

Friday, August 30

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Job 34:1 - 36:33

34 **1** Then Elihu said: **2** “Listen to me, you wise men. Pay attention, you who have knowledge. **3** Job said, ‘The ear tests the words it hears just as the mouth distinguishes between foods.’ **4** So let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good. **5** For Job also said, ‘I am innocent, but God has taken away my rights. **6** I am innocent, but they call me a liar. My suffering is incurable, though I have not sinned.’ **7** “Tell me, has there ever been a man like Job, with his thirst for irreverent talk? **8** He chooses evil people as companions. He spends his time with wicked men. **9** He has even said, ‘Why waste time trying to please God?’ **10** “Listen to me, you who have understanding. Everyone knows that God doesn’t sin! The Almighty can do no wrong. **11** He repays people according to their deeds. He treats people as they deserve. **12** Truly, God will not do wrong. The Almighty will not twist justice. **13** Did someone else put the world in his care? Who set the whole world in place? **14** If God were to take back his spirit and withdraw his breath, **15** all life would cease, and humanity would turn again to dust. **16** “Now listen to me if you are wise. Pay attention to what I say. **17** Could God govern if he hated justice? Are you going to condemn the almighty judge? **18** For he says to kings, ‘You are wicked,’ and to nobles, ‘You are unjust.’ **19** He doesn’t care how great a person may be, and he pays no more attention to the rich than to the poor. He made them all. **20** In a moment they die. In the middle of the night they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand. **21** “For God watches how people live; he sees everything they do. **22** No darkness is thick enough to hide the wicked from his eyes. **23** We don’t set the time when we will come before God in judgment. **24** He brings the mighty to ruin without asking anyone, and he sets up others in their place. **25** He knows what they do, and in the night he overturns and destroys them. **26** He strikes them down because they are wicked, doing it openly for all to see. **27** For they turned away from following him. They have no respect for any of his ways. **28** They cause the poor to cry out, catching God’s attention. He hears the cries of the needy. **29** But if he chooses to remain quiet, who can criticize him? When he hides his face, no one can find him, whether an individual or a nation. **30** He prevents the godless from ruling so they cannot be a snare to the people. **31** “Why don’t people say to God, ‘I have sinned, but I will sin no more’? **32** Or ‘I don’t know what evil I have done—tell me. If I have done wrong, I will stop at once’? **33** “Must God tailor his justice to your demands? But you have rejected him! The choice is yours, not mine. Go ahead, share your wisdom with us. **34** After all, bright people will

tell me, and wise people will hear me say, **35** 'Job speaks out of ignorance; his words lack insight.' **36** Job, you deserve the maximum penalty for the wicked way you have talked. **37** For you have added rebellion to your sin; you show no respect, and you speak many angry words against God."

35 **1** Then Elihu said: **2** "Do you think it is right for you to claim, 'I am righteous before God'? **3** For you also ask, 'What's in it for me? What's the use of living a righteous life?' **4** "I will answer you and all your friends, too.**5** Look up into the sky, and see the clouds high above you. **6** If you sin, how does that affect God? Even if you sin again and again, what effect will it have on him? **7** If you are good, is this some great gift to him? What could you possibly give him? **8** No, your sins affect only people like yourself, and your good deeds also affect only humans. **9** "People cry out when they are oppressed. They groan beneath the power of the mighty. **10** Yet they don't ask, 'Where is God my Creator, the one who gives songs in the night? **11**Where is the one who makes us smarter than the animals and wiser than the birds of the sky?' **12** And when they cry out, God does not answer because of their pride. **13** But it is wrong to say God doesn't listen, to say the Almighty isn't concerned. **14** You say you can't see him, but he will bring justice if you will only wait. **15** You say he does not respond to sinners with anger and is not greatly concerned about wickedness. **16** But you are talking nonsense, Job. You have spoken like a fool."

36 **1** Elihu continued speaking: **2** "Let me go on, and I will show you the truth. For I have not finished defending God! **3** I will present profound arguments for the righteousness of my Creator. **4** I am telling you nothing but the truth, for I am a man of great knowledge. **5** "God is mighty, but he does not despise anyone! He is mighty in both power and understanding. **6**He does not let the wicked live but gives justice to the afflicted. **7** He never takes his eyes off the innocent, but he sets them on thrones with kings and exalts them forever. **8** If they are bound in chains and caught up in a web of trouble, **9** he shows them the reason. He shows them their sins of pride.**10** He gets their attention and commands that they turn from evil. **11** "If they listen and obey God, they will be blessed with prosperity throughout their lives. All their years will be pleasant. **12** But if they refuse to listen to him, they will cross over the river of death, dying from lack of understanding.**13** For the godless are full of resentment. Even when he punishes them, they refuse to cry out to him for help. **14** They die when they are young, after wasting their lives in immoral living. **15** But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity. **16** "God is leading you away from danger, Job, to a place free from distress. He is setting your table with the best food. **17** But you are obsessed with whether the godless will be judged. Don't worry, judgment and justice will be upheld. **18** But watch out, or

you may be seduced by wealth. Don't let yourself be bribed into sin. **19** Could all your wealth or all your mighty efforts keep you from distress? **20** Do not long for the cover of night, for that is when people will be destroyed. **21** Be on guard! Turn back from evil, for God sent this suffering to keep you from a life of evil. **22** "Look, God is all-powerful. Who is a teacher like him? **23** No one can tell him what to do, or say to him, 'You have done wrong.' **24** Instead, glorify his mighty works, singing songs of praise. **25** Everyone has seen these things, though only from a distance. **26** "Look, God is greater than we can understand. His years cannot be counted. **27** He draws up the water vapor and then distills it into rain. **28** The rain pours down from the clouds, and everyone benefits. **29** Who can understand the spreading of the clouds and the thunder that rolls forth from heaven? **30** See how he spreads the lightning around him and how it lights up the depths of the sea. **31** By these mighty acts he nourishes the people, giving them food in abundance. **32** He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target. **33** The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his indignant anger.

2 Corinthians 4:1 - 12

4 1 Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up. **2** We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this. **3** If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. **4** Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. **5** You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. **7** We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. **8** We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. **9** We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. **10** Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. **11** Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. **12** So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

Psalm 44:1 - 8

44 1 O God, we have heard it with our own ears— our ancestors have told us of all you did in their day, in days long ago: **2** You drove out the pagan nations by your power and gave all the land to our ancestors. You crushed their enemies and set our ancestors free. **3** They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strong arm that gave them victory. It was your right hand and strong arm and the blinding light from your face that helped them, for you loved them. **4** You are my King and my God. You command victories for Israel. **5** Only by your power can we push back our enemies; only in your name can we trample our foes. **6** I do not trust in my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me. **7** You are the one who gives us victory over our enemies; you disgrace those who hate us. **8** O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name. Interlude

Proverbs 22:10 - 12

22 10 Throw out the mocker, and fighting goes, too. Quarrels and insults will disappear. **11** Whoever loves a pure heart and gracious speech will have the king as a friend. **12** The LORD preserves those with knowledge, but he ruins the plans of the treacherous.