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If I Were You

Text: Job 4:1-5:27

Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, opens with the sentence, "Someone must have slandered Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning."

A similar sentence could be uttered about Job. We sit with him as he suffers. Three of Job's friends are informed of his circumstances and they leave their homes and come to see about him. They see him from a distance, are shocked at the sight of him and start weeping(2:12). They sat with him for seven days without saying a word(2:13). After Job curses his birthday, his friends speak.

Eliphaz speaks first. Perhaps he is the oldest of the three friends. Or the wisest?

R. G. Moulton says of Eliphaz, “He is a stately personage with a wider range of vision than his colleagues.”

Note four imperative verbs.

1. Remember- 4:7. This verse links nicely

Comment [1]:

with the psalmist’s words in Psalm 37:25- *I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.*

Dr. Harry Wright preached this text in my hearing a few years ago. He said, “The

psalmist didn't say the righteous were never forsaken. He just hadn't ever **seen** it.”

Job is encouraged to remember, consider, God's track record.

2. **Call out-** 5:1. This is not, suggests

Comment [2]:

Eliphaz, a time for keeping everything internalized. Cry out! Are there any holy people to whom you can turn? (5:1)

Eliphaz says, in 5:8, “If I were you, I'd seek God”. This is the verse from which I got this sermon's title. Job has *already* sought God.

Comment [3]:

Job is *already* a righteous man. Perhaps Eliphaz is suggesting that in this season of intense suffering, Job might seek God on a different level. Suffering can send us into a deep spiral, a dark hole. Suffering can silence some people. They are so blindsided by the suffering that they close up. They don't want to talk to God. They don't want to talk to people and they don't even want to talk to themselves. Eliphaz suggests that, for Job, that would be a great mistake. Cry out!!

3. Do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

Comment [4]:

The ones that the Heavenly Father loves, He disciplines(Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6) Often, our suffering is a sign of the Father's love for us. he trusts us enough to give us this trial to handle.

4. Hear it and know for yourself- 5:27

Comment [5]:

James Strahan, in his commentary on the book of Job, titled The Book of Job

Interpreted, makes an observation about these two chapters.

*The discourse is a remarkable performance, brilliant throughout in its phrasing, and rising artistically to a noble climax...But it has several serious blemishes. It does not contain a single word of genuine sympathy....It breaks the seven days' silence with the words, not of a comforter but of a moralist, not of a tender-hearted friend but of a theologian chilled by his creed.(p.59)*

Job has not been comforted by his wife.

Now his friend fails to comfort, at least in this first discourse. What is Job to do?

Job must move from theory to practice. He must process what he hears and what he knows. Paul said “that I may know Him” long after he met Christ. There is a level of knowing God that might not be accessed except through suffering. If I were you, I’d be listening, watching and waiting...like Job. Amen.