

“Hear This”

Job 34:1-37

Our text is from verse 16, but Elihu uses the term “hear” or “hearken” five times in this chapter. He is addressing Job’s three friends specifically, and any others that may have been there to hear him as he addressed Job.

Some that have written on the book of Job have spoken rather highly of Elihu, based on the fact that Job doesn’t respond to him, and because God doesn’t threaten him as He did the three friends of Job, but I don’t believe we ought to give that much credit to this man. In this portion of his response to Job he is more than unkind – in fact, he advocates that God keeps up this trial until the end of Job’s life, simply because Elihu thought He should. Everything that Elihu said was based on a misunderstanding of Job, and a misinterpretation of what he said, and what he meant by what he said.

The main emphasis I gain from this chapter is to be careful what we hear, and how we hear it. Elihu may have only heard part of what Job said to his three friends, and filled in the rest, or he may have been there from the beginning, but only heard what he wanted – either way, he was wrong. But, don’t be too critical of Elihu – for we do the same thing today. We hear only what we want to, or we only hear portions of statements and we fill in the blanks. There are some great statements here regarding God, but it is said in relation to why Elihu thought Job was wrong. Again, as has been the case so many times before – what was said of Jehovah was right, just didn’t apply to Job.

So, when we listen to people:

I. BE CAREFUL WHAT WE RECEIVE – VS. 1-9

- A. Elihu addresses the friends of Job and says that "the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat" – he's saying that they were to listen to Job and receive what he said with the intention of doing good – vs. 1-4.**
- B. However, that's not what he did – he received what Job said, but then he interpreted what he said as being self-righteous, as if Job had put himself above God – vs. 5-7.**
- C. Elihu then, because he stopped listening when what Job said made him angry, he quotes Job as saying something he did not say and based what he replied on something Job didn't even say – vs. 8-9.**
- D. We do the same today – we will often hear what people say, but when we receive it in the ear it somehow gets misunderstood in the brain, and when we speak of it, it isn't at all what was meant, and many times isn't at all what was even said.**
- E. We're speaking of more than just gossip – gossip is saying things, often true things, with the intent to cause harm or make ourselves look better. This was done more out of anger and disgust with Job that he would have the audacity to ask God, "Why?"**
- F. Be careful how you receive what others say!!**

II. BE CAREFUL HOW WE RELATE – VS. 10-28

- A. By that is meant how we relate God to the situation, and how we relate what we receive to what was meant.***
- B. Elihu is right in what he says about God, and how God views man – what he did that was wrong was assume Job was wrong in what he said – and because of that, all that Elihu said about God was misapplied – it didn't relate to the situation.***
- C. In verses 10-12 it is stated that God cannot do wickedness, and that what happens to man is his reaping what he sows (vs. 11) – that is true, a principle found elsewhere in Scripture, but the way that Elihu is using it here would lead us to believe that everything that happens to a believer is directly in relationship to what he has done, but the whole story of Job shows that not to be the case. We do reap what we sow, but there are going to be things that happen just because we live in a sinful world – not because we have sinned.***
- D. Verses 13-15 show the absolute sovereign authority of God over the world – a relationship that is absolutely right.***
- E. Verses 16-19 we find Elihu upset that Job accused the kings and princes of being wicked and he thinks that that is part of***

why Job is suffering – in Elihu’s mind, God wouldn’t allow someone to be king if he was wicked – a false view of course, but again, a misapplication because of a wrong relational application.

F. Elihu comes back to the reaping what is sown principle in verses 20-28 and he makes some very true statements regarding how God deals with man, and the relation our actions have upon how He deals with us.

III. BE CAREFUL HOW WE REACT – VS. 29-37

A. Understand that God is in control of all that happens, and that He will guide in the affairs of man – vs. 29-30.

B. Knowing this, if we are being chastised, as Elihu (as well as Job’s three friends did) felt Job was, then the best reaction we could have would be that of confessing the sin, forsaking it, and living right – vs. 31-32.

C. Elihu reacted in such a way as to make himself look good and Job look wicked. He manipulated what was said by Job to mean what he wanted with the intention of putting himself on top – vs. 33-34.

D. He then wishes Job’s pain and suffering to continue because he thought Job was so wrong – vs. 35-37.

E. Be so very careful how you react to other people’s situation!!

Conclusion: How do we receive the words of other people? Not just, how do we "hear," but how do we receive it? Then, how do we relate to them what it is we received, and how do we relate to others what we received from them? The most telling thing will be our response to all of that. When it's all said and done, this may be the most telling sign of our spirituality and may be the most important way of showing we are a Christian.

A pastor had finished preaching and after the service a lady approached him and stretched out her hand. The woman told the pastor, "Pastor, I want to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Pastor, you have convinced me of what Christ has done on Calvary."

The pastor was touched to see this woman saying these things as tears flowed down her cheeks.

The pastor then asked the woman, "Please tell me, what really convinced you of the reality of Jesus in your life?" The lady looked the pastor in the eyes and said. "It wasn't your preaching." The pastor answered, "If it wasn't the sermon, what was it that led you to Christ?"

"Pastor, a few weeks ago I was in the line of people waiting to say hello to you, and in that line, I was behind a man who criticized you in front of everyone. I heard the mean things he said to you."

"Do you want to know what convinced me of Christ? You didn't respond with harsh words- you just smiled and shook his hand. You acted with such kindness and patience." "I saw the real love of Christ in you. "So many preachers talk about love, but on that day you actually lived it."