

## March 25

**Scriptures:** Read Job 16 & 17

**Key Verse:** “Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself.” (Job 17:3a)

### Overview

The verbal battle continued with greater force and intensity. Job rebuked Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar for their insensitivity. He sarcastically called them “miserable comforters,” for their words did not comfort him in the least, but were useless, irrelevant, and increased his anguish. They had come to Job with the purpose of comforting him, but this did not happen (2:11b). A comforter is supposed to release a burden from another, but Job’s “comforters” added to his burden. Job said, in effect, “If you were in my place, I could do to you as you have done to me, but I would not. I would be a true comforter who would strengthen you and ease your grief.” Job had also accused them of being “worthless physicians” (13:4), because they made a terribly wrong diagnosis and did not help to bring healing.

The Holy Spirit is the greatest Comforter (or “Helper”). He heals the soul and the troubled heart with the peace of Jesus (John 14:26; 16:7), and Jesus is the Great Physician who, when turned to for help, will always properly diagnose the condition of one’s soul and bring healing to the wounds. It is no wonder that Job could only turn to God. His misunderstanding friends had cold hearts and could never be of help. They could not relate to Job’s suffering, since they had never suffered like Job. Only his understanding God was to be his comfort and strength. Those with hearts that seek the Lord and who have been comforted by God, and have related to the sufferings of Christ, can in turn give true comfort to others (2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11).

Job was still suffering and had not yet received any divine comfort. So he bitterly accused God of mercilessly attacking him and turning him over to be abused by the wicked. Job’s “miserable comforters” were some of those who had abused, scorned, and mocked him. Yet, through it all, Job defended his innocence (16:17). The hope of his vindication was all he had left. Since Job thought he might die without being vindicated, he asked “O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry [of innocence] have no resting place”, like the spilt blood of Abel that cried out his innocence and God heard (Genesis 4:10; Hebrews 12:24).

Job had wept before God and humbled himself, which he expressed by wearing sackcloth and putting dust on his head; yet it seemed to him that God had not taken any notice. Job knew, however, that God was his only Witness who had been watchful and registered everything that had transpired. Thus God had the evidence to prove his innocence (16:19). Once again, Job longed for a mediator to plead his case before God (16:21); but where was he and where was God? Job asked despairingly, “Where then is my hope?” Time would tell that God was indeed merciful, just, and attentive to Job’s cries. God also provided an Advocate. Only Jesus could supply Job with what he needed (1 John 2:1; Hebrews 9:24).

Even more hurtful than Job’s material loss was his loss of respect, for he was once the most prestigious man. But now those much less honourable than himself spat upon him and made him

a byword (17:6). He took notice of this treatment (17:2), and it caused him additional pain. Job blamed God for hiding their understanding so that they could not see the truth, but he took comfort in the thought that God would not exalt them (17:4).

Job had asked God to vindicate him in the future (16:18-19), but he also desired God to be his guarantor in the present time, that he might have some token of the vindication yet to come. He longed for the surety with God that only He can give. He longed to be in a covenant relationship with God that would be solemnized by the striking of hands together. So he expressed his desire for God “to put down a pledge for me with Yourself” (17:3). Only God could be his guarantor in the present day, for the witness and evidence to vindicate Job was in heaven, so then the pledge, or surety, must be divine. Likewise, Jesus is our surety for the better covenant that God initiated from above (Hebrews 7:22).

### **Prayer**

O God, Your Holy Spirit is known as “the Comforter.” Fill us today with Your Spirit so that we will truly be friends to those who need comfort. Keep us from being judgmental, like Job’s friends. Make us an encouragement, a strengthening to those in need.