

September 16

Job 31-37

Hi, my name is Marty Barnhart; I am the Director of Ministry Expansion here at Christ Community Church. I am here in China and have the opportunity to do one of our accelerators once again on The Great Wall like I have done previously. Today you have been reading in Job 31-37 and as you know you have now passed through the first 31 chapters and have heard the arguments of Job's three friends.

As you have heard these arguments you may have thought, "man, do I want to listen to these guys and read these guys, are they saying truth?" Don't discount what God has given to you. Remember that this is God's Word and in turn, God has given you truth that he says to you, there are good things that he says to you there are items he wants you to hear which may not fit with the rest of Scripture.

Today, we meet a man named Elihu. Elihu is one of those guys that says, "I was the young guy." He waits till these other three men are finished with their arguments. They condemn Job, they tell Job how wrong he is, how unrighteous he is and Elihu comes in and says, "I am the guy who will tell you what God wants you to know." He says, "I am a guy who has real truth, real knowledge and real opportunity to show you that God has a message for you." So as he begins his argument, he says that there are two ways that God talks to you. He talks to you through dreams, and if he does he reveals that you are a wicked man. Sounds like the old argument again of the other three friends. Second he says that God talks to you through pain and suffering. When Elihu makes these arguments he is trying to get Job to look at God in a bigger picture.

Now we know from reading chapter 1 that Job was a righteous man, an upright man, a godly man not only in God's sight but in the sight of all of the people who encountered him. He prayed daily, he prayed for his kids and was a righteous man in all that he did and all of the things that he said.

As you look at Job's story you have to say, "Elihu, you are not on the right page here." "Your condemnation of Job again is unfounded." Even though you are saying great things and are saying things that are true about God in part, you are still not showing Job truth." So, what do you do with truth like that? I believe we should look at an argument like Elihu's and if you found yourself to have skimmed over some parts, go back reread it again, and take your time to listen to his arguments. Pay special attention to the dream and sufferings part of his speech and listen to what he says about God. A lot of the things he says are indeed true. As Elihu comes to the end of chapter 37 he says that God is a God who even cares him with the lightning and thunder. If you are like me, you may agree that since a little child you may sit right up in bed when lightning and thunder strikes and says, "Wow, that was a big boom when God brings the lightning and the thunder."

In turn, I agree with Elihu that God's power is beyond anything that we may do. What do you do with this today? How do you apply this to your life in this daily accelerator?

First, God is a God of strength and might and sovereignty. He says to us, "Revere me, follow me and I will bless you for my purposes." We know it may not always go easy but it is worth it.

Second, in God and in following God there is righteousness and hope for each one of us. Paul said in Romans 5.1-5: *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

I want you to say today if you are going through trial, "Is this me?" Don't look to Elihu but to God. God has a message for you today. It is a message of saying, "I am trying to refine you, I am trying to draw you, I am trying to show you that there is hope in God and God alone.

I hope this helps. Keep reading, keep in Project 4.4 and know that we are in September now! As you look at September you know we are getting near the end of the year. You are also in a place where you are coming down to the home stretch of the Old Testament.

Stay in it, stay reading. I am Marty Barnhart and this is The Great Wall. This is a beautiful day and if you ever get to China and want to visit it is worth seeing the trip. Have a great day!