

Faith Under Fire

Lesson #4 (Elihu...who?)

Job Chapters 32-37

Scripture: 1 John 5:4 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.”*

Introduction:

I used to play football in high school. I can remember when I used to get something right, how good it felt. But on the other hand when I messed up, the coach would grab my face mask and pull me in close to his face and yell at me with spit smacking me in the face. He only expected silence from me with a concluding “yes sir”.

But the real problem came on Saturday morning after the game. The coach would always call early and want me to join them at the locker room to watch the game film. By watching the game film we could figure out what went right and where we needed to improve.

Our 8mm film projector had a rewind button. If you messed up the coach would yell at you again and play it five or six times for all to see. To have my problems be so public and played back like an instant replay was hard.

Transitional Statement:

Today, Job is going to get some instant replay from an unlikely source.

I. Elihu....who? 32:2

- A. Elihu is not included with the three friends in the introduction to the book
 - 1. And God doesn't mention him in his anger at the end of the book.
- B. Elihu means “*My God is He*”
 - 1. He is a Buzite....apparently called that because of a short hair preference
 - 2. Brother of Uz (Gen 22:21) son of Nahor
 - 3. Of the family of Ram
- C. Elihu was a younger listener who had sat and listened to the whole discussion between Job and his friends. 32:4,6

II. Three times in the open verses it says that Elihu burned with anger 32:2-3

A. The Hebrew helps us understand that he was passionately angry.

1. In short he was hot under the collar

B. He was angry because:

1. Job's friends went ahead and condemned him without adequate explanation.
2. Job justified himself rather than God.

a. Or at the expense of God.

3. I must say, that the first rattle out of the box this young man seems to have some pretty good insight.

III. So Elihu says listen to me ! 32:6-10

A. He says that he is:

1. Younger
2. Shy, afraid

a. Maybe intimidated.

B. He goes on to say I thought age = wisdom v:7

1. But wisdom comes from God v:8James 1:5
2. The older and even the elders may not be wise v:9

C. So Elihu says listen to me and I will tell you what I think v:10

IV. As to the three friends Elihu says:

A. I patiently listened to your reasoning v:11

1. I paid close attention v:12
2. Not one of you answered his words

B. Elihu refuses to excuse the friends failure based on their reasoning that his great wisdom could only be overcome by God. v:13

C. Elihu says...I won't be using your argumentsthat's for sure ! v:14

D. Your friends are dismayed and you have given up v:15

1. Your words have failed you v:15
2. Job's wisdom is not invincible

E. Elihu says now I am going to give you my opinion v:17

1. Elihu feels a deep need to let his argument out v:18-20
2. But he makes a disclaimer.....

a. He will be partial to no one v: 21-22

V. So Elihu begins the first of four speeches to Job with the idea that “God is greater than man” 33:1-33

A. He requests that Job listen to him v:1-7

B. But then he gets quite bold and says:

1. Refute me if you can ! v:5
2. I belong to God like you do v:6
3. He basically says I should intimidate you at all v:7

C. Elihu begins by summarizing Job’s complaint.

1. You have said that your pure, without transgression v:9
2. That you are innocentnot guilty v:9
3. That God invents pretext against me & counts me as an enemy v:10
4. That God has put your feet in the stocks v:11

a. And watches my path

D. You are not right in this Job.....God is greater than man v:12

1. Elihu is saying that whatever measure of justice that men understand...God’s measure is far greater.

VI. Elihu continues by saying that God uses suffering for good.

A. He begins here by saying that God doesn’t have to give an accounting of Himself v:13

1. Job has viewed the silence of heaven as wrong for God.
2. But Elihu says why do you complain against God?

a. He doesn’t have to give an accounting of Himself

3. I think at the root of Elihu’s thoughts are the idea that God’s ways are so much higher than our that to even question him leaves the realm of intended faith.

B. Elihu reminds Job that God speaks to us in different ways. v:14-15

1. Even in dreams and visions.

a. And circumstances.

2. But that often times it goes unnoticed.

3. And He does this to turn us from evil v:17

- a. To keep us out of the pit v:18
- b. And He uses pain to chasten us v:19

C. Elihu tells Job that even if an angel was assigned to be a mediator v:23-24

1. The angel would merely be reminding man what is right v:23
2. And pleading with God to keep man out of the pit v:24

D. Man should ask God to refresh his soul v:25

1. Then God would accept him v:26
2. Then the righteous would be restored
3. Then the man could sing about how he was wrong v:27

E. Elihu ends this first section by saying that suffering brings good by keeping us in line.

1. It is a valuable tool of Gods v:29-30
2. Do you have anything to say to this Job? V:32

VII. Then Elihu tells Job that God is not unjust 34:1-37

A. He starts by keeping the three friends listening. V:1-4

1. He says let's weigh out these words...you wise men !
2. A touch of sarcasm it seems

B. Then Elihu continues with Job's charge against God. v:5-6

1. You say that you are righteous but God has taken away my right
2. You say my wound is incurable...though I am without sin
3. You have went as far as to say...It prophets a man nothing when he is pleased with God v:9

C. In verses 7-8 we see Elihu's view of Job

1. He says you drink up derision (ridicule) like water
2. And you walk with wicked men

D. Then Elihu defends God

1. God doesn't do wrong v:10
2. God isn't acting wickedly v:12
3. God hasn't perverted justice v:12

a. He has insured it

4. Who can condemn the Righteous Mighty One?
5. God actively seeks a balance of justice 21-30

- a. His eyes see our every step v:21
- b. The sinful can't go unnoticed by Him v:22
- c. God strikes the wicked down because they turn aside from Him v:27

- 6. When God decides to keep quiet, who can condemn Him? v:29
- 7. God won't change His mind because we don't agree with His ways.

-Shall God recompense on our terms? v:33

E. Elihu's frustration at Job boils over

- 1. He says Job speaks without knowledge.....words without wisdom v:35
 - a. God Himself is going to say the exact same thing to Job.
- 2. Then Elihu just completely let's go
 - a. He says: *"Job ought to be tried to the limit, Because he answers like wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God."*

VIII. Now Elihu says there is great advantage in being faithful to God 35:1-16

- A. Has your words ever come back to haunt you?
- B. Here Elihu, in a continued defense of God, answers some of Job's senseless ramblings:
 - 1. He is going to make the point that God is just
 - 2. And that there is definite advantage in being faithful
- C. Elihu says that the works of God's hands are greater than we are v:5
- D. And Elihu makes a very profound statement when he basically says what can you really give God anyway.
 - 1. If you choose the good or bad it only affects you. v:6-7
 - 2. He says what are you able to give Him v:7b
- E. Elihu goes on to say that those oppressed by God cry out in their suffering v:9
 - 1. But none of them ask "Where is God"....because they know where He is ! v:10
 - 2. And God doesn't answer the empty cries v:13
- F. Elihu tells Job that the case is before God and he must wait on God.
 - 1. It kind of takes on the same idea of Isa 40waiting on the Lord theme
- G. Elihu adds that *"Job opens his mouth emptily; He multiplies words without knowledge."* v:16
 - 1. God will make a similar statement also.

IX. Then Elihu takes time to point out the greatness of God. 36:1-26

A. Now Elihu gives 4 reasons to keep listening. v:1-4

1. He still has more to say on God's behalf
 2. What he is about to say is not trivial
 - a. Fetched from afar
 3. He wants to ascribe righteousness to his maker (God).
 4. One who is perfect in knowledge is with you v:4
- * All of Elihu's speeches are meant to defend God against Job's accusations.

B. Then Elihu reminds Job and his friends that God's greatness is seen in his earthly works. V: 5-15

1. He says of God that He is mighty especially in understanding v:5
2. He is just v:6
3. And that God doesn't lack mercy v:7-10
 - a. But gives to all men their true due.
4. Elihu seems to say that affliction is graciously intended

C. Elihu warns not to turn to evil v:21

D. God is exalted in his power v:22

1. Who is His teacher?
2. Who has appointed His way?
3. Or who can say You have done wrong?

E. Remember:

1. You should exalt His work v:24
2. That you should bow under the mighty hand of God.
 - a. He is supreme

X. Then Elihu finishes up by saying that God is in back of the storm. 36:26-37:24

A. God is so great that we can't even begin to understand Him

1. The number of His years are unsearchable 36:26

B. Then Elihu directs us to see the greatness of God in nature

1. The raindrops
2. The clouds

3. Snow
4. Frost and ice
3. Lightning and thunder

a. God is even in the storms.

C. He finishes by saying

1. *“Out of the north comes golden splendor; Around God is awesome majesty. The Almighty — we cannot find Him. He is exalted in power, And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness.” Job 37:22-23*

Conclusion:

-One thing rings true with Elihu’s words....often times we try to justify ourselves in the storms of life instead of proclaiming God’s greatness.

-Many times in life we are called to defend ourselves....but will be defend ourselves rather than God?

-Elihu has served as a human tape recorder playing back Job’s own words to him.

-Today if your words for the last two months were to be played back, would you be found defending God, proclaiming His greatness

-Or complaining