



Sunday, October 14, 2018  
Pastor Don Denyes

## **Intro to Job 4-7**

It can be difficult to know what to say to someone who is going through a period of intense suffering. It is near impossible to come up with something encouraging when you yourself haven't experienced a similar kind of suffering. So, what can well-meaning Christians do to encourage brothers and sisters who are going through a particularly hard time? Job's friends don't necessarily give us a blueprint of how to go about it, but their example certainly gives us some cautions as to how *not* to go about it.

In many ways, Job's friends have sound theology. Much of what Eliphaz says in chapter 5 is actually true. But as Pastor Don noted, sometimes what we share as "truth" is actually only "half of the truth." We need to make sure that as we approach suffering friends to try to comfort them, we cannot give them a partial picture of who God is. We must make sure we are seeking to comfort them with the whole truth about God and His world. We must never wield the Bible or sound doctrine as a weapon against those who are suffering.

## **Context**

Chapter 4 begins the central section of the book, consisting of Job's dialogues with his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. While this first discussion is the longest of any speech by any friend, it sets the trajectory for what is to follow. Many of the speeches consist of attacks on Job's character based on the assumption that all people who suffer must do so because they have sinned. Only, we already know from earlier chapters that Job never sinned. He was blameless and upright in every way. He did not sin—even to speak a word against God—during this trial. This central section runs from chapter 4-27, culminating in Job's closing argument in chapter 28, and finally, the confrontations with Elihu and God Himself.

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Job 4:1-4, 7-8, 17; 5:6-7, 17-18; 6:1-4, 8-9, 14; 7:11, 17-21

“The Battle Begins”

### Key Ideas

- 1) Eliphaz, like many of us, make the assumption that innocent people don't suffer.
- 2) Retribution theology is prevalent (what you sow, you will reap).
- 3) This theology is true, but it is not the whole truth. It doesn't account for Satan's work, nor the grace of God.
- 4) We have a mild form of the “health and wealth” gospel: that those who suffer deserve it, and those who prosper have earned it.
- 5) Job's friends are highly insensitive and do more harm than good with their theologizing.
- 6) We tend to want a religion that is easy to understand, with no unsolvable problems.
- 7) There is a weight to suffering that people who have not suffered in similar ways cannot understand. But sympathy is identifying with someone else's pain in our own hearts.
- 8) Very terrible things can happen to very innocent people.
- 9) We must bring our fears and frustrations to God.
- 10) We must be kind to everyone—for everyone is having a hard time.

## Discuss

- 1) What's the least helpful thing someone has said to you when you were suffering?
- 2) Pastor Don mentioned that many people simply believe what they can understand from their observations of the world. How do your non-Christian friends and family members process suffering in their lives?
- 3) What is it about retribution theology or the "health and wealth gospel" that is so appealing to people?
- 4) Are you quick to take your fears and frustrations to God in prayer? Why or why not?
- 5) What people in your life are you tempted to be unkind towards? How does the gospel enable us to be kind to everyone?