

**Title: When Life is Unfair and God Seems Not to Care (Part 2)**  
**Number: 0222Job24:1-25(25)**  
**Text: 24.1-25**  
**Central Idea: *Trust and obey for there IS no other way***  
**Date: February 20, 2022**

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**{Read Selected Text: 24:1-12 / Prayer}**

*When Life is Unfair and God Seems Not to Care (Part 2)*

3 wks ago we spent an hr. in chapt. 23 . . .

**[i] These 2 chapters stand as a unit**

Wanted to cover both of them in 1 message, but that was not to be. It's also been 3 wks. since I've been in t/pulpit which adds further distance between what we covered in chapt. 23 & what we are yet to cover in chapt. 24. Brief review is in order.

**[ii] Chapter 22**

If I can go back to our introduction, to part 1 of this series, back to Jan. 30th (3 wks. ago). I reminded you that Eliphaz, t/oldest of Job's 3 comforters, had just finished addressing Job in chapt. 22 ==>

Chapter 22 we called ==>

*Disorder in the Court: The Last Words of Eliphaz*

Disorder in the court bc Eliphaz continues his legal assault against Job (so much of t/book is metaphorically pics a courtroom setting).

The Last Words of Eliphaz bc this is t/last we hear of him in t/book.

As far as chapter 22 is concerned ==>

*Central Idea: You cannot apply right what you know wrong*

Eliphaz, like his 2 friends b4 him, says lots of things that are true. Prob is w/application.

E. takes much of what is true on face value and misapplies it to Job.

A common theme among t/friends is their counsel that Job needs to Return to God (he needs to repent).

Eliphaz, 22:23 “If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored...”

### **[iii] Chapter 23**

In chapt. 23 where we were 3 weeks ago, Job declares

“Return to God? How can I do so when I can’t even find Him.”

We talked about how common it is in t/life of t/believer to feel that God isn’t there, esp. during times of affliction.

“Believers sometimes find themselves in terrain where they feel abandoned and God seems to be absent. It is not virgin territory. Job pioneered it for us long ago.” [Layton Talbert, 133]

### **[iv] That’s what we see in Job’s response covering chapters 23-24**

G. is absent // Cannot be found. To make matters worse, He doesn’t seem to care. Job paints a pic of (AA) Absence & Apathy on G’s part.

I summarize these 2 chapters under the heading ==>

*“When Life is Unfair and God Seems Not to Care”*

2 Parts: Part 1 (chapter 23); Part 2 (chapter 24).

## **[v] Trust and Obey for there IS no other way!**

If you were here 3 wks ago I told you about t/19th c. hymn “Trust and Obey” & how that song came to mind as I studied these 2 chapters.

It was a song inspired by t/words of a young man who was converted during 1 of D.L. Moody’s revival meetings in Chicago. That new convert, reflecting on t/change wrought in his life, said, “I’m not quite sure. But I am going to trust and obey.” Those words formed t/basis of t/hymn, which includes t/line: “trust & obey for there’s no other way.”

I changed that line a bit to reflect a key thought for us that come out of chapters 23-24. I think it’s an obvious implication for sufferers, esp. during those times when God seems absent:

*Trust and obey for there IS no other way*

Phillip Yancey, in his book *Disappointment with God*, tells a true story about a friend who “went swimming in a large lake at dusk. As he was paddling at a leisurely pace about a hundred yards offshore, a freak evening fog rolled in across the water. Suddenly he could see nothing: no horizon, no landmarks, no objects or lights on shore. Because the fog diffused all light, he could not even make out the direction of the setting sun.

“For 30 minutes he splashed around in panic. He would start off in one direction, lose confidence, and turn 90 degrees to the right. Or left—it made no difference which way he turned. He could feel his heart racing uncontrollably. He would stop and float, trying to conserve energy, and force himself to breathe slower.

Then he would blindly strike out again. At last he heard a faint voice calling from shore. He pointed his body toward the sounds and followed them to safety.

Reflecting on the story of Job, Yancey concludes:

“Something like that sensation of utter lostness must have settled in on Job as he sat in the rubble and tried to comprehend what had happened. He too had lost all landmarks, all points of orientation. Where should he turn? God, the only One who could guide him through the fog, stayed silent.

“The whole point of [Satan’s challenge] was to keep Job in the dark. If God had delivered an inspiring pep-talk—‘Do this for me, Job, as a Knight of Faith, as a Martyr’—then Job, ennobled, would have suffered gladly. But Satan had challenged whether Job’s faith could survive with no outside help or explanation. When God accepted those terms, the fog rolled in around Job.

“God ultimately ‘won’ The Wager, of course. Though Job lashed out with a stream of bitter complaints, and though he despaired of life and longed for death, still he defiantly refused to give up on God: ‘Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him.’ Job believed when there was no reason to believe. He believed in the midst of the fog. [Phillip Yancey, *Disappointment with God*, 203-204]

As believers we're to persevere during t/tough times, thru t/fog. May not understand, but we can walk in obed. to t/light of God's W. May feel God is absent, but we can trust. We walk by faith, not by sight (or perceptions). *Trust and obey for there IS no other way*

**[vi] As far as chapter 23 is concerned . . .**

1st 3 points of our outline tells t/story

***I. Job Believes He Cannot Find God (23:1–9)***

23:3 “Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat!”

Job is in t/fog. He can't sense where God is.

Like a lost swimmer, stuck in a fog, fearing for his life, w/no compass

23:8–9 8 “Behold, I go forward but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; 9 When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.”

Question I asked of us is this ==>

***Will I Trust God when I Don't Perceive Him?***

Last week I was talking to Lois about t/frustrations of not living up to what you know. Of knowing that you are dead to sin and alive to righteousness (Rom 6) // if you walk by t/power of t/HS you will not carry out t/desires of t/sinful flesh (Gal 5)—yet falling prey to a lack-luster life where t/air of heaven seems like it's a million miles away.

Like Paul who reminds us in 1 Cor. 13:12 ==> For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Job sees dimly. As we so often do.

Yet, like t/words of Paul, Job is “fully known” - he admits that in v. 10 “But He knows the way I take.”

## ***II. Job Believes He is Innocent (23:10–12) -***

He is! In spite of t/groundless accusations of his friends, Job did nothing to deserve his many sufferings!

23:11-12 11 “My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. 12 “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

It all seemed so unfair.

Question for us ==>

### ***Will I Trust God when Life Seems Unfair?***

I say “seems unfair” because that’s our perception.

We don’t know t/whole story. We don’t know why God has ordained things to be as they are. At 1 level we can say “Life is unfair.” Perfect equity / equality cannot be found in this life. We have a problem that t/world refuses to acknowledge: sin.

Another level we have to ask, “What’s fair anyway?” All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious standard. Fair, justice from God’s perspective (only 1 that counts) means everyone gets judged for their sin. That’s fair. We all lose; we all end up in hell getting t/punishment we deserve.

You want fair? You want mercy? I’ll take that which I don’t deserve: X’s righteousness, rather than was I do deserve, Judgement.

### ***III. Job Believes God’s Sovereignty is Capricious (23:13–17) -***

We saw in those vv. that Job rightly affirms that God is sovereign; “He does what His soul desires” (13); He works out that which He has appointed or ordained for Job (14). This is His decree, what He has decided, predestined to do before t/creation of anything!

But that doesn’t mean He’s capricious. Job seems to think so, that’s why he is terrified of G. (15).

Question we asked ==>

### **Will I Trust God in His Wise Sovereignty?**

NOT fatalism (like t/false theology of Islam)

god of fatalism is impersonal

God of Bible is personal

god of fatalism is arbitrary/capricious

God of Bible works in keeping w/His nature, perfectly holy, good, and consistent.

god of fatalism is to dreaded

God of Bible is to be trusted — loved.

Again, listen to t/words of Spurgeon ==>

"There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. . . . [C.H. Spurgeon from a sermon on Matthew 20:15. Cited by A.W. Pink,

The Attributes of God, 32-33]

*Trust and obey for there IS no other way*

Trusting and obeying presuppose perseverance (central mark of Xn)

Brings us to chapter 24 and Part 2

#### **IV. Job Believes the Wicked Triumph (24:1–17) - *Will I Trust God when Evil Triumphs?***

**A. Job asks a question followed by several examples that he thinks prove his point**

##### **1. Question is in verse 1**

**1 “Why are times not stored up by the Almighty, And why do those who know Him not see His days?**

**a. What in the world does that mean? What is Job saying?**

**1 “Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days? [NIV]**

Why doesn't God hold court so that the righteous can appeal to Him - especially regarding the crimes of t/unrighteous?

## **2. Job gives a few common examples of these crimes in vv. 2-17**

We are going to go through these quickly . . .

### **a. The godless are driven by greed (v. 2)**

**2 “Some remove the landmarks; They seize and devour flocks.**

T/unethical would move property boundary markers to enlarge their estate, robbing land from others while also stealing their herd, their livelihood.

Practice was condemned in ANE legal codes of t/times, as well as later in the Mosaic Law (Deut. 19:14; 27:17).

#### **(1) This was probably a land-grab by the rich & powerful**

They would wield their power to influence t/community leaders to give their approval. IOW this isn't a neighbor moving t/fence in t/middle of t/night, but a powerful man, like Job, getting t/other powerful men to do so.

This is like having t/power to get politicians to do your bidding, something we see today. This is powerful corporations like Amazon and Facebook; big Tech // Pharma operating in keeping w/their godless agendas.

I'm a capitalist. I believe capitalism best reflects t/economy of Script. But like Constitutionalism, it needs a moral absolute to work.

Take away that moral absolute and all that's left is corruption.

**b. The godless exploit the vulnerable (vv. 3-11)**

That's the over-arching principle here. Those that are easy prey are used as human tools to achieve the furtherance of the powerful. We really see two things here: 1) Lust for money; 2) Exploitation of the less advantaged (those that cannot adequately defend themselves).

**(1) Primary target was widows and orphans**

**3 “They drive away the donkeys of the orphans; They take the widow’s ox for a pledge.**

**(a) Here we see the two most vulnerable classes of that culture**

Widows and Orphans. Their meager means for survival taken away as payment for a debt. This was condemned by legal texts of t/day & later by t/Mosaic Law:

Deut 24:6 “No one shall take a handmill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.

You can't take something as a payment for debt that's essential for life itself.

**(2) Secondary target: the poor - which included widows and orphans (vv. 4-8)**

**(a) Look at how the poor are treated in verse 4**

**4 “They [wicked] push the needy aside from the road; The poor of the land are made to hide themselves altogether.**

**(b) As a result they are driven to desperation (5-6)**

Forced to scavenge for food like wild animals ==>

5 **“Behold, as wild donkeys in the wilderness They [needy] go forth seeking food in their activity, As bread for their children in the desert.** 6 **“They harvest their fodder in the field And glean the vineyard of the wicked.**

**(c) Verse 7: They have no suitable clothing**

7 **“They spend the night naked, without clothing, And have no covering against the cold.**

**i. This is what Eliphaz accused Job of doing in chapter 22**

22:6 **“For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked. [not literally naked, but of their outer garment]**

**(d) Verse 8: No suitable shelter**

8 **“They are wet with the mountain rains And hug the rock for want of a shelter. [they dwell in rock country hoping to find a cave for shelter]**

**(1) Unfair labor practices including child abuse (vv. 9-11)**

9 **“Others snatch the orphan from the breast, [not “babies” but juvenile children forced into slave labor] And against the poor they take a pledge. [back to verse 3]**

10 **“They cause the poor to go about naked without clothing, And they take away the sheaves from the hungry.**

Sheaves = grain / food.

May be that t/hungry here were employed to transport the sheaves, like human mules. Starving, carrying food, but forbidden to eat it.

What we also see in v. 11 ==>

**11 “Within the walls they produce oil; They tread wine presses but thirst.**

One writer declares that ==>

“[Verses 5–11 give] one of the most graphic pictures of the plight of the poor found anywhere in the Bible. See them foraging for food like wild animals in the desert (vv. 5–6), freezing because they have no clothing (v. 7), drenched by the rain because they have no houses to live in (v. 8), weeping because their children have been snatched from their arms until they pay their debts (v. 9), and forced to work for the rich and yet not allowed to eat any of the food that they harvest (vv. 10–11).” [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*]

**c. The afflicted cry out - but to deaf ears!**

**12 “From the city men groan, And the souls of the wounded cry out; Yet God does not pay attention to folly.**

IOW - God does not hear.

Exodus 6:5 “Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.

But these are people w/o a covenant. Why doesn't God hear them?

**(1) Asaph in Psalm 73 felt similarly . . . until . . .**

Psalm 73 (snippets): Surely God is good to . . . those who are pure in heart! But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling . . . For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. . . . always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight  
Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end.  
Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to  
destruction. How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly  
swept away by sudden terrors!

What you see now is not the end of t/story. God will make amends in His time.

***IV. Job Believes the Wicked Triumph (24:1–17) - Will I Trust God when Evil Triumphs?***

That's hard to do. We rightly have indignation against tyrants.

A large group of gospel ministers wrote an open letter to Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, objecting to the godless tyranny that nation has experienced of late: from laws that criminalize the gospel to draconian COVID restrictions. Yes, there's a time for civil disobedience // to stand for what's right.

Always a time to proclaim biblical truth. That's what we will do here, w/o compromise.

Evil may appear to triumph, but does not win in t/end.

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,  
Even the wicked for the day of evil.

**3. Verses 13–16 give further examples of what godlessness looks like — what we see demonstrated in our cities (murder/adultery)**

**a. Verses 13-16 are all triplets with a common theme of darkness as wickedness and light as righteousness**

**(1) What do I mean by “triplets?”**

I mean that the vv. are structured in a pattern of threes:

13      **“Others have been with those who rebel against the light;  
They do not want to know its ways  
Nor abide in its paths.**

14      **“The murderer arises at dawn;  
He kills the poor and the needy,  
And at night he is as a thief.**

15      **“The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,  
Saying, ‘No eye will see me.’  
And he disguises his face.**

16      **“In the dark they dig into houses,  
They shut themselves up by day;  
They do not know the light.**

**(2) Verse 13 forms a heading**

IOW - this is the over-arching principle:

- 13      **“Others have been with those who rebel against the light;  
They do not want to know its ways  
Nor abide in its paths.**

That is, t/godless reject t/light. They refuse to walk in t/ways of G.

Proverbs 2:13 warns about “those who leave the paths of uprightness  
To walk in the ways of darkness;”

**(a) Murderers and thieves (14)**

- 14      **“The murderer arises at dawn;  
He kills the poor and the needy,  
And at night he is as a thief.**

**(b) Adulterers (15)**

- 15      **“The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,  
Saying, ‘No eye will see me.’  
And he disguises his face.**
- 16      **“In the dark they dig into houses,  
They shut themselves up by day;  
They do not know the light.**

### **(3) Common theme of Darkness and Light in Scripture**

John 3:20 “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

Ephesians 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

**17 “For the morning is the same to him as thick darkness, For he is familiar with the terrors of thick darkness.**

That is, it’s all t/same to t/wicked. They see no diff. between good & bad // righteousness & evil. They have no absolute standard that they can go to. That’s what we see today! Men can be women; marriage can be between members of t/same sex. “Light is t/same as dark!”

2 Cor. 6:14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

In Gen. God separated t/light from t/darkness. That’s a precursor to what He will do in t/final judgement: separate t/children of light from t/children of darkness.

“On this depressing note Job ended his description of the wicked, who appear to go unpunished because of an apathetic God.” [Robert Alden, The New American Commentary]

***IV. Job Believes the Wicked Triumph (24:1–17) - Will I Trust God when Evil Triumphs?***

## **V. Job Believes Righteousness will Eventually Prevail (24:18-25) - *Will I Trust God in His Timing?***

### **A. These last 8 verses are widely contested by scholars**

Not only is t/Heb lang. here challenging

(true of t/entire book - rem. t/Heb. in Job may be t/most diff. in t/OT)

### **1. Big question is, “Who’s speaking in these verses?”**

#### **a. Three basic options**

##### **(1) Job is quoting the three friends (“This is what you said”)**

ESV puts t/words in vv. 18-24 in t/mouths of t/friends, maybe Eliphaz: “You say,” (not in t/Heb.).

24:18 (ESV) “You say, ‘Swift are they on the face of the waters; their portion is cursed in the land; no treacher turns toward their vineyards.

[^]

##### **(2) This is one of the 3 friends directly speaking**

Rem., — 3 cycles of speeches whereby each “friend” confronts Job: Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar. In this 3d cycle of speeches, Zophar says nothing. So some scholars think these are t/missing words of Zophar.

I don’t think this is Zophar’s missing 3d speech.

I think that he just opts out of round 3 — esp. since he is the youngest— he seems to get exhasporated in chapt. 20.

We think he gives up & does not speak again.

### **(3) This is Job continuing to speak (how I take it)**

#### **(a) Wonder, “Why is this an issue?”**

##### **i. Because vv. 18-25 are an abrupt change in thought**

We’ve gone from ==>

#### ***IV. Job Believes the Wicked Triumph (24:1–17)***

Verse 12 ends by saying that God is ambivalent to these crimes. He’s seems unconcerned at this injustice.

All of a sudden you get to v. 18 & there’s an about face.

#### ***V. Job Believes Righteousness will Eventually Prevail (24:18-25) -***

##### **B. Now look at what we have ==>**

24:18–21 18 **“They [wicked] are insignificant on the surface of the water; Their portion is cursed on the earth. They do not turn toward the vineyards. 19 “Drought and heat consume the snow waters, So does Sheol [grave] those who have sinned. 20 “A mother will forget him; The worm feeds sweetly till he is no longer remembered. And wickedness will be broken like a tree. 21 “He wrongs the barren woman And does no good for the widow.**

##### **C. Then you get to verse 22 and you have t/supplied pronoun “HE” — but who’s the “HE” (cf. v.21)**

Appears that now God is in view (many translations put the word “God” in v. 22 but that’s implied, not in t/Hebrew text) ==>

## 1. I think that's right ==>

22 **“But He drags off the valiant by His power;**

[G. judges those t/oppressor w/His power ]

**He rises,** [picture of God's active nature; he stands up demonstrating action] **but no one** [wicked] **has assurance of life.** [their lives are in His hands]

23 **“He provides them with security, and they are supported;**

[God allows them to seemingly prosper]

**And His eyes are on their ways.** [He's watching; judgement is coming]

We see that explained in verse 24 ==>

24 **“They are exalted a little while, then they are gone; Moreover, they are brought low and like everything gathered up; Even like the heads of grain they are cut off.**

### *V. Job Believes Righteousness will Eventually Prevail (24:18-25) -*

#### **D. Why the sudden change in Job?**

Is that so inconsistent that these words cannot possibly be his? Can someone go from pessimism to optimism in a moment? YES!

Remember, this is a soliloquy. Job is speaking his thoughts out loud. He's also greatly suffering. When you are really hurting & lamenting - sure! you can go from one extreme of thought to another.

### **1. Not at all unlike Asaph in Psalm 73 (saw that earlier)**

For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . .

When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight  
Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end.  
How they are destroyed in a moment!

It could be that Job in v. 18 has his “sanctuary of God” moment.  
He’s now looking at things from an eternal perspective.

### ***V. Job Believes Righteousness will Eventually Prevail (24:18-25) - Will I Trust God in His Timing?***

Romans 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room  
for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I  
WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.

24 **“They are exalted a little while, then they are gone;**

**E. Job closes this section with a challenge**

25 **“Now if it is not so, who can prove me a liar, And make my  
speech worthless?”**

## ***When Life is Unfair and God Seems Not to Care***

*Trust and Obey For There IS No Other Way*

### **Thoughts . . .**

#### **1. God's Justice Delayed Demonstrates His Mercy**

“Justice delayed is justice denied” [MLK] — may be true in an earthly sense, but not in a heavenly one.

That God doesn't drop the proverbial hammer demonstrates his patience.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is . . . patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

“Justice is not necessarily for now. Retribution for moral evil and reward for moral excellence are guaranteed only in the age to come.”  
[Sam Storms]

Storms also noted that ==>

“Our responsibility to obey God is never suspended on whether He shows himself. We are to be holy even when He remains hidden. [Sam

Storms, *Biblical Studies: Job* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016), Job 8–37

*Trust and Obey For There IS No Other Way*

## **2. God is Never Absent Regardless of How you Feel**

C.S. Lewis, “I don’t believe in God because I see Him. But through Him I see everything else.”

“The God of Israel, the Savior, is sometimes a God that hides Himself, but never a God that absents Himself; sometimes in the dark, but never at a distance.” [Matthew Henry]

## **3. Life may be unfair but that does not mean that God is.**

If life were fair, Jesus would never have died.

Do you want fair? Do you want mercy?

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.