



[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 7, 2024 -

AUGUST 07TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Wednesday, August 7, 2024 -

Although we may never meet in person, I would like to pass on a bit of wisdom I have acquired as a pastor. Speak kindly concerning somebody's children and grandchildren even when you need to deliver unpleasant news regarding their behavior.

In Job 8, Bildad, Job's other friend, decided to speak. As the reader, you may be hoping that he has listened to Job and will come alongside him with helpful truth. Unfortunately, our hopes are quickly dashed. He responds by calling Job a windbag (v. 2).

Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?

JOB 8:3

Then he asks two questions to place himself on the moral high ground: "Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right?" (v. 3). On this, Bildad is correct. But then he attacked Job's children: "When your children sinned against him, he gave them over to the penalty of their sin" (v. 4).

Wow! It is obvious that Bildad is not wise when it comes to giving counsel. Proverbs tells us, "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a ruling rightly given" (Prov. 25:11). In Bildad's own twisted way, he did want what was best for Job. He said, "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless or strengthen the hands of evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy" (vv. 20–21). Bildad wanted joy for his friend, but his theological instruction was warped.

When we walk through times of trouble, not everyone will be sensitive to our plight. Some, when trying to help, will add a dose of salt to our open wound and it will sting. However, we can rest in God’s promise to Israel, “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” (Isa. 49:15).

Go Deeper

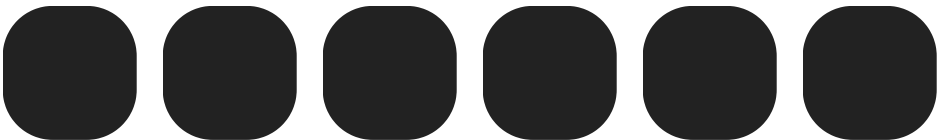
How have well-meaning people been hurtful in their efforts to minister to you in difficult times? Why is our knowledge of God and His Word so important during those times?

Pray with Us: Reading about Job’s “friends” who added insult to his injury, we can’t help but praise You, merciful God, for the wise friends You give us on our life’s journey. Thank You for Your faithful servants who speak Your truth to us.

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Go to post



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TOP

Daily Devotional - Monday, August 5, 2024 -
Eliphaz: Sin Caused Your Suffering

AUGUST 05TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, August 5, 2024 - Eliphaz: Sin Caused Your Suffering

Years ago, when I was in seminary, I misplaced one of my Bibles. One of my classmates picked it up. Approximately a week later, he returned it to me along with a statement: “You obviously have not been having quiet time with the Lord.” It must not have occurred to him that I had more than one Bible. I thought, “With friends like you, who needs enemies?”

Job must have had similar thoughts as his friends began to respond to his plight. While they were silent (2:13), they were probably a comfort to Job (2:11). But when they began to speak, their words were sharp as razors. The first to respond was Eliphaz. He appears to have been the leader of the three friends (42:7).

Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

JOB 5:17

Eliphaz complimented Job for giving wise instruction to others, strengthening the weak and supporting the unstable (vv. 3–4). At least, this was the public face of Job. However, because of Eliphaz’s extreme view of retribution, he was convinced that Job was leading a double life. Eliphaz believed that a person “only” reaps what he sows. Therefore, Job must have secretly sowed evil.

The good news from Eliphaz’s perspective was that Job could be blessed by God. His tragedy was God’s reproof (5:17). If Job turned to God (5:8) and away from evil (5:12–13), advised Eliphaz, then Job could once again experience God’s blessing (5:17).

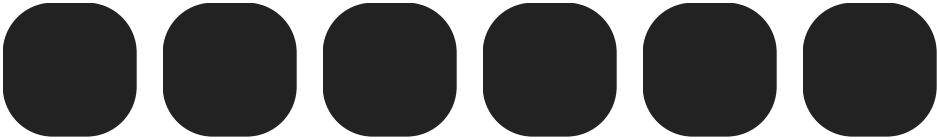
Galatians 6:7 is clear: “Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” However, tragedy is not always the result of our own sinful behavior. Jesus Christ, who had no sin was tragically crucified for our sins. We may suffer for sin, but it is not always our own personal sin. As believers, we should never despise God’s discipline, but tragedy isn’t necessarily God’s discipline.

Go Deeper

What did Job’s friends fail to understand? Have you ever been falsely accused of something? How did you respond?

Pray with Us: Jesus, Savior, You brought the Kingdom of Light into the shadows of our lives. And You walked through the shadows of our world as well. Kindle great hope in our hearts as we wait for You to come in power and glory to make all things new.

[Go to post](#)



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TOP

Feeding Christ's Children Summer Food Program

AUGUST 02ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Feeding Christ's Children Summer Food Program

At 7:30 a.m. for five Tuesdays in July, Team SEMO had the privilege of delivering a total of 2,040 food bags to the [Stoddard County Gospel Mission](#) in Dexter. These bags, thoughtfully assembled at the [Christian Church - Dexter, MO](#) were a result of collaboration and generosity from various groups and individuals. Together, they made the Feeding Christ's Children Summer Food Program a reality for those in need.

The participating groups include Bernie Christian Church, Bernie Methodist Church, Circle of Love Sunday School Class from First Baptist Church in Dexter, Crossroads Global Methodist Church, First Baptist Church of Dexter, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Dexter, First Church of the Nazarene in Dexter, First General Baptist Church in Dexter, Friendship Baptist Church in Dexter, Liberty Hill, New Bethel Church in Dexter, Northside Baptist Church in Bernie, Pleasant Grove Community Church in Dexter, Risen Church in Dexter, Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Dexter, Sadler Chapel Church in Dexter, and Southwest Church of the Nazarene in Dexter, along with Stoddard County Church Women United. In addition to these groups, many individuals and couples also made generous donations to support the cause.

This heartwarming annual event is coordinated by FCC's Kellie Reese. Since its inception in 2013, SEMO

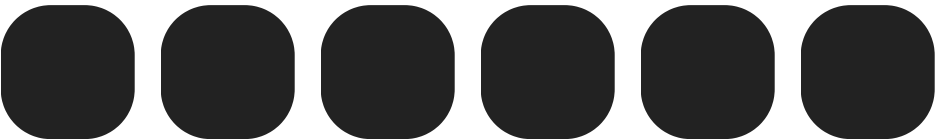
Electric Cooperative has played a significant role in delivering thousands of meals through this program. If you'd like to support this meaningful cause, donations for the Feeding Christ's Children program can be made to the First Christian Church. Please indicate "Feeding Christ's Children" in the memo section of your check and mail it to First Christian Church, PO Box 295, Dexter, MO 63841. Your generosity will help make a positive impact in the lives of those in need.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, making a significant difference in other people's lives better.

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Go to post



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TOP

Daily Devotional - Friday, August 2, 2024 - Worshiping in Tragedy

AUGUST 02ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Friday, August 2, 2024 - Worshiping in Tragedy

In 2009, a major news outlet published an article titled “Why Do We Believe That Catastrophes Come in Threes?” The author stated, “The persistence of this belief is difficult to explain since the case for it is so easily demolished.” The story of Job demolishes this illogical belief as well. Job’s catastrophes came in four waves.

After receiving permission from the Lord, Satan began to attack Job’s household and possessions (v. 12). Job received a string of bad news from a survivor of each event.

*The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.*

JOB 1:21

First, the Sabeans killed his herdsmen with the sword and stole his oxen and donkeys. Next, lightning struck and killed all his sheep and the shepherds watching them. Then, the Chaldeans stole his camels and murdered more servants. Finally, a windstorm destroyed the house where Job’s children were feasting and killed them all. This last news was the worst of all. His children had been killed from what we might call “an act of God.”

Not having time to grieve between each of the four sequential messages, he finally mourned his loss. The narrator depicts four separate and sequential acts by Job. He got up. He tore his robe. He shaved his head. He fell to the ground in worship (v. 20). He acknowledged that everything he had came from God and that the Giver had the right to take back those gifts. Job’s response expresses praise, even in the midst of tragedy: “The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised” (v. 21).

It would have been easy for Job to become angry with the Lord for taking away his possessions and his children. However, the narrator allows us to see that just as Job was concerned that his children might have “sinned and cursed God in their hearts” (v. 5), Job hadn’t sinned against God in his (v. 22).

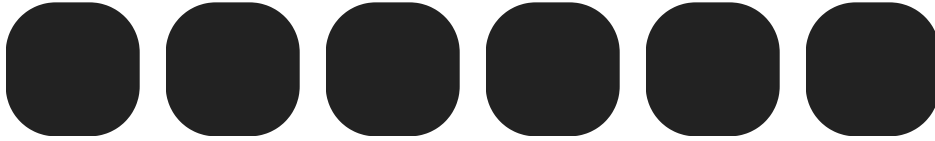
Go Deeper

Has God ever removed something or someone important in your life? Did you respond appropriately?

Pray with Us: Almighty God, we marvel at Job’s unshakable faith in the face of all his misfortunes! Give us strength to be able to say, like Job, “May the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:21), in both happy and hard times.

<https://showmetimes.com/Blogpost/vjr6/Daily-Devotional--Friday-August-2-2024--Worshipping-in-Tragedy>

[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Daily Devotional - Monday, July 29, 2024 - A Certain Future

JULY 29TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Daily Devotional - Monday, July 29, 2024 - A Certain Future

A few years ago, I was at a conference where the speaker was introduced as a “futurist.” I had never heard of that as a job title before. A futurist is someone who analyzes data and trends to forecast what might happen in different areas of life such as technology, government, or medicine. Humans have always desired a glimpse into what the future holds.

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to

In Genesis 49, Jacob gathered his sons to share one final message (v. 1). He introduced his speech by declaring that he would “tell you what will happen to you in the days to come” (v. 1). His speech described the future tribes of Israel and some of their qualities. The sons are grouped by their mutual mothers and then listed in their birth order.

whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

GENESIS 49:10

The first three sons are told why they will not be considered as the firstborn. Reuben engaged in sexual sin (v. 3). Simeon and Levi violently overreacted to the crime committed against their sister by killing many (Gen. 34:25–31). But while Judah had his own issues, he had demonstrated repentance and a changed life. Jacob prophesied that Judah will be a leader among the tribes of Israel. He declared, “The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his” (v. 10). Jacob here tells of a Messianic king who will rule over the nations. The New Testament writers affirm that this prophecy finds its fulfillment in Jesus (Rev. 5:5).

Just as God has been faithful to keep His promises to Abraham, we can be confident that He will keep His promises to us regarding the Lord Jesus’ Second Coming when He will rule over the nations! Jesus said, “Yes, I am coming soon” (Rev. 22:20). To which we can respond, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Go Deeper

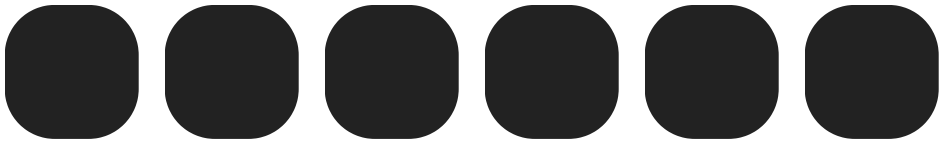
Do you worry about the future? How does knowing we can depend on God’s promise about Jesus’ return change the way we live today?

Pray with Us: Jesus, we eagerly await Your return! Teach us how to live in the light of Your Second Coming. May we grow in faith as Christians and citizens of Your eternal kingdom. “Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

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