

Untitled #2

By Christopher Lyons

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Speaker 1:

...for a week and have a great time and try and train you in junior high high school, in college ministry. But try and train you in the area that you're most interested in. So afterwards, if you're interested, jot your name down on a piece of paper. It's not a commitment. We'll send you some information, and then when we're back in the spring, we'll give you an application. Thanks.

Christopher Lyons:

Thank you, Brett. There's far more material, of course, in the Book of Job than we could possibly handle in three three quarter hour sessions. But turn in the Book of Job to the fourth chapter and let's now look at the earthly scene. We've really spent the last two days looking at the heavenly scene and looking at this cosmic conflict, this test, this contest that is taking place in heaven. And you really do not understand the drama of the Book of Job unless you recognize that there is this heavenly scene that takes place in the first two chapters, which Job knows nothing about. Even when we come to the final chapter of the book, Job is still not informed of what all has been happening and why it has been happening.

And I guess the answer to the question, Why is God so often silent? Really is God is not silent. You may not be hearing from God. You may be going through a wilderness experience, but God is sovereign over all the Earth. God knows what's happening. God knows what's going on. And my experience, you may have difficulty with this, you may not agree with this, but my experience in 35 years as a pastor is that so very often, especially for the new Christian, or

especially for the person who was involved in evangelism and seeing others come to Jesus Christ, we really do see the mighty acts of God. We see God working in just amazing, unbelievable ways in leading a person to Jesus Christ.

Yet it seems that as a person walks with God, the miracles are fewer and fewer. The signs and wonders are fewer and fewer. They're there as God from sometimes just steps in and bails us out. Maybe we would have given up on the faith altogether, I don't know, but they're there, and I've seen them in my ministry. I've seen some wonderful answers to prayer, and it does seem that when God wants to do something wonderful in a person's life, first of all, he lays it on the hearts of a couple of people to begin to pray and to begin to pray earnestly and fervently. He'll wake a person up in the middle of the night. He'll contact some person on the other side of the world. That person doesn't even know there's a problem in his friend's life, but he's so heavily burdened that he begins to wake up in the middle of the night and pray for that individual.

And weeks later, the two of them get together and then find out just at that time when he was awakened on the other side of the world to begin to pray. This person was going through a crisis or going into surgery or somebody had just died or whatever. So those things happen. But it's interesting that more frequently they happen in the life of the younger, the novice, the beginning Christian. But as the years go by and more, as I talk to you with all the wisdom of a grandfather, as the years go by in a person matures in Christ and is older, you see less and less of that and more and more, god is teaching us that we have to walk by faith.

What is it Martin Luther, the great reformer, said? Feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the word of God, nor else is worth believing. It's wonderful to walk by feeling. You attend a great and evangelistic service or a Bible teaching session just as we've had with Billy Ingram in the first hour. And there's just a sense of excitement. You want to praise Hallelujah, and there's a sense of feeling. But we don't base our commitment to God through Jesus Christ on feelings and on experiences, but on the Word of God, which tells us that God is sovereign. That God is in control, that God watches over us. His eye is on us.

But we also recognize that those who are going to be pleasing to God are people who walk by faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Those who come to God must believe that he is. Sometimes maybe with tears in their eyes. All the evidence proves that there is no God. All the evidence proves that life is just a blind roll of the dice. But you're not just looking at experience and evidence. By faith, you know that God is and that God is in control and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. It's not easy. It's never easy to walk by faith, but that's what God requires of you. That's what God requires of me.

So as I say, we can't cover now all of the conversations that take place. As you know, the Book of Job now is a series of dialogues. There are these three friends of Job who come and each one of them speaks in his turn, and Job responds to them each time, and then once again, each one of them speaks in their turn, and Job responds to them another time, and then once again, each one of them speaks in his turn, all except for the last one.

Zophar he doesn't get a chance to give a third speech. But Job responds to each one of them and what they've had to say. And then all the while there's been someone standing there he's never really introduced, and he disappears off the scene. We don't know who in the world he is. But here's Elihu, this teenager, this college student who stands there listening to these men of wisdom, waiting to hear something, some new thought that's really going to challenge him and blow him away. And he hears all these wise people speaking and he's getting more and more angry. They don't have any answers.

And isn't that interesting? I know you're college students, but there aren't a lot of people with a lot of answers. I hope that you have some answers in the field in the career in which you go into. You're going to find out there are a lot of questions. There are a lot of opinions. When we have a communion service at Redwood Chapel, I like to use the line, Come to the sacred table, not because you must, but because you made Jesus Christ invite you. And in the formula I say, Come not to express an opinion, the world is full of opinions. Come to seek a presence, the presence of Jesus Christ in your life, enabling you, empowering you to Christian life and Christian service.

There are a lot of opinions. I go wild listening to talk shows. Everybody has an opinion and that's what Elihu the college student says. I've listened to all this discussion. I've listened to all of these opinions and nobody seems to have any answers. And he just gets mad about the whole thing and once again joins everybody else and telling off poor old Job. But nobody has any answers for Job. And I don't know that I have a lot of answers for you. For what all you're going through, what maybe has happened to a dad? What's happened to a brother? What's happened to some dear friend, maybe whose lost his eyesight or lost his health? I don't know that. I have a lot of

answers for you other than if the Book of Job teaches us anything, God is. God is sovereign. God is watching overall.

Well, let's look at some of the main themes of the Book of Job. In Job 4, Eliphaz is the first one who ventures to speak and this is going to occur over and over again. I'm not going to call your attention to every one of them, but Job 4:7 basically is what everybody says to poor old Job. They seem to say it with intensity as the dialogue takes place. They say it with more and more urgency and anger. But basically this is what everybody is saying in 4:7, Who being innocent has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?

Job, if you're suffering, if you've got this great problem of elephantitis in your life, it's because you have sinned. And God is punishing you for your sin. Now Job is going to protest all the way through the book that this isn't so this isn't what he is going through. But to no effect, they just get more angry with him. Also notice over in Job 5, this also seems to be their approach in hitting poor old Job in Job 5:8. And it's Eliphaz who is still speaking. But others are going to say the same thing. If it were I, if I were in your shoes Job, if I were going through what you're going through, Job, I would appeal to God, I would lay my cause before him.

Have you ever done that in counseling one of your friends? Now, if it were I, I would do such and such. And what in the world kind of help is that going to be? You're not going through what Job is going through. How do you know what you would do if you were covered with boils? We talked about zits a bad enough if you were covered with boils from the top of your head to the sole of your foot, be very, very careful in counseling your friends. Be careful in counseling

anyone from coming from that approach. Now, if I were you, I would do such and such because you cannot be that person even for a moment. You are an absolutely unique person in the plan of God. He is an absolutely unique person in God's plan for his life.

And don't try to transfer your experiences. Don't try to transfer your sensory perceptions into his life or into his thinking. But there again through the book of Job, you find people giving that kind of counsel and advice and it doesn't happen. So look at poor old Job's response over in the 6:28. And Job's got problems enough, but he's pleading with his friends. Get off my case, get out of my face, get off my back. In 6:28, but now be so kind as to look at me, would I lie to your face? Relent, do not be unjust. Reconsider for my integrity is at stake. You guys are questioning my integrity. I'm going through all of this suffering and all of this pain and you're just saying, Well, you've done something, Job, and God is just getting even with you.

In fact, old Zophar is going to come along, and he's going to say, Job, you may be suffering, but what you're going through is nothing compared to what God ought to do to you because of your sin. God's letting you off easily. Well, let's face it, you're there in a hospital bed with tubes going in and tubes coming out and somebody comes in and says, hey, this is nothing compared to what you deserve. You say what in the world? Get out of my life. Get off my case.

In fact, go over to Job 8:5 as Bildad, the Shuhite, shortest man in the Bible. Pardon that. Thanks. 8:5. But if you will look to God and plead with the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, even now, he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your rightful place. Job, if you would just rev up your faith, if you would just believe in healing and claim your healing, it would be all over and everything would be all right. Now, there may be cases where this is a

good answer and a correct answer. But do you see these people have no idea of Job 1 and 2. They have no concept of what is going on here.

They're giving all of these answers that they've been taught all of their well, let's use the word Christian, even though we're in the Old Testament here. All of their Christian life, they've been taught answers that may be valid in certain situations. And they're not working here. And what you point your finger and say it's your own fault. Really? If you had more faith, your little baby wouldn't be dying of leukemia. And you know, as a pastor, I've had to pick up the pieces from situations like that, where a mom and dad with their only child, and there she is dying of leukemia.

And well-meaning Christian friends are giving answers such as that. And now the parents not only have to go through the grief of the suffering of this little child, but through the grief of it's my own fault. And if I had just believed more, I don't want to put down some of this popular teaching. But remember, never, never in the Bible are we taught to have faith in our faith. All our righteousness is as filthy rags. It's not faith in my faith. It's what it's faith in an all loving God. It's faith in an all-powerful God. Don't ever get trapped into the fact that you feel that it's all going to depend upon you and revving up your belief and revving up your faith.

It's always what a simple childlike faith. Unless you're converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. It's always just a simple and childlike faith in a loving, caring, all-powerful heavenly Father. Really the theme, though, of the Book of Job over in the 9th chapter is not the problem of suffering, despite the fact that we've been

talking about that all week. The theme of the Book of Job has stated for us really in that second verse, that's what you wrestle with through the Book of Job. That's what we wrestle with in the world in which we live today.

How can a mortal person be made righteous before God? I recognize that I'm not worthy to stand in God's presence. Job was never saying that he had never in his life done anything that was less than absolutely perfect. Remember, we saw in the first chapter, he was even concerned so much for his children that when they got together for their feast days and celebrating birthdays, just in case anyone had goofed it up, Job was offering these sacrifices for their sins and offering sacrifices for his own. And his concern was, how can a mere man, how can a mere mortal ever stand before the eternal God?

Remember those who are closest to God in the Book of Revelation, those angels who are around the throne are constantly falling down and crying out, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. What is there? You've seen it in your own life. The closer you come to God, the more you are aware of His Holiness and your own need for cleansing, your own need for redemption. And you've also seen it in your witnessing, haven't you? The farther away from God a person is.

He's way off in our far countries, he's into a junk he ought not to be into and he's impressed with his own righteousness, with his own holy. Oh, I may not be perfect, but I'm as perfect as those hypocrites to go to Biola University and et cetera. What is it? The closer you come to God, the more you're aware of your own sinfulness. The farther away from God you are, the more you're convinced of your own holiness and your own righteousness. And here are these heavenly beings surrounding the very throne of God, closest to God, as you possibly can come.

And what are they crying out? Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty. That's the theme of the Book of Job. How can a mere man ever be made righteous before God? In fact, he expands upon it in verse 33. He doesn't understand the New Testament theology that you know and that I know. If only he tells us in Job 9:33, he tells his friends, he tells us, if only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay His hand upon us both. Someone to remove God's rod from me so that this terror would frighten me no more, then I would speak up without fear of him. But as it now stands with me, I cannot.

If there was only someone and didn't Billy Ingram say it so well in that first session this morning, in that final illustration. If there were only somebody to take my hand and God's hand and put them together. And of course, you know, from your New Testament understanding things that Job did not know, but he was longing for the coming of the Messiah, longing for the one who would take our guilt and our sin upon himself at Calvary's Cross and reconcile a sinful person with a Holy and righteous God.

One of the great themes one of the great chapters of the Book of Job. Over in 11 Zophar speaks and says in 11:3, Job, the way you're talking, the way you're defending yourself, will no one rebuke you when you mock. He says in verse three, and then he starts to take it off, take poor old Job off to the cleaners as he reads him the riot act also. One of the things, though, that impresses me about Job through all of this, through all of the trials and through everything that he's going through, facing the silence of God, as some of you in your lifetime may well face the silence of God.

But look at Job's response in Job 13:15. And no wonder, at the end of the book we're told, in all of this, Job did not sin. And God calls him my servant, my servant job. What does he say in the midst of all this? Job 13:15, one of the most important verses of the book, Though he slay me yet will I hope in him. Do you remember the story of the three children they're called in captivity in Babylon and the fiery furnace?

And they are commanded to bow down before other gods of Nebuchadnezzar. And they say again, probably college age students. They say Our God is able to deliver us. They were heating up the furnace. What was it seven times they were going to burn these guys alive. And these young people said, Our God is able to deliver us. But even if he doesn't, we will not worship your God. If it is in God's plan, in God's will to take our life, we know that he could deliver us if he wants to. But if in His will, he decides not to. That's all right. That's all right. We're still not going to worship your gods.

I don't have time to go into a personal experience here of something that happened to me back some years ago with one of my sons, who was 15 years of age. Just one of these kids. If you've ever seen Michael J. Fox on Family Ties and what's? Alex Keaton, a three piece suit. Hey, that was my kid. That's funny on television, but sometimes that's a sign of sickness. It's somebody who's that into money and that different from everybody else's own age and et cetera. Something happened. I don't have the time to go into it all.

But I saw my son being taken away in an ambulance, chained to a stretcher, going to be for a while in a psychiatric hospital. Great, normal, one of my best friends today, but so tremendously

out of character. But here I'm a pastor and I'm firmly committed to the fact that I have five children. But I'm firmly committed to the fact that a man ought not to stand in the pulpit and preach to others if he doesn't have his own family in order. And I knew I was going to resign. I knew in a sense my ministry was over. And yet as I stood there and I was all alone and the doctors had just fallen, I was all alone in this parking lot as the ambulance was driving away.

And this verse came to me, God, I love you, though you slay me, I will honor you, though you slay me. I will serve you. And I don't know hardly any of you. I don't know your names and I don't know the future for you. But I dare share that story with you because I'm sure on a congregation this large, somebody's going to go through an experience sometime in his life similar to that, where you stand there psychologically, pardon this expression, but psychologically stripped, absolutely naked, left with nothing. And you say, God, I love you, though you slay me yet will I honor you. Can you see why Job comes through with flying colors? Well, I've got to skip ahead in the book. We have the various speeches of others. You may be saying the same thing as Job says in the 16th chapter.

This should not be the life verse for a pastor, but notice in Job 16:3, Job says, Will your long winded speeches never end? I think of this in sort of the Torrey conference, boy, you guys are real patient. We've been chatting away with you now for three days. And the last time I was here, believe it or not, this conference was five days long. I'm sure somebody may feel will your long winded speeches never end. But let me take you over to the 19th chapter of the book of Job.

Man, can you believe this? He was probably a contemporary of Abraham. There's so much about the mighty works of God in the world that they did not understand in that day. There was so much that no one would understand until the apostle Paul would come along and say, Behold, I show you a mystery. A mystery is what? Something that you could never figure out on your own. Something that, given all of the theological libraries of all of the world, you still wouldn't be able to figure out with human reason. But it's something that God wants you to know. It's something that's essential for you to know. God wants to reveal it.

And the apostle Paul is the one through whom God revealed many mysteries. And he says, Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep. We shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. You know, it's all going to happen so quickly that it's not even the blink of an eye. It takes too long to blink your eye. It's going to all happen in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead in Christ shall rise and et cetera.

Well, go back a couple of thousand years. And in Job 19, oh, what a walk with God this man had. Do you see why God says, Have you considered my servant Job? He's upright and blameless and shuns evil and loves me. And Job says in Job 19:25, I know that my Redeemer lives. I can't explain what I'm going through. I've lost all my children. I've lost all my wealth. I've lost my home. That could happen to some of us up in Northern California. An earthquake could strike. And man, I live 900ft up on the edge of a hill. I got an unbelievable view 10 miles down a canyon, but I recognize man, I only live a little away from the Haywood fault. I've written my friends after we had that earthquake a year ago. At this time, 7.1 on the San Andreas fault. And I

said, look, if you ever read about a 7.1 earthquake on the Haywood fault, don't even bother calling. We're all dead.

I got vases that belong to my. We have a lot of antiques old and from New England. I've got vases that belong to my that were wedding presents to my grandparents. And I often look at them and say, Boy, you guys are going to be history in an earthquake. But you know? What in the world? You may lose everything. Job had. But what is he saying at all? I know that my Redeemer lives. Possessions are not eternal. What is that famous line from Tennessee Williams' play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Big Daddy has just come back from the hospital and he's diagnosed as dying with cancer.

He doesn't really know it, but the rest of the family does. But Big Daddy is sort of retired to the basement. He's just sitting there depressed about what all is going on. And he's got stuff everywhere that he and Big Mama have bought all over the world in their travels. You know, they've shipped it home from Egypt, and they've shipped it home from China. And the basement just filled with all of this stuff. And his alcoholic son, Brick, comes on down and they have a big confrontation there together in the basement. And remember, he looks at Big Daddy. He looks at his father dying of cancer. He looks around at all this stuff and he says, You've got a million dollars of worth of junk. Does it love you?

When was the last time your automobile said, I love you. Your bank account. I need you. When was the last time you opened your drawer and your designer blue jean said, You're important to me. You've got a million dollars worth of junk. Does it love you? What does Job say? He's lost

everything. I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end, he will stand upon the Earth. And after my skin has been destroyed. You know, my family may take my body and they may cremate it. My body may throw it on the dump heap, which the pagans did in those days when Christianity came along because God became man. Because God has made the body Holy.

As their final testimony, the Christians began to bury their dead in the catacombs. Everybody else just burned up the body. So threw the body away. The body is nothing. The body is evil. No, the body has been baptized with the Lord Jesus Christ. But Job is saying, though, there's nothing left but ashes. I know that there is going to be a resurrection. I know that God can get that DNA. And even if there's only some molecule, you know, the argument of what happens to a guy who falls off a boat and drowns, and he's eaten by a fish that's eaten by a fish that's eaten by a fish that's eaten by a fish. And how is there going to be a resurrection? By experience and humanly speaking, you say it's all foolishness.

And yet I don't know if God only needs some kind of cell somewhere, as you see, some kind of science fiction and he recreates the whole thing. I don't know. All I know is that God's commitment to you is so absolutely complete. He says, I am not going to leave even one cell of you behind on planet Earth. That I am going to deliver you spirit, soul and body. You're going to have a brand new body. But my commitment to you is so absolutely complete. Salvation is so absolutely complete. I'm not going to leave anything of you behind in this old world that's going to perish. Well, you can see I'm appreciated. I've got to move fast now, so let's jump across everything. I'd even like to leave a moment or two for questions.

Jump to the 38th chapter. I could take another two whole days on that. But let's go. And because this is important because even in studying the Book of Job, this is still where some of us have a fundamental problem. With all that Job goes through, finally, God speaks. And you know, Job has said, if only I could meet God, I would question Him. I would ask God a lot of questions. And I used in our introduction that statement by the nonbelieving college student who said, if there is a God, he certainly has a lot to answer for. And maybe some of you could look in your life and say, yeah, I believe that God does have a lot to explain to me. I believe that God has a lot to answer for for some of the things that have happened to me that were unjust or unfair.

I've tried to be holy, I've tried to be a righteous person. I've tried to live clean and look where it's got me. I think God has a lot to answer for. Isn't it interesting? We come to the 38th chapter of the Book of Job, and God does not answer one of Job's questions. Over and over again, we've heard people asking the question in the Book of Job. Why? And now God speaks finally. Now we have a problem because you haven't heard God speak. You say, well, if I were as well off as Job, if only I had heard the word of God, then it would be all right.

And so you say, Well, Job doesn't really satisfy me because God spoke to Him and God's never spoken to me. I don't know. I can't explain it. All I know is we come to the 38th chapter. And now the silence of heaven has broken. Even still, God doesn't reveal to Job what had taken place in heaven in that command performance when the angels of the universe are brought before God and Satan has to come to. But now God says in 38:2, who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?

Hey, a lot of talk. But, Job, there's so much you do not understand. Brace yourself like a man. This isn't the typical word for man and Scripture. It could better be translated perhaps by the Hispanic term machismo. Man in man in his ability. Man in his confidence, man in his power, man in his strength. Okay, strong man, brace yourself because I will question you. You've been questioning me. Let me ask you some questions and you give me the answers if you're all so smart. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me if you understand.

Who shut up verse eight, the sea behind the doors when I burst forth. Now we don't have time to cover all the questions. But God now asks Job a series of 60 questions about creation, about the universe, about the morning stars, about the animals, maybe a reference here to dinosaurs, maybe a reference to unbelievable Loch Ness Monster, the monsters that live in the sea. We just say, hey, all this has passed away and they didn't exist. Well, that's another whole subject.

Let's finally go to verse 42, chapter 42 thought I'd never get there. But chapter 42. And by this time, Job is on mental overload. All of his circuits have just about broken as Job finally responds in 42:3, Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. God, I've been questioning you. I've been challenging you. I've been doubting you. And I realized in 42:6 the only thing that I really need to do, the only thing I can do, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. I don't have time to go into the epilogue. But through it all, God calls Job my servant.

Remember that's where it began. Have you considered my servant Job? And God tells these friends of Job of his anger, his disgust with them and their simplistic answers and the

accusations. Job, you're suffering because God is getting even with you. He blesses Job. He doubles everything that he has. Everything that he lost. There's a verse in the book of Joel that's always been a blessing to me. Remember, there was a plague. God's judgment upon the land of Israel was a plague of locusts that ate up everything. But God said to the righteous person, I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten.

And I've seen that again and again. I liked what Bill Ingram said this morning. You get tired on television of all these people who've been into drugs and promiscuity and stuff like that. I do think that we give too much honor to them. Brett and I were talking about this coming down, about finding youth leaders. And we don't want youth leaders who just always come because they feel they want to tell the kids how they got into junk and how they shouldn't get into it. And he was telling me how I want youth leaders who could be able to share with the kids, how God kept them clean, how God delivered them. They had all sorts of opportunities and all sorts of experiences that were possible.

And they were able to be more than conquerors through Jesus Christ, who loves them. And this is what Job has been through, all of this, and God says, you are my servant, and he restores to Him the years that the locusts have eaten, all the camel and all the oxen. But isn't it interesting? Even though he gives him everything double, he gives him back three daughters and seven sons. Now, if everything is doubled, he ought to have six daughters and 14 sons. No, you are eternal. You're going to live forever. A million million years from now, you're going to be just as alive and conscious as you are this very moment, maybe even more conscious. Maybe some of you are flaked out on me, going to be even more conscious.

And so God only gives him three daughters and seven sons. Why? Because he still has three daughters and seven sons. They're in heaven. They're with God. But Job is going to see them again. They still are for Job has said, I know that my Redeemer lives. Well, we don't have time for questions, but I'm sure there are many. Hey friends. I don't mean to come here and somehow dazzle you with answers. The older I get, the fewer answers I have. But remember I said last night, if you were with us at the session last night.

No matter what the answers, no matter what the problems, the Christian is somebody who always starts with a conclusion. God is, and he is a rewarder of those who faithfully seek him. Let's pray. Oh, God, our Father. I want to pray for some student here these couple of days. In fact, there may even be a student here, they don't have to be. They fulfilled all the requirements. And yet they're here today because they heard and they need answers. And father, all of their friends, all of their counselors, all of the brightest minds that you could find anywhere who are here on Biola campus. And they don't seem to be able to answer. And they don't seem to be able to satisfy. And it's for that person who is hurting. It's for that person who is crying that I want to pray that they might at least find some comfort in those words of Job. God, though you slay me, I will honor you in Jesus name. Amen God bless you all.