



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the
second Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

O LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Job 30

King James Version (KJV)

30 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation

they rolled themselves upon me.

15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

Job now draws a finished contrast between the Job of wealth and comfort with the present Job of suffering, childless, and afflicted of God. But does the essence of a man of god change in character because of externals? I think not for to be a child of God, we must be God-like – unchanging in our inner man as God is unchanging in His immutable Word and Person. I do not criticize Job for his doubts; for it is common to all who are favored by God and who, suddenly, find that they have lost all that they hold dear. In actual fact, this is a time of growing for Job for God is teaching him that, regardless the outward conditions and associations, the inner soul that belongs to God is unscathed by those externals.

This chapter has too many verses to address each individually in devotion,

however, I will summarize as best I am able. There are two major divisions in Job's lamentations for this chapter:

1. Rather than being held in high esteem, that former honor has turned to extreme contempt. (verses 1-14)
2. His former good fortune is turned on its head to calamity. (verses 15-31)

1 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. 2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished? 3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. 4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. 5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;) 6 To dwell in the clefts of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. 7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together. 8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth. 9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. 10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. 11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me. 12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. 13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper. 14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

We see in the first verse that the young deride and hold Job in contempt. It would seem that the evils of the so-called "generation-gap" infected the youthful mind even that long ago. Of course, such attitudes are inherited honestly for their fathers were a worthless lot as well. If we will raise decent children, we must comport ourselves as decent parents. Such youth, corrupted in morals, are of no profit to anyone. They will be fortunate if they attain an age of adulthood since they are so undernourished physically and morally. I wonder if Job read the New York Times, for our day is even worse perhaps than his own. *8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth* In other words, they were worse than DIRT. It is usually true that the child of a fool will inherit his father's traits just as a child of God will possess a character of wisdom and love. Whose child are YOU?

The disrespect for the aged, even if in bad fettle, is a growing trait among youth in America today – indeed, our modern wonders of gluttony have respect for no one. *10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.* They are born with a seemingly insatiable appetite for benefits and a total disdain for sacrifice or labor. Was Solomon not right in telling us, "*....there is no new thing under the sun.*" (Eccl 1:9)?

15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

Once we have tasted the honey of the Lord, the bland flavor of dry bread will not suffice. In times past Job sat respected and renowned in the gate of his city, but now he has come to what he considers the lowest point of life. How can anything ever be worse? He is insecure in his condition. His imagination creates ghosts and goblins out of thin air – a typical experience of the elderly without God. But Job has no excuse, for Job KNOWS God and he knows better than what he expresses. Here, he is complaining more in the hopes that God is eavesdropping than to his three friends. Prior to reading the remainder of this devotion, I encourage you to read the experience of Christ on the

cross in Psalms 22:1-21. Then read and compare the illustrative expressions of Job's grief.

16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. 17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest. 18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat. 19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. 20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not. 21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposeth thyself against me. 22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance. Do you see how Job is compelled to bear his cross daily just as the Lord has commanded you and me to do? The cause of Job's suffering is unknown to him. It is commonplace for a sufferer to blame God when his understanding of suffering is lacking. But the suffering of Job is not because of any sin Job has committed, per se', but a means whereby God is being glorified. God will not lose face before Satan who has tormented Job as a result of his initial challenge to God regarding Job. We are so far below God that we must always know that He is merciful, righteous and just. If we do not understand the terms of our troubles and trials, blame not God, but carry on in your Christian spirit as a good soldier in the Army of God. What field soldier at the Alamo would have understood the strategic importance of delaying the forces of Santa Anna at the Alamo, yet he stood his ground and died to the last man. God desires you to be the same caliber of Christian man or woman as those who chose to shed their blood rather than shackles and chains.

23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Please read this verse carefully again. What is Job speaking here? Do you see the remarkable power and beauty of this verse? Job knows that he shall taste death just as do all men, but he will not swallow it whole. He will close his eyes in the sleep of death and open them again in a greater House of the Living. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:* (Heb 9:27) This verse comports nicely with that of Job of 19:25-27 - *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* (Job 19:25-27)

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction. Death and the grave is the end of suffering in this life. God will not allow the righteous to be offended in the long home to which he goes. *25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? 26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness. 27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me. 28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.* Job is appealing for fairness here since he has had mercy and compassion on others of like condition; but the Christian can never expect fairness from a world that plays by other rules. All the days of the sufferer are as the night – full of darkness. Darkness, spiritually, is the absence of God.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. This compares Job's condition with the desolation of the desert. The plaintive words of the Psalmist comes to mind – *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalms 63:1-2)

The strange screech of the owl and the scream of the jackal are here noted. It is much like the resulting ruins of Babylon when God had judged them: *And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps* (Jer 51:37-38)

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. 31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep. Job is skin and bones. His skin sticks to his bones because there is not intervening muscle. The appearance of his skin is the dark color of disease. His days of joy, he mistakenly believes, are ended. When the music dies, as in American Pie, the delightful country is ended. The harp represents the happy music of life. The organ could be translated as 'pipe' which is used to convey a joyful march. *Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD, to the mighty One of Israel.* (Isaiah 30:29) Perhaps the dismal prospects of Job are best summarized in the following: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.* (Psalms 137:1-2) The dread and captivity of the soul is not to be lightly taken. Have you ever had occasion to hang your "hanged your harps by the rivers of Babylon, Friend?