

INTEGRITY IS EVERYTHING!

Scripture: Job 29:12-17.

*12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
And the orphan who had no helper.*

*13 "The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me,
And I made the widow's heart sing for joy.*

*14 "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice was like a robe and a turban.*

*15 "I was eyes to the blind
And feet to the lame.*

*16 "I was a father to the needy,
And I investigated the case which I did not know.*

*17 "I broke the jaws of the wicked
And snatched the prey from his teeth.*

Introduction:

Today we will learn about Job in detail, his lifestyle, his friendship with God, and his passion for helping the needy. Despite his righteous living, he was still facing insurmountable tragedies in his life. Job felt that God was punishing him, but he could not understand why? This is the last long speech of Job, and we can learn so much about the integrity of Job. Let us strive to apply those values in our lives also.

Job is reminiscing his past glory in the following passage!

Job. 29:1-5.

1 And Job again took up his discourse and said,

2 "Oh that I were as in months gone by,

As in the days when God watched over me;

3 When His lamp shone over my head,

And by His light I walked through darkness;

4 As I was in the prime of my days,

When the friendship of God was over my tent;

5 When the Almighty was yet with me,

And my children were around me;

We all have our close encounter with God when we came close to our God first, and when we gave ourselves to Him totally. We can never forget our first love for our God. Just like our honeymoon love in our marriage. What happened to that kind of first love? We experienced His closeness, but now He seems to be so far away. Rev. 2:4 says that church of Ephesus lost its first love. God wanted that church to remember its first love for Him. It is good to remember those moments and get back to God again. It is not too hard. Our God is faithful to receive when we repent and come back to Him.

His presence is everything. When we feel His presence, that grace is more than sufficient for us. Friendship of God is everything for us in this life! The light of His Holy Spirit can lead us into green, righteous path. The light of the Word can make us see things clearly, and help us make the right decisions. Let us remember that first love and get back to Him.

Job again reminisces about his past life!

Job. 29:6-10.

*6 When my steps were bathed in butter,
And the rock poured out for me streams of oil!
7 "When I went out to the gate of the city,
When I took my seat in the square,
8 The young men saw me and hid themselves,
And the old men arose and stood.
9 "The princes stopped talking
And put their hands on their mouths.
10 The voice of the nobles was hushed,
And their tongue stuck to their palate.*

The blessings were flowing like river for Job. He was honored by everyone! He was an elder in town, and he was revered, and well respected! The princes put their hands on their mouth and stopped talking when Job passed by! The young men were afraid to stand in front of him, and the nobles refrained from talking anything and they were yearning to listen what the wise man Job had to say. We will see this topic in depth a little later. Just wanted you to know how well a man of integrity is respected by everyone!

Job 29: 11-14.

*11 "For when the ear heard, it called me blessed,
And when the eye saw, it gave witness of me,
12 Because I delivered the poor who cried for help,
And the orphan who had no helper.
13 "The blessing of the one ready to perish came upon me,
And I made the widow's heart sing for joy.
14 "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me.
My justice was like a robe and a turban.*

Job was called a blessed man. He delivered the poor, helped the orphan, anyone who was ready to perish, came running to Job for help. The widows rejoiced over him because he was always protecting and supporting them. He put on righteousness as his garment, and a turban as a crown that proclaims holiness. Let us make note of these virtues and examine ourselves where we stand. Are we just living for ourselves or living for other people?

Job. 29:15-17.

15 "I was eyes to the blind

And feet to the lame.

16 "I was a father to the needy,

And I investigated the case which I did not know.

17 "I broke the jaws of the wicked

And snatched the prey from his teeth.

Job paid attention to the needs of the people. He was like a seeing dog for the blind! He was doing the chores for the lame who were shut in. He was like a father to the needy.

He investigated the unknown cases thoroughly. We must do the same with all the conspiracy theories. Bring out concrete proof and shut the mouth of gossipers and people who constantly promote conspiracy theory! The next one is very poetic. He broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the prey from his teeth. There was a video about a guy rescuing a puppy dog from the jaws of the alligator! We must break the teeth of those who charge exorbitant compound interest rate. Must deliver those who are being enslaved because they owe something. We must break the jaws of the people who try to sexually abuse little ones. Break the jaw of those people who try to rob the purse of a vulnerable person and try to get away with it.

The following passage shows how much Job was well respected, and how people were anxious to listen to the wise words of Job and obey him.

Job 29:21-25.

21 "To me they listened and waited,

And kept silent for my counsel.

22 "After my words they did not speak again,

And my speech dropped on them.

23 "They waited for me as for the rain,

And opened their mouth as for the spring rain.

24 "I smiled on them when they did not believe,

And the light of my face they did not cast down.

25 "I chose a way for them and sat as chief,

And dwelt as a king among the troops,

As one who comforted the mourners.

Here Job claims that he sat as their chief, and was more like a king! Integrity of a person brings great honor. It must be everything in our lives. A person of integrity will not exploit the other person. The friendship among people of integrity grows stronger. Chapter 29 tells us basically how he was honored!

But chapter 30 describes his status of complete rejection. It gives a clear picture of where he was, and where he is now! We have gone through lot of those lamentations

before in our study. So, I will touch upon just couple of those passages, and then move to chapter 31.

Job 30:9,10

*9 "And now I have become their taunt,
I have even become a byword to them.*

*10 "They abhor me and stand aloof from me,
And they do not refrain from spitting at my face.*

What a drastic change in people's attitude toward Job - honor to disgrace. We see this was the life of our Lord Jesus Christ also. They all rejoiced over Him and marveled, but later on they started mocking Him and started shouting, "crucify Him!" They did spit on the prince of glory!

Do not be flattered when people glorify you. The same tongue that praises you might make fun of you and insult you behind your back!

We can feel the pain of Job in the following passage!

Job. 30:26-28.

*26 "When I expected good, then evil came;
When I waited for light, then darkness came.*

*27 "I am seething within and cannot relax;
Days of affliction confront me.*

*28 "I go about mourning without comfort;
I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help.*

Things may be going well in our lives, but then suddenly tragedy happens and pulls us all to the valley of the shadow of death. It is like buying a stock. When you think it will go up real high, it just comes down like a heavy hammer, and makes you bankrupt! Job felt like he was surrounded by darkness. There is no one to comfort him. He was crying for help, but no one was compassionate and skillful enough to lift him up. His friends were only condemning and rebuking him. They were just adding salt to the injury, and that was no help at all! They all thought that Job was punished for his wicked living. But Job tries to refute that argument in chapter 31.

In Chapter 31, Job again lists his integrity. I have tried to group them together.

Job on adultery.

*Job. 31.1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes;
How then could I gaze at a virgin?"*

Here Job says that he will not gaze at a virgin with lustful eyes. What about married women then? Vs 9 and 10 has the answer.

Job. 31:9;10.

*9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or I have lurked at my neighbor's doorway,
10 May my wife grind for another.....*

Integrity is all about freeing ourselves from the lust of the flesh.

Here Job proves that his heart is free of any lust for any woman! That is a remarkable integrity. As per Christ's teaching, even if we see a woman with lustful eyes, we have committed adultery! You can see the integrity of Job very clearly.

Job on judging.

The next passage talks about let God be our judge!

Job. 31:6-8.

*Let Him weigh me with accurate scales,
And let God know my integrity.
7 "If my step has turned from the way,
Or my heart followed my eyes,
Or if any spot has stuck to my hands,
8 Let me sow and another eat,
And let my crops be uprooted.*

Let God weigh and expose Job's integrity. Job did not want his friends to judge him unrighteousness through their sinful eyes.

If my step has turned from the ways (of the Lord)

Or my heart followed the lust of my eyes!

If my clean hands became stained because of any sin,

Then let me become a laborer of someone's land and toil, but the master may enjoy the fruits of my labor.

Job on mistreating slaves.

Job. 31:13-15.

*"If I have despised the claim of my male or female slaves
When they filed a complaint against me,
14 What then could I do when God arises?
And when He calls me to account, what will I answer Him?
15 "Did not He who made me in the womb make him,
And the same one fashion us in the womb?*

Integrity is treating every person fair. It is an important attribute of any supervisor. If a slave was mistreated, he had nowhere to turn but God. God watches over vulnerable people, and He will punish the slave masters who abuse them.

Job on poor, widows, and orphans.

Job 31: 16-23

*16 "If I have kept the poor from their desire,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
17 Or have eaten my morsel alone,
And the orphan has not shared it
19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
Or that the needy had no covering,
20 If his loins have not thanked me,
And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep,
21 If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan,
Because I saw I had support in the gate,
22 Let my shoulder fall from the socket,
And my arm be broken off at the elbow.
23 "For calamity from God is a terror to me,
And because of His majesty I can do nothing.*

Integrity is taking care of the needs all around us. Let us not forget the widows, orphans, poor. Let us continue to support the local food bank. Let us continue to support orphanages, let us continue to support Helping up missions or other local missions. Let us never forsake doing good.

Job on trusting his wealth.

Job 31:24-25

*24 "If I have put my confidence in gold,
And called fine gold my trust,
25 If I have gloated because my wealth was great,
And because my hand had secured so much;*

Job's confidence is on God alone even though he was a very wealthy man. Where is your integrity? Where is your confidence?

Job on sun, and moon, and nature as idolatry.

Job 31:26-28

*26 If I have looked at the sun when it shone
Or the moon going in splendor,
27 And my heart became secretly enticed,
And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth,
28 That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment,
For I would have denied God above.*

Our heart of gratitude toward sun, moon, stars, and creation becomes more of a worship, and we forget the source and the creator behind those things. Job knew exactly whom he believed and he did not give room for idolatry.

Job on rejoicing over enemy's calamity.

Job 31:29-30

*29 "Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy,
Or exulted when evil befell him?*

*30 "No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for his life in a curse.*

Integrity is loving our enemies also. Pray for them. Bless those that persecute you. It is amazing. Job was following the teaching of Jesus two thousand years before Jesus, without even hearing His teaching about loving the enemies!

Job on welcoming the strangers and showing them hospitality.

Job 31:31-32

*31 "Have the men of my tent not said,
'Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat'?*

*32 "The alien has not lodged outside,
For I have opened my doors to the traveler.*

Integrity is welcoming strangers and showing great hospitality. Job did that just like Abraham.

Job on covering his sins.

Job 31:33-34

*33 "Have I covered my transgressions like Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,*

*34 Because I feared the great multitude,
And the contempt of families terrified me,
And kept silent and did not go out of doors?*

Seems like Job was familiar with Adam's story about covering one's sin. He was not afraid of anyone that he should cover his sins or there is nothing in him to cover. Integrity is keeping an open book. A person must be the same person of character anywhere, anytime, with anyone. There will be real transparency in such a personality.

Job 31:35-37

35 "Oh that I had one to hear me!

Behold, here is my signature;

Let the Almighty answer me!

And the indictment which my adversary has written,

36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,

*I would bind it to myself like a crown.
37 "I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.*

Vs35 is very ambiguous. It is more like court language, the charges, and the defense with his signature. Job would declare every step of his or all the records of his life, and he will approach God like a prince without fear because he had not done anything wrong. We are not sure who is Job's adversary here, his friends or God? If the verdict comes from God, his Judge, he would wear that as a crown or badge, because Job was confident that he would not be found guilty. We can see Job's confidence concerning his integrity. He had nothing to hide.

Some scholars think that Job's speech should have ended right here. The next passage is just redundant.

Job on unjust gain over the crops of the fields.

*Job 31:38-40
38 "If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
39 If I have eaten its fruit without money,
Or have caused its owners to lose their lives,
40 Let briars grow instead of wheat,
And stinkweed instead of barley."*

Job claims that he had not stolen the crop nor killed the owners and taken their lands.

The words of Job are ended.

This last passage may not be the original conclusion. It appears more like an editor's note here.

Conclusion:

1. Let us get back to our first love for God.
2. Let us cherish our friendship with God, and walk with Him daily.
3. Be everything for the needy! Be a father always for the needy.
4. Integrity is all about freeing ourselves from lust of the flesh, eyes, and pride of life.
5. Let God be our judge. Not any man!
6. Our confidence and trust in God alone, and not on any idols.
7. Love your enemies and pray for them!
8. Welcome strangers.
9. Let our life be an open book. Do not have secret sins.
10. Integrity brings perfect love and perfect love casts out all fears!

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