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Sermon Notes

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## **Job's Third Lament: Pain Made Him Doubt**

### **Job 11-14**

As we come to Job's third lament, we will see how the weariness of the trial has begun to wear him down... we will see him flicker in unbelief concerning his final vindication over death and the grave through his faith in God... we will see how Job's friends were pridefully detached from his sufferings because they weren't going through it themselves; and how the terror of the majesty of God is finally resolved in the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here God will prepare us more for the trials that he is planning on bringing all of us through for our sanctification

Here God will prepare all of us in Christ to die well, trusting in our final vindication at resurrection

And it begins with Job rebuking his friends

In Job 11, Job's third friend Zophar, has given his first speech... he takes the gloves off and rebukes Job, who by this time has twice defended his innocence...

Zophar is probably the youngest and definitely the most arrogant and insensitive of them all

***Job 11:2-6 "Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? <sup>3</sup> Will your idle talk reduce men to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock? <sup>4</sup> You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.' <sup>5</sup> Oh, how I wish that God***

*would speak, that he would open his lips against you <sup>6</sup> and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.*

Zophar confidently appeals to the infinite majesty of God:

*Job 11:7-9 "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? <sup>8</sup> They are higher than the heavens-- what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave--what can you know? <sup>9</sup> Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.*

Then he gives the same kind of advice as the other two friends: repent, and God will restore you:

*Job 11:13-18 Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, <sup>14</sup> if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, <sup>15</sup> then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear. <sup>16</sup> You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. <sup>17</sup> Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. <sup>18</sup> You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety.*

Now... it is time for Job to deal with all three of them, as he has heard their so-called wisdom

#### I. Job Rebukes His Friends, Part I (12:1-12)

##### A. Sarcasm (12:1-2)

*Job 12:1-2 Then Job replied: <sup>2</sup> "Doubtless you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!"*

##### B. Pride (12:3)

*Job 12:3 But I have a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Who does not know all these things?*

##### C. Lamenting His Shame (12:4)

***Job 12:4 "I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called upon God and he answered-- a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless!"***

D. Accusation (12:5-6)

***Job 12:5-6 Men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping. <sup>6</sup> The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure-- those who carry their god in their hands.***

E. Even the Animals Know What You Know (12:7-10)

***Job 12:7-10 But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; <sup>8</sup> or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. <sup>9</sup> Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? <sup>10</sup> In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.***

F. I Am Testing Your Words (12:11-12)

***Job 12:11-12 Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food? <sup>12</sup> Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?***

Summary: Your so-called wisdom is obvious; I already knew it; and it is so unfair that I am publicly shamed. Bottom line, it's easy to judge the suffering when you yourself are at ease.

II. Job Dreads God's Awesome Power and Knowledge (12:13-25)

A. God Owns Wisdom and Power (12:13)

***Job 12:13 To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.***

B. God's Destructive Power is Awesome and Irresistible (12:14-15)

***Job 12:14-15 What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; the man he imprisons cannot be released. <sup>15</sup> If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land.***

C. God Actively Rules Over All Humanity... And Destroys Them All  
(12:16-25)

1. Earthly victory comes from God

***Job 12:16 To him belong strength and victory; both deceived and deceiver are his.***

2. No one escapes God

***Job 12:17-21 He leads counselors away stripped and makes fools of judges. <sup>18</sup> He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. <sup>19</sup> He leads priests away stripped and overthrows men long established. <sup>20</sup> He silences the lips of trusted advisers and takes away the discernment of elders. <sup>21</sup> He pours contempt on nobles and disarms the mighty.***

3. God exposes all men's secrets

***Job 12:22 He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings deep shadows into the light.***

4. God's sovereignty over the rise and fall of mighty empires

***Job 12:23-25 He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. <sup>24</sup> He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he sends them wandering through a trackless waste. <sup>25</sup> They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.***

Aside: This hugely reminds me of Daniel 4

Nebuchadnezzar, the sole ruler over the mightiest empire on Earth, the Babylonian Empire, was arrogant and filled with his own glory... God decided to humble him... he changed his mind into that of an animal, and for seven years he acted like a cow, drenched with the dew of heaven and eating the grass of the earth... utterly humiliated. All of that was to teach him and the entire world one simple lesson:

***Daniel 4:17 so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.***

Nebuchadnezzar learned that lesson and came to delight in it...

***Daniel 4:34-35 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. <sup>35</sup> All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"***

***Daniel 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble***

This is exactly what Job already knew and proclaimed in Job 12:

***Job 12:23-25 He makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. <sup>24</sup> He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he sends them wandering through a trackless waste. <sup>25</sup> They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.***

Summary: God owns all wisdom and sovereignly rules over all the peoples of the earth... he raises empires as high as he chooses, then crushes them back to the earth. God's power over all individuals no matter how great is absolutely terrifying. Imagine, then, what it is to have such a mighty God as your enemy... hunting you down, prosecuting your sins!

### III. Job Rebukes His Friends, Part II (13:1-13)

#### A. Pride: Again, I Already Know Everything You Know

***Job 13:1-2 My eyes have seen all this, my ears have heard and understood it. <sup>2</sup> What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.***

B. Weariness: I Don't Want to Talk to You Anyway... It Is God I Want to Talk To!

***Job 13:3 But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case with God.***

C. Insults:

1. You Are Liars and Worthless Physicians!

***Job 13:4 You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you!***

2. The Wisest Thing You Could Do Would Be to Shut Your Mouths for Good!

***Job 13:5 If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom.***

D. Accusation: You Are Lying About God

***Job 13:6-8 Hear now my argument; listen to the plea of my lips. <sup>7</sup> Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf? Will you speak deceitfully for him? <sup>8</sup> Will you show him partiality? Will you argue the case for God?***

E. Warning: You Really Should Be Just As Afraid of God As I Am!

1. What if God examined you as closely as he is examining me?

***Job 13:9 Would it turn out well if he examined you?***

2. Could you deceive him?

***Job 13:9 Could you deceive him as you might deceive men?***

3. Would he not rebuke you?

***Job 13:10 He would surely rebuke you if you secretly showed partiality.***

4. Would his glory not terrify and overwhelm you?

***Job 13:11 Would not his splendor terrify you? Would not the dread of him fall on you?***

5. Would not your defense of words be scattered like ashes and crumble like clay?

***Job 13:12 Your maxims are proverbs of ashes; your defenses are defenses of clay.***

Summary: Job's friends are vastly underestimating the infinite majesty of God and should be approaching Job more humbly, aware that they themselves are under the same scrutiny by God and need to repent before him as much as Job does.

#### IV. Job Makes His Case Directly to God (13:13-14:22)

##### A. Hoping in God Even Though He Slays Him (13:15a)

***Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him***

##### B. Yet... Ready to Argue His Innocence to His Face (13:15b)

***Job 13:15 I will surely defend my ways to his face.***

##### C. His Boldness Proves His Innocence (13:16)

***Job 13:16 Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before him!***

##### D. The Lack of Accusers Proves His Innocence (13:17-19)

***Job 13:17-19 Listen carefully to my words; let your ears take in what I say. <sup>18</sup> Now that I have prepared my case, I know I will be vindicated. <sup>19</sup> Can anyone bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent and die.***

##### E. O God, Show Me My Sin, or Else Leave Me Alone (13:20-28)

1. Leave me alone! Stop frightening me!

***Job 13:20-21 "Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from you: <sup>21</sup> Withdraw your hand far from me, and stop frightening me with your terrors.***

2. Give me a hearing... let me make my defense!

***Job 13:22 Then summon me and I will answer, or let me speak, and you reply.***

3. Show me my sin... what did I do?

***Job 13:23 How many wrongs and sins have I committed? Show me my offense and my sin.***

4. How did I become your enemy?

***Job 13:24 Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?***

5. I am nothing... why do you pursue me at all?

***Job 13:25 Will you torment a windblown leaf? Will you chase after dry chaff?***

6. You have shackled me to my sins, even the sins of my youth!

***Job 13:26-28 For you write down bitter things against me and make me inherit the sins of my youth. <sup>27</sup> You fasten my feet in shackles; you keep close watch on all my paths by putting marks on the soles of my feet. <sup>28</sup> "So man wastes away like something rotten, like a garment eaten by moths.***

F. O God, Why Do You Judge Insignificant Men? (14:1-6)

1. Human beings are born to trouble and live a very short time

***Job 14:1-2 Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. <sup>2</sup> He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.***

2. So, why do you spend your time judging us?

***Job 14:3 Do you fix your eye on such a one? Will you bring him before you for judgment?***

3. How can such impure beings become pure?

***Job 14:3-4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!***

4. Man's days are determined by your sovereign plan... so why do you judge us at all?



***Job 14:5-6 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed. <sup>6</sup> So look away from him and let him alone, till he has put in his time like a hired man.***

Aside: this reminds me of the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination... the words predestination means setting the boundaries of man's life before he is born... fixing his horizon, his lines, his limitations...

***Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.***

But Job uses this fact as a reason why God should not judge us...

Paul brings that argument up in his chapter on predestination

***Romans 9:19 One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?"***

But look how he refutes it!!

***Romans 9:20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"***

Job acknowledges God's sovereign plan in fixing the limits and boundaries of his life... but misapplies it to say God then should not judge any human being for how he lives within those narrow limits which God himself has set

G. In This World, It Seems There No Hope for Resurrection (14:7-22)

1. Trees that are felled can recover... but it seems like men never do (14:7-12)

***Job 14:7-12 "At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. <sup>8</sup> Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, <sup>9</sup> yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. <sup>10</sup> But man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. <sup>11</sup> As water disappears from the sea or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, <sup>12</sup>***

*so man lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more,  
men will not awake or be roused from their sleep.*

This is why some people feel that Job has no hope for life beyond the grave... why they want to translate Job 13:15 as "If he slays me, I will have no hope."

We never see a human being rise from the grave... death ends everything, and there are no contrary examples

2. If that is true, then at least the grave can conceal me from your anger (14:13)

***Job 14:13 "If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me!"***

3. If a man dies, will he live again? It seems not! (14:14)

***Job 14:14 If a man dies, will he live again?***

Honestly, in the context of this particular portion of Job's lament, it seems he expects the answer to be "No!" There is no evidence for dead men to live again.

YET... look where Job goes next!!

4. BUT I will wait for my deliverance... when at last my sins are atoned for (14:14-17)

***Job 14:14-17 All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. <sup>15</sup> You will call and I will answer you; you will long for the creature your hands have made. <sup>16</sup> Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin. <sup>17</sup> My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.***

He is yearning for a renewal even beyond the grave... he is yearning for God to restore him and have the love relationship with him for which he was created

He yearns to be free of God's careful record-keeping of his sins...  
 where at last God's omniscience and constant over-watching of  
 him is only for good and blessing, not for judgment!

This is the heaven we all want, where at last our sins cause us not the  
 least bit of trouble!

BUT... Job ends this portion with a return to the reality of his  
 agonies... it seems all roads on earth lead to hopelessness and  
 the grave

5. Until then, everything that happens on earth only erodes our hopes  
 (14:18-22)

***Job 14:18 - 15:1 "But as a mountain erodes and crumbles and as a rock  
 is moved from its place, <sup>19</sup> as water wears away stones and torrents  
 wash away the soil, so you destroy man's hope. <sup>20</sup> You overpower  
 him once for all, and he is gone; you change his countenance and  
 send him away. <sup>21</sup> If his sons are honored, he does not know it; if  
 they are brought low, he does not see it. <sup>22</sup> He feels but the pain of  
 his own body and mourns only for himself."***

## V. Lessons

### A. Humbled by God's Infinite Majesty

***Job 13:11 Would not his splendor terrify you? Would not the dread of him  
 fall on you?***

1. We must be continually humbled by the terrifying majesty of the  
 glory of God
2. We must realize how holy he is, how high and exalted he is
3. We must tremble at a God like this, who raises and lowers mighty  
 empires with the movement of his little finger
4. We must humble ourselves at his omniscience... the fact that  
 nothing we do can ever escape his notice
5. To realize that someday we will give an account to God for every  
 careless word we have ever spoken

## B. Job's Friends Exposed and Laid Low

1. We must NOT be so ignorant and arrogant as Job's friends, who did not seem to think they would have to stand before the same God and give an account for themselves... they thought that because it hadn't happened to them, they were fine, they were righteous
2. Job exposed them... said that it was because they weren't suffering they were unable to be compassionate and humble

***Job 12:5 Men at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.***

3. We should realize that the sufferings of others, they could just as easily be happening to us

## C. Job's Pride... Horizontally and Vertically

1. Job was provoked by his friends' pride... and he became prideful himself
2. Multiple times he was sarcastic with them and said he was just as good as they were
3. All of us have pride... and we can see Job's pride toward these men
4. But far worse was his pride vertically... toward the majestic God he said his friends should have feared

***Job 13:11 Would not his splendor terrify you? Would not the dread of him fall on you?***

But then, he says this:

***Job 13:15 I will surely defend my ways to his face.***

5. At the end of the time, Job was thoroughly humbled and shut his mouth in the presence of God and repented in dust and ashes

## D. Job's Inconstant Hope in Resurrection

1. Sometimes, it seems Job has a genuine faith in life beyond the grave
2. Other times, he seems to speak as one who has no hope
3. This is realistic of us... when we go through agonies, it is easy for us to become blown and tossed by the waves of our pain... to begin to doubt the promises of God
4. Clear example: John the Baptist

***John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"***

***John 1:34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."***

But then, when he was arrested by King Herod and awaiting execution by beheading, his faith in Christ began to flicker:

***Matthew 11:2-3 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples <sup>3</sup> to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"***

WOW! How could this great man of God begin to waver and flicker in doubts about Jesus? How could John testify that Jesus was the Son of God one day, and then ask "Are you the one... or should we wait for someone else?"

PAIN can make cowards of us all!! Pain and suffering can put doubts around us and shake our foundations

Jesus did some miracles in front of John's disciples as clear evidence and spoke these words to them to give to John:

***Matthew 11:4-6 "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. <sup>6</sup> Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."***

Go back to the evidence... the scripture's clear testimony to Jesus as your Savior and as the resurrected glorious Lord who will also raise your corpse from the grave!!

E. The Final Triumph of the Gospel!!

1. Job's inconstant hope for resurrection lacks the historical fact of Christ's resurrection to buttress it
2. His lament is very much like the Book of Ecclesiastes, which declares that all things "under the sun" are "vanity of vanities"... that everything done on planet Earth is empty, worthless, and destined for oblivion... destined to become "dust in the wind"

***Isaiah 40:6-8 "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. <sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,***

3. But Christ HAS INDEED RISEN!

- a. Christ's death is the atonement Job yearned for... in which the careful record of our sins is covered in his atoning blood... in which God the omnipotent no longer uses his power to strip us and crush us and lay us low and eradicate all our earthly accomplishments and empires
- b. Christ's resurrection is what this suffering man is yearning for, so that he will no longer be blown and tossed by the uncertainties of his doubts and struggles that were tormenting him and making him so unstable

***1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.***

***1 Corinthians 15:53-57 the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. <sup>54</sup> When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." <sup>55</sup> "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death***

*is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The question is, have you trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?

Have you come to the place where you realize that this life is a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes?

Have you been able to stare at all the evidence of death and pain and decay and say, "Yes, I see all that... but I know that my redeemer lives – Jesus Christ – and in the end he will take his stand on my behalf and claim me as his own and raise me from the dark grave into eternal glory?!!!