

Website Devotions - May

May 1, 2010 Advice

Job 5:1

Call out now: is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn?

Advice is often easy when you are standing on the outside of the problem. Job's friend, Eliphaz, chastens Job and claims God is giving Job what he deserved. Eliphaz warns Job not to ask help from the angels or any "holy ones" of God. His words are partially correct. When we complain about God repeatedly, God seems to withdraw. When we complain to God, God listens and answers our prayers in God's time. For God is good! Just complainers on earth receive the deaf ear when the complaints are about God. Yet, God sends his "holy ones" in motion to sustain and strengthen His people.

Prayer: Counseling Spirit, we thank you for listening to our complaints and moving to answer our prayers in a wise and loving manner. Pray for us the right prayer so that we may be in tune with the will and love of Jesus. Amen.

May 2, 2010 Words of Wisdom

Job 5:2

For wrath kills a foolish man and envy slays a simple one.

Wrath is defined as the righteous anger of God. Wrath is also strong vengeful indignation. Human wrath destroys people and relationships. This wrath kills the person from inside out. This behavior demonstrated the foolishness of the person.

The stupid man might not know God but more so copies the evil behavior of other people.

Forest Gump quotes his mother in the film: "Stupid is as stupid does.?" Forest understood his shortage on the intellectual side

but he didn't need to be a copy cat to understand the integrity of live. For envy only slays the simple person.

Prayer: Creating Father, we celebrate the fact that your love doesn't discriminate but embraces the least, lost and lowly. When our anger turns to wrath, turn us to you and your love. Amen.

May 3, 2010 "Proof of Goof"

Job 5:3

I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.

How can one sense that your friend has goofed in his relationship with God. The "proof of the goof" is in the pudding or the lack of pudding. Job's friend points out to Job that he has watched Job plant foolish goof seeds. Now Job's mistakes have turned him from his friend because Job has fallen short in his life. How easy to judges someone's "goofs" from afar and not relay to the friend the "proof of his goof."

In Christ we are to speak the truth in love to grow to maturity in Christ Jesus. When we sense our own sinful nature, we don't point fingers or we became the proof of our own goof. For none of us are goof proof. Job doesn't deserve the finger pointing. What about you?

Prayer: Lord, your scripture says all have sinned and fallen short of your righteousness. Accept our humble confession of sins as we accept your gracious forgiveness in Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

May 4

Family Album

Job 5:4

His sons are far from safety, they are crushed in the gate, and there is no deliverer.

When we take pictures for our family album, rarely do we highlight the time of trouble and sadness. Job's friend points out the catastrophes that verify to him and Job's neighbors that Job's family album proves that he is far from the Lord. Does the number of disasters to prove one walks with God or not with the Lord? No! As Jesus said, "It rains on the just and unjust." Walk humbly with the Lord in faith and you will understand the peace that passes all understanding.

Prayer: Gracious Savior, we thank you that you do not count our sins but seek us to return to you with our whole heart. For your grace on the cross is not to punish us but to save us. Amen.

May 5

Allusions

Job 5:5

Because the hungry eat up his harvest, taking it even from the thorns, and a snare snatches their substance.

The snide remark! The glaring look when you are not looking! The whispers that decrease in volume but increase perplexity! Most of us have been there and hear them. Allusions allude to an indirect reference to your present condition. Job has not disillusioned that these allusions breed contempt from his friends. The "hungry" and downtrodden feed from the former goodness from God. Does his foreclosed home prove his waywardness from the Lord's favor? Shall we count our disasters or remember that all are caught in the snares of life?

Prayer: Counseling Spirit, when we are downtrodden, make us aware that Jesus suffered the greatest death on the cross for us and by His wounds we are healed. Amen.

May 6, 2010 "Testify"

Job 5:6

For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble spring from the ground.

One family suffered many afflictions and disasters. They asked themselves, "What have we done to deserve all these troubles?" Another man talked to me about how God had showered his life with endless blessings. Although we cannot understand the reason for blessings and afflictions, can we point fingers at our neighbors? What is the real testimony? Judgment is in God's hands alone.

Prayer: Omniscient Lord, when we cannot understand the mysteries of pain and pleasure, keep us mindful of good days and bad days come and pass but you are always present with your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 7, 2010 Sparks

Job 5:7

Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Have you sat around a camp fire and watched the sparks jump into the darkness of the night and disappear? Have you sat on the log next to the campfire and suddenly a "spark" leaps at you? Job's friend is declaring to Job that trouble springs from the person or at the time of Job from the Ugaritic god of the underworld responsible for plagues and lightning. Demonic forces from hell cause troubles. Sparks fly around us and tempt us to see the evil. While God provides the real light and warmth.

Prayer: Embracing Savior, give us the discernment of knowing good and evil without judgment upon on our others. For what is born of the flesh is flesh and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Amen.

May 8, 2010

Innocence

Job 5:8

But as for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause.

Job's friend links Job's afflictions with his lack of innocence. If God's wrath is unleashed with our falling short each time, then we deserve punishment immediately. This worldly misconception points to a vengeful and cruel God. The world's conception falls short of God's abundant love. Jesus said, "I came that you might have life abundant. The cross is God's big eraser and is based on the innocence of Jesus, not our innocence.

Prayer: Forgiving Father, when we, the prodigals, stop and return to you help us hear the sounds of rejoicing. Amen.

May 9, 2010 Awareness Job 5:9

Who does great things, and unsearchable, marvelous things without number!

The truth hurts! The truth helps! The truth frees us to see the "great things" and marvelous ways of God. How many times did our earthly father say, "I want you to stop and notice what you are doing and where you are going"? Take time to marvel at God's grace and "marvelous things without number." Why is God so gracious? Why, even when we are wrong, is God so right in loving us and protecting us from ourselves? How wonderful to be aware of God's presence in His world.

Prayer: Magnificent Creator, when we see the majesty of the mountain or the smallness of the ant, present us with the awareness that we are like Moses on holy ground. Amen.

May 10, 2010 Providence Job 5:10

He gives rain on the earth, and sends water on the fields.

When the drought continued in the dry summer in Nebraska, a wise farmer pointed out that we were one day closer to rain. Clarence's wise words vividly danced in my head as we prayed for rain week after week. When the rains finally came, the farmers rejoiced and stopped attending worship. God gives the rain to water the field and the dryness so that we appreciate the rains. We call this providence.

Prayer: Omnipresent Lord, we thank you for the rains that splash off our faces and the dryness that causes us to appreciate the rains. Keep us mindful that both are necessary for growth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 11, 2010

Richness

Job 5:11

He sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

It is in the "little things" that we see the greatness of God. God's compassion provides peace for the lowly at the right time. God's wisdom lifts the mourner to safety in His arms. Richness often is found in the minds of the "lowly" that know God's love and realize their richness. A tightrope walker meticulously walked across Niagara Falls on a tightrope. The people applauded! He invited them not to applaud but to get on his shoulders and venture across with him.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you lift up the lowly and make the poor rich in your grace. We thank you for the knowledge of your love and the gift of faith. In your name we pray. Amen.

May 12, 2010

"Human Plans"

Job 5:12

He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot carry out their plans.

A little girl was drawing a picture and her teacher asked, "What are you drawing?" She answered, "I'm drawing a picture of God." The teacher responded, "No one has ever seen God." The little girl responded, "I know! That is why I am drawing the picture." Often we believe we understand God's ways and will. We present these facts to friends struggling with their relationship with God. Here Eliphaz points out to Job his wisdom. Yet the God does not always punish or frustrated the plans of the wicked. Evil has its way in our midst. Yet we know who will have the ultimate victory.

Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope. In Jesus' name. Amen.

May 13, 2010

"Evil's Plans"

Job 5:13-14

He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope at noontime as in the night.

Walt Disney's "Peter Pan" is the classic story of the conflict between good and evil. Captain Hook's endless quest for evil shines as an example for each of us. The "Darling Children" are just darling. Yet we don't always see the imaginary and subtle differences between the good and the bad. Evil plans hide in the midst of our daily lives and silently flesh out their goals. God does not always intervene "quickly" or causes "evil plans" to "grope at noontime." Instead, God works his will and power through us as we keep our eyes on Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is discord, let us sow union; where there is darkness, light. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

May 14, 2010

"Phone Booth Theology"

Job 5:15-16

But He saves the needy from the sword, from the mouth of the mighty, and from their hand. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts her mouth.

As a youngster I watched Clark Kent as Superman. How remarkable when evil seemed to be triumphing, Clark walked into the phone booth and donned his "Superman" costume and conquered evil. "Phone booth theology" has existed since Job. God's rescuer comes quickly and conquers the evil foe has been the focus of religions based on magic, not grace. Yes, the Lord protects the "poor" and "needy" to produce hope but God's plan works through the suffering and crucifixion of life to redeem us with the blood of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, make us instruments of your peace. For it is in dying that we are reborn to eternal life. Amen.

May 15, 2010

"The Joker"

Job 5:17

Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

Jack Nicholson portrayed the "Joker" in the Batman movie. This supervillain trickster dressed like a clown. His psychopathic nature and actions unleashed consequences on the good guy. At the time of Job the religious righteous believed that evil's presence meant you were far from God and deserved the consequences. The reason for Job's misfortunes wasn't whether Job was a good man or a bad man. Instead, Job suffered because Satan opposed him. No joke! Satan picks on us to turn us away from God. Satan wants the high card.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for your patience and wisdom. When evil envelopes us, let us not so much seek to be

understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

May 16, 2010

"Suffering"

Job 5:18

For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.

During the escape in the "Poseidon Adventure" when the ship is upside down and a few stalwart venture to the bottom of the ship which is the top of the ship. Did you catch that? At one point when sacrifice is essential the clergyman raises his voice to God and says "I've had to do it all along. Why can't you do something, God?" Here Job's friend points out Job's suffering and blames it on God. Stop the propeller! You have this upside down. God did not cause Job to suffer. The Devil did it. God disciplines to direct us back to Him.

Prayer: El Shaddai, your name means Almighty. For You alone nourish, supply and satisfy your people. Bless us that we may be blessings in the midst of suffering to all who surround us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

May 17, 2010

"Right On!"

Job 5:19

He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you.

Finally, Eliphaz gets it right! When God allows pain to enter our lives, it is not harm us but to make us stronger in our faith and closer to God.

We can "high five" Job's friend for he is right on. If we are into counting our trouble than we need to also count the number of times God rescued us and protected us. God greatest rescue happened on the cross once for all.

Prayer: Lord, you protect us with an umbrella of grace. We thank you for watching over us. Forgive us when we fail to see and acknowledge the many times You have been there for us. Amen.

May 18, 2010

"The Survivor"

Job 5:20-21

In famine He shall redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword.

In the classic, "Saving Private Ryan", Tom Hanks leads a group of men to save one man. Private Ryan's brothers had been killed on different battlefields and he was the lone male survivor of the family.

Our earthly lives are filled with troubles, wars and even death. Yet, God graciously pursues us across the terrains in life to redeem us one person at a time. God sent His Son to earth as the "hidden one" to purchase your life with the blood of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, give us faith to trust you in all circumstances of life. When we feel alone and seem to be the last survivor, open our eyes to the fact that you fulfill your promise to be with us always, even to the ends of the earth. Amen.

May 19, 2010

"Harmony"

Job 5:22-23

You shall laugh at destruction and famine, and you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

While in kindergarten, Mrs. Drummond was blessed with the awesome task of coordinating the entire class in a musical. The audience was to be the PTA parents. For months we worked on "harmony" but the sound didn't come out right. Then, our wise teacher removed one person from the group and celebrated

musical "harmony". Mrs. Drummond made him the director and told him just waves his arms and the band would do the rest. How awesome it was to stand and lead the band that evening. How wonderful to laugh at the disharmony and know that God makes a covenant with us in Christ to bring peace personally and with all nature.

Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of peace. Where there is discord, let us sow harmony; where there is sadness, joy so that we laugh and the midst of sadness and embrace your almighty presence. Amen.

May 20, 2010

"Peace"

Job 5:24

You shall know your tent is at peace; you shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.

Do you remember your first "tenting" vacation? We ventured to New York and the tent was to be our vehicle to save money while seeing the sights. God provided rain and rain and more rain. We were saturated! Our tent at night was not always at peace. Yet God promises peace in the midst of the problems in life. The greatest wealth personally is the "peace of Christ".

Prayer: Prince of peace, we pray for peace for us as individuals, as a nation and as human working together on this planet. As we enter our dwelling place, send your Spirit of peace into our midst. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

May 21, 2010

"Legacy"

Job 5:25

You shall also know that your descendants shall be many, and your offspring like the grass of the earth.

When we look into the heavens at night and see the stars, we can easily sing: "Twinkle, twinkle little star. . ." At the same time we

can remember God's promise to Abraham that his descendants will number with the stars in the heavens. Legacy is more than a word. Legacy speaks repeatedly in volumes. Don't you love how grandparents unfold their pictures? Our legacy often ends abruptly while God legacy of love and grace continues to the ends of the earth.

Prayer: Lord of life, we thank you for our forefathers and mothers who walked the walk with You. As they passed on the legacy of faith, inspire us to pass on your Word and love. Amen.

May 22, 2010

Job 5:26-27

You shall come to the grave at a full age, as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. Behold, this we have searched out; it is true. Hear it, and know for yourself.

I love home grown tomatoes! One summer the Lord blessed our garden with an abundance of tomatoes. I watched with eager expectations as they developed. Our children were young and eager to help with the garden. Then, green tomatoes started to appear on the porch, in the grass and other places. Soon, I was teaching our boys not to pick them until they were red. They told me they didn't pick them. How mysterious! Then, examining one green tomato I saw small teeth marks. Our playful puppy was picking tomatoes. We need to be trained to let the "sheaves of grain ripen in its season" in regard to our spiritual growth and maturity. Job's sadness causes him to not to understand the simplicity of his best friend's advice. Job has listened and is left with resolve.

Prayer: Lord, you search our going out and coming in. You know us better than we know ourselves. We ask for your

counsel as we discern your mysterious presence in this world and our lives. Amen.

May 23, 2010

Job 6:1-3

Then Job answered and said: "Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, and my calamity laid with it on the scales! For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea-therefore my words have been rash.

Sometimes words leave us without words to express our thoughts and emotions. Job cannot express his "grief fully weighed." Do you watch as people talk? How many really listen and permit the other to complete their thought process. Very rarely does the phenomena happen! Then, the grief becomes "heavier than the sand of the sea" for the speaker. Heavyweight strain brings us to our knees and without hope. Then, our words become irrational and "rash" as we futilely attempt to express the grief. One of the greatest gifts in life is the training to be good listeners.

Prayer: Lord, lend us your ear as we pray. Listen to our hurts and hope, our praise and ponderings, our lips and our hearts. At the same time, keep our minds and hearts open to the words and meanings that we listen to daily. Amen.

May 24, 2010

"Points to Ponder"

Job 6:4

For the arrows of the Almighty are within my; my spirit drinks in their poison.

Today is our son's birthday! I remember his first cry and working with Gerry with Lamaze to alleviate or block out the pain of child birth. Soon her pain was gone when Gerry held Michael in her arms.

Job's pain was beyond what he ever imagined. Its intensity was illustrated as "arrows of the Almighty" dipped in "poison." Arrows

are symbolic of judgment or wrath. Job assumed that his goodness justified God's goodness and punishment was justified by guilt. Was Job being punished unjustly or unjustly looking at God for vindication and/or righteousness? Job thought God caused the troubles when the troubles were from Satan.

Prayer: Lord, when we look into a mirror, we see only the reflection. When we look into our lives, we see the reflection of your love and grace. We thank you for the pain of new birth that move us forward in our spiritual life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

May 25, 2010

"Noises"

Job 6:5-7

Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass, or does the ox low over its fodder? Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them; they are as loathsome food to me.

She barked and groaned! Her walk was restless and her snort more and more frequent. The number of noises and sounds increased with the apparent impatience. Our dog sitting companion was hungry and was speaking her discontent in her language.

Job's noise vocalizes not his hunger but his hunger for meaning. Life without flavor is vanilla ice cream without the hot fudge sauce. How we loathe the worthless fillers! How we rejoice in the tasteful events in life.

Prayer: Lord, you create all things with a purpose. For even the animals understand the importance of your goodness. We pray for insights as we travel through life that we may sense the situation importance in our lives and the lives of others. Amen.

May 26, 2010

"Weakness"

Job 6:8-9

Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the things that I long for! That it would please God to crush me that He would loose His hand and cut me off!

The Urban Dictionary defines "at the end of your rope" as a rope thrown to someone in a difficult place as in deep water or the edge of cliff. If there is not enough rope to reach the person, then there is no more help available.

Job was at the "end of his rope" and asks God to "crush him" and end his miserable life. In our weakest moment we usually turn to God with that one desperate plea as Job did. When life is out of control, we remember that God is still in control.

Prayer: Omnipotent Lord, you have power over all the universe and wisdom to move planets from their axis. We acknowledge that when our life is out of control we need you. Here our prayer in our weakness and use your wisdom to answer our prayer. Amen.

May 27, 2010

"Tongues"

Job 6:10

Then I would still have comfort; though in anguish I would exult, He will not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

Job did not want to die because of his pain! Instead Job wanted to die so that he would not use words to defame and blaspheme the "Holy One". God's name was indeed first and a reason for praise during even the worst times.

When we sit with head down over food that doesn't interest us, we pray meaningless words like "God is great! God is good! Let us thank him for this tofu. . .green beans. . . Job's words teach us to be mindful of our tongues.

Prayer: Omniscient Lord, you hear every word and know every thought. Keep the most dangerous member of our body, our tongue in check. May we use our tongues to praise you for your providence and protection. Amen.

May 28, 2010

"Respect"

Job 6:11-13

What strength do I have, that I should hope? And what is my end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh bronze? Is my help not within me? And is success driven from me?

Barry stood at the bottom of the pit of life. His wife left him and took the kids! His job was in jeopardy and the house near foreclosure. All that was left was his life. His friend had deserted him. Who was he? Where would he go?

Job slumps over drained of all hope at the bottom of the pit of life and he. . .and he. . .looks. . ? Although Job cannot trust his friends, can we trust our greatest Friend?

Prayer: When we sing, Lord, "what a friend we have in Jesus" keep us mindful of the bedrock of friendship is unconditional love. Cement our hearts with the lyric from the song, Jesus Loves me this I know. Amen.

May 29, 2010

"Ostrich Principle"

Job 6:14

To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

The "ostrich principle" thrives in society. If we stick our head in the ground and don't hear the cry of our friends, we are free. If we stick our heads in the ground and don't see the problem, then we really didn't witness the event. If we stick our head in the

ground and no longer recognize the person as a friend, then, we are no obligated.

Job's words cry out from the other side of the hole in the ground. Even if the person in peril is not a friend, they deserve sympathy and kindness. For birds of a feather need to stick together!

Prayer: Lord, send compassionate people to our aid. And send us with compassion to the aid of people we don't know well. Bless us so that we don't ostracize others as they ostracize us. Amen.

May 30, 2010

"Life Savers"

Job 6:15-16

My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away, which are dark because of the ice, and into which the snow vanishes.

Kurt and Mike rode their three wheelers to the edge of the stream swollen by the rains. They trusted their instincts and their knowledge of the stream as any 13 year old. Let go! Soon they found themselves engulfed in the undercurrent and swept away.

Life's streams often are well known to us but change with the weather and conditions. Job learns to not trust friends for they forsake you in dry conditions and not throw us a life saver when drowning. Thanks God for dear friends.

Prayer: Lord, bind us together in close relationships with our friends and You. Carry us through the disappointments hand in hand believing in your ultimate love for us. Amen.

May 31, 2010

"Seasonal"

Job 6:17-18

When it is warm they cease to flow; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. The paths of their way turn aside, they go nowhere and perish.

Job likens former friends who ran in the opposite direction to escape their friendship and his dilemma as the stream of life. They vanish when it is hot and their paths to the stream perish. During the summer only the true senior softball players turn out. When temperatures reach 100+, the number of players dwindle. Are they smart? Are they sane? Should they be loyal? When they return, they find empty ravines left by seasonal rains. Our Lord is a lord for all season and calls us to be the same.

Prayer: Lord, you are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. We thank you for your love in every season of life. For you never desert or forsake us. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.