

March 20

Scriptures: Read Job 5 & 6

Key Verse: "...let there be no injustice... my righteousness still stands." (Job 6:29)

Overview

Eliphaz continued his discourse of judgment upon Job, and although his words still contained truth, he misunderstood Job's condition. He made general statements based upon his experience and limited knowledge of God, but that is exactly what it was, "limited." Under usual circumstances, however, his counsel would be very wise and helpful; but it was of no help to Job. Indirectly, Eliphaz called Job foolish by relating the circumstances of a fool, which were the same as Job's (5:2-4). He persisted by insisting that adversity and affliction come as a result of sin, and the intensity of the suffering was dependent upon the greatness of the sin, implying that Job's sin was indeed great. Eliphaz's assumptions were wrong. Prosperity does not necessarily follow repentance; neither does it come in proportion to one's piety. All we have depends on God's good pleasure.

Eliphaz encouraged Job to appeal to the mercy and justice of God "who does great things, and unsearchable, marvelous things without number" (5:9). If Job only repented and sought the Lord, then he might be restored, suggested Eliphaz. Therefore, he encouraged Job not to lose hope. Whatever Job might have done that was sinful, Eliphaz assumed, was now being punished, that it might lead to Job's repentance. Eliphaz tried to explain Job's tragedy by saying that God was chastising him; therefore, he warned Job to "not despise the chastening of the Almighty" (5:17), since it was possible for God to once again bless him and give him back all that he had lost, if he would only stop insisting on his innocence and come to repentance. Job had come from the same school of thought as Eliphaz, but no matter how hard he tried, he could not figure out where he had erred (6:24). However, as the reader is aware, Job was blameless at the time of his calamities (2:3b).

For Job and his friends, the ultimate blessing of God upon their lives was to live a long, happy life and have many children and descendants (5:25-26). In God's own timing, He would indeed restore Job and give him these very things; but it was not to come as a result of repentance (although Job did later repent because of his lack of faith), rather as a result of Job's passing the test and withstanding Satan's temptations. Thereby, the ultimate result would be the glorification of God.

Job responded in his own defense, for it was as though he had been put on trial. He continued his lamentation (from chapter three), but now he gave justification for the words he had spoken (6:1-13). By using animals as examples, he expressed that his complaints were not without good cause (6:5). His sufferings were something he detested, just like loathsome food (6:6). Job finally verbalized that his suffering was from God, who had come against him as an enemy; at least Eliphaz's theological discussion helped Job come to this recognition. In actuality, his suffering came from the attacks of Satan, but nonetheless they were allowed by God, and God was still in control. Job's continued belief in the sovereignty of God made him turn to God in prayer, that He might grant his request, which was still a longing for death to end his misery.

Job addressed his friends by expressing his disappointment in their lack of understanding and sympathy, as well as their judgmental attitudes which made him feel even worse. He had not invited them nor had he asked for their help, but still they came, only to be disappointed, confused, and made afraid because of Job's mysterious misfortune (6:20-23).

Since they were with him, however, Job asked them for concrete help, not mere speculations that would bring no answers or accusations that had no proof. They did not believe his pleas of innocence, and so they were accusing him of being a liar (6:30). Job had to plead for them to stop and show justice, saying, "my righteousness still stands" (6:29). Job's spiritual condition was truly between him and God alone, but at least he had the strength and confidence to stand up to his accusers.

Prayer

Lord God, 'You are our Sovereign. We trust You in everything that happens to us, whether we judge it to be good or bad. May we, like Job, not conceal the Words of the Holy One but faithfully communicate Your truth, O Lord.