

Job 11-14 part 2 – Hear the Pain, Join the Journey

1. When my father was dying of Alzheimer's, we had some very difficult days. This is common among all who are caring for parents with this awful disease. I had one advantage: I knew about the brain, the disease, what to expect, what worked, and what wouldn't. I knew that, when the bad days came, I needed to enter his world. Demanding that he enter our world, or the real world, was futile. (murdered cops in Dallas, Korean War).
2. This is not just something we need to do for Alzheimer's patients – it is something we need to do for everyone. (atheist angry that I was making fun of them...when I was just dismantling their arguments. I needed to see what he was going through, through his eyes)
3. This is true in so many areas of our lives and, unless we have been trained, we will fail at most of them. (Kami and her order, precision. My use of humor and solitude. An elder upset that no one helps him with the garden at church. A person wearing a mask. A person not wearing a mask)
4. A person of color. First – I don't like any of the descriptions we have for each other: African American, white, Caucasian, black, Asian, Southeast Asian...we can go on and on and on. We are all human beings but we CAN'T just leave it there because there are histories, markers, feelings, and facts that are tied to color, national origin, and religion.
5. Of course, I am not speaking here of rioters or of the very large percentage of the rioters who are white. I'm talking about our neighbors, our friends, and the random people we meet. I can see Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar all saying "we didn't have slaves! Get over it" when the story of the one who is suffering is still continuing. (Color of Law by Richard Rothstein, The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander). The game of Monopoly.
6. All of this is to say that you may agree with a person or you might disagree, but one of our primary jobs as human beings is to listen and enter the story told by another, to see with their eyes, to feel what

they feel without judging them or telling them what you would do if you were they.

7. **Job 12:2,3**. When I read this, I hear the cry of **John Merrick**, known to history as the Elephant Man. Pursued by the callous mob, he yells “I am a human being!” Sadly, it is as true today as it was then that (**Job 12:5**).
8. Job calls for humility and invokes the name of Yahweh for the one and only time in this entire series of arguments. **Job 12:7-10**.
9. He asks his accusers to taste their words first before using them (**Job 12:11**). The Bible has more than 100 commands about communication and a lot of them are: listen more, speak less. The face is an information intake device that is able, on occasion, to also give information. We are not designed to speak without listening, seeing, hearing, thinking, and, yes, feeling. (it doesn't matter if the fireworks can't hurt you. If you are afraid, you are afraid)
10. In **Job 12:13-25**, Job gives quite a beautiful and terrifying description of God as the king of the universe, whose invisible hand is behind all things and whose ways are far, far beyond man's comprehension. Job feels that all living creatures are puppets being pulled and tossed by invisible strings controlled by a God no one can see. That is the very definition of faith and hopelessness combined.
11. Chapter 13 starts the way he started chapter 12: I am a man. (**Job 13:1-3**). He states that he is done arguing with them (well...) and wishes to talk to God. Before he goes much further, he gives his friends a warning that we need to keep in mind: **Job 13:7-8**. We HAVE spoken deceitfully for God when created vast rolls of laws and created theological and traditional myths and then demanded that every man and woman obey our creations, our interpretations.
12. When Jesus says we will be known for our love, one for another, and we preach against playing a guitar on a folk hymn...while keeping blacks out of our colleges and in their own churches...we have spoken deceitfully for God. We will answer for that. No one hurts God's reputation more than those who claim to serve Him best.

13. Job turns to address God in the rest of chapter 13. There are amazing statements of faith in this portion: **Job 13:15**. And then comes chapter 14 where Job submits himself fully to whatever God wants. This passage has become a saying in English speaking cultures: **Job 14:1,2**. Shakespeare, Milton, and many others incorporated versions of this saying.
14. Job whispers, struggles, and hurts. He asks God to enter his story and, to be fair, he is trying to enter God's story. In Jesus, we get the answers Job sought, but he had to seek in the dark.
15. And while we have the Jesus story, we, too, are still in the dark about many, many things. So...be good to each other. Listen more than you speak. Enter their story. This world is hard enough without making it harder than it has to be.