

AM Job 28

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[0 : 00] God's Word, in page 521 in your Pew Bibles, we're going to be reading, the reading we've taken from Job chapter 28.

Job chapter 28, page 521. I'll be reading the entire chapter of Job chapter 28.

Hear the Word of God. Surely there is a mine for silver and a place for gold that they refine. Iron is taken out of the earth and copper is melted from the ore.

Man puts an end to darkness and searches out the furthest limit, the ore in gloom and deep darkness. He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives.

They are forgotten by travelers. They hang in the air, far away from mankind. They swing to and fro. As for the earth, out of it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire.

[1 : 21] Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold. That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon's eye has not seen it.

The proud beasts have not trodden it. The lion has not passed over it. Man puts his hand to the flinty rock and overturns mountains by the roots.

He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing. He damns up the streams so that they do not trickle, and the thing that is hidden he brings out to light.

But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living.

The deep says it is not in me, and the sea says it is not with me. And silver cannot be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire.

[2 : 27] Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mansion shall be made of coral or of crystal.

The price of wisdom is above pearls. The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. For where then does wisdom come?

And where is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and death says, we have heard a rumor of it with our ears.

God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. And he gave to the wind its weight, and apportioned the waters by measure.

When he made a decree for the rain, and a wave for the lightning of the thunder. Then he saw it and declared it.

[3 : 31] He established it, and searched it out. And he said to man, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to turn from evil is understanding.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to the public reading of his holy and inspired word. That very last line, his wisdom, search can none.

It's kind of a springboard to our sermon this morning, for our consideration. If you turn back with me to Job chapter 28.

The text that I will be exploring and seeking to understand can be found in verse 12, 20 and 28.

But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? And verse 20 is very similar. From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?

[4 : 30] And in verse 28. And he said to man, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to turn away from evil is understanding. But the book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible.

Job is a converted man. We don't need to dispute on that. God himself said so. The Lord said to Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job?

In chapter 1 verse 8. That there is none like him in the earth. Imagine that. A perfect and upright man. One that fears God and eschews evil.

God declares that about Job. So he's a converted man. He is one who prays for his children. And sadly you know about this. Well, if you read the book of Job.

You know that he lost everything along the way. He lost his children. His livestock. And his servants. And later on he was afflicted by a terrible skin disease.

[5 : 34] Job unfortunately could not see behind the scenes. What was going on behind the scenes. The conversation between Satan and God. And Satan basically accused Job of only serving God.

In order to gain some benefit for himself. That was what Satan leveled against Job. And God said, well let's put it to the test.

And so that's why Job was in that particular predicament. And you know about Job's wife. Who basically told Job to curse God and die. And then we come to that point where Job's comforters.

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Came along to allegedly comfort him. But seemed to make things worse.

And then there's at the towards the end in chapter 33. There's Elihu who appeared. And he's a little bit of anonymously. But we won't consider him for today. The book of Job up to the point of chapter 31 onwards.

[6 : 46] It's made up of three cycles of speeches. Between Job and the comforters. So Job was, the comforters were basically accusing him. You know why you're in this situation?

Do you know why you lost everything? It's because you have sinned. You've done something really bad. Something really naughty. And God is judging you for that. And so, because of that, he's punishing you.

You've lost everything. Your children. Your livestock. Your servants. God is punishing you. You need to repent. And Job's response, in many, many, many ways.

And this goes on for three cycles with all the three friends or three comforters. And Job's comforters are very much like the people of today.

You see that happen quite often, do we not? Something bad happens to a Christian. Especially a Christian in the public eye. And guess what? You see how quick all those people come out of the woodworks and start condemning them.

[7 : 48] Especially on social media. You know, they'll dig up some old tweets. You know, start digging up some old things that they wrote in the past. And they'll start accusing them. There you go. You did, you know, because you wrote all these bad things in the past.

So now, you know, that's why you're in this terrible state. You may have heard of this thing called cancel culture. And so on and so forth. Yeah, before the internet.

Those of us who can still remember what it was before the internet. People can only gossip in the barber shops or in hairdressers. You know. With a day and age when reporters were actually paid to report on things.

Rather than give their opinions. Unfortunately, we don't live in a day and age. You know, we live in a day and age where people can just dig up old tweets and start accusing. Even good Christians who have had a fall.

Or when something bad happens to Christians. You know, some would describe this as the theology of the man on the street. The theology of the man on the street.

[8 : 50] You know, people would start to pick up all these things. You know, they can accuse a Christian who is falling into bad times. They were saying, well, because you wrote this in the past ten years ago. That's why God is judging you.

No different from the comforters. Job's comforters are the same. Now, Job's response is very interesting. So much that we can learn from. Job's response to the accusations of the comforters comes in two ways.

The first way is, I'll just briefly say it. The first response of Job is basically to say, look. Look around you.

Sinners, those who are far from God. Those who have not bowed a knee to God. They're actually doing quite well. They're actually doing quite well. In Job chapter 21.

If you want to flip back with me. Just read it. In Job 21, we read here. In fact, if you've got the ESV, it's right on top. The wicked do prosper. And Job says in Job 21, verse 7.

[9 : 53] Why do the wicked live? Reach old age and grow mighty in power. Yeah. Their offspring are established in their presence. Their descendants before their eyes.

Their houses are safe from fear. And no rod is upon them. Their bull breeds without fail. Their cow calves and does not miscarry. And look at verse 15.

This is the response of those who are sinners. Who are doing quite well. Doing very well. They say to God, what is the almighty that we should serve him? What profit do we get if we pray to him?

Now that was Job's response. Or one of his response. And that is very true of what we see today. Is it not? David, if you remember King David said later in years later after Job.

David said in Psalm 73. For I was envious of the foolish when I saw, what? The prosperity of the wicked. Behold, these are the ungodly who what?

[10 : 59] Who prosper in the world. They increase in riches. So Job is saying, look, you say that I have sinned. You know, that's why I'm under God's judgment.

But look around you. There are people who are perfectly happy. Perfectly rich. Perfectly doing well. Their children are doing well. They've got good jobs.

They've got nice houses. They've got good livestock. They're doing well. But they are not worshippers of Almighty God. They do not submit themselves to the Word of God.

They're doing quite well. So that argument of yours, the comforters, is wrong. It's wrong. His second response is what we're going to consider this morning.

His second response to his predicament can only be found in God's wisdom and not human wisdom.

[12 : 02] We, we are all pursuing answers in life. Whether or not we acknowledge that or not, we are all pursuing answers in life. The question is, where can we find those answers?

We may not be consciously thinking about those answers in life. But subconsciously we are. Especially when you're doing badly in life.

Especially when you're facing challenges in life. Especially when, as I say it, when the chips are down. That's when we start asking the big questions in life.

But we are asking those questions. And so, Job's question in verse 12. But where shall wisdom be found? He's basically saying to the comforters, well, you know, whatever you're talking about, my predicament, the answers can only be found in wisdom.

In wisdom. Where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Now, before we consider what is wisdom, we need to consider what wisdom is not. Okay, what wisdom is not.

[13 : 07] What wisdom is not, it can be in several ways. One way is academic prowess. Academic prowess.

Or those who are intellectuals. You cannot find wisdom in that. You cannot find wisdom in that. You know, we used to think that in the past, I mean, it's going back quite a number of years now. We used to think that academics have all the answers about life.

And academics can sort out all the ills of society. It can sort out our lives. You know, if you've got any problems, you know, you just have this.

If you say you've got a particular illness, take this pill and everything's well. If you get this job, if you get this education, if you get this particular degree, have this job, everything will be sorted out for life.

We used to think that. Let's be honest. I still used to think that when I was young. The internet, COVID-19, lockdown kind of changed the public perception of that.

[14 : 12] You know, nowadays, academics are not, well, you know, they don't have all the answers. In fact, sometimes the answers are wrong, you know. And then we get experts like Dawkins who tells us that, you know, we should reject the existence of God.

Although, when I prepared this sermon, I didn't realize that he kind of changed his mind a little bit, no? Now he calls himself, what, a cultural Christian? I mean, goodness, no, what does it mean? We know what it means.

It's not Christianity at all. So, I'm like three days behind what he said. But anyway, and then you get liberals. Those who are universities telling us, you know, how to reject the Bible.

You know, these are Bible scholars, and I'm going to quote one. A Bible scholar in Birmingham University who actually says this. He's a Bible scholar, okay? It is just not possible to fully obey and honor the Word of God.

Who knew? And it's authority. Amazing. It's not because we're imperfect sinners. It's because the Word of God is not univocal or it's inconsistent.

[15 : 17] It's internally contradictory. And this is from a Bible scholar in the University of Birmingham telling us this is how you should handle the Word of God.

Don't listen to it. Don't obey it. It doesn't have any authority. Can you find wisdom in that? Oh, yeah. These are people who are academically very, very smart.

But they're not wise. That's not wisdom. Now, another way what wisdom is not is being streetwise. You may have met such people.

I've certainly met many in my lifetime. You know, those who are experienced in a hard life. You know, the University of Hard Knocks, they say, you know, what school do you go to? University of Hard Knocks. You know, perhaps they have, you know, multiple marriages.

They're usually very active in social media. You know, they know the mood of the nation through social media and so on. You know, they know all the stories of our lives, you know.

[16 : 24] Some of them may be even dabbling in politics. You know, they know all the, you know, the various people living in their constituencies and so on.

Now, there's much to be commended. I'm not trying to knock down, you know, the whole idea of being streetwise. There's much to be commended. Life experience is something that we can truly appreciate.

But that is not wisdom. That is not wisdom. Wisdom is not knowledge. Wisdom is not knowledge.

You know what knowledge is? You know, at the touch of your device, Wikipedia can give you a lot of knowledge. Far more than you can in the days of Rodex and, you know, library books and so on.

At the touch of the device, Wikipedia, Google will give you all the knowledge that you need. But that is not wisdom. Knowing something about the facts is not the same as understanding what the fact means or its significance.

[17 : 29] I've already mentioned that I teach at the university. And time and time again, I have to tell the students, what does this piece of result mean?

What is its significance? I teach biological science. So, if the student does an experiment and they get the result, they put the result in their answer sheet and that's it. And I say, well, what does the result actually mean?

Giving me the data is one thing, but what does it actually mean? Knowing the facts is one thing, through Wikipedia is one thing, but what does the fact actually mean?

And what is its significance? What is its importance? You know, it's so easy to know the facts about climate change, for example. You know, lots of, for some bizarre reason, lots of facts about climate change out there.

You don't even need to go very far to learn about climate change, which at one point, it used to be known as global warming, but nowadays it can't really use that anymore, because there's global cooling as well.

[18 : 34] And look at what has those facts done to young people. You may have heard of climate anxiety. I had to be trained to handle such cases, where students are anxious, anxious, in distress, about the dangers of the future of climate change.

And they have this sense of grief, of anger, of guilt, because of what they're doing to the environment. And it affects their mood, affects their behaviour and their thinking.

And sadly, academics in universities, I'm sure in schools as well, they have to be trained to handle children with climate anxiety.

But all they've done is they've just picked up pieces of information on the internet, and that caused this whole meltdown. What we need is wisdom.

What we need is understanding. Another thing that is not wisdom is age. Age does bring a lot of good things.

[19 : 48] And the Bible is very clear that we should honour those who are, who with old age brings experience. The Bible does tell us to honour that.

In fact, Elihu, in the so-called anomaly in Job's comforters, he said, it is not the old who are wise, nor the age who understand what is right.

That came from Elihu. Now, whatever you may think about Elihu, there is some truth in that. Age does bring a lot of experience, and a certain level of wisdom, but it's not wisdom per se.

So what is wisdom? What is wisdom? Job asked, where shall wisdom be found? That's a jolly good question, and we need to ask that. Well, wisdom, if you read the dictionary, it says, the ability to use your knowledge and experience to make good decisions and judgments in matters relating to life and conduct.

The dictionary does have a good definition, but remember, that is still human wisdom. To use just knowledge and experience to sort out big decisions in life, making right judgments in life and conduct, to just purely based on human knowledge and experience.

[21 : 24] That is human wisdom. And in fact, that is what Job's comforters have been using. They've observed what's around them in their own limited way. They've used a bit of their own understanding in a very limited way.

And they say to Job, well, you have done something bad. That's why you lost everything. God is judging you. You've done something naughty, something bad. You've sinned against God.

So you've lost everything. You've got your comeuppance. Human wisdom has its place. Don't get me wrong.

But it has its limitations. Human wisdom has its place, but it has its limitations. In fact, there's this joke that I read about wisdom and knowledge, the difference between wisdom and knowledge.

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad. Yeah? Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit.

[22 : 26] Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad. I can't get why. You know what I'm talking about. That is the problem with Job's comforters. They're using human wisdom.

And they concluded that Job's problems must, must be because he had sinned and now is under the judgment of God. I say it already.

There is limitations to that. They could not see what was going on behind the scenes between Satan, the conversation between Satan and God. They could not see what was going on behind the scenes.

Now, we may want to inquire about how we should live our lives. How we should, what is the purpose of our lives in this world?

What are we doing here? We may want to live our lives so that we have a clean conscience, a clear conscience. Most of us are thinking that.

[23 : 30] But what we tend to do is we tend to replace the answers with either material things or with human wisdom.

It might be you this morning. You might be in that position. You have questions about life. Why am I doing here? What's going on in my life? But your answers is you replace the true wisdom with human wisdom and material things.

For the Christian, we must recognize and be contented with our own limitations with human wisdom, but to seek God's wisdom.

We know our own limitations. Certainly, Job recognized his own limitations. And we must seek God's wisdom. We must seek God's wisdom.

One writer puts it this way that wisdom is the reason which deals with principles. In other words, if we have principles in life, the Bible being the Word of God, this is where truth resides, this is the foundation of our lives, that is the principle of our lives, then the reason which deals with principles is what is called wisdom.

[24 : 48] Wisdom is a God-given, God-centered discernment regarding the practical issues of life. This is God's wisdom.

This is true wisdom. It is God-given and God-centered discernment regarding the practical issues of life. Wisdom, true wisdom, is a divine gift that is given to us by God.

And for the believer in Jesus Christ, if we lack wisdom, if we are struggling to handle the trials of our lives, and we know what it's like, James, the Apostle James says, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally and without reproach, and it shall be given to him.

This wisdom is given to us by God. And it's so important for us. It's so important for us to recognize this.

Because this wisdom is precious and it's very scarce. It comes from God. You can't find it in this world. It has to be given to us by God.

[26 : 01] In fact, this wisdom is so scarce and so unique that Job is going to use an example of mining. Well, he's going to use the example of mining.

And it's so, before I go into the part about mining, it's so scarce and so unique that his friends, his so-called comforters, the dude thought they had it, but according to God, they didn't have it.

They didn't have that wisdom. In fact, Job, in the last chapter of Job, in Job 42, when God appears and God says about the comforters, Therefore, take unto you, this is God saying to the comforters, take unto you now seven bollocks and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering.

For my servant Job shall pray for you, for him I accept lest I deal with you after your folly or your foolishness and that you have not spoken of me the thing which is right like my servant Job.

So those, all the speeches that came before the last chapter of Job, that they thought this is what, why you've done wrong, this is why you're in this predicament. God says, no, you've not said anything that's right.

[27 : 31] You've not said anything that's right. Unlike Job. God says that they lack wisdom. Which is shocking if you think about it. You know, after like, you know, 41 chapters of it, you realize, oh, they've got it wrong.

Now, I said already, the picture that Job uses about the scarcity and the importance of wisdom, the picture that Job uses is in mining.

We read in the beginning, surely there's a mine for silver and a place for gold that they refined. Iron is taken out of the earth and copper is melted from the ore and so on. Now, if the book of Job, and there's good reasons why the book of Job is the earliest book written, then at the dawn of time, at the dawn of time, the earliest so-called human technology that you can find in the book in the time of Job is this activity called mining.

In fact, various secular writers have said that mining is something that is one of the critical advancements of human civilizations.

And if you think about it, you can find in museums all over the country, all over the world, you find pieces of pottery or pieces of metal plates and so on.

[29 : 06] Crockery, cutlery and everything made of bronze, brass. These are all dated thousands of years old. So, you think about it, mining is at that time in the book of Job, in the time of Job, is one of the, you can call it like the AI of Job's time.

You know, the internet of Job's time. You know, the computer age of Job's time is the forefront of human technology. Mining. Mining. Mining represents for Job the furthest frontier of human ingenuity and possibility.

You know, so the equivalent for today would be, you know, the internet, social media, AI, you know, artificial intelligence and so on. Job's time, mining. Mining. Mining did the following.

You know, he extracted all these precious stones. You read in verse 6, its stones are the place of sapphires, it has dust of gold. You know, he extracts all these important metals for use in everyday life.

But mining also brings to light things that are hidden. You know, in verse 11, he damns out the streams so they do not trickle and the thing that is hidden, he brings out to light.

[30 : 24] Mining did all these things. And so for Job to use the example of mining in this particular chapter is very interesting.

What Job is doing is this, he's saying to us, for all the best, the best of human technology, the best of human advancement, the best of advancing human civilization, all the mines that people have dug in the time of Job, you know, the people have dug to look for that vein of silver or that ore of gold, for all that humans have dug and searched for precious metals, wisdom can never be found like that.

Wisdom can never be found like that. And not only that, but he says that even how deep you dig, you know, and we know now that you can mine for precious metals way deeper than what your shovel can do.

in verse 14 it says, the deep says, it is not in me. And the sea says, it is not with me. So you may dig how deep and you may go into the depths of the oceans.

You will never find wisdom that way. You will never find wisdom that way. Wisdom can never be mined, wisdom can never be dug, wisdom can never be bought.

[31 : 51] In verse 15 it says, it cannot be bought for gold and silver cannot be weighed as its price. You know, society is pushing us to tell everybody that, you know, what you need to do, you know, for your family is, you know, your children need to be educated, which is all good, you know, and your children have to dig for and mine for knowledge in books and so on.

Why? So that they can get a good degree and pursue better jobs. And even when they get better jobs, they need to dig and mine for the next, not just the next paycheck, but for the profits, for the company and so on.

Why? So that they can get better lives. Okay, that's all very good and well. And so, because of that, they need to make all these big decisions in life about careers, about marriage, about parenting, about jobs and so on.

Now, all this is all very good, but without God's wisdom, wisdom, if a person is outside of Christ, if a person is not a believer in Jesus Christ, you know, you're in a very bad, very, very difficult position.

You'll be hopeless and helpless and you probably don't even realize it. You know, the modern person with all its vast knowledge and we live in a day and age where people have very much more knowledge than people in the past.

[33 : 15] in reality, people of today, we struggle to handle life. We know very little. We may think we know a lot, but we actually know very little.

If we only step down from our high horse and be a bit like a little child, as Jesus said, and seek his face, perhaps we might actually learn something about God's wisdom.

And God's wisdom is very simple. He said it. The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. You want to know what is true wisdom? You want to know what is true wisdom?

God's wisdom says fear God. True wisdom, like God's grace, is an alien concept to the natural man.

If we are outside of Christ, we would not know what true wisdom is. The only way to find wisdom is by the fear of the Lord. God. In other words, we have to humble ourselves before God.

[34 : 18] Now that is already a very difficult thing to ask people to do. To tell God that I like wisdom and I need wisdom and I submit myself under God.

God. We need to acknowledge our need and we need to acknowledge our ignorance. And we need to acknowledge and we need to accept the wisdom that comes through Jesus Christ.

You know, the Apostle Paul says that Jesus Christ is the power of God and what? The wisdom of God. That is who Jesus Christ is. He's the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Where can we find wisdom in God? Through, in and through Jesus Christ. That's when we gain understanding. When we, when we submit ourselves to the Lordship of Christ.

When we say, when we say to God, I need to be born again. I need God's wisdom to get anywhere in life. I know that all my learning and all my knowledge is nothing unless I submit myself to the word of God.

[35 : 25] Unless I put my faith and trust in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who came into this world, born in the virgin's birth, died that atoning death on Calvary, Jesus Christ who died on Calvary to take away all my sins.

As one hymn writer puts it, bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place, condemn his stood, seal my pardon with his blood, hallelujah, what a savior.

And then gloriously resurrected on the third day. When we receive that, when we receive Jesus Christ, when we believe on him and humble ourselves under him, that's when we receive wisdom.

That's when we receive God's wisdom. That's when we fear God and receive the wisdom that is Jesus Christ.

And that's when things change. That's when we understand ourselves. That's when we understand who we are. That's when we understand the life that we are in.

[36 : 35] And that's when we begin to live. That's when we begin to be contented with life. That's when we begin to be satisfied with our own lives. And that's when we have peace.

peace with God and peace within ourselves. And that's when we are no longer afraid of death. And that's when we are no longer afraid of judgment to come.

So if you are still outside of Christ, seek the Lord. Remember that the fear of the Lord that is wisdom. Ask God for forgiveness.

Submit to him. Believe in him. Acknowledge your sin. Tell God that I do not want to be your enemy, but I want to be your child. I want to bring honor to your name, to the name of Jesus Christ.

I want to spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ. And when we do that, when you can say as what the hymn writer says, I've heard the voice of Jesus says, come unto me and rest.

[37 : 45] Lay down, thou weary one lay down, thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place. And what? And he has made me glad. Well, do you have this wisdom? You can have it as the gift freely given from God even at this very moment.

God. Acknowledge your lack of wisdom, of God's wisdom, and your need of God's wisdom. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Take it and accept him as the free gift of God.

Well, may the Lord bless those thoughts to our hearts. And we will conclude in singing. God bless God bless service and help God help youj thy profiting.

j Maps bread and get Africa with faith■ gosp