

Worship Material
Where are you, God
Material from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 13th October

Begin with an opening prayer

Our ever-present God,
we pray that as we worship
you will reveal yourself to us.
By your grace forgive us
and call us back to you when we are lost.
In the fire of your Holy Spirit, warm us,
by the wind of your Spirit, move us,
with the love of Jesus, fill us.
Amen.

Read Job 23:1-9,16-17

Bible notes

This is a bleak passage with little obvious hope. In preaching, this would need to be acknowledged. There may well be some hearing the text who are in a similarly bleak place. The text needs to be handled with particular care, with hope offered from other sources. The Hebrews text could be helpful here (Hebrews 4:15 especially), as could the Gospel. The verses from Job come after the third round of speeches from Job's 'friends' and immediately after Eliphaz's indictment of Job (one commentator describes Eliphaz as the 'kindest of the three friends'). But even for Eliphaz, Job is plainly marked out as a sinner. So, he concludes that Job should turn back to God (i.e. repent) and accept God's instruction. If he does, Eliphaz believes God will restore Job's prosperity. For Eliphaz, piety and prosperity are inextricably linked. He cannot comprehend Job's greater piety, which holds on to both his innocence and to the God whose actions are incomprehensible. Convinced that he has done nothing wrong, Job longs for the opportunity to present his case directly before God. Alongside this we have Job's sense of despair as God proves to be elusive. Alongside Job's physical suffering there is now clear evidence of mental anguish too in the form of fear (v.16) and severe depression (v.17).

A prayer to conclude

Holy God, we thank you for your living Word,
which discerns the intentions of our hearts.

We thank you for your Word incarnate, Jesus,
who has suffered and been tested as we are.

Give us the humility to ask for the grace and mercy we need in difficult times.

Amen.