, *and God loves*, still suffer.

When we do suffer, it is not a punishment for our sin. Jesus already bore that. Trust him.