

The Folly of Platitudes

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Job 8-14.

B. Bildad is the cold intellectual thinker.

II. His first question is whether God can do wrong.

A. God cannot do wrong--right is defined by what He is, and God cannot be unlike Himself.

B. Bildad's argument is that all tragedy is the result of some hidden sin.

C. There is much truth to what Bildad says.

1. God punishes those who have been disobedient.

2. Man by nature must have God's blessing in order to prosper.

D. What Job's friends leave out constitutes what is wrong.

1. They zero in on his words without understanding what he is going through.

2. Their theology was incomplete.

3. They never seem to refer to God for help for themselves.

III. Job has an inadequate theology too--he accepts the principle that hardship is the result of sin, but he has not been able to put his finger on any sin that he has not dealt with.

A. He suggests that the problem must lie with God.

B. However there is no way for him to examine God.

C. Life is incomprehensible without understanding God.

IV. Job becomes aware of what is missing a mediator. He is crying out for the kind of mediator that Jesus Christ provides. (Psalm 119:71)

V. Job's prayer: he cries to know the reason for the affliction or that he would be left alone.

A. Job asks if God limits Himself like a man, which carries implications of the incarnation.

B. Job questions the reason of one forming someone and then destroying him.

C. Job asks what recourse he has.

D. God is silent for the time being though.

VI. Zophar, the zealous, gives a scorching rebuke of Job's seeming folly.

VII. Job responds sarcastically: they are nothing but know-it-alls, he has become a laughingstock before them, they have not faced all the facts, and they are not helpful.

VIII. Job expresses assurance that he will be vindicated.

IX. The book of Job ought to give us pause when giving advice to others.

Application questions:

1. Why is it not always proper to assume that some difficulty someone is facing is the result of his or her sin?

2. Do you regularly consult God before giving counsel to others? Why is this important?

3. Why is a mediator important in understanding God? Who is the mediator that Job is looking for?
