

# Comforting the Miserable

April 29, 2012

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Job 16.1-6

## The Character of Job

- ❖ Job was a contemporary of Abraham (from same area)
  - ✧ Terah lived to 205 / Abraham lived to 175 / Job lived to at least 185
- ❖ He was a very wealthy and successful man (**Job 1.3**)
- ❖ He was blameless and upright / feared God and shunned evil (**Job 1.8; 2.3**)
  - ✧ He was unique in this ~ “**best of the best**” (**Job 1.8** – “**none like him**”)
- ❖ Job was God’s champion of sorts (**Job 1.8; 2.3** “**Have you considered**”)
  - ✧ He resisted temptation better than Adam (**Job 2.9–10** – wife)
  - ✧ He endured suffering like Jesus (**Job 1.21; 2.10**)

## The Court of Heaven

- ❖ In **Job 1 and 2** occurs an event unique in Scripture
  - ✧ We witness two discourses between God and Satan
- ❖ We can’t go into detail but let’s note 4 things:
  1. God brings up Job both times (**Job 1.8; 2.3**)
    - ✧ Job is a thorn in Satan’s side at both times
    - ✧ Note that God’s words do not change ~ they are identical
    - ✧ But Satan’s must change ~ his first prophecy failed (**Job 1.11; 2.5**)
  2. God rules over Satan and controls his bounds (**Job 1.12; 2.6**)
  3. Satan challenges God to attack Job ~ but God allows Satan to do so
    - ✧ **III**: Boettner’s “**Reformed Doctrine of Predestination**”
      - “**Satan is a tool in the hand of God**”
  4. God and Satan have different objectives in Job’s life

## Calamity Strikes

- ❖ **Read Job 1.13–19**
  - ✧ Sabeans take oxen and donkeys ~ Fire destroys sheep and servants
  - ✧ Chaldeans take camels ~ Great wind kills his sons and daughters
- ❖ “**While he was still speaking**” **vss 16, 17 and 18**
  - ✧ Satan used shock and awe in his attack ~ tried to overwhelm his integrity
  - ✧ Satan wanted Job to know this attack was sanctioned by God

## Xition: How did Job respond?

## Job Responded . . . Very Well

### ❖ Read Job 1.20-22

- ✧ Job immediately recognized and accepted this was of God
- ✧ And he responded as few people do . . .
- ✧ **Job 1.22** ~ “Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong”
- ✧ **Job 2.10b** ~ “Job did not sin with his lips” / But did Job sin in his heart?
- ❖ **III**: Tom’s pastor when barn wall broke legs / “Lord Jesus, give me strength”

## Job’s Three Friends Mean Well

### ❖ Read Job 2.11–13

#### ❖ We note 6 things here:

1. They inconvenienced themselves ~ “each came from his own place”
  2. They talked to one another ~ “made an appointment together”
    - ✧ “It is good manners to be an unbidden guest at the house of mourning”
  3. They purposed to “mourn with him, and to comfort him”
  4. They “did not recognize him” ~ ashes, boils and anguish distort features
  5. They joined him in his grief
    - ✧ “wept”, “tore robes”, “put dust on heads” and “sat in ashes”
  6. They sat with him for “seven days and seven nights”
- ❖ These three men are very good friends . . .
- ✧ But they are unprepared to deal with Job’s grief and despair

## Job Cries Out in Despair

- ❖ He curses his day of birth
  - ✧ **Read Job 3.1** ~ “Job . . cursed the day of his birth”
- ❖ He wishes he’d died at birth
  - ✧ **Read Job 3.11** ~ “Why did I not die at birth?”
- ❖ He longs for death
  - ✧ **Read Job 3.20–21** ~ “Why is light given to him who . . long[s] for death?”
- ❖ Job had now given himself over to depression and despair
- ❖ *Had God abandoned him?* / The text doesn’t say . . . but I think so . . .
  - ✧ Jesus was tested in the wilderness ~ but afterwards comforted
  - ✧ Jesus was abandoned while on the cross ~ but afterwards elevated to glory
  - ✧ God tested Job . . . God tested Jesus . . . God tests us . . .

## Xition: How did Job’s 3 Friends Respond?

## Job's Friends Responded . . . Poorly

- ❖ All three of Job's friends are probably older than him ~ Eliphaz the eldest
- ❖ Eliphaz immediately criticizes Job
  - ✧ **Job 4.2** ~ He assumes Job will not welcome his words
  - ✧ **Job 4.5** ~ He minimizes Job's grief without addressing it
  - ✧ **Job 4.6** ~ He accuses him of misplacing his faith and confidence
  - ✧ **Job 4.7–9** ~ He implies Job's children deserved what happened
- ❖ This is an awful attempt to comfort a grieving friend

## Job Responds in Moderation

- ❖ **Job 6.2–4** ~ He admits "my words have been rash"
- ❖ **Job 6.8–9** ~ He repeats his desire to die
- ❖ **Job 6.14** ~ He instructs his friends / "kindness should be shown"
- ❖ **Job 6.24 – 25a** ~ Job tells them to use facts in their rebukes
- ❖ **Job 6.27** ~ He accuses them of misconduct
- ❖ **Job 7.7b** ~ He is seriously depressed and assumes he's going to die
- ❖ **Job 7.11** ~ This is why he feels justified in speaking candidly

## Bildad Rubs Salt in Job's Wounds

- ❖ **Job 8.3–4** ~ Bildad refers to the death of Job's children as an act of justice
- ❖ **Job 8.5–6** ~ If you would only repent and turn to God He would comfort you

## Job's Bitterness Leads to Sin

- ❖ **Job 9.1–13** ~ He tells of God's might
- ❖ **Job 9.14–20** ~ And his own smallness by comparison
  - ✧ **Job 9.22-23** ~ He accuses God ~ "It is all one thing" & "He destroys the blameless and the wicked" & "He laughs at the plight of the innocent"

## Chapters 11 through 15

- ❖ Zophar attacks him mildly in **ch 11**
- ❖ Job eloquently describes God's power in **ch 12** through **ch 14**
  - ✧ Theme verse given in **Job 13.15** ~ "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Even so I will defend my own ways before Him."
- ❖ **Read Job 15.1–13** ~ Eliphaz responds with a bitter attack against Job

## Xition: Let's reread our text – **Job 16.1–6 . . .**

## We Can Help

- ❖ I included **verse 6** for a reason . . . **Read v6**
  - ✧ Neither silence nor speaking aids the sufferer
  - ✧ We friends of the grieving have a purpose to fulfill . . .
  - ✧ Time alone is not the ultimate healer ~ But the love of friends and family
    - ◇ We are like an ointment allowing fast and complete healing

## Always Remember 2 things !

- ❖ Remember what has happened
  - ✧ These men responded poorly to Job's attitude and despair
    - ◇ *"What did they expect ~ to discuss business as on earlier visits?"*
- ❖ Remember why you're there
  - ✧ These men went to mourn with Job and comfort him
  - ✧ Their initial actions and 7 days of silence was a great start
    - ◇ But they did not know what to say . . . so they argued with him . . .

## What Not to Say or Do

- ❖ Don't speak in platitudes ~ Probably our biggest weakness
  - ◇ *"God means this for your good . . ."*
  - ◇ *"God will not test you beyond what you're able . . ."*
  - ◇ *"All things work together for the good to those that love God . . ."*
  - ✧ Not helpful ~ they already know and believe these things or they don't
    - ◇ They don't need to hear theological concepts – no matter how true
- ❖ Don't ignore the people or the topic
  - ✧ This is sadly what many people do . . .

## What to Say . . . 4 Things . . .

1. Address the issue directly ~ **"I heard that \_\_\_\_\_ died?"**
  - ✧ This will show them that they can discuss it with you if they want
2. Express sympathy ~ **"I'm so sorry to hear this . . ."**
  - ✧ What's happened is not just a fact . . . It's potentially a crisis . . .
3. If you are at a loss for words, say that . . .
  - ✧ **"I'm not sure what to say, but I want you to know I care."**
4. Ask them **"Do you feel like talking about it?"**

## Xition: Let's reread our text – Job 16.1–6 . . .

## What to Do . . .

- ❖ Respond to a personal attack with love, grace and patience
  - ✧ Even in good times we're to endure unfair attacks ~ how much more so now?
  - ✧ III: Aunt's health and cousin's facebook post
- ❖ Comfort and console them
  - ✧ They need to be hugged / to be cried with / to reminisce
  - ✧ They need to be protected from the witless and the clueless
    - ◆ III: Zia's operation ~ as Dad I should have comforted him
- ❖ Take the initiative in offering practical assistance
  - ✧ Don't try and run their life – but . . .
    - ◆ Run errands for them ~ Clean up ~ Do the dishes
    - ◆ Help with funeral arrangements
    - ◆ Assist with visitors or callers
    - ◆ Watch their children or pets
  - ✧ Don't expect to be called ~ If you're a friend just go . . .

**May God make us all compassionate comforters of the grieving . . .**

## Glory to God

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,  
And to present you faultless  
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

25 To God our Savior,  
Who alone is wise,  
Be glory and majesty,  
Dominion and power,  
Both now and forever.  
Amen.