

# NEED CARING FRIENDS!

(Scripture. Job 2:11-13)

**Introduction:** We all have our breaking point. When our suffering exceeds that breaking point, we snap and lose our mind. We do not know how to react. We may scream, shout, may have emotional outbursts, some may curse everyone and everything, and they may even curse God. At that time, we may all say one thing alike. "I hate this life! I want to die!"

This is the time we all need good, caring friends who can speak comforting words, and give hope. Job's friends were baffled. Did not know how to respond properly. Then when they did, they botched up the whole counseling sessions, and hurt Job even more. Please pay attention to how this story unfolds! Let us see how Job responds to his pain and suffering.

**Job:2:11.11** Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, they came each one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite; and **they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him.**

Job's three "friends" travelled from very far places and came together to comfort Job! They must have spent a huge amount of money and time! No doubt they loved Job!

Who are these three friends?

Eliphaz the Temanite. Could be from Esau clan. Gen. 36:11. From southeast Arabia of Dead Sea.

Bildad the Shuhite was from Shuah. Shuah was the name of one of Abraham's sons. Eliphaz and Bildad were close descendants of Abrahamic descendants? This gives us clue of Job's time period.

Zophar the Namathite. This name is not found anywhere else in the Bible at all. Some think that he was from northern Arabia.

They made an appointment and came together.

Came to sympathize with Job and comfort him. That is indeed lot of sacrifice on their part.

**Job. 2:12,13.12** When they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept. And each of them tore his robe and they threw dust over their heads toward the sky. **13** Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that *his* pain was very great.

First mistake! As they came, they started weeping! The counselor's meltdown! They confessed hopelessness by their behavior. They raised their voices and wept, tore their outer garments, and threw dust on their heads! Now who is going to comfort whom?

Second mistake. They sat with him for seven days without uttering a single word! They could have prayed to God. They could have sung a song that could be comforting. But they did not do any of that.

Job had to break the ice!

Job. 3:1-5.1Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*. 2And Job said,

3“Let the day perish on which I was to be born,  
And the night *which* said, ‘A boy is conceived.’

4“May that day be darkness.  
Let not God above care for it,  
Nor light shine on it.

5“Let darkness and black gloom claim it;  
Let a cloud settle on it;  
Let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Job began to curse. He did not curse God, but he started cursing the day he was born! He did not curse the creator, but he cursed the day of His creation. The very birth of him and the life God had given him.

Job. 3:6,7 6“*As for that night, let darkness seize it;  
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;  
Let it not come into the number of the months.*  
7“Behold, let that night be barren;  
Let no joyful shout enter it.

No more birthday celebration for Job. He cursed his birthday and wanted that to be a mourning day for him. All these years, he must have remembered his birthday with full of gratitude, and joy, but now it turned out as a mourning day.

How soon we forget our past blessings! Job was one of the richest people in the world. He had everything going well. He had not one child or two children but 10 children, and many grandchildren. They were not fighting with each other like many large families do. They dwelt in unity and fellowshiped together. It is a marvelous thing to see the brethren dwell in unity. Job had enjoyed his blessings all these days! But when the sufferings hit, he forgot about it.

We repeat Psalm 103:1 and 2 like a chant. We focus on the bless the Lord, o my soul part. But we forget the second part of second verse: forget not all his benefits!

It is so essential to remember how the Lord has blessed us, especially when we suffer. As Christians, God not only blessed us in the past, but continues to and He is going to bless us in the future also. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. We are more than conquerors in this life as well as in our next life. He is a blessing in the present time also. His Holy Spirit, the comforter is always in us, and He gives us His peace, and comfort. But excruciating pain in our body, mind, and soul may make us forget those blessings quickly, and the pain takes over all our thought process. This is perfectly normal, and it is possible that we may hate life more than death. But still we do not have to come to the level of cursing the day we were born. That is a little too much. Job’s pain was so much, he snaps and starts cursing! Anytime death becomes more appealing than life, we lose our mind, and start hating life itself. But those are the critical times we must embrace the Lord even more and say, thy loving kindness is better than life or death. Nothing can take us away from the love of God! Neither death nor life!

Job. 3:8

8“Let those curse it who curse the day,  
Who are prepared to rouse Leviathan?”

Everyone celebrates Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Memorial Day. Now a new day, Job has created in the calendar year: a curse day, the day he was born!

The people who go through excruciating pain may start cursing the day, and it would wake Leviathan up? Meaning is unclear. Leviathan was more of a mythological figure. The professional mourners, diviners, magicians, sorcerer were practicing the cursing of the day. Their cursing is so powerful, it could arouse more evil, and darkness in someone’s life. Leviathan is a symbol of more evil!

This beast is mentioned in Isaiah 27:1

Isaiah 27:1. In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.

Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a great book on book of Job, with a great title, “when bad things happen to good people”. When Harold Kushner’s three-year-old son was diagnosed with a degenerative disease that meant the boy would only live until his early teens, he was faced with one of life’s most difficult questions: Why, God?

Years later, Rabbi Kushner wrote this straightforward, elegant contemplation of the doubts and fears that comes when tragedy strikes. In these pages, Kushner shares his wisdom as a rabbi, a parent, a reader, and a human being. This book, “When Bad Things Happen to Good People” is a classic that offers clear thinking and consolation in times of sorrow from the Jewish perspective.

In that book, Rabbi Kushner interprets this Leviathan more like a loose cannon that creates havoc in this world at random! I would call this mythological animal as the X factor of our suffering!

Psalms 74 explains how enemies destroyed the temple and the land, and it refers to God crushing the heads of Leviathan! This time God did not intervene when these loose cannons came and destroyed the land of Judah, and God’s temple! This random beast has entered America also in the form of corona virus and is causing real havoc.

Now we can summarize all the reasons for our sufferings confidently using this algebraic X factor of Leviathan in our equations!

1. Most of the time, our sufferings happen because of our own actions.
2. It can also happen often because of others’ actions, accidentally or deliberately.
3. It can happen because of Satan if we are not strong.
4. It can happen because of God as a punishment or to make us strong.

5. It can happen because of this random chaos of Leviathan, the X factor mystery of our suffering! Loose, random factors!

There are times we may never know why we go through serious trials and tribulations! Let us not be too quick to blame God for all our sufferings!

Now Job starts cursing the creation.

Job. 3:9-10 -9“Let the stars of its twilight be darkened;  
Let it wait for light but have none,  
And let it not see the breaking dawn.  
10Because it did not shut the opening of my *mother s* womb,  
Or hide trouble from my eyes.

Job curses the stars and demands that it is twinkling to stop because it didn't shut the opening of his mother's womb! Interesting connection between conception of a baby and the stars! Was Job alluring to astronomy or astrology?

Job 3:11-13. 11“Why did I not die at birth,  
Come forth from the womb and expire?  
12“Why did the knees receive me,  
And why the breasts, that I should suck?  
13“For now I would have lain down and been quiet.  
I would have slept then, I would have been at rest,

Job laments why was not he born as a still baby. Why did someone deliver him? Why did his mother breast fed him to sustain his life?

Job. 3:14-16. 14With kings and *with* counselors of the earth,  
Who rebuilt ruins for themselves?  
15Or with princes who had gold,  
Who were filling their houses *with* silver?  
16“Or like a miscarriage which is discarded, I would not be,  
As infants that never saw light.

Job wished that he had slept, in other words, died! Just like the kings and princes who had gold. Or he wished that he would be more like a discarded fetus!  
The following passages are very poetic in describing the phenomena of death.

Job. 3:17-19. 17“There the wicked cease from raging,  
And there the weary are at rest.  
18“The prisoners are at ease together.  
They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster.  
19“The small and the great are there,  
And the slave is free from his master.

Job portrays death as the relief for all our troubles of life.

The wicked are forced to cease from hurting other people for good.  
Those who were weary of doing very hard work could refrain and find permanent rest from death.

The prisoners who were constantly tortured by their task masters rest peacefully. No more task labor from them. Slaves are free from their masters.

There is no rich or poor in the cemetery. There is no wise or fool. There is no beautiful person there. All look the same! Death is the greatest equalizer of our life. Death practices true communism. Everyone receives the same portion. Death levels hills and raises the valleys same level too.

Then Job asks a very pertinent question, which most people ask, when they go through extreme suffering!

Job 3:20-22    20“Why is light given to him who suffers,  
And life to the bitter of soul,  
21Who long for death, but there is none,  
And dig for it more than for hidden treasures,  
22Who rejoice greatly,  
And exult when they find the grave?

The light here refers to life. Job asks, “Why can’t God turn-off that light for those who suffer greatly, those who are so bitter, and hopeless? Such people seek death more than the hidden treasures! Just like people digging for treasures, they wanted to dig their graves and die in it. They cherish death over anything in life.

Then second time he questions about this light.

Job. 3:23,24    23“Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,  
And whom God has hedged in?  
24“For my groaning comes at the sight of my food,  
And my cries pour out like water.

These verses are complicated ones. The light of life is given to someone who cannot find his way to death (vs22) nor find his way to live normally because he is hedged in. Just imagine a man in his casket locked in but he could breathe and is fed through tube. This person may cry out for death more than life. Is it not the same concept of hades or hell? The wicked are hedged in and are tortured alive. Even if they seek death, they cannot find it. It is a valid question: why should light of life should be provided to such people? The only answer is to torture! The CIA who indulged in water boarding, and other torture methods did not want the person to die but at the same time, they inflicted maximum pain. The light of life was provided to such people just enough so that they can experience maximum suffering.

For those who are sick unto death, the very sight of food would bring so much anger and anguish! Why? Food is the symbol of life and they are tired of living, and they want to die and not live even one more day. (I am talking about very very old people who are ready to die. Others, if they feel this way, they must seriously seek counseling, and we must try to feed them).

My experience with my mom.

My experience with another 90 plus year old lady.

We refuse to let our old people die. We tend to hold onto them too long! We can try enticing them with food. We may give them lot of reasons to live with purpose. But if they profusely refuse to eat, what do we do? Are we just punishing them or helping them? This is a good discussion question. (I'll hang in here few minutes after service. Feel free to talk about it, if you want to!)

Now the last two verses:

Job. 3:25,26. 25“For what I fear comes upon me,  
And what I dread befalls me.  
26“I am not at ease, nor am I quiet,  
And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes.”

Now Job spues out his honest feelings! As we get older, we fear one thing. Not to become disabled and become a burden to somebody!  
What he feared the most had happened to him! Fear not! Trust in the Lord! Cast your burdens upon Him!

Job was angry about his suffering and he longed for his death.

He experienced the pain of physical suffering, shame of public rejection, and guilt of God's rejection. It was a combination of these three factors that crushed his spirit.

He sat on a garbage dump and grieved. He felt free to open his heart because they were his friends. His friends did not know what to say for seven days! They were wondering what awful thing had Job done to receive such severe suffering?

Job did not curse God, but he cursed the day he was born! He felt that he was rejected and punished by God! At one time God had hedged and protected him so that Satan cannot afflict him. He was very much blessed that way. But now Job was hedged in that he cannot escape suffering at all. Death was his only path to freedom from suffering.

But God still loved him! Job did not know that! Wrong theology could make us bitter! Who caused the suffering to a righteous person is a very important question? But we cannot find the right answer. Try not to blame God for everything.

Conclusion:

The most fitting conclusion is Romans 8:35,37-39

Romans 8:35,37-39 35Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

37But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Job was expressive about his suffering. We must be expressive. Let people express their thoughts and fears and concerns and pray for one another.

All things work out for good for those who trust in Him and love Him.

2 Cor. 12:8-10. God told Paul, My grace is sufficient for you! But Job did not understand enough about God's wonderful presence, His grace, and His love!

We are in much better situation than Job. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us so much about suffering, and we know for sure that because He lives, we shall live also. For us to live is for Christ, and to die is gain.

We win even through suffering, and death! Hallelujah!

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