

The Tasteless White of an Egg

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Bible Text: Job 6:6

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I would like you this morning to open your Bible in the book of Job and I would like you to read with me from the sixth chapter of that book and I will read to you beginning in the first verse.

I have to inform you that this is the oldest piece of literature of which we have knowledge in the Bible. I inform you that we do not know who wrote it. We only know that he could not have written it without special revelation given to him by God because he can account for the times that Satan went before God and the conversation that went on between the two of them.

I can also tell you that if there is a historical location in which this particular story would rest, it is somewhere, I am told, between Genesis 11 and Genesis 12. That is the period historically in which this is recorded.

There is two interviews between Satan and God. There are at least two or three conditions for which there is great sorrow in his heart, but he is considered as being a real person. He is mentioned with Noah and with Daniel and so he is on the level, according to the reference given to him, he is on their level. And it does us worthwhile to read what this thing happened to him.

Two chapters give us that little piece of historical background. Chapter three he speaks and we look at what he has to say or what he has to ask.

Then we get two chapters in which a young Eliphaz responds to his question. And then finally in chapter six he is responding to Eliphaz.

With that in mind, let me read the words for you. It states that:

But Job answered and said, Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!¹

¹ Job 6:1-2.

What he is asking is, “I wish there was a weighing scale that could be used as evidence. I would like to be included on one side what I have done to deserve this trouble. I would like to go on the other side the affliction that I have had to face. And I wonder how the scales would balance.”

In verse three:

For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up [or draineth] my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder? Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?²

It is my purpose, with the enabling of the Spirit, I trust, to be able to define for you what Job’s response to Eliphaz is. He has had a severe affliction that has come to him. The first thing that we should do, I suppose, is always look at the vocabulary and see if there is anything there that we can find to give us definition. But when we do the word “egg” is used in the Hebrew only once in the inspired revelation. And this is the one time in which it is given.

When I go into the New Testament I notice the word in the Greek in Luke’s gospel chapter 11 and verse 12 it says, “if he ask for an egg will he give him a scorpion?”³ So, therefore, there is no mystery about the egg. The egg is as we would consider anything. There is one other—when I tried to take the word “white” to find it in the Old Testament I have one other reference, but I really don’t know if I should use it. I am saying that only because you are going to be leaving here and going to lunch and I don’t want to cause you to have any trouble at the lunch table. But let me tell you what it is. It was when David had gone to the king of Gath and he was pretending to be insane and he let froth come out of his mouth and drip down onto his beard and that is the only other time this word is used.

So we don’t get any help, really, from them. But I want to do what he is asking for. I would like to get the weighing scales. I would like to take this man and put him on one side and look at this afflictions on the other side and see if we can determine whether or not it is valid and reasonable to assume that he would face this kind of affliction.

First, let me look at the man. If you go into chapter one and you look in verse one it says, “that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”⁴ I ask you. Can you get any other dimensions? Isn’t that complete? There is no question about this man as he gives the information to us, but that he is perfect, he is upright. He is one that fears God. He is one that eschews evil. There is nothing I can look at in this life

² Job 6:-6.

³ See Luke 11:12.

⁴ Job 1:1.

according to that that would give me any reason to believe that he had fallen out of favor with God.

Look at his grandeur. In chapter one verse three, “this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.”⁵

In what way we would consider the greatness it may not be equivalent in our standard or in our social habit, but it tells me in verse two regarding his family that “there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.”⁶ And that was considered worthy in his day. In those days they did not have a government agency that took care of elderly people. And elderly person was attended as far as his needs were concerned by his children. And when you have seven sons and you have three daughters you have whatever package gives you security for the age that is coming ahead when you may need them to give you some assistance.

And then look at his fortunes, chapter one verse three. “His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household.”⁷

If I count the 7000 sheep and I only get the great household I am led to the conclusion it is a superlative. There was a vast number of attendants that were occupied in his household so that that all becomes a part of the grandeur of this man.

Let me go from what may be the externals and look a little at the internal in his guidance in chapter one verse five.

“Job rose up early and offered burnt offerings... for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”⁸

It wasn't his personal need that brought him to the altar morning by morning. You could have been somewhere at the center of that ranch and you could be sure about it by a certain time before the sun has come up that man would go out of his house and would make a way to an altar, would bring a sacrifice to God and would pray that God would accept the sacrifice on behalf of his children in case, without verbalizing the word in their heart they might have cursed God.

Can you find a fault with that man? Is there any reason to believe that it is appropriate that what happened to him had really taken place?

Let me look at the attack. But now look at it. I have got to remind you it is given to us in sequence. And I believe that that is not a matter of minor importance. I want you to notice at the same time the location. I would like you to notice at the same time the

⁵ Job 1:3.

⁶ Job 1:2.

⁷ Job 1:3.

⁸ Job 1:5.

timing. It is a vast ranch. And wherever these events are occurring at his ranch, there has to be somebody that escapes to bear the news and that person has to be able to get to the company of Job at a specific moment in time. And how long it would take a divine providence obviously has conditioned things so that they happen exactly like this.

First it was a problem with the Sabeans. I have that in chapter one verse 15. They came and they took the oxen and the asses. These were a nomadic group. These were people who were just Bedouins that roamed around in northern Arabia and they took opportunity whenever it was afforded to them to take what didn't belong to them and only the servants were killed. The animals were all taken and he was unable to do anything about that.

But in what they had taken it was the oxen and the she asses, but it was just like in our day where the men and the machinery and the same night disappeared and one large portion of his stock is taken away from him.

The second thing that happened is worse because you notice in chapter one and in verse 16 that there were 7000 sheep. And 1000 sheep were not destroyed by some human crazy person [?]. It was destroyed by God. It was a fire of God that came down. Apparently it was one of those kinds of nights in which there are flashes of thunder and the noise of thunder and lightning and all of that going around him so that on this particular occasion they are after his 7000 and there are lightning bolts that come down to hit the ground, as it were, and they start traveling at the speed of bullets and heading directly to 7000 sheep, right to the heart with enough voltage that it just burned them to a crisp. But, you see, it is different because it came from heaven.

Now look at the third thing that has happened in verse 17. Now we have the Chaldeans. We believe that they were previous relatives to Abraham. They are in three bands and it is probably because the camels were kept in three different or separate locations. It suggests that they were literally swarmed by their prey. And, again, unharmed, but their absence was a problem to Job. He had no way to chase the culprits. This was his transportation. This was the only means by which if there is any personal power for him to recover, it would require these camels for that to be able to happen. So, in a sense, it is even worse that what happened before that.

Now look in verse 18 in chapter one. The young men. It suggest that they were really young people in the Hebrew. They are assembled in the house of the oldest son and they are eating and they are drinking. And, again, because of the awful weather conditions that were there some force came along, picked up the house by the four corners and lifted it up and then smashed it down to the ground until not one single person within it was saved.

And in the moment when his fortunes were taken from him step by step with an increased degree of severity, it finally came down to the sons and daughters in his home.

You see, everything that happened before this was measured in quantity. This is measured in quality. Was it fair that it should happen like that? But it is not over.

If there is trouble of the spirit and trouble of the soul, there certainly is of the body. And Satan comes back before the Lord. And although there was none like him in the earth, perfect and upright, God said to Satan, “You moved me against him without a cause.”

There was nothing he did to deserve it. And yet Satan said to him, “But, you see, you have got a hedge about that man and I am not able to touch him physically. And while you may have taken fortunes away, life may give him the opportunity of recovering all of that. But what about sons and daughters? What about himself?”

Well, when it comes to himself Keil and Delitzsch suggest to us that it was a form of elephantitis. If you have seen the elephant put his foot down it looks like there is no bone. It is just muscle or fat or whatever that just lets him... and it was something similar to that that happened here. His body was covered with boils. It exuded the puss that required him to place pieces of shrapnel pottery and scrape his body in order to give him some ease from the pain of it and the discomfort of it. According to the Septuagint version he sat on a dung hill outside the city gates.

I don't know. I mean, you have had broken hearts in the past. There have been times when things that have happened are so misfortunate to you that it has caused you to weep until your eyes were red. But look at this man. Everything that you could expect in a human in response to a relationship with God he has been a perfect man. And then comes this tremendous calamity on him.

So in chapter three he asks questions. And the questions he asks four different times. “Why? Would it not have been better that I had not been born? Would it not have been kinder that I was destroyed at the moment of birth? Why does this have to happen? And if this is what is part of life to come, wouldn't it be kinder just to take me completely out of it?”

That is his concern.

So Eliphaz the Temanite said in chapter four verse one through verse 11 he rebuked him. In chapter four verse 12 through chapter five verse seven he claims that he got a special revelation from God. Therefore he will speak as God has revealed to him and you can't argue or contradict. “You can't speak back to me. I have a revelation from God.”

In chapter five verse eight and to verse 27 he tells him, “You need to repent and see if you can recover your confidence and your relationship with God.”

And when he did it I think it is worth making a note of it. In chapter five and verse 27 he said, “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.”⁹

⁹ Job 5:17.

He assumed, “If you listen to what I have got to say, Job, you won’t need to ask anybody else questions. I will give you the answer. I know what I am talking about.”

That irritates me, a little whiper snapper that comes from nowhere and sits in the company of a man of God like this who is broken into pieces and he speaks to him like that. In chapter five and in verse six he said, “Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.”¹⁰

“You can’t tell me that you have got problems like this and there is no reason that causes it, that justifies it. There has to be.”

And then, worse than all, chapter five verse four. He said, “His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.”¹¹

He is saying that you can put this down that whenever God allows something to happen and it comes in to your home and it touches your family and the son or the daughter is not what you wanted them to be and your heart is broken because of this, he is saying to him, “That is just the evidence that God considers this affliction a just desert on your part.”

Well, again, how does he respond to it? I will read it for you. He said he rent his mantle, he shaved his head and he worshipped.¹²

Oh, let me ask you. Have you ever worshipped God by the things you didn’t say, by responses that you would have felt justified, but you restrained yourself in order that you might worship God in the process? And that is exactly what this man did. It says in chapter 1:22 that he “sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”¹³

He guarded his lips. He was very concerned about it. He didn’t want the articulation of any words from his mouth to speak against God. And he protected himself as much as he could in the positive way he responded in chapter one verse 21. “I had nothing that was mine when it started. I came into this world,” he essentially said, “naked. And the Lord hath given. And if he has, it is his right to take it away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”¹⁴

I remember a minister who just lost his wife and they had a Monday morning prayer meeting in Glasgow, Scotland and the minister tried to bear testimony to the group and he got up on this occasion, first time that he had met with them after the event and he said, “The Lord giveth...” And he couldn’t get any further.

¹⁰ Job 5:6.

¹¹ Job 5:4.

¹² See Job 1:20.

¹³ Job 1:22.

¹⁴ See Job 1:21.

He said, “The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.” But it took him three weeks to get to that next bit, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

And this man, without any justification that I can see required on his part, he blessed God who took it as he had given it and claimed that he was right in doing it.

What is the lesson? Can I suggest to you in the first place that life is composed of tasty and of tasteless things? You can’t take unsavory things unless there is salt that is available for it. And when God created the egg, God created the unit. And within that unit there are elements that are tasty and there are elements that are not tasty.

Encyclopedia Britannica gave me this definition of the egg. “It is the female reproductive cell or ovum of animals which after fertilization give rise to the new individual. The yoke is being the essential portion of the egg and is surrounded by a large store of food material known as the white.”

And God put them both together.

I don’t know why we think that we ought to have the privilege of walking the pilgrimage of life on our way to that celestial city and we should not have to suffer affliction. All that we can do is in the examination of the facts as they are recorded for us say that it is God that does it. And if it is, then it is not our privilege to do anything that would in any way bring fault and charge God.

He said, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of [sorrow or full of] trouble.”¹⁵

You see, it is the balance of life. It is the thing that makes life wholesome. Where there are the elements that are good and the elements that are not acceptable and you put them together and you come to the conclusion, they go together.

I read about this man that he is the greatest in the east. I am told about his properties and possessions as though there is no other man in the community that is equal to him. And in that, if he is able to enjoy, he should be willing to suffer. If God can give me moments of happiness, then it is just as he puts it the balance of life to allow the other part to come into my life at the same time.

It was the psalmist that said, “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.”¹⁶

I remember when our first son was born and I was taking my wife down through a corridor in the hotel where she happens to have been employed, they had pictures on both sides of the wall, but they were interesting. On one side it was preventative medicine. On

¹⁵ Job 14:1

¹⁶ Psalm 119:67.

the other side it was curative medicine. And the history of both is portrayed for us and I just grieve that I didn't know enough about the history of it in order to be able to enjoy the art of it. But sometimes all the troubles that come into our life are not related to what is past. Sometimes they happen to us because they are preventative. They are saving us in terms of what lies ahead.

It was recorded in Genesis 50 and in verse 20 where Joseph said, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."¹⁷ God saw the future. God knew what it was going to take. And Joseph has come to the place where he can say, "God ordained what took place in my life because of your envy of me. God took that and by that he brought us into an experience where many people were saved because of it." That is the type of thing God has to impress upon my heart at the same time.

I love F.W. Borham, by the way. He is one of my favorite writers. He tells a story about a fishing village in the east coast of Scotland where all the little towns up and down the coast are all fishing villages. The men go out on Monday morning, come back on Friday night and prepare things on Saturday, have a day for the Lord on the sabbath and then the following Monday starts it all over again.

But there is one man in the group that has a better catch than any other man. And he gets a better price. They try every way they can to calculate what he is doing that they are not doing. When they get people under his vessel they notice that he has got a tank that is open to the waters of the North Sea so when you take the fish out of the water, you put them back into the same water, but they had the same tanks. It wasn't that.

The man died. The only member of the family left was a daughter. She couldn't run a fishing fleet. She turned around and advertised that her fishing fleet was for sale to the highest bidder. And the secret goes with it. And she got a wonderful price for it. But do you know what they found out what the secret was of his success? He kept the catfish in the tank.

You say, "What would that do?"

The catfish happens to be a scavenger fish. And as long as a scavenger fish is in the tank no other fish will be still. It will just keep moving and if it has got five days to go before it gets back to port, it will have exercised itself through those five days so that it becomes a choicer piece of meat than any of its comparisons.

Sometimes, says, F.W. Borham, "God has to drip a catfish in our tank."

Sometimes life has to give us something that causes our spiritual muscles to exercise.

Life is composed of tasty and of tasteless things.

¹⁷ Genesis 50:20.

Let me go on my second thought. It is the tasteless parts that are nourishing. If I want the value of the egg, the value of the egg lies in the tasteless part of the egg, that for which I need salt in order to be able to enjoy. And it is in that, that it becomes equal to our understanding of why he would let us walk through trouble and crush our hearts at times.

Calvary says you will never lose anything in sorrow.

I have reached an age where I can look back over my shoulder and I can remember the times when it was difficult for me and I would be only honest to let you know I look at those difficult times that I went through as treasures like a gift given from God that changed me. They made me. They gave me a different outlook on life. And if there is anything that has built me or given me any quality in the past times, it came out of those afflictions and those troubles.

I remember going through one set of troubles I wouldn't go through for one million dollars. But I testify to this. I got a million dollars value out of it. It was the nourishing part of life to me and it gave me what I never expected to happen.

My wife and I jokingly had said to each other at times when one or the other does what the one or the other just doesn't enjoy and she says, "Honey, I am your grain of sand."

A grain of sand happens to be a pearl. But when it gets into the oyster shell and the oyster can't get it out, it has to exude something that comes around that grain of sand that stops it from irritating. And when you look at what comes out as the result of it, it is the pearl. And the heart of the pearl is the grain of sand.

I walked a mile with pleasure.
She chatted all the way.
But I was none the wiser for what she had to say.
I walked a mile with sorrow,
And never a word spake she,
But, oh, the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me.

It is the thing that becomes the satisfying part.

I love the story of John Gilpin. He was sentenced to death by Bloody Mary in England. And he had a favorite verse of Scripture that he shared with everybody. And his favorite verse was in the book of Romans. "All things work together for good to them that love God."¹⁸

It irritated the jailers. They wished that he would be quiet. But he couldn't stop saying, "All things work together for good."

And the story goes—and I don't know the specific details—they were taking him to his execution when irritated by him, one of the men pulled on the chain and it caused him to

¹⁸ Romans 8:28.

loose his footage and it broke a bone in his leg. And according to the law of that time they couldn't execute him if something like this occurred before he got to the place of execution.

So who do you think had to carry him back to his cell? The one man irritated that caused the problem. And when he lifted him up into his arms and stated walking him back, Gilpin put his arms around the man and he whispered into his ear, "All things work together for good."¹⁹

And do you know how good it was for him? Before the healing occurred, Blood Mary was dead. Elizabeth was on the throne and all such people were liberated.

No, you have got to admit. Let me go to my final thought.

If I look at, as I say, "Well, there is unsavory portions in life, but there is salt for them."

You can't eat what is unsavory without salt. Have you ever thought to stop, pause for a moment and say to him, "Thank you for the salt?"

Where is the salt? It is this immutable, invincible, infallible, inspired revelation of God. I am sorry for the people that are so confused today that are trying to find peace through somebody else's experience and they haven't opened their heart and meditated on his Word like the psalmist said.

When David is giving the explanation of his backsliding in Psalm 73 he came down to the place where he said it was the fatness of the eyes of the wicked that disturbed me. They had more than heart could wish for.²⁰ They had things like prosperity put into the palm of their hands and I suffer affliction every day of my life.

"I washed my hands in innocency. I shouldn't have become a Christian so quickly. If I had given proper time and meditation to it, I would have thought entirely different to it."

And then he said:

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.²¹

That is our biggest problem. We take the moments of life and they become the supremely important parts of it. We never take the time through this precious book to stand far enough distant from it to be able to see the picture in its totality, because I can promise you there is no grief to touch your heart that doesn't have a divine purpose in it. And that is, indeed, to make you the better for it.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See Psalm 73:7.

²¹ Psalm 73:16-17.

I don't know how many of you may know the story of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*. It came out on April the third in 1862. When it came out it was in five volumes. When it came out it was already translated into nine different languages. And when it came out would you believe it was sold in St. Petersburg? It was sold in London. It was sold in New York and Brussels, in Madrid and Berlin all in the same day.

The story is told about Jean Valjean. He is the center of the story. He had gone to visit at his sister's house only to find out when he got there that it hurt him, her children were suffering with hunger and he couldn't stand it. And he made up his mind no matter what it cost him, he was going to do something to help those poor, hurting children. And he stole a loaf of bread.

They caught him. They sentenced him to five years at the galley. And when he was mixed among those people, the criminals that justly deserved what they got and the hardness of the masters that were over him, it converted him from a human almost into a brute.

He managed to escape. We don't know where he is traveling, but somewhere across Europe going from town to town lonely, hungry, disappointed, broken hearted and then one time in the middle of the night torrential rain pouring down he is making his way across a town square, trying to get over unto the other side. And while he is in half way across that square a strange power he felt beside him. And he turned around and he looked at a cathedral and its marble floors and its beautiful ornate structure and its incredible display of colored glass. It was to him the epitome of God. It was the only thing he knew of that put God into human experience. And he stopped long enough to put his fist in the hand of God and curse God because of his affliction.

Stop the scene.

Let me move it over to one side. Let me bring you another man to the other side of the screen and show you the difference that Christ makes in a man's life, because the other man comes from the dawn of human history. The other man comes, as we have just read the story, and we felt the afflictions that have hurt him and while we are thinking of all of that, he is saying, "I wish I could die."

Ah, but when you get a chance, go read the context.

"I wish I could die because I am afraid the pain will overcome me and I may speak a word with my mouth that I would regret for all eternity. I would rather that God kindly would take my life."

He said he could just do it like that and I would be gone.

What a difference.

To those of you who may have the broken heart, my heart goes out. But, at the same time, I have got to tell you, when you know the Lord Jesus Christ and God is God and he is supreme and nothing happens to his believer without his consent you can say, "Lord, I'll walk the rough path if I just know in my heart that what I am doing is bringing glory and credit to thee."

The man that I am thinking of is E. Stanley Jones. He wrote a series of books as a missionary in India, not of my particular persuasion, but he wrote one on the Christ of the Indian Road. And he told the story of a professor of comparative religion that was sitting with a group of people on the grass giving them a lecture on this occasion, he said, introducing them to Christianity.

"Christianity are a group of people that takes the mastership of one called Christ and I have met him"

Thos students put their pens down and they looked at him in amazement. He said, "I see you would like to get an explanation. Let me explain what happened. My family lived in South India and I was in North India and I had a need to go down and visit them on a piece of important business. But while I was there a plague came to India. And for about some 200 miles in width it went from one end to the other end across the middle."

And the only way that he could get back to his appointments was to go through it. He carefully scrutinized everything that he would do and then his analysis of what he is going to accomplish, he is going to get his food. He is only going to sleep between villages. He is going to gallop his horse through villages.

And he was in the process of doing that. As he was coming into the village when a door opened on the side house and the lady, blonde headed, obviously an Anglican... he had passed her before it dawned on him. I know why she is here. She is a missionary. She is here because of him.

And when he thought of that he pulled his horse, went backward, got off the horse as quick as he could and said to the lady, "Give me your hand and let me help you on to the horse. There is a plague that is eating this place away. I will get you out of here as quickly as we can go."

She shook her head and said, "No, sir."

And it was then it dawned on him, she wasn't a prisoner because of them. She was a prisoner because her Savior put it on her heart to go to them for his sake.

Well, he said, "I understand. Let me shake hands with you."

She took her hand from behind her back and then from behind the other hand and the hand was already eaten away with the plague. And he looked in her eyes and he said to those students, "I saw her Christ in her."

Do you know him?

We are all going to face it. We all have faced it. There is no promise to anything else except this. My grace is sufficient for you. God bless you.