

Having considered Eliphaz's first speech (4-5), we come this morning to begin our consideration of Job's response to Eliphaz (6-7). And as we do so, we must keep two things in mind.

(1) Job's response is largely a reaction to Eliphaz. By this I mean, it's evident what Eliphaz said wounded Job. His words are still ringing in his ears. (2) Job's response is ultimately directed toward God. In fact, midway through chapter 7, Job speaks directly to God Himself (thus, while he starts with Eliphaz, he ends with God – as Job's problems are not ultimately with his friends but with God).

Chapter 6 has four parts, and I intend to briefly consider each one and then summarize the chapter with three observations.

- I. Job's Defense (vv1-7)
- II. Job's Desire (vv8-13)
- III. Job's Disappointment (vv14-23)
- IV. Job's Demand (vv24-30)

I. Job's Defense (vv1-7)

1. The first thing Job does in responding to Eliphaz is, he offers a subtle defense of what he said in chapter 3.
2. Now, the defense that Job provides concerns the grief he experienced—notice three things about this grief.
3. (1) The degree of his grief, v2—"Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, and my calamity laid with it on the scales! For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea."
4. Job uses an illustration to illustrate how much grief and calamity he had—if they were weighed on one side of a scale and all the sand of the sea on the other scale, his grief and calamity would exceed the sand.
5. Now I don't know how much sand exists on all the beaches of the world, but I suggest it would be very heavy.
6. Job is basically saying, there's no human way to measure the amount of grief and calamity he's known.
7. The amount of calamity and the amount of the grief that resulted from that calamity, are immeasurable.
8. The Hebrew word rendered "grief" in v2 brings together two basic meanings—vexation (NAS) and anguish (NIV).
9. Depending on the context it's translated differently—it can refer to anger or pain—here I think it's right to render it grief.
10. The English word grief refers to a deep sense of sorrow or anguish—to experience pain or agony of soul.
11. Only man grieves—good angels don't grieve (they only rejoice), bad angels don't grieve (they only hate).
12. Scripture describes God as grieving but that must be properly understood; God does not properly grieve.
13. But this is not true of man—in fact, grief is one of the most common emotions or passions known to man.
14. Furthermore, not only can the human soul experience grief, but it can experience deep and prolonged grief.
15. The pain and anguish associated with the death of a loved one, prolonged sickness, disappointment, or betrayal.

16. (2) The cause of his grief, v4—"For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; my spirit drinks in their poison."
17. While a cause of his grief is his calamity (v2), from v3 we learn its ultimate source—the arrows of the Almighty.
18. Now again, statements like v3 must be interpreted as Job's experience—he felt as if he were God's target.
19. In other words, Job fully understood that God was at the helm of all his grief, afflictions, and calamity.
20. All the pain and sorrow he was experiencing, ultimately and finally, came from God (though indirectly).
21. I say indirectly because God mediated these afflictions through Satan and evil men as secondary causes.
22. But Job understood what many today fail to understand, that behind these secondary causes was a first cause.
23. Because God is the first cause of all things, Job understood that in some sense, God was shooting the arrows.
24. But here's the problem—the imagery Job uses not only suggests God is involved but that He's against him.
25. And to the extent Job thought or suggested this, he obviously was wrong—God was not against Job.
26. This seems to be suggested in the next phrase, v4b—"My spirit drinks in their poison (which is deadly)."
27. This is clearer in v4c—"The terrors of God are arrayed against me"—as if the terrors of God were an opposing army.
28. (3) The result of his grief (vv5-7)—while the result of his grief is found in vv5-7, it's first found in v3—"therefore my words have been rash."
29. In light of my heavy affliction and grief, my words or response has been rash—he's thinking about chapter 3.
30. The Hebrew word rendered "rash" (NKJV) literally means "to drink or swallow quickly" and thus rashly.
31. It here refers to reckless or careless speech—speech offered quickly or rashly without thought or care.
32. Verse 5 uses two illustrations from the donkey and ox to communicate the same point—animals don't complain when they have food.
33. Verses 6 means, who finds delight in flavorless food—if you take away the salt it's difficult to enjoy.
34. V7—"My soul refuses to touch them; they are a loathsome food to me"—he refuses to eat flavorless food.
35. Verses 5-7 illustrate the same point—when we lack certain things, we speak rashly and find little delight.
36. This is why Job spoke rashly because there was no grass or fodder in the barn; there was no salt for his food.
37. John Gill—"Job himself, when he was in prosperity, made no complaints, as the donkey brays not, and the ox lows not, when they have both food enough; but now, being in distress, he could not but utter his sorrow and trouble, as those creatures when in lack of food."

II. Job's Desire (vv8-13)

1. (1) What he desired (vv8-10), v8—"Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the thing that I long for."
2. By this he means death, v9—"That it would please God to crush me, that He would loose His hand and cut me off."
3. V10—"Then I would still have comfort; though in anguish I would rejoice—that is, even if I died in great pain, I would be better off than now."
4. Even if God killed me in the most painful way, I would rejoice; death is preferred regardless of its cost.
5. Job would undergo such pain and anguish, if it meant he would die and leave this world and find comfort.
6. The latter part of v10 at first seems out of place—"He will not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."
7. Job is appealing to his obedience as a reason God will answer his prayer to die; he did not conceal the words of the Holy One.
8. To "conceal" the words of God is to hide them—to ignore them—to fail to practically show them in life.
9. Instead of concealing His words he revealed them—he embraced them for himself and taught them to others.
10. Steven Lawson—"Job's one consolation was that he had not denied the words of the Holy One. Unlike his wife, he knew he had remained true to God. Job had not cursed God or rejected his words, which, in essence, would have been a denial of the Lord. So he preferred to die now, knowing he had kept the faith."
11. (2) Why he desired it (vv11-13), v11—"What strength do I have, that I should hope? And what is my end, that I should prolong my life?"
12. In other words—"Because I lack the strength to bear these afflictions, why should I continue to live?"
13. V12—"Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh bronze?"—both stones and bronze are strong.
14. They are both able to hold a structure up; for example, foundation stones are able to hold up a large house.
15. Scripture often speaks of brass as a symbol of strength and power (thus, Christ's feet are described as brass).
16. His point is rather simple—he wanted to die because he lacked the strength to bear under his afflictions.
17. Verse 13 has been variously interpreted—it likely means—"Am I not supposed to look within for help and strength? But when I do, all success is driven from me."
18. Or perhaps he means—"As I look outside of me at my wife and friends, I find no help at all! And thus, I'm left to look to myself. But there's no help there either!"
19. Either way, it's evident Job lacked any true source of strength to help him in his time of sorrow and need.
20. Simply put—Job felt as if he could continue no longer—he knew he lacked the strength to bear his afflictions.

III. Job's Disappointment (vv14-23)

1. In this section, Job turns his attention to Eliphaz and his other friends—it's actually a rebuke or correction (and it has three steps).
2. (1) He states a fact, v14—"To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty."

3. Here Job confesses, he forsook the fear of the Almighty—he admits he crossed the line with his rash words.
4. This doesn't mean that he forsook the fear of the Almighty in the full sense, but only in a smaller sense.
5. It's as if he said—"Even though I stumbled in my response, Eliphaz should have shown me kindness."
6. Those in the midst of affliction need kindness and not confrontation—they need mercy and accusations.
7. (2) He illustrates that fact—from vv15-20 he gives an extended illustration to prove Eliphaz's ineffectiveness.
8. V15—"My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away."
9. He describes a stream that runs with cold water in the winter, but dries up and becomes dry in the summer.
10. V19—"The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope for them. They are disappointed because they were confident; they come there and are confused."
11. That is, just as these thirsty travelers were disappointed by no water, so Job was disappointed by no help.
12. V21—"For now you are nothing, you see terror and are afraid"—far from helping they became afraid.
13. We are not told what they were afraid of—it's likely they were afraid of God (that is, afraid for themselves – afraid what happened to Job may happen to them).
14. (3) He draws a conclusion (vv22-23)—in these 2 verses Job asks Eliphaz 4 short rhetorical questions.
15. All 4 of them say the same thing—"Did I ever ask you for help?" "Did I ever look to you for assistance?"

IV. Job's Demand (vv24-30)

1. In this final section, Job intensifies his speech to Eliphaz, and he provides 3 demands (teach me, look at me, and vindicate me).
2. (1) Teach me (vv24-26), v24—"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand wherein I have erred."
3. I understand these words as sarcastic or cynical—that is—"Show me where I have erred, if you can."
4. V25—"How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove?"—if you spoke rightly your words would have force.
5. V26—"Do you intend to rebuke my words, and the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind?"
6. Instead of hearing him out, they rebuked his words and treated them as wind (as if they were empty or meaningless).
7. (2) Look at me (vv27-28), v27—"Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless, and you undermine your friend. Now therefore, be pleased to look at me; for I would never lie to your face."
8. Here Job appeals to his evident integrity—he knew if Eliphaz was honest, he would admit Job's integrity.
9. (3) Vindicate me (vv29-30)—there's a sense in which Job's intensity increases throughout the chapter.
10. Thus, in vv29-30, we come to the most straightforward of Job's words thus far—he now removes the filter.

11. V29—"Yield now, let there be no injustice! Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands!"—admit I am righteous.
12. Brethren, Job is not only an example of grief and suffering, but he's also an example of confident assurance.
13. Job knew that his righteousness still stands! That is, he himself stood in his righteousness or integrity.
14. V30—"Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?"—that is, "Wouldn't I know if I was wrong in what I've said to you?"

V. Three Observations

1. This chapter portrays Job from various perspectives—he's grieving, he's confident, he confrontational.
2. Obs.1—A good conscience provides comfort to the soul—through all of his suffering he kept a good conscience.
3. Two things are necessary for a good conscience: first, it must be washed in Christ's blood; second, it must be bound to Christ's word.
4. (a) A good conscience and prayer, v10—"He will not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One."
5. Job had confidence in prayer because he obeyed the word of God—he had a good conscience toward God.
6. 1Jn.3:22—"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."
7. (b) A good conscience and suffering—even though he was in anguish, he had a good conscience toward God.
8. Job 4:6—"Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope?"—there's comfort in having a good conscience.
9. (c) A good conscience and death—Job wanted to die (even a painful death), because his conscience was good.
10. Let me illustrate this point like this—think of a Christian man who's very old, sick, and in great pain.
11. And while he's submissive to God's sovereign will, he finds himself oftentimes asking God to take him to heaven.
12. This is similar to Job—he realizes that he won't have any true comfort as long as he remains in this world.
13. And yet, death can be a scary thing—Scripture refers to it as the last enemy—what can give us comfort?
14. Job faces the prospect of death with comfort and joy—why? Because he had a good conscience toward God.
15. Can you imagine a person, who lived a life contrary to the word and ways of God, facing death with confidence?
16. Albert Barnes—"If there has been a consistent profession of religion, it will give unspeakable consolation and confidence when we come to die. If there has been concealment, and shame, and shrinking back from a profession of religion, there will be shame, and regret, and sorrow."
17. Obs.2—Afflictions are given to deplete our strength—we know that Job was ultimately afflicted for his good.
18. And of all the good intended in Job's afflictions, we learn from vv11-13, afflictions depleted Job of strength.

19. This is really a basic lesson that God has to teach us every day—you and I will never make it by ourselves.
20. This is classically illustrated in Paul—if you remember, do his exalted privileges—"a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure."
21. 2Cor.12:8—"Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me."
22. 2Cor.12:9—"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect (complete) in weakness.'"
23. 2Cor.12:10—"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."
24. Regardless whatever this thorn in the flesh was, notice while Satan had a hand in it, it came from God.
25. It could have been some recurring temptation, or else possibly some severe physical or mental affliction.
26. But the purpose of the thorn is very clear—it was intended to remind Pau of his own personal weakness.
27. We oftentimes hear Christians say—"God will never give you more than you can handle"—and this is right in one sense (1Cor.10:13).
28. But it's very wrong in another sense, for in one sense everything God gives us is too much for us to handle.
29. That's kind of the point—every affliction we receive and every trial we endure, is to show us our weakness.
30. This is true for Christians but it's also true for non-Christians—"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."
31. Obs.3—Job shadows or typifies our beloved Savior—Christ knew deep grief and upheld His righteousness.
32. (a) He knew deep grief—never was there a human soul that experienced more grief than our beloved Savior.
33. Matt.26:38—"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death"—that is, Christ also longed for death.
34. Isa.53:4—"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"—that is, the grief and sorrow due our sin.
35. The grief and sorrow we deserve to experience for all eternity—He bore and carried these in His life and especially death.
36. And so, here in Matthew 26 our Savior is in Gethsemane, and the sin of the world was being laid on Him (He was beginning to feel the weight of these sins and the grief they caused).
37. (b) He did not conceal the word of God, Ps.40:10—"I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your loving-kindness and Your truth from the great assembly."
38. This means, our Savior did not conceal the words of the Holy One, but He proclaimed them to others.
39. Nothing could keep Him from concealing the words of His holy Father, but He revealed them all (verbally and practically).
40. Ps.40:11—"Do not withhold Your tender mercies from Me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve Me."
41. (c) He upheld His righteousness—even though His endured sufferings and accusations, He could say—"My righteousness still stands."
42. Thus, there's a sense in which the righteousness that Job had, was one and the same with the righteousness Christ had.