

## The QBC Daily Nugget March 2, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOB 16:1-2** - Then Job answered and said: "I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are you all.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **MERCIFUL OR MISERABLE.** Humans, even Christians, are a “wishy washy” lot. Whether dealing with ourselves or others, we have our high days and not so high days. There are those high days where we are heavenly-minded living out the strength of the Lord’s joy. Our walk with the Lord is vibrant. Our compassion and commitment to others are evident with real sacrifice of time and energy in His name. Then we get those “refrigerator type” days. Life seems cold or at least chilly. Spiritual disciplines, instead of warm encounters with God, are either missed or just cold mechanics not making much difference in our lives. And compassion and commitment to others? They seem to have gone into a deep freeze somewhere. Wishy-washy is a good description of us. Job had friends like that.

In the beginning of Job’s severe testing, his friends proved their worth to him with their compassion and mercy. They were merciful comforters. I am sure Job welcomed their company in his misery – “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him. And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great” (**JOB 2:11-13**).

Notice three things a good friend and comforter does as modeled by Job’s friends. First, they made time for their hurting friend – “they made an appointment together to come and show him sympathy and comfort him.” We will never be good comforters for one another unless we do it on purpose. A passing, “I will pray for you” on a Sunday morning is fine, good, and convenient. Upsetting our personal schedules for a hurting brother or sister is fine, good, and inconvenient. The difference between our ministry and ministry in Christ’s name will be how available we make ourselves for others. If our ministry to one another only happens as it fits into our schedules, we might want to re-think and re-define our definition of ministry. It isn’t what we see in the life of our Lord. Another thing Job’s friends did, making them merciful comforters, is that they were willing to pay the cost for their friend – “And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights”. That isn’t to say we need to move in with a hurting brother or sister for a week, but we must be willing to pay the cost of time investment. Hurting souls won’t always be healed instantaneously. They may need us for more than an hour over coffee some evening. Finally, Job’s friends didn’t rattle off a bunch of advice – “and no spoke a word to him”. Sometimes a hurting soul just needs to talk and it will often be rambling. The good comforter doesn’t get impatient, and then interrupt with a ton of advice. That approach often proves more hurtful than helpful. Job’s friends started well. It didn’t last. Read today’s reference. Job’s friends go from merciful comforters to miserable comforters. How did this happen? Here’s one thought. They grew tired of Job’s “complaining” revealing their impatience. Job was hurting, talking, and it wore out his once patient friends. Patience in ministering to others isn’t a human quality. It is a Spirit-given virtue. Attempt to minister to others without a close walk with the Lord and our patience won’t last. Hurting people need a ton of patience and it is beyond our ability to have such. Fortunately, God comforts us with patience so we may comfort others with patience (**2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-5**). As we seek to comfort one another, what type of comforters are we?

PRAYER: “Lord, help my ministry to others to actually be Your ministry to others through me.”

QUOTE: “The quality of our comforting others relies upon the comfort we know from God.”