

"Till My Change Comes" • Job 14:1-17

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *No Funeral Message*

1. As a young man, D.L. Moody was called upon suddenly to preach a funeral sermon.
2. He searched in vain through all 4 Gospels trying to find one of Jesus' funeral sermons
3. He found instead, that Christ broke up every funeral he ever attended.
4. Death could not exist where he was.
5. When the dead heard his voice they sprang to life.
6. Standing outside Lazarus' tomb, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life."

B. *Unusual*

1. It may seem unusual for us to looking at the Resurrection today, since it isn't Easter and we are studying the Book of Job
2. But we find some surprises here!
3. You see, while the Book of Job is filled with chapter after chapter of Job's mournful laments for the suffering he was enduring -
4. Alternating with his friends attempts to discredit him while defending God -
5. Job *does* occasionally rise from his mourning to inspired statements of hope
6. And these moments of light and inspiration in what is otherwise dark and melancholy, lends a solid sense of *realism* to the story
7. There have been periods in my brief life when I have gone through difficulty and testing
 - a. and while all seems dark and I was heavy-hearted
 - b. there would come brief flashes of light and hope
 - c. these passing moments of illumination would be just enough to keep me going
8. When we read Job's laments, every so often we see these brief flashes of light
9. As if, just for a moment, the thick blanket of despair was lifted, and he caught of glimpse of something to hope in
10. Such is the case in Chapter 14 . . .

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 1-6*

1. Try to picture Job
 - a. he is covered head to foot with painful boils
 - b. his skin is cracked and covered with scabs
 - c. he itches so badly he uses the edge of a broken piece of pottery to scrape himself
 - d. we read that he found it hard to sleep, and that even his breath was

- offensive
- e. he has nothing to do all day but to sit in the ashes of the city garbage dump
 - f. while three of his friends insist that the reason he had lost everything was because he was a wretched sinner who was simply experiencing the judgment of God
2. In the midst of all his trouble, Job has become quite philosophical
 3. His personal distress moved him to consider the human condition
 4. His conclusion: life is brief - and though brief, it is marked by pain and trouble
 5. Man is like a flower
 - a. his early days are marked by color and life
 - b. in his youth he is firm and virile
 - c. but then he wilts and withers; gravity eventually wins out and pulls him back in to the soil from which he rose
 6. Men and women are like shadows
 - a. early in the morning when the sun first rises, they cast a long, bold shadow
 - b. but as the sun rises, the shadow shrinks
 - c. and when the cloud hides the sun, the shadow disappears
 7. And though life is brief, there is not one moment of it that God isn't watching closely
 8. Job feels like he is a bug under a microscope - and it's oppressive
 9. The tension of always being in the spotlight of God's inspection is too much
 10. Why can't he have some rest?
 - a. why can't he be like a hired day-laborer
 - b. who after a day's work can at least go home and relax without the boss looking over his shoulder?

B. Vs. 7-12

1. Job senses that what he's enduring is *not* something that will last forever -
 - a. he's in a *season* of trial, a period marked by some manifestation of God's displeasure
 - b. but after much soul-searching, he can't figure out why
2. In these verses he laments that he couldn't just lie down in death till this season, this period of God's heavy hand would pass and God would once again restore Job to favor
3. But man isn't like a tree, that though it is cut down and nothing is left but a stump, it can still send forth a new shoot
4. When man dies and lies in the earth - he is like water that's spilled on the ground and is soaked up - you can't get it back
5. Job's meditation on the briefness of life and the finality of death disturbs him
6. He doesn't want to die and pass away with his end being such as it was
7. He wants to come out of his day of trouble into a day of restoration, so he says
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C. Vs. 13-15

1. Here is that moment of inspiration and light I mentioned before
2. Job cries out in desperation that God will set Himself a reminder to raise Job

from the dead and bring him into a glorious new day of renewal

3. In v. 14, Job's question isn't asked cynically "If a man dies, shall he live again?" - in a flash of illumination the Spirit gives him a glimpsed answer to his prayer:
4. The dead will indeed rise again!
5. Job's startled response is: "If a person dies, will he or she indeed live again? Could it really be?"
6. It's a question of tenuous hope - of longing
7. And then, with the hope becoming more certain Job moves to declare the faith that marks his whole life -

"All the days of my life, which have been like that of a soldier who was drafted to serve on the front lines in a desperate battle to the death, I will wait till my change comes."

8. One day, the Lord will remember, and call out, and Job will rise from what has been sown in the ground in death - and he shall be changed
9. Hard on the heels of this insight is another that is crucial to his being changed .
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D. Vs. 16-17

1. While Job was a man of integrity as few others have ever been in the history of all mankind, he was not perfect - we wasn't sinless
2. And he knew that sin could not stand before God
3. So if he was to be changed and raised up after death to spend eternity with God, then his sin would have to be dealt with
4. So Job prayed for God's forgiveness
5. He asked that the Lord would gather all his sins, pile them into a bag, tie the top tightly closed, and then bury them

III. CONCLUSION

A. In Part

1. What Job only caught a *dim glimpse* of, has now been made fully known through the life and work of Jesus Christ
2. God gave Job but a sliver of hope in the resurrection to keep him from slipping into unrecoverable despair
3. We get no mere sliver - Because of Christ, we have the greatest hope & grandest promise of all - Death is *not* the end
5. The grave is not the final resting place of man - it is but a door into real life, *eternal* life
6. I like what DL Moody said, "As I go into a cemetery I like to think of the time when the dead shall rise from their graves. Thank God, our friends are not buried; they are only sown!"
7. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul wrote, "The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." (42-43)

B. The Reality of the Resurrection

1. Christian - God wants the reality of the resurrection to be *more* than simply a doctrinal tenet you hold as a good, solid, straight thinking evangelical believer
2. He wants the resurrection to be the hope that gives substance to your life
3. He wants it to be an anchor to your soul - Your lifeline when the storms of life knock you about
4. Hebrews 6:19-20 says . . .

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus.

5. Right now, somewhere in the world, a Christian is being tortured for their faith!
 - a. whether it is in Sudan, or Pakistan, China, Iran, or one of a dozen other nations
 - b. one of our brothers or sisters is feeling the pain of being put to death for their faith
 - c. for them - the resurrection isn't merely a doctrinal principle - it is the one thing that enables them to endure the pain and suffering
6. We here in American stand in danger of losing the simple life-giving vitality of the Christian faith because the real heart and promise of the gospel, the resurrection from the dead for those who believe in Christ, isn't seen as all that great a thing to look forward to
 - a. after all, we've got it pretty good here
 - b. we're not being persecuted for our faith
 - c. no one I know has been stretch on the rack lately, or had their eyes put out with hot tongs
 - d. no, life in the US is pretty safe and comfortable
 - g. most of us live much like Job did before his calamity
7. There was a time, not long ago, when most of the pulpits in the land held out the promise of the here after as a bright shining hope
 - a. the gospel was the message of how to prepare for eternity
 - b. and Christians were reminded that this world was not their home
8. But now it seems much of the preaching you hear aims at helping people achieve success in *this* world
 - a. it's gospel presents Jesus as CEO
 - b. or the Great Psychotherapist who didn't come to *save* your soul but to analyze it
9. It's critical the Church recapture the power and reality of the message of the Resurrection
 - a. that this world is not our home - we are strangers and visitors here
 - b. our destiny is heaven, and we shall be raised up to dwell with Christ
10. Remember when you were a child and you looked forward to Christmas with such excitement and eagerness?
 - a. remember the little diddie about Santa keeping a list of who's been naughty and who's been nice?
 - b. and to some degree or another, the expectation of Christmas effected your behavior?

11. Friends - a great day lies before us - the day of our Resurrection!
12. The excitement that marked our childhood at the expectation of Christmas should be magnified 100 fold as we anticipate our Change
 - a. it should animate our lives
 - b. it should have a dramatic impact on our behavior
 - c. because at any moment - we could be caught up to be with Christ

C. The Problem

1. But man has a problem - a problem that would bar him from experiencing the resurrection
2. Job identifies it here - it is sin!
3. That's why Jesus came - to not only make it possible for us to be raised from the dead, but to remove the obstacle that would keep us in our graves - sin!
4. His death on the cross atones for, *covers* our sin.
5. Just as Job prayed, God collects all our sins, puts them in a bag, seals it and forever buries it
6. Then Jesus' resurrection becomes the *guarantee* of ours - He is the firstfruit which assures the rest will be gathered

D. Vision

1. Some years ago Columbia University had a great football coach by the name of Lou Little.
2. One day Lou had a boy try out for the varsity team who wasn't really very good.
3. But Lou noticed that there was something unique about him--while he wasn't nearly good enough to make the team, he had such irrepressible spirit and contagious enthusiasm that Lou thought, "This boy would be a great inspiration on the bench. He'll never be able to play, but I'll leave him on the team to encourage the others. "
4. As the season went on, Lou developed a tremendous admiration and love for this boy.
5. One of the things that especially impressed him was the manner with which the boy obviously cared for his father.
 - a. whenever the father would come for a visit to the campus they would always be seen walking together, arm in
 - b. they could always be seen on Sunday going to the university chapel.
 - c. it was obvious that theirs was a deep and mutually shared Christian faith.
6. Then, one day, a telephone call came to Coach Little.
7. He was informed that the boy's father had just died, and would he be the one to tell the boy?
8. With a heavy heart, Lou informed the boy of his father's death, and he immediately left to go home for the funeral.
9. A few days later the boy returned to the campus, only two days before the biggest game of the season.
10. Lou went to him and said, "Is there anything I can do for you? Anything at all?"

11. To the coach's astonishment the boy said, "Let me start the game on Saturday!"
12. The coach didn't know what to say.
13. He thought, "I can't let him start--he's not good enough."
14. But he remembered his promise to help and said, "All right--you can start the game," but he thought to himself, "I'll leave him in for a few plays and then take him out."
15. The day of the big game arrived and to everyone's surprise the coach started this boy who had never played in a game all season.
16. You can imagine everyone's surprise when, on the very first play from scrimmage, that boy was the one who single-handedly made a tackle that threw the opposing team for a loss.
17. He went on to play inspired football play after play.
18. In fact, he played so well, the coach left him in for the entire game and he led the team to victory
19. He was awarded the outstanding player of the game.
20. When the game was finally over, Lou approached the boy and said, "Son, what got into you today?"
21. He replied, "You remember when my father would visit me here at school and we would spend a lot of time together walking arm in arm around the campus? My father and I shared a secret that nobody around here knew anything about. You see, my father was blind--and today was the first time he ever saw me play!"

 22. The Writer of Hebrews wrote, (Heb 12)

{1} Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

{2} looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

23. Job has finished his race and now sits in the stands and cheers us on
24. The Apostle Paul has finished his race - Peter, John, James, Mary, Priscilla; they've all crossed the finish line and are now sitting beside Job and the saints of all ages
25. They call to us not to grow faint or weak, but to press on - To not get caught up and entangled in the things of this world

E. We Wait

1. So like Job said in v. 14, we wait!
2. All the days of our lives, we wait for the day when the Lord will call, and we will go to Him
3. But we don't wait passively,
4. Like that young man on the football field, we live life to it's fullest, looking unto Jesus and the Day we are gathered to Him!