

06.07.26

Genesis

Chapter 22 - God's Test of Devotion

Unforseen Benefits (vs. 20-24)

Genesis 22:20-24: Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, “Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel.” Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

One of the reasons I like Genesis so much is that we actually get to follow certain individuals' lives. And of course, Abraham, what a wonderful life to follow. Scripture tells us that Abraham was a friend of God's. What would it be like to be called a friend of God? Where

God just looks down and says, "You're My friend." Well, that's what Abraham was called. And certainly, it is our desire to be not only friends, but sons of God. What a marvelous thing that is.

We walk through Genesis, and we actually see Abraham at the beginning in Genesis 11. In Genesis 11, he's called out from among his people, the Ur of the Chaldeans, and God brings him forth from the region ultimately of Mesopotamia, and then He brings him down about 500 miles to the south where he presently resides within this particular passage. He leaves his family, and it is now about 50 years since he has seen those that were brothers and sisters in his family. That's a long time to not see somebody. And it is clear that God, when He called him, He said, "I want you to leave your country. I want you to leave those that were a part of your household." And we believe that one of the reasons why clearly is God was going to deal with him specifically. And we also know that bad company corrupts good morals, and we know that they were worshiping other gods. Joshua speaks of this later as we read. So, God had a reason for drawing

him out and calling him out. Abraham was faithful in obeying God for the most part, except that he had Lot tag along with him as he felt perhaps somewhat responsible in the sense that his brother had passed away and Lot was his son. And so, he takes him under his wing and clearly God did not say that he should, but Abraham was kind of winging it, and through the process of Abraham doing some of the things that he does, perceiving perhaps what God really means by what He says, he finds himself dealing with bigger issues than he really needed to.

As we've watched Abraham go through this process of walking with God, it is clearly an interesting walk in which it's fundamentally just Abraham and God. You don't see a whole lot of people involved in this particular walk.

Nevertheless, Abraham begins to follow God and have this relationship. The relationship begins to build, and in the process, he makes mistakes, and in those mistakes he has to deal with complications that, as my father oftentimes said, "sin complicates." And the more you go your own way and do your own thing, though God is still leading in your life, it causes your life to be more

complicated. And certainly, there have been complications along the way, whether it be with Lot or whether it be with Hagar. I mean, you can go through the different decisions that he's made and you realize that going down to Egypt and maybe even trying to pass his wife off as a sister has brought some complications in his life that he's had to deal with. The Lord has brought him through all of those things. And certainly, there is forgiveness with God.

And as you go into Romans 4, if you were to read why God loved Abraham so much, it clearly is stated in Romans 4, it's not because of his perfection. It is because he believed. And it was his faith that was accounted unto him as righteousness because he would ultimately put his trust in God all the way in which he would literally lay his son on the altar and willingly believe that even if he had to take his son's life that God was able to raise him from the dead as the Book of Hebrews reminds us of.

We now come to a point in Abraham's life in which his family comes back into the picture. It's been 50 years, 500 miles, and not seen one at all. And so, as we come to this

passage, we realize that though we may have been at a distance, though God has called us at times to be separated from, God knows the things that concern us. God's interested in the things, and I oftentimes think of that Psalm 139 where it so wonderfully states, He is intimately acquainted with all of our ways. He knows where we go, the paths that we take, and God knows the things that are on our hearts. This is why Psalm 37 will say, "Delight yourself in the Lord; He'll give you the desires of your heart." How does He know my desires? He knows your desires. He knows what concerns you. And so, we now come into an interesting revelation in the sense that his brother, the one that didn't die; Haran is the one that had passed away and had Lot and had others, members of the family. But now, we come into the family of Nahor and it is his family that we focus on. That's another brother of Abram. We realized that this brother has had a lot of children, but we didn't know that. I mean, we were 500 miles away from him. And so, no word has come. We didn't know what was happening. And I think there are times in our life where we begin to be concerned about those that maybe God has separated us

from for a time for a reason. Obviously, Corinthians is pretty clear, don't be a part of those that are going the opposite way. What fellowship has light and darkness? And you just can't have that fellowship if in fact you're pursuing different things. Can two walk together unless they're agreed? So, clearly, there has to be oftentimes separation. The thought is, "If I'm out of their lives, then their lives are falling apart. God's not dealing with them. God's obviously not omnipresent and He's not omniscient. He doesn't know these things." Somehow, though we know that He is omnipresent, and He does know all things, nevertheless, we still have our doubts that these people are okay. So, this is an interesting passage in which God virtually says, "No, I know who they are. I know what's been going on and I'll tell you what's going on." And somehow, word gets to Abraham about what's going on with his family. Now, the passage doesn't say who told him. It just said that it was made known to him. So, it's one of those wonderful secrets of God. And I don't know, like Ecclesiastes says, if it was a little bird flying around and gave the information or whatever, but God made evident the information.

And so, we pick up in Genesis 22:20, and it's a very interesting passage as it starts off,

(Genesis 22:20) "Now it came about after these things..."

After what things? After Abraham had come all the way, wholly devoted himself to the Lord, laid his son on the altar and said, "I trust You." This is what God was looking for. This is what God was waiting for. We oftentimes think in terms of, "I've got to know what my family's doing. I've got to know this." And we have a list of things that we bring before God in order to settle our way of thinking. And God goes, "Stop. Set those things aside. You start walking with me. We're going to develop a relationship. Once we develop the relationship, you'll understand why I do everything that I do." I think sometimes we want God just to give us information so that maybe we can assimilate the information and somehow figure out what God is doing. And God says, "No, you get to know Me, then you'll know what I'm doing." And so, that's exactly what's happened at this particular juncture. Abraham now has a relationship with God and he knows Him.

My brother and I were real close in age, two years apart, and we would oftentimes take trips in the summer. And though we were excited about going certain places, I look back with great fondness, not as much about the places that we visited, but the time in the backseat with my brother. It was a time in which we not only got to know each other, but talked with each other, did a lot of things. And the relationship really deepened. What Scripture is going to reveal to us really, in many respects, is that it really is about the traveling with God. It's about walking with God. It's about the journey with God. It's not necessarily about coming to heaven. We're excited about going to heaven. I know that I am too, to be with Him. But God says, "Get to know Me. Let's develop a relationship." And so, it is in that, that we begin to find a nearness and a dearness with Him.

We see in this particular passage that God's timing is perfect. And it's now at this time that He lets Abraham know about things that he didn't know about his family. Why at this time? Why wouldn't God tell him all these things ahead of time? Well, clearly, there are things that

we shouldn't know ahead of time. And this happened to be one of them because as you look at the passage, and let me just summarize it in verses 21, 22, 23, 24, what you have is his brother had a lot of kids, 12 in particular, 12 sons. Now, that sounds interesting and familiar in the sense that not only will he have 12 sons, but remember, Ishmael had 12 sons. And they became 12 tribes of basically Arabia. So, you have the 12 sons of Ishmael. You now have 12 sons of Nahor, his brother. And let's see, let's count. Abraham has 1. And it will not be his son Isaac that will have 12. He won't have 12 until Jacob. And it will be Jacob that has the 12 tribes of Israel. What is God doing? Why is He making us wait? Why is he allowing his brother to have 12, Ishmael to have 12, and he just has one? What is God doing? And why did He withhold this information until this very point? It's very interesting.

So, we realized that in verse 20,

“Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, “Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ...”

And from what I understand, as you read a little bit further in Genesis, that there was actually a city named after Nahor, his brother. So, apparently, he'd become quite important enough to actually have a city named after him. It was the city of Nahor that he will ultimately send his servant to, go visit his family. So, you have a city, you have 12 sons, you have all these things that are happening. And they've been having these kids clearly before Isaac was even born. You know, it's really the graciousness of the Lord that holds back on information; that there are times in our life where if God were to tell us something, that we would see it perhaps as a defeat, perhaps as something that would cause emotions of jealousy or envy. I mean, "I don't have any kid. My brother has 12 kids. Really? Where's the fairness of that?" You begin to think and worry yourself about things that are really not for you to worry about. Because God's going to let you know when it's the right time. And when He lets you know, it's going to be a good thing. You go, "Well, what's so good about finding out ultimately that my brother has 12 sons?" Well, here's the good thing. One of his sons, Bethuel, by the way, the last of his sons, the last

of the 8 of his wife, there'll be a concubine that will have four more that will make the 12. But of the 8, the last that is born is Bethuel. Bethuel is the father of Rebecca.

Rebecca is the one that will marry Isaac. So, what God is doing throughout all of this is, He is setting the stage for the relationship between Isaac and Rebecca. But not until the relationship between Abraham and God is right, and not until he's able to handle the information. And now, the information is not going to seem like something horrible, but something wonderful, because this is what he needed, a wife, not of the Canaanites. I mean, you're living in Canaan, and God says, "I don't want them marrying the Canaanites," and you're going, "So, who's my son going to marry?" And just to let you know, by the time the servant is sent out to have a relationship in some way with another woman, Isaac is now 37 years old. So, we're at 37 years old and all we have is Canaanite women surrounding us. And God sends this word, and He goes, "I've got good news for you. We've got family and there's a wonderful girl." She's actually pretty, it says. Wow. It's like one of those bonuses, right?

Look in Genesis 24:16.

It says,

(Genesis 24:16) “The girl was very beautiful, a virgin...”

Not only this, but she turns out to be extremely generous and thoughtful and caring. I mean, she actually shouldn't have those qualities when you think about it because her brother was Laban. And what a horrible guy he was. But God had preserved this wonderful lady, especially for Isaac. And the news comes at a perfect time because as you read the next chapter, and I don't want you to cheat and read ahead, but what you're going to find is that Sarah dies. Now, you have a guy that was special to his mother because this is an only son. So, she's had a close relationship with him and then she dies. How do you think Isaac's taken it? Not well, but God's timing is perfect; because now they're here, and now he marries this other girl, and Scripture actually tells us that Isaac was comforted. So, not only is the news turned into good news, which might have been easily bad news, but now the news has turned into a source of comfort that God is doing. God is working a wonderful work within our lives.

We oftentimes don't see it, and there are benefits that He doesn't show us. He simply just tells us, "Wait," which is the hardest thing for us. And sometimes, the perception in the waiting is that God somehow is keeping blessings back from us, but He's just building them up.

And let me just say this about the 12. Jacob will have 12 tribes. These 12 tribes will not only not be forgotten; I don't know if you can name Ishmael's 12 tribes today. No. So, they will not only not be forgotten, but they will actually be part of heaven's doors in eternity. The 12 gates of heaven will be the 12 tribes. When God builds, what God is building is something that is eternal. So, we think in terms of, "He's a little late," and He goes, "Well, not if you look at the time of eternity." And so, the things that He's doing are far grander because the things that man is doing and man is building are very temporary. And it's one of the reasons why we feel sometimes, God's holding something back from us because of the fact that everybody else seems to be getting the things that according to the human timeline, we should be getting.

God says, “No, you don't understand what I'm doing. I'm doing some eternal stuff here.”

So, we go to the passage and it begins to describe the sons. Now, what I think is interesting is, I always like saying, “Uz” and “Buz,” don't you? 2 names. Actually, if you were to pronounce it properly, it would be “oots” and “booz”. But anyway, we'll call it “Uz” and “Buz” because it's just more fun to pronounce.

But it tells us in verse 21 that Uz is the firstborn. Now, one of the reasons why that's so important is that there's a very famous individual that lived in the land of Uz, and his name was Job. That's very interesting, isn't it? So that once again, when we oftentimes think in terms of, “What is God doing? Maybe there's no one righteous there,” well, the most righteous man on the face of the earth seemed to live in this neighborhood and was part of this family.

If you'll turn with me to the Book of Job, you'll see this. And I just bring this up just to, once again, reveal things that maybe we don't normally see. Because, in fact, we're not omnipresent and we're not omniscient. And so, it's

hard for us to believe that God is doing good because we don't understand what's going on. Job 1 talks about this in verse 1, if you look there.

(Job 1:1) “There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job...”

And what we understand is that the land of Uz or where Uz lived was the land of Syria, Mesopotamia, about 500 miles from where Abraham is at the time. And he actually comes from the same lineage that Abraham does, that is the lineage of Shem, the Shemites. We use the phrase oftentimes “anti-Semitic”. “Semitic” is where we get from those that came from Shem. So, to be anti-Semitic would be anti-God's chosen people that actually came off the boat, so to speak, in that particular passage. So, what you have is that these are the ones that Scripture ultimately called Arameans, or perhaps Syrians. And the Syrians will be actually part of the family of the Semites. Not Assyrians, that would be Ashur, a whole different family, but Syrians, according to Scripture.

“There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

In the realm of Padan-aram, the house of Bethuel, as Genesis 24 will go on to say.

What's interesting about this is that there's another guy mentioned in the Book of Job that is related. And if you go all the way to Job 32, there's a guy by the name of Elihu. He kind of comes out of nowhere. The other “friends” were not great comforters, but Elihu comes out of nowhere with wisdom. He seems to be younger than the other 3. He states that, “I'm younger than you.” He says, “That's one of reasons why I hesitate about speaking because I knew that you would see me as not being as wise.” But he then goes on and he rebukes the 3 “friends” of Job that were really not good comforters. And then he begins to point Job to God. He will leave as suddenly as he comes into the picture. But he is related.

And the reason I state that is it reads this way,

(Job 32:1) “Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

(Job 32:2) But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the...

Alright, there you go. Uz and Buz.

“... the Buzite, of the family of Ram...”

Actually, “Ram” seems to be a form of “Aram,” which Aram is Syria.

“... the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God.”

So, then he begins to proclaim what he believes to be the truth of God, which God does not discipline him at the end, only the other 3 “friends”. This is the one that speaks truth. So, from that particular region, where Job is, with probably his relatives, i.e. in the land of Uz, and Job has been going through this difficulty for now, well, months. How do we know months? Because I just picked it off the top of my head?

(Job 29:1) “And Job again took up his discourse and said,

(Job 29:2) “Oh that I were as in months gone by...””

There you go.

As we look at this passage with Elihu, he begins to proclaim certain things about God and certain things about Job and really indicts him within the passage. Actually, Chapter 32, all the way to 37, is his dissertation in this. But there's just a couple of points that I wanted to see that he brings out within the passage. That is, as he begins to point out to Job, "You seem not to be concerned that you're offending God." So, he points this out to Job.

And he states this in Job 34:31,

(Job 34:31) "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne chastisement; I will not offend anymore;

(Job 34:32) Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will not do it again'?"

In other words, "Does anybody really stand before God and say, 'If I've done anything wrong, tell me and I won't do it anymore'?" And he goes, "No, not really. Nobody ever does that." And more specifically, what he's trying to convey is that we go through trials and we go through times of waiting and we just literally come before God, and we go, "Enough. Just let me know and I'll fix it, but

I'm done with this." And Elihu says, "Does anybody really say that to God? Are you thinking when you say that?" You don't ever want to use those kind of words.

He goes on and says in verse 36,

(Job 34:36) "Job ought to be tried to the limit, Because he answers like wicked men."

Why did God take Job so far? Because Job was starting to question God.

And so, as it comes in at Job 35:1,

(Job 35:1) "Then Elihu continued and said,

(Job 35:2) "Do you think this is according to justice? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?"

Well, now, we're clearly going into a bad place, and Elihu begins to correct Job within this particular passage and remind him of how great God is and the necessity for not standing in judgment against God or shaking your fist at God, or perhaps coming to God and going, "I think You're doing all things wrong." These are all the kind of feelings that we would naturally feel when God is waiting and doing things in other people's lives and seemingly not

doing them in our lives. It's almost like sometimes our life is on hold. I mean, 20-some-odd years we see and hear hardly anything about Abraham within that span of time, which is pretty interesting because much of the things that happen to him are within the first 25 years. 25 years later, you don't hardly hear of anything except then God says, "Okay, now bring your son, your only son." And then it brings us to that point. There are times in our life where God is just saying, "Wait." And I know that we say, "Well, what is He doing?" He'll let you know. "When will He let me know?" When He's ready and when everything is ready. And then He'll bring it to fruition.

And so, we come to a passage in which these sons begin to be listed. And of course, verse 21 is letting us know that there's probably a context. We know that Job was kind of a contemporary of this particular time.

(Genesis 22:21) "Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram."

"Aram," once again, making reference to Syria.

And then in verse 22, it says,

(Genesis 22:22) “and Cheded...”

Which is kind of where we get the grouping of Chaldeans. So, it seems to be a branch of the Chaldeans, not necessarily the total.

“... and Hazo and Pildash...”

And you have these 8 sons.

And in verse 22, we finally come to Bethuel, which is a very interesting name. You would think “Beth” is significant of “house of God,” but it's not Beth-el, it's Bethuel. And the name itself seems to make reference to destruction or separation, which is interesting. And so, you have this interesting picture of being separated from God, but then this man has a daughter, that will be Rebekah, and then the family would now be conjoined again. So, once again, we know that the family at one time began to separate from the things of God and they began to worship other idols, but God will bring them back. And it will be through the venue of Isaac marrying into the family as well as you have this one wonderful woman that has kept herself pure and kept herself in the right heart. And God has seen her and draws her in. Let

me just say this, “Rebekah” means to tie together. So, you have a kind of a separation and then a tying together because God begins to do this.

And it says in verse 23,

(Genesis 22:23) “Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight...”

And of course, we know and believe that the number “8” is the number of resurrection. And at this very early stage we begin to see the number “8” as it's used in much of the Old Testament as that which points to that day in which there would be a new day or resurrection day. 7-completion, 8th being a new day. So, you have a new day being proclaimed at this particular juncture through the 8th son. And they had to go through the 8th son in order for the timing to be good, in which he now has a daughter, and this daughter will actually become a part of the family of Isaac.

“Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother.”

Now, there were 4 more that come from the concubine and Scripture fundamentally is saying, "Do you remember these people?" And you say, "No, we don't remember them." And God says, "Okay, so I want you to know the one that you do remember, Bethuel." Because he is mentioned and will continue to be mentioned throughout as the text begins to unfold. In fact, the servant that Abraham will send out to go find a wife in the realm of Mesopotamia where his family is will first talk to Bethuel and then Laban will also kind of chime in and talk for his father, which is pretty interesting as he begins to be a part of the decision making in that text. What the passage is making reference to is the control of God in the sense that His timing is perfect and that He's going to do all things well.

There are multiple passages that deal with this particular point. And a couple of the Psalms that we've oftentimes made reference to, but I just want to point to them once again. One is found in Psalm 37, very familiar passage to most of us anyway, because of the promise that it gives right at the beginning, "If you delight yourself in the Lord,

He'll give you the desires of your heart, right?" But at the beginning of it, it's saying, don't fret because other people are successful, and in particular, people that are not necessarily walking with God.

And so, the statement says this,

(Psalm 37:1) "Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers.

(Psalm 37:2) For they will wither quickly like the grass..."

Now, what it's talking about is a transient, right?

"... And fade like the green herb.

(Psalm 37:3) Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness."

What is he talking about cultivating faithfulness? What he's talking about is cultivating a relationship with God. Nothing will deepen your relationship more than you having to trust in God and wait. It'll be during this time that you're drawn to Him. It'll be that time that you're in the back seat of the car. You haven't arrived yet. But that's the time you start talking to God. Because what can you do? Your hands are tied. Nothing's happening. And

God says, "Wait." No, I've got to do something." "Wait. I'll take care of it. I've got it all orchestrated. You just need to wait." And it is in that waiting, I have found, that I had this drawing to God. There are days that I just go, "Okay, I trust You." He goes, "How much do you trust Me? Are you going to let go?" Remember Psalm 4? You know how evil men begin to attack and then you go, basically, "I want to go get them"? And God goes, "Nope, go to sleep." "Go to sleep? Really? Are You serious?" He says, "Yeah, offer the sacrifice of trust." And probably one of the hardest things that we'll ever do, and it's one of the reasons why it's called a sacrifice, is just to lay down and sleep. Trust God. He's going to take care of it. I mean, He gives to His beloved even in their sleep, the psalmist says, right?

(Psalm 37:4) "Delight yourself in the LORD..."

So, what it's talking about is working on the relationship, and He'll take care of those desires. I don't know how many times Abraham was sitting in his tent going, "I wonder what's going on with Nahor. I wonder what's happening with the family there," because it seems like Nahor and Milcah actually were married about the same

time that Abraham and Sarah were, if you go back to Genesis 11. So, there seems to be kind of a relationship there in that respect as well. Then of course, they both lost their brother. So, there was kind of a camaraderie in all of that. Nahor stays where he was. And there are times where God's going to say, "You stay, you go." You say, "What happens to all these people?" God says, "I'll let you know." So, He does within the passage.

That's why it says in verse 5,

(Psalm 37:5) "Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it."

Look at verse 7,

(Psalm 37:7) "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret..."

(Psalm 37:8) "Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret..."

(Psalm 37:9) "... But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land."

What's he telling you to do? Why is he telling you to wait?

Because if you look at verse 18,

(Psalm 37:18) “The LORD knows the days of the blameless, And their inheritance will be forever.”

God has forever-plans for you. One of the reasons why it looks like God is late is because He's working on the timeline of forever for you. He's not working on the timeline of today. He's the forever God, and He's working that way in your life.

And that's why he says in verse 27,

(Psalm 37:27) “Depart from evil and do good, So you will abide forever.”

(Psalm 37:28) For the LORD loves justice And does not forsake His godly ones; They are preserved forever...”

(Psalm 37:29) “The righteous will inherit the land And dwell in it forever.”

That's why he ends there in verse 34,

(Psalm 37:34) “Wait for the LORD and keep His way...”

He's doing a great work. He's doing a work forever.

Psalm 73, once again, that oftentimes parallels to this passage. And just to bring up some things that perhaps we had not talked about before, in Psalm 73, of course,

the tendency is for us to take our eyes off God during these times because we see so many things happening with other people. And God goes, "Don't do that." There are times where God just doesn't let us know. I have been so thankful somewhere down the road I would hear about somebody, and I'd go, "Thank You for not telling me about that earlier." It was just the grace of God to do that. And as Jesus even talks to His disciples, He says, "Many other things I have to tell you, you just can't handle them now." So, it is the grace of God that gives the information that we need. Now, what is interesting is when you look at Abraham in Genesis 15, God actually tells Abraham what's going to happen 400 years later. You say, "Well, why does He tell him that?" To comfort him; to let him know how it turns out.

And that's why God gives us Revelation. Not necessarily so we live out the Book of Revelation, except for the fact of the 7 churches. But the reason why He gives us this information is to let us know it's going to be okay. And not only is it going to be okay, but we're going to be victorious in this, and this is how it's all going to end. And so, in

many of the things of Revelation, you don't know a lot of details. There are specific things that are made mention of so that when they happen, it doesn't worry you. This is one of the statements that Jesus makes to his disciples in John 16. He says, "Look, I'm going to tell you these things so that when they happen, you're not upset because of these things." Because there are things that will begin to happen, and you go, "Why is that happening? I wonder why that is. Looks like we're losing." And God goes, "No, you're not losing. That's the way it's supposed to go." And God tells you these things to comfort you. But there are also things that He holds back. "Why doesn't God tell me the exact time?" It's not going to be good for you. There are things in our lives that He doesn't let us know. And let me say this too. Rejoice over the stuff that you don't know because that's the grace of God. But God will reveal them to you when it's helpful to you, when it's beneficial to you. And so, Psalm 73, there's a concern that, "I almost came close to stumbling." (Verse 2) "I was envious because of things that were happening to other people, and they didn't happen to me. And what is God doing?"

Why am I the one left with nothing? And everybody seems to be successful.”

He ultimately comes within the temple of God, and it seems at this point, it says in verse 16,

(Psalm 73:16) “When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight

(Psalm 73:17) Until I came into the sanctuary of God...”

And then things became clear. One of the reasons why we come to church, right? Things get clarified.

And so, we come into this, and though our heart is oftentimes embittered by what was happening and we're pierced within, (verse 21) we sometimes become senseless and ignorant and angry like beasts.

Nevertheless, we come before God, and we come to this ultimate conclusion throughout the process. What is that?

(Psalm 73:25) “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.”

So, what has God been doing all this time that He hasn't been giving us the stuff that we think we need to have? He's been working on our relationship with Him. Once

you get the relationship to work, then God reveals these other things. But God says, "Let's take care of this first because this is what's forever. A relationship with Me is what's important." Not you taking care of all these things or maybe even knowing all these things or maybe even thinking that yourself is the answer to all these things. And I think sometimes we come from that perspective. We begin to perceive ourselves as the answer.

(Psalm 73:26) "My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

(Psalm 73:28) "But as for me, the nearness of God is my good..."

Oh, you mean your good isn't you figuring out what's going to happen? This is why people get actually into a lot of trouble with eschatology, because their perception is, "I've got to figure out all these things." This wasn't made for you to figure out. That's why it's written the way it is. It was made for you to trust in God, that He has the future. Now, He'll tell you things and how they're going to go and that we're going to win, but He's not going to let you know the details because that would just weigh you

down and you'd begin thinking about all those things rather than working on your relationship with God. I oftentimes tell people as they debate certain issues, "Well, how is this bringing you closer to God? And if it's not bringing you closer to God, then why are you doing it?" Paul will talk about the wrangling of words and all these things and debate about things that really don't matter. God's controlling these things. If God wants you to know, He's going to reveal it. And He's going to reveal it for a purpose. And that purpose is either going to be a to comfort you; it's going to be to shore you up; it's going to be perhaps in a way that would actually affirm. Because with the disciples, He says, "They're going to bring you before courts. And I just want to let you know that when that happens, you're going to say, 'I'm on track. I'm on track.'" And so, He'll let us know the things that are necessary. There are things in your life where I know you want to try to micromanage. I know you want to try to control. If God wants you to control them, He'll let you know. And I think the wonderful thing too about loved ones is that it's oftentimes in time of need that God begins to bring you in. I've had people call me up I hadn't

talked to in years, and they just all of a sudden call me up, “Hey, I have this problem.” I'm wondering, “How do you have my number?” I don't even know how they get my number. But God opens the door at that time. And you can hear, I don't know if it's a whisper or a scream from God, “It's time. Talk to this person now. This is the time where you open up the relationship again.” Before that, I'm not in control of what's going on. Their hearts are not ready. Things are not prepared. Things are not happening the way that they should. But God is fixing them. And just to kind of throw in this, and I know it's a little bit of speculation, but I can't help but feel that the whole incident of Job became a part of that history of that particular region and was probably the very thing that kept people like Rebekah coming to God, hearing about this man named Job in their region that had finally come to fully trust in His righteousness, not their own. It wouldn't surprise me.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for the way that You deal within our hearts, the way You deal within our lives, that You're intimately acquainted with all our ways, and there's not a place that we can go away from Your presence, that You're concerned for the very things that concern us. And yet, You tell us to lay those aside and focus on You, for You're the God that orchestrates all things. You're the One that saves people, not us. And You're the One that brings good out of confusion. We believe that. So, today, what we're going to do is take that walk and concentrate on the journey with You. We're going to wait for You to open the door. And we're going to delight ourselves in You above everything else.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we're asking you to do is have a relationship with God, and it begins by receiving His Son, Jesus Christ, by realizing just how much He loves you and how much He cares for you and how much He wants you with Him. What a wonderful truth that is. And how sad it is that we will oftentimes take our focus off that and put it on the things that we desire or the things that we feel like we have to settle. Set

your eyes upon Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith.