

Now I See

Job 42:1-6

INTRODUCTION

- A. Fanny Crosby, the famed hymn writer, was blind.
1. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, she held on to her faith in God & wrote many of the hymns we still sing; e.g.: “I Am Thine, O Lord,” “Jesus is Tenderly Calling,” “To God Be the Glory,” & “Blessed Assurance.”
 2. When Fanny Crosby was old, someone said to her that, if she had been born in that day, an operation could have restored her sight. Instead of being bitter, she said, “I don’t know that I would change anything. Do you know that the first thing I’m ever going to see is the face of Jesus?”
- B. What a glorious thought!
1. That no more will there be any sickness or pain or trial or temptation, but we shall be with the Lord.
 2. The Apostle Paul declared a desire to depart this life in order that he could see the Lord face to face: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better (Phil 1:23).
 3. While seeing the Lord after this life is over will be glorious, encountering the Lord in this life has caused many to fear greatly.
 - a. After they sinned, Adam & Eve “heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Gn 3:8).
 - b. When the Lord descended on Mount Sinai, we read, “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled” (Ex 19:16).
 - c. When John saw the glorified Christ on Patmos, he “fell at his feet as though dead” (Rev 1:17).
- C. Job was no different.
1. Job was quite angry at God for bringing all this affliction upon him.
 - a. 30:19-23.
 - b. “The Almighty . . . has made my soul bitter” (27:2).
 2. Because of his anger at God, Job wanted to talk with God face to face: “Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would lay my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments” (23:3-4).
 3. God finally shows up, but not quite in the way Job expects.
 - a. The Lord shows up in great power & with the multitude of questions of his own:
 - 1) “The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (38:1, 4-7).
 - 2) Imagine being in Job’s shoes!
 - a) You are firmly convinced that you are suffering even though you are righteous, but you have some friends come & accuse you of sin. You argue with these friends & beg God to show up and answer some questions.
 - b) God shows up in powerful form, but instead of answering your questions he questions you about the secrets of the universe.
 - b. Is it any wonder, then, that Job answers God the way that he does? “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further” (40:4-5).
 - c. But, God continues to pound Job about two monstrous beasts—Behemoth & Leviathan.
 - d. Job then speaks the words of this morning’s text.
 - 1) READ TEXT.
 - 2) Job says that he had heard of God but now he saw God.
 - a) It’s obvious that Job knew a great deal about God.
 - i. Job was a “man [who] was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil” (1:1).
 - ii. Job offered sacrifices for his children: “He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of [his children]. For Job said, ‘It may be that

- my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did continually” (1:5).
- b) No longer did Job simply know of God & know who God was—now he had experienced God.
 - i. In the context of this passage, Job had literally seen a representation of God—a whirlwind.
 - ii. Yet, is it not true that when we are suffering, we see God so much more acutely?
 - i) When we cry to him in the night, is there not a calm assurance that God hears us?
 - ii) When we overcome a struggle, do we not find our faith much deeper?
 - e. This morning, we wish to go back several millennia & sit with Job as he sees God.
 - 1) We wish to see God in the same way Job saw him.
 - 2) How is it that Job saw God? Job saw God’s POWER, God’s PRUDENCE, & God’s PROVISION.

POWER, v 2

- A. “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”
- B. Job understood that God could do anything, and that man could not stop his will.
 - 1. What caused Job to understand that God could do anything?
 - a. The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.
 - 1) I understand that in English the term “whirlwind” can refer to a dust devil or something that’s relatively minor.
 - 2) However, the Hebrew term refers to a violent storm.
 - a) This is the word used to describe the storm God sent upon Jonah: “The LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up” (Jon 1:4).
 - b) The term refers to a violent wind that has the ability to scatter: “Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest [same Hebrew word] carries them off like stubble” (Is 40:24).
 - 3) If the Lord answered me out of a violent storm, I’d really be tempted to believe that he could do anything!
 - b. From that whirlwind, the Lord questioned Job about the Creation.
 - 1) “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’? Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind?” (38:34-36).
 - 2) Whereas Job couldn’t speak to clouds & cause rain, God can. Whereas Job couldn’t cause lightning to streak across the sky, God can. Whereas Job couldn’t create a mind, God did.
 - 2. What caused Job to understand that God’s purpose could not be thwarted?
 - a. Job suffered so very intensely, and Job understood God was involved in that suffering.
 - 1) “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (1:21).
 - 2) To his wife, Job says, “Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” (2:10).
 - b. Job believed it was God who was tormenting him.
 - 1) We understand that God never reached out to touch Job, his children, or his livestock.
 - 2) However, God allowed Satan to do trouble Job & he had a purpose in so doing: to establish Job’s integrity against Satan’s smears.
- C. When we suffer, let us thank the Lord that Job saw God’s power!
 - 1. God can heal every disease.
 - a. When Hezekiah was at the point of death, he prayed & the Lord healed him.
 - b. When Jesus walked this earth, he healed so many of various diseases.
 - 2. God has a purpose in suffering.
 - a. “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28).
 - b. God has enough power to bring good out of every situation, out of every trial, out of every pain.
- D. After Hurricane Ivan hit Panama City Beach, Florida in 2004, Kevin Harless said, “You want to see the natural hand of God firsthand, but you don’t realize how strong it is.”
 - 1. Job knew—he was looking at the Creator of the universe in the form of a whirlwind.
 - 2. Let us rest in the power of God—the power he has to heal our bodies & the power to raise those bodies at the last day!

PRUDENCE, vv 3-4

- A. “Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ‘Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’”
- B. The first statement Job makes here comes from God’s opening speech at 38:2.
1. God’s point is simply: “Job, you think you are so smart & know everything, but you don’t know anything.”
 2. Job had conceived his ideas of God on what God had revealed of himself.
 - a. We know that Job lived before the Law of Moses, for he offers sacrifices for his children & his friends, something only a Levite could do after Moses.
 - 1) We know, therefore, that Job lived before a single word of inspired Scripture was ever written.
 - 2) Thus, Job, while he dealt with God as did the other patriarchs, knew very little of God.
 - b. In fact, it seems that Job’s ideas about God largely came from the Creation.
 - 1) That seems to be the case, for God questions Job about the Creation.
 - 2) God’s point seems to be: “Okay, Job, you think you have me all figured out because of what you know from Creation. Answer some tough questions about the Creation & let’s see how much of me you really know?”
 3. Job realizes that he knows so very little.
 - a. Since Job knows so very little about the Creation, he likewise knows so very little of God’s purpose.
 - b. Job accused God of wrongdoing.
 - 1) E.g.: “God has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes. I cry to you for help and you do not answer me; I stand, and you only look at me. You have turned cruel to me; with the might of your hand you persecute me. You lift me up on the wind; you make me ride on it, and you toss me about in the roar of the storm” (30:19-22).
 - 2) But, Job didn’t know what he was talking about! God was not wrong in allowing God to afflict Job, but God was using great wisdom.
 4. How many people accuse God of wrongdoing today because of suffering?
 - a. “If there’s a God, why did he allow the cancer to come?” “If there’s a God, why did he allow Hurricane Katrina to decimate the Gulf Coast?” “If there’s a God, why did he allow hijackers to fly planes into the World Trade Center?”
 - b. If I knew the perfect answer to those questions, I would be God!
- C. God has great prudence—wisdom—in his will.
1. We understand that God’s wisdom is so very vast. God used that vast wisdom to create this earth.
 - a. “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Ps 104:24).
 - b. “The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens” (Prov 3:19).
 2. Biosphere 2 was an attempt to set up an isolated living environment that would supply all the factors necessary for sustaining life.
 - a. It was to be a self-contained microcosm of life on earth, containing soil, air, water, plants, and animals.
 - b. Biosphere 2 originally consisted of an air-tight enclosure covering 3.15 acres in Arizona.
 - 1) Despite an investment of about \$200 million from 1984 to 1991, a multi-million dollar operating budget, almost unlimited technological support and heroic effort, it proved impossible to sustain eight human beings with adequate food, water, and air for two years.
 - a) Just 1.3 years into the experiment, oxygen levels had fallen to the point where oxygen had to be added from the outside.
 - b) Nineteen of twenty-five vertebrate species placed in the unit became extinct.
 - c) All the species that could pollinate the plants became extinct, as did most insects.
 - d) Water and air pollution became acute and temperature control was a problem.
 - 2) With all the intelligence put into the design of Biosphere 2, it couldn’t be made to work.
 - c. However, our God made the Earth fully capable of supporting life.
 - 1) If God has enough wisdom to make this world, doesn’t he have enough wisdom to govern this world?
 - 2) That was the lesson Job came to understand so very clearly.
 3. While we certainly do not have all the answers, we know that suffering perfectly fits with God’s wisdom.
 - a. Our deaths can cause others to take stock of their own mortality: “It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart” (Eccl 7:12).
 - b. Our own suffering can lead us back to God: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word” (Ps 119:67).

- c. Our suffering leads us to maturity in Christ: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Js 1:2-4).
3. When we suffer, let us not forget the manifold & great wisdom of God!

PROVISION, vv 12-13

- A. “And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. He had also seven sons and three daughters.”
- B. The Lord provided for Job after his suffering was over.
 1. Job ended up with more possessions than he had before his suffering: The Lord doubled this righteous man’s material possessions.
 2. Job had the same number of sons & daughters after his suffering than before.
- C. We dare not forget the Lord’s great provisions in suffering.
 1. We’ve already mentioned the spiritual blessings that God gives through suffering.
 2. We dare not forget, however, that all suffering prepares us for that heavenly home God has prepared. It will be a glorious thing for us to lay aside this body of flesh!
 - a. “This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor 4:17-18).
 - b. “I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!’” (Rev 14:13).
 - c. “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (Phil 1:21-23).
 - 1) Paul received that which “is far better” through suffering!
 - 2) It was only when Nero severed Paul’s head did Paul die & get his gain.

CONCLUSION

- A. No matter what happens in this life, we can place our trust in God because of God’s POWER, God’s PRUDENCE, & God’s PROVISION.
- B. Are you this morning prepared “to depart and be with Christ” which “is far better”?
 1. We know how transient life really is: Js 4:13-16.
 2. We have no idea what this day holds. Are you prepared this very minute to lay aside your flesh & enter the rest of God?