

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 28 (July 9-15, 2017)

Since I recently preached on the amazing passage describing cancer as well as salvation in the book of Job, I am reprinting week 34, 2015, so that you will have this material in writing. I have updated and expanded some of the original material.

Sunday, July 9 (read Job 33:1-7)

The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. (Job 33:4)

A young man named Elihu makes his appearance in chapter 32. He has been patiently waiting while Job's three friends try to prove that he (Job) is being punished for his sins. Job, meanwhile, declares his innocence and says that God has wronged him. Elihu has waited quietly because he is younger than they are (32:4). He can no longer refrain from speaking, however, so he begins to lecture Job. In today's text, Elihu acknowledges that he also has been "taken from clay," so Job does not need to be intimidated by his presence (v. 6-7). The argument Job has made is that he is righteous based on his good deeds—a mistake still made by many church members. We will see how this conversation goes in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, July 10 (read Job 33:8-12)

I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt. (Job 33:9)

Elihu summarizes the complaints Job has sent up to God while talking with his friends. Bottom line: You think you deserve God's salvation because of your good works (v. 8-9), but God's Word declares that all men are sinners (Romans 3:23), even in the Old Testament (Isaiah 53:6). Job believes that God has wronged him by sending severe trials his way (v. 10-11). Elihu makes the same point in v. 12 that Isaiah makes in Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Have **you** learned that "clearly no one is justified before God by the law" (Galatians 3:11a)? If so, thank Him today for His mercy and grace that replaces the law (See Romans 10:4).

Tuesday, July 11 (read Job 33:13-18)

For God does speak—now one way, now another—though man may not perceive it. (Job 33:14)

Elihu lists several ways in which God speaks to men. He starts with dreams/visions in the middle of the night. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was one of those who heard from God in dreams (see Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 2:19). In this passage, Elihu seems to be describing a nightmare that scares the recipient into changing his/her life (v. 15-18). I have had several dreams/visions over the years that drastically changed the direction of **my** life. When I was a child, I had recurring dreams that my body was descending into a lake of fire. At age 12, I gave my life to Jesus and I never had this dream again. I could give other examples, but it suffices to say that God uses various ways to get our attention. Do you have a story to tell as to how He got yours?

Wednesday, July 12 (read Job 33:19-22)

His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. (Job 33:21)

The description of cancer in today's text is amazing, especially when you consider that this is one of the oldest passages in the Bible. God certainly can use diseases of all sorts to get our attention. Some are caused by our own decisions and habits, while others come to folks who seemingly have no bad habits. At any rate, God can use these times of suffering if we allow Him to work during the process. I'm sure you have walked with a relative or an acquaintance through the valley described in v. 19-22. It is difficult to see someone you love lose weight and mobility to the point that he/she has to be cared for around the clock. Many of the deathbed repentances that I have witnessed have come to those going through this very experience. God is not willing that anyone should perish, so He will use whatever it takes to prepare us for heaven (see 2 Peter 3:9). Can you rejoice that even in the worst of moments, God is still on the throne?

Thursday, July 13 (read Job 33:23-25)

Then his flesh is renewed like a child's; it is restored as in the days of his youth. (Job 33:25)

As amazing as the Old Testament description of cancer is, it pales by comparison to the picture of **salvation** that follows in today's text. The solution to **any** man/woman dying from cancer does not come in the form of an angel, but rather in the Person of Jesus Christ who, as our Mediator, stands between sinful man and a holy God (v.23; see also Hebrews 7:24-25). The plan begins with the extension of **mercy**, when God does **not** give us eternity in hell, the wages that our sins deserve (v. 24; see also Romans 6:23). In that same v.24, note that God has found a ransom for you, His Son Jesus Christ. When you receive His offer of salvation, you are **born again** into the family of God, giving you a brand new start (v. 25; see also John 3:3 as well as 2 Corinthians 5:17). This is offered to you because, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Are you amazed at the accuracy and relevance of God's Word?

Friday, July 14 (read Job 33:26-28)

He prays to God and finds favor with Him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. (Job 33:26)

Anyone who answers God's call to salvation accepts His mercy, receives His Son and is born again (v. 24-25). This person prays for God to forgive him of all his sins and is **justified (just as if I'd never sinned)**. He is now assured of eternal life, meaning that he will see God's face when his life on earth ends (v. 26). Next, the recipient of God's **grace** makes a public decision before the church and confesses his sinful condition, as well as the grace and mercy that God has given to him (v. 27). The new convert testifies to the reality of a place called hell, but he rejoices that he will never go there, because he has been born again into the family of God! From now on, he will walk in the light that Jesus will show him daily (v. 28). The text does not mention baptism, but this is assumed in his public testimony before the church (v. 27-28; see also Acts 2:38). What a beautiful picture of salvation through our Redeemer!

Saturday, July 15 (read Job 33:29-30)

God does all these things to a man—twice, even three times—to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him (Job 33:29-30)

Some versions use the word "oftentimes" instead of two or three (v. 29). This can mislead readers into thinking that God repeats His call to salvation time and time again. I have seen many true conversions from folks on their deathbeds, but I have also seen some who went out into eternity cursing the One who died for them. God will clearly reveal himself to a person **two or three** times; after that, His Spirit will not be calling out to offer salvation again. This does not mean that they will not hear the **plan** articulated; it means that they will hear only **words** and not the **message**. God says, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal" (Genesis 6:3b). "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2b). "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7b). Allow the light of life to shine on you now (v. 30; see also John 8:12).