

Smashing the System: The Wicked Prosper

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[0 : 00] But we're going to turn now to our reading for this evening, and Phil Copeland is continuing our series in the book of Job. So do turn to Job in your own Bibles there, and it's Job chapter 21.

So Job is in conversation with a few of his so-called friends, and Job is replying.

He's responding to what some of his friends have been saying to him. And so this is Job's response. So Job chapter 21, and we'll read this chapter together. Then Job answered and said, Keep listening to my words, and let this be your comfort.

Bear with me, and I will speak. And after I've spoken, mock on. As for me, is my complaint against man? Why should I not be impatient?

Look at me, and be appalled, and lay your hand over your mouth. When I remember, I'm dismayed, and shuddering seizes my flesh.

[1 : 17] Why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in power? Their offspring are established in their presence, and their descendants before their eyes.

Their houses are safe from fear, and no rod of God is upon them. Their bull breeds without fail. Their cow calves and does not miscarry.

They send out their little boys like a flock. Their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and the lyre, and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.

They spend their days in prosperity, and in peace. They go down to shale. They say to God, depart from us. We do not desire the knowledge of your ways.

What is the almighty that we should serve him? And what profit do we get if we pray to him? Behold, is not their prosperity in their hand? The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

[2 : 19] How often is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out, that their calamity comes upon them, that God distributes pains in his anger, that they are like straw before the wind, and like chaff that the storm carries away.

You say God stores up their iniquities for their children. Let him pay it out to them, that they may know it. Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them drink of the wrath of the almighty.

For what do they care for their houses after them, when the number of their months is cut off? Will any teach God knowledge, seeing that he judges those who are on high?

One dies in his full vigour, being wholly at ease and secure. His pails full of milk, and the marrow of his bones moist. Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having tasted of prosperity.

They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them. Behold, I know your thoughts and your schemes to wrong me.

[3 : 34] For you say, where is the house of the prince? Where is the tent in which the wicked lived? Have you not asked those who travel the roads, and do you not accept their testimony, that the evil man is spared the day of calamity, that he is rescued in the day of wrath?

Who declares his way to his face, and who repays him for what he has done? When he is carried to the grave, watch is kept over his tomb.

The clods of the valley are sweet to him. All mankind follows after him, and those who go before him are innumerable. How then will you comfort me with empty nothings?

There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood. Amen. May God bless to us his word this evening.

Well, good evening, and please do have your Bibles open to Job 21, and we will come back to it eventually. The other day I was in my car, I was driving along the road, and a song came on the radio that I've not heard in years.

[5 : 00] It was a big hit back in the 90s, back when I was arguably in my prime, perhaps. But the song was called, You Only Get What You Give. You Only Get What You Give.

And really, that is a fair summary of the system of beliefs that Job's three so-called friends hold to. You only get what you give.

If you were to ask them the question, Do those who live morally good lives also enjoy pleasurable good lives? They would answer, Yes, of course, always.

If you were to ask Job's friends the question, Do those whose lives are bad, Do they also live a miserable existence? Their friends would always answer, Yes, always.

Remember that their friends have what one commentator calls a vending machine view of the world. You pop in a coin of goodness into the vending machine, and out pops a can of blessing.

[6 : 00] You pop in a coin of badness into the vending machine, and out pops a can of poison. That is how God has set up the world to run, according to their system. And these friends have no place in their thinking, in their beliefs, for the concept of innocent suffering.

To suggest that God would allow a blameless, an upright believer, to suffer, and to face hellish horrors, well, that is just out of the question for these friends, according to their system.

It's a nonsense, they would say. And it makes them furious, if you dare question, their belief system. And at this point in the book, that's what Job has done.

Job has got these men livid. They are very angry with Job, because he's been insisting upon the fact, that he is an innocent sufferer.

Just as we heard last Sunday night, in Job 19. You'll remember if you were here, Job said to his friends, God has turned against me. God, the God I thought I knew, he now seems like a cosmic monster, who's turned against me, he's treating me like an enemy.

[7 : 11] I'm not an enemy, because I'm a repentant believer. And yet that is how God is treating me. My conscience is clear. I have no hidden sin. Something has happened in the heavenly council above.

I don't know what it is, but God seems to have turned his wrath upon me. And it's so painful. And yet, as we also saw in chapter 19, Job believes, that in the end, God, his redeemer, will publicly vindicate him.

Job says, Job, the day is coming long after my death, when the Lord will appear on the earth in the flesh, and I will be raised to life. And on that day, the Lord will look at me in the flesh, and he will say to me, well done, my good and faithful servant.

Job, you're a true believer. You're a true believer. And we didn't have time to look at it last Sunday, but at the end of chapter 19, verse 28 to 29, please turn to that, if you could.

Job 19, verse 28 to 29, Job fires out a serious warning to his friends. Let me read 28 and 29. Job says to his friends, if you say how we will pursue him, that's Job, and the root of the matter is found in him, that's Job, be afraid of the sword, for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment.

[8 : 38] In other words, Job is saying to his friends, that they must stop accusing him, of being an unbeliever, who's committed some secret sin. Because on the last day, when the redeemer God comes, Job's friends will be publicly seen, to have been wrong.

They will be seen, to have opposed someone, whom God has justified. And friends, you do not want to oppose, someone whom God has justified. Because if you do that, really, you're opposing God himself.

And you will face the sword of his judgment, says Job. And in chapter 20, Zophar is raging. He is livid at Job for saying such things.

He cannot stand the thought of innocent suffering. And he also seems to completely ignore, what Job has said about his resurrection hope. Zophar has no time for that nonsense.

He's so entrenched, and blinded in his own beliefs, that he's not willing to listen, to the hope of the gospel, that has been proclaimed to him by Job. Instead, what Zophar does in chapter 20, is again, and again, he furiously defends, his system of beliefs.

[9 : 50] Please look at chapter 20, verse 4. He says to Job, Do you not know this from of old, since man was placed on earth, that the exalting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless, but for a moment.

Do you hear what he's saying? He's saying, Job, don't you know, that ever since the beginning of time, it's always been this way, that the wicked never get far in life. If the wicked prosper, if they experience joy, and happiness, well it's short lived, it's cut down in an instant.

That's what God will do. And read that chapter later on, when you go home tonight, you'll see again, and again, Zophar, he's not very inventive, he just repeats the same point, again, and again.

And anytime he describes a wicked man, and what will come upon a wicked man, again, like the other friend's speeches, it is always, very similar, to what Job has faced in real life.

And so again, what Zophar is saying here, in chapter 20, is Job, you are this man, you are a wicked, wicked man. You were prosperous, you're not anymore, therefore, you must be wicked.

[11 : 04] You must be wicked. And in chapter 21, Job launches a passionate retort, against Zophar's words. And really what Job is doing here, is he's trying to smash the system, of his friends.

And I'd like us to run through, what the main body of the chapter says, from verse 7 onwards, in three points. And having done that, we'll run through these three points, so that we're clear on what's being said.

And then after that, we'll think briefly, just about some implications, for our lives today. So firstly, our first point, in verse 7 to 16, Job says, wicked people do prosper.

Wicked people do prosper. Please look at verse 7. Job says, why do the wicked live, reach old age, and grow mighty in number? Job is not asking God, why this happens here.

He's not saying, please tell me the reason, why the wicked prosper. Rather, Job is refuting, what Zophar, and his friends have just said. He is seeking to smash their system, with hard evidence.

[12 : 09] He's saying, if your system is valid, if what you said is true, then how do you explain the fact, that when you look around the world, the real world in which we live in, and not la la land, you see countless numbers, of wicked people, prospering.

They do prosper. What you say doesn't match up, with the hard evidence. There are many wicked people, on the earth, who really live long, very happy, and very prosperous lives.

And in verse 8 to 13, what Job does is, he drives home this point, by describing, the types of people, that he's seen, on the earth. Let's run through it. Verse 8.

Job says, I noticed that the wicked have children. Now back in chapter 18, Bildad said, the wicked have no prosperity, and no progeny. Well here Job says, that's rubbish. The wicked have children.

More than that, the children go up, they do well at school, they breeze through university, they land top high earning jobs, and then these, grown up children of the wicked, have children of their own.

[13 : 09] And their families are established. The wicked prosper like that, all the time says Job. I've seen it with my own eyes. In verse 9 he says, the houses of the wicked, are safe from fear.

That is their estates, prosper. And no rod of God beats them. Back in chapter 9, Job cried out in agony, let God take his rod away from me.

Because he felt the pain of God's presence in his life. Well the wicked never feel such things. They are free from all of that. In verse 10, Job says that even the livestock of the wicked prosper.

Look, their bulls, their bull breeds without fail. Their cow calves, and does not miscarry. In Deuteronomy, prosperous livestock, it's described as a covenant blessing, that the Lord would shower upon Israel, if Israel kept covenant with the Lord.

Well here Job says, that in the real world, actually this covenant blessing, is experienced by wicked people all the time. Their fields are full of livestock, and as a result, they will be minted.

[14 : 20] And their dinner tables, they will enjoy the finest cuts of meat. Verse 11, Job says, when the wicked go on a family day out, they pull up at their destination, in their big, posh, expensive people carrier, and all of their children, come firing out of the doors, leaping out like lambs, leaping out into the field, on a sunny spring day.

They prosper. Verse 12, the family life of the wicked, it's not filled with misery, says Job in despair. No, they sing to the tambourine, and the lyre, and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.

The tambourine and lyre throughout the Bible, is always symbolizing celebration, and joy. Job is saying, the family of the wicked, make many happy memories together.

You go into their house, they've got lots of photograph albums, of lots of family holidays, and all of the photos, are full of lovely, smiley faces. You wonder if they've ever had an argument, in their life.

And in verse 13, Job says, they, the wicked, they spend their days in prosperity, or in peace, or literally, in an instant, they go down to Sheol. That means that when the wicked die, often, they are spared, from having a long, drawn out, painful death.

[15 : 42] When the wicked die, often, they do so in their sleep, peacefully, says Job. What a wonderful life, most of the wicked lead, and how deeply wrong, your system of beliefs, is, says Job to his friends.

And at this point, you can just imagine the friends, sitting there again, fuming. You can imagine them going red in the face. And you can imagine them wanting to butt into Job, and cut across him, and say, ah, Job, what the thing is, when people live such prosperous lives, Job, that is actually a sign, that they're not wicked at all.

They're actually good. So what do you have to say about that, Job? Well, Job goes on to prove, that these prosperous people, are wicked. Please look at verse 14.

They, that's the people Job's been describing, they say to God, depart from us. We do not desire, the knowledge of your ways. So Job knows, that these prosperous people, are wicked from their words.

For these prosperous people, say that they want, nothing to do with God, whatsoever. Friends, this is such, an important point. This is whom the Bible, is really referring to, pretty much every time, it refers to someone, as being wicked.

[16 : 58] It's not, what we tend to, how we tend to use the word, we tend to use the word, when we see maybe, the monsters on TV, who've committed some kind of, a terrible atrocity, or war crime from history. We say, oh they're wicked.

A mass murderer. Actually the Bible says, the wicked, are all those who say to God, I do not want you, over my life. Leave us alone. We do not want your ways of living.

We want to be autonomous. We want to make our own laws, choose our own lifestyles. We want to follow our own desires. We are the masters of our own fate, the commanders of our own souls. Depart from me God, I want to cancel you and your word.

The Bible is such awful hate speech. Now just look at what the wicked, also say in verse 15. Look at what they say in verse 15. What is the almighty, that we should serve him?

And what profit do we get, if we pray to him? Those of you who've been listening into Job, over the last week of the year, do you recognize that from earlier on in the book? Anywhere? The wicked say, who is God, and what is it about him, that makes him worth serving?

[18 : 04] What's in it for us? What profit will we get, if we pray to him, and worship him? And that should sound familiar, because we heard that back in chapters 1 and 2, in the heavenly courtroom, when the Satan accused Job, of being a real unbeliever.

Satan said that Job, deep down, was someone with a, well what's in it for me, motive. He only loved God, because of all of the good stuff, God gave him.

Of course Job showed, that he's not like that at all. For that is the mark, of a true unbeliever. They don't love God, simply because he is God. They will only consider, turning to God, if they know that they will get, good stuff from God.

It's a kind of, consumerist gospel, isn't it? In verse 16, it is really tricky, to be sure, what Job means, when he says, behold is not their prosperity, in their hand.

I think it can mean, one of two things. It could either mean, that the wicked are claiming, that their prosperity, has come about, through their own doing. And that it is all, under their own control, and that they do not need God, to become rich.

[19 : 12] Or, it may be, Job's critical judgment, that the wicked, are foolish, in thinking their prosperity, is under their own control, because it isn't. But what we can be certain of, in verse 16, is that Job wants to, utterly distance himself, from their type of thinking.

The counsel of the wicked, is far from me, says Job. I'm not a wicked man, like these people. I am a believer, who walks in the light. And yet I'm, having a miserable life.

And their lives, are prosperous. My friends, are you sure, you've got your system right? The wicked do prosper. That's our first point.

Then Job goes on, to smash their system, from a different perspective. And that brings us, to our second point this evening. In verse 17 to 26. Job says, the wicked, are rarely punished.

Wicked people, are rarely punished. That's really the big thrust, of this section, of what he's saying. Please look at verse 17. How often is it, that the lamp of the wicked, is put out?

[20 : 23] That their calamity, comes upon them? That God, distributes pains, and his anger? That they are like, straw before the wind, and like chaff, that the storm, carries away?

In chapter 18, Bildad said, the light of the wicked, is snuffed out, like that. Just cut out. In chapter 20, Zophar said, there is a day of God's wrath, that will always come, immediately, and sweep, upon the wicked.

But how often, does this happen, observably, in this age, asks Job, in verse 17. And by asking that, Job is really saying, this doesn't happen at all, visibly, hardly at all, in this age.

I don't know what you're talking about, friends. The free friends, have frequently said, what verse 18 says, that the wicked, are worthless creatures, weightless before God, blown away, by the wind of God's judgment, like chaff, and straw.

Psalms 1 says, very much the same thing. But says Job, just look around, the real world. Look at those people, who say, they want nothing to do with God. So often, in this age, it doesn't look like, they're chaff, or straw.

[21 : 34] It looks like, they're a prosperous tree. Doesn't it? It certainly doesn't look like, the wind of God's judgment, has blown anywhere, near the wicked. Now later on, in the book, let's just be clear about this, later on in the book, Job actually says, that he does believe, as the Bible teaches, that ultimately, the wicked, are indeed like chaff, and that God will send his angels, to separate the righteous, from the wicked, like wheat from chaff, but not yet.

And this is his point, in this present age, the wicked are rarely punished, says Job to his friends. And in verse 19, and can I just honestly say, from verse 19 on to 22, I found them very, very hard.

But here we go. I'll give you what I thought, is being said here. In verse 19, I think Job anticipates, that his friends will have, a counter argument. Verse 19, you see, God stores up, their iniquity, for their children.

So Job anticipates, that his friends, might come back at him, and say, well if a wicked man, lives a prosperous life, and if that wicked man, dies peacefully in his sleep, not having faced the punishment, he deserved publicly, well don't worry Job, you know what God does?

God will still get justice, he will store up the punishment, that the wicked man deserves, and then later, God will pay that punishment out, upon the wicked man's, surviving family members.

[23 : 08] The house, whom the wicked man, has left behind. And really from the second half, of verse 19 to 22, I think Job rightly, says to his friends, if you claim that, that is how God works, you are so wrong.

The wicked should be punished, for their own wickedness. I take it that's what Job means, when he says here, verse 19, let him, God, pay it out on them, that is the wicked people themselves, not their family members, so that they, the wicked people, may know it.

Let their own eyes, see their destruction, and let them drink the wrath, of the almighty. Go home later on tonight, and read Ezekiel chapter 18, and you will see, that what Job says here, agrees exactly, with what the Lord says, to Israel, in that chapter.

It would be unjust, for final judgment, not to fall, on those who deserve it. After all, wicked people, by definition, don't really care, for the destiny, of their families.

I take it that's what Job, is speaking about in verse 21. Once a wicked man dies, he's not going to care, what's happened to his family, that he's left behind, he's dead. So how's that justice?

[24 : 21] And in verse 22 to 26, what Job does is, he compares, two deaths, to drive home his point. Let's just read those verses, verse 23 to 26.

Job says, one dies, in his full vigor, being holy at ease, and secure, his pails full of milk, and the marrow of his bones moist.

Another dies, in bitterness of soul, never having tasted, of prosperity. They lie down alike, in the dust, and the worms, cover them.

So on the one hand, verse 23 to 24, Job pictures, a wicked, wealthy man, who is healthy to the end, who enjoyed a restful, and refreshing retirement, and who died quietly, in his sleep.

On the other hand, in verse 25, Job sees one, who dies, in the bitterness of his soul. And again, that's significant, because in chapter 3, Job used that exact phrase, to describe, himself.

[25 : 26] So the man in verse 25, I take it, is someone like Job, a miserable man, who is a believer, someone who worships God, and yet suffers for it terribly. The two of these men die, and they're laid out, side by side, lifeless bodies, lying there, side by side, in the cemetery.

As far as anyone can observe, the one has had, a long and happy life, and the other, a miserable life. And that is the end, of the story.

Who is it, who had a better life? Well according, to the visible world now, the answer is, the wicked man. The person, who cared nothing for God, kept his distance from God, and lived a wicked life.

But is that the whole story? Well it is as far, as we can observe, says Job to his friends. And therefore, observation, and expectations, in this life, cannot be the whole story.

You see what Job is saying here, he's saying, oh my three friends, your religious system, that governs expectations, is in this life, it can't be correct. For in this life, the wicked are rarely punished.

[26 : 39] You've got it wrong. Well there's one final stage, to Job's argument. And that brings us, to our third point. In verse 27 to 33.

Job says, even in death, the wicked seem to prosper now. Even in death, the wicked seem to prosper now. Please look at verse 27. Behold, Job says, I know your thoughts, and your schemes to wrong me.

For you say, where is the house of the prince? Where is the tent, in which the wicked lived? So Job says, that he knows, what his friends are thinking, thinking about him.

He knows that they think, A, wicked people come to ruin. B, Job has come to ruin. And therefore, C, Job must be wicked. That is their scheme, that is their system, and it wrongs him.

And part of their scheme, their system, is that powerful, wicked people, completely disappear, from the earth, under the judgment of God. Verse 28. When the wicked people die, when the wicked, powerful people die, their tent, he says, is uprooted, and their house is destroyed.

[27 : 54] That's, I think that's talking about their palaces. It's also talking about their dynasties, as well. There is no more trace of them, on the earth. But again, Job says, is that true? Are you true?

Is that right? Are you, just living in la la land again? Well, in verse 29 to 30, Job challenged them, to ask, for the eyewitness testimony, of those who travel, the roads.

He is saying, instead of staying cocooned, in your religious system, just open your eyes, and walk around. If you take the trouble, to do that, you will notice, that the wicked people, do not die violent deaths, verse 30.

Nobody dares, to tell them, to their face, how evil they are, because they're too afraid of them. Verse 31, are they not called, to account for their evil deeds? Oh sure, in the end, they do die, peacefully in their sleep.

But even then, verse 32 and 33, even then, the wicked, when they die, are given, amazing funerals, grand funerals. People build, fine memorials, for them.

[28 : 59] That are guarded, so that they won't be desecrated. And they rest, peacefully, in the valley. And back then, the valley was the traditional place, where people were buried. And when the wicked, are dead and buried, Job says, they actually grow, in popularity.

Verse 33, all mankind, follows after him, that is the wicked man, who's died. And the poetry, seems to be saying, two things here. I take it, it means that, when the funeral, of this wicked man, takes place, there's lots of people, who come and follow his coffin, as it's carried along, to the grave.

But this could also mean, that lots of other people, go on to follow, the wicked man's example, and how he lived his life. He becomes a hero, a role model, after his death.

And loads of people, want to follow, the pattern of his life. And so Job again says, look around at the real world, when the wicked die, they seem to prosper, even more in this age. For even in death, the wicked prosper.

And Job sums it up, in verse 34, to his friends. And I'll just sum it up bluntly, he says to his friends, please, shut up. Please, stop tormenting me, with your system of beliefs.

[30 : 17] There is an empty nothing. It is an empty nothing. That's how Job, smashes the system. And if you're to read on, into the next section, you'll find that the friends, are now, furious.

Well our time is gone. But before we finish, let me just draw, three implications for us today. And they probably should be, very obvious, I think. Firstly, as believers today, we must do all that we can, to shun, the dangerous system of beliefs, that Job's friends hold on to, so dogmatically, throughout this whole book.

And I think that from this section, in particular, I think we must learn the lesson, that we should be very, very, very weary, of drawing conclusions, about someone's spiritual health, from their current prosperity, happiness, or their present sufferings.

You and I should be very, very, very weary of doing that. Christopher Ashe says, that this, must be burned onto our consciences, lest we slip into the errors, of Job's comforters.

Let me just stick my neck out, in the line here, and say this, that if I've come across, someone in the church, who's visibly unhappy, and obviously, having a hard time, and I must confess, that in the past, I will always usually have, just assumed, that they were not doing well spiritually, that they were in a bad place, with the Lord.

[31 : 53] Well the book of Job, has warned me, to think twice, about making such, quick, and careless, assumptions like that. For the book of Job, teaches us, that someone could be, in the utter depths of despair, someone could be going through, hell on earth, and yet that person, could be wonderfully passionate, about the Lord, and be blameless, a blameless upright believer.

So in order to help, an unhappy brother or sister in Christ, I'd say to you, and I'd say to myself, that we need to be, very careful, we need to gently, and appropriately, get alongside them, we need to listen to them, we need much, much wisdom, and so we need to pray.

We need lots of information, before we make any assumption, and before we make any conclusions, about that person's spiritual health, because if we rush into, making a conclusion, about someone's spiritual health, from their current level of happiness, or prosperity, well then you and I, could really end up, giving some atrociously bad advice, or bad care.

And it could crush someone. Just look at Job's three friends. I think another implication, from this passage, is that it may actually, help us and challenge us, in how we think, non-Christians, and unbelievers, go about their lives.

I think that many Christians, just assume that because people, don't know the Lord, God, then they are all, automatically, going to be miserable, and longing for something more in life.

[33 : 31] Now don't get me wrong, you do meet unbelievers, who are miserable. And as you look at their lives, you're full of pity, because you know that deep down, you know what the problem is. They do not know the Lord Jesus.

They're looking for something more. They're looking for him. But Job's words here, they tell us, that that is not always the case. It's actually, looking at the world, that we live in today, you'll see, that not much has changed.

That the wicked, unbelievers all around us, they're actually very, very, very happy, in their lives. Without God.

And friends, I think that this passage, should challenge us, in how we pray, for our non-Christian friends. I was at a prayer meeting once, and I always talk about the church, I used to work for.

It was in the church I used to work for, and down in England. It was a very, very wealthy town. There was a lady there. She was an absolute gem, of a Christian lady. And she would come to the prayer meeting, and almost every week, she would pray for her neighbor, and her neighbor was minted.

[34 : 36] Think of the richest person, that you know, and probably multiply that rich person, by about four. And that's about the wealth, and value, of the bank balance, that was in this neighbor's bank.

Minted. Sorry, that was a really, overly complicated way, of saying they were very rich. Sorry, they were very rich. I don't know what I was doing there. Sorry. But this old lady, this lady in the church, she prayed the same thing all the time.

She prayed, and I kind of paraphrase, she said, she would pray this, Lord, Lord, with great fear and trembling, we ask that you would spoil the world, for my neighbor. Spoil the world, thine my neighbor, so that my neighbor would feel their need for Christ, and having felt that great need, might turn to him in faith.

One of the many things, that Job 21 teaches us, is that our non-Christian friends, need us to pray such things for them, I think. Because lots of unbelievers, are very, very happy, living in their sin.

The third implication, and final one, that I've got for you, this evening. Again, it should be obvious, but I think it's this, it should remind us, as believers, that we should never, ever, envy our non-Christian friends, in their lives.

[35 : 51] Especially, when our non-Christian friends, are living very prosperous lives. For the day of the Lord is coming, and on that day, all those who have said to God, depart from me, well, they will be seen to have been, in the wrong.

And on that day, they will have everything taken from them. Doesn't matter how prosperous, they've been. But as we heard last Sunday night, all those, who have loved God, simply because he is God, just like Job, they will see God face to face, and they will glorify him, and they will enjoy him forever, in perfection.

Even if they go through, the most terrible suffering now, that is what's to come. So friends, I feel like this, I don't know, I'm being honest again, but I sometimes do feel tempted, to look at my non-Christian mates, and I look at their lives, and I think, well, there's lots of things I like about your life, I don't see struggle with sin.

There's all sorts of, other things. And we must resist, thinking like that. Because if you don't have Christ, you've got nothing. If you have Christ, you have everything.

We'll come back next Sunday, when we will look at Job 28, and we'll ask, where is wisdom found? Well, let's be quiet for a moment, bow our heads, and then I'll pray for us.

[37 : 17] Heavenly Father, we pray once again, that you would bless us, with the same faith, and the same patience, as your servant Job.

We thank you for this book, and we thank you for these words, of truth, spoken by a real believer. We pray that you would, help us to be wise, especially when we're comforting, those in pain.

And help us to shun the system, of Job's three friends. And instead, help us to grow, in the wisdom of the cross, of your son, Jesus Christ. For we know that when we look at him, we see the ultimate, blameless, sinless believer.

who suffered terribly, on the cross, and yet was vindicated, and raised in power, and who will one day, stand in glorious triumph, on the earth.

And all those, who have put their trust in him, will see him face to face, and they will be vindicated too. So Father, please help us not to envy, our non-Christian friends, especially if they have, been given much prosperity.

[38 : 45] And we pray that you would give us, a real heart to reach out to them, a heart to pray for them. We pray, that indeed, you would spoil the world, for our loved ones, so that they might see, their real need for Christ, and that they might turn, and repent, and trust in him.

Father, we pray these things, in his name, and for his sake. Amen.