

Cries in the Dark – Job 8-10

1. One of the hardest jobs of anyone teaching the Book of Job is to get people to hang in there and listen even when answers are not forthcoming. This is one of the very few places in scripture where we cannot wrap things up with a nice bow at the end of a 15min, 30min sermon or hour long class. Are you comfortable with mystery? With silence from heaven?
2. It is not as if we have never been warned that this would be our norm. We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7; Hebrews 10:38) and, yet, we get quite upset anytime we are asked to do so. And I'm not criticizing us for that! We are human beings and, sometimes, that is just too vulnerable, too frightening a place to be. We cry out for more. We know we need God.
3. CS Lewis would say that is one of the reasons we have for believing in God. And it is also one of the main reasons given for not believing in God. It would seem that we need to get a handle on this whole concept of being the creature, not the Creator, on suffering, and on living in faith while concurrently living in the dark.
4. Job has just finished a speech in chapters 6 and 7, using sarcasm, parody, and mythology. He ends with this plea: **Job 7:20,21**.
5. That is too much for Bildad. He rises to speak and he will not be as gentle as Eliphaz. **Job 8:2-7**. Now, before you judge Bildad harshly (and he deserves a bit of that), note that what he is saying is still being said by church people and church leaders. Ever heard of the prosperity gospel? It is a perversion of Christ's teachings but millions still push it in one form or another.
6. Bildad is relying on the traditional and widespread belief that one's external conditions accurately reflect inner states. In other words, what you see is an indication of how happy or angry God is with you. Did your kids die horribly and way too young? It has to be because they sinned! It can't be that God wasn't watching or that God didn't care. "Everything happens for a reason" is a lie straight from hell and straight from the lips of Bildad. Why? Because it is assumed that God

is responsible for whatever happens. That makes God guilty of sin, homicide, rape, torture, all illness...how dare we lay it at His feet?

7. Some would answer: how dare we not? God is in charge of all things! So, if there is smoke, there must be fire. Or, as Bildad puts it: **Job 8:11**. Bildad goes further and uses spider webs and well watered plants to illustrate that things don't just happen, they happen for a REASON.
8. Job responds in chapter 9 and 10. He admits that no one is without sin. **Job 9:1-3**. Job is frustrated that God is silent on what sin Job must have committed (or his children). How can he repent of a sin and promise to not do it again when God won't tell him what it was???
9. Job then goes into a beautiful speech about the power of God (**Job 9:10-13**). Even the demonic monsters cannot withstand God...but God's beauty that can twist and become a terrible beauty in a heartbeat. Why does Job feel this way? Because Jesus has not yet come. Until Jesus came, we didn't know what God looked like, sounded like, and what He would say to us face to face.
10. So Job says he would like to have a trial before God where God could argue His side and Job could argue his side. An Almighty God without Jesus would look a lot like the God Job asks for: **Job 9:22,23**.
11. Job asks for someone to come and adjudicate this case: a daysman redeemer. **Job 9:32-35**.
12. The rest of this speech is found in chapter 10 and I urge you to read it. In that chapter, Job lays out his case and the hopelessness he feels. He speaks of the kind of God I heard preached when a child. He speaks of the kind of God I've heard from the preaching of fundamentalist, hell raising, shouting preachers. They've railed through the centuries and are at least as culpable as the weak, compromise on everything preachers. God is not a dragon and neither is He a timid, shaky creature.
13. It's more complex than that. We need to slow down and remember what Paul said: **1st Cor. 13:12**.

14. The daysman had to be someone who could stand between the opponents, respected by both. He had to be willing to pay the difference if the disputants could not come to terms.

15. Only one did that. **1st Timothy 2:5. Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:26,27**