

Sunday Sermon 101324 Job 23:1-9, 16-17 Hebrews 4:12-16

“When God Is Silent...”

Do you believe that God is alive today and that He answers your prayers? If so, do you experience God's work in everything as you believe? Why is there such a profound gap between our confession of faith and our experience of faith? Let's explore the text today to discover a solution that can bridge this gap.

If you read the scripture from the Old Testament today, Job 23, you will feel the urge to have God appear before Job. Many of us have had similar experiences as Job did. Job is looking to God in a very painful situation, but God is unresponsive. Is it during these times when it is easy to fall into despair and lose trust in God? It is reasonable to expect that the same happening will occur in the relationship between God and us.

I. What is Job's real pain? Job 23 records Job's answer to his friend, Eliphaz, in the form of a monologue. Here, Job aspires to argue before the invisible God (vs. 1–9), but then voices his trust and fear in God and belief that God recognizes his faith (vs. 10–17). Even in his monologue, we can see that Job does not deny God's existence or faithfulness, even in his greatest time of suffering.

At present, Job's physical suffering is beyond description. But the more painful thing is that God does not answer, no matter how much he seeks him. Can you imagine how painful that must be for him?

Imagine your most trusted person. Who is it? Your spouse? Child? Friend? Imagine in your greatest hour of need; you call them, but they don't answer you. You knock on their door, but they don't answer. How painful would that be in addition to the pain you are already suffering?

Did you know that God is not a person I can meet because I seek him? I can meet God only when God comes to me. In Jeremiah 29:13–14, God says, "When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me." It is my job to find God. But it is in His sovereignty that God meets me or not. That is why it is the grace of God that we have met God.

However, we tend to choose when God is around, when in fact, he is always there. When things are going well, we praise God, we recognize our blessings, or even sometimes, we forget God. However, when we are in pain, we often feel like God has left us.

In the end, in Job 38, God answers Job in a storm. Job came to meet God. At that time, all the problems of Job are resolved. The suffering without God's answer is the most desperate problem for man.

II. Let's think about now our High Priest, Jesus Christ, and our operating surgeon, The Word of God. Today the scripture of the Hebrews boasts the power of our High Priest, Jesus, and His Word. In verse 12, we are reminded of the scene in which the doctor in charge of surgery is in the operating room.

It expresses the ability of the Word of God to diagnose, operate, and perfect the condition of human flesh, soul, and spirit. Thus, the Word of God becomes the best operating surgeon for us.

See verse 13. We must reveal everything before God. You do not need to hide anything or cannot hide anything before him. When we stand before God's Word, he diagnoses, he operates, and he renews us. We take off all clothes when we lie on the operating table.

This surgery applies to all of our flesh, our soul, and our spirit. When we reveal our thoughts and intentions in our hearts before Him, He gives us grace. But if we rebel against him till he forcibly reveals our lies and disobedience, we have shame and punishment.

In this way, when we are renewed by the Word, our high priest, Jesus, thoroughly sympathizes with our weaknesses. So, we can boldly advance to the throne of grace. And we are graced with mercy and receive help in a proper time.

I ask you specifically to remember, concentrate, and hold verse 16. It says, "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

I repeatedly confess this statement. This is because God's full reward for me is guaranteed. Sometimes we forget that this guarantee is given to us. Besides, we do not know how to use it.

Why? Is it because of a lack of ability, strength, or career? No. It is simply because we do not remember the promise and our faith is lacking.

But God came to us as a human being in the body of Jesus. And he has given us a word of promise that does not change forever through the Scriptures. As a result, whenever we are in that Word, we meet the living God.

Like Job 23, in Psalm 22:1–15, we hear the scream of seeking God through the confession of a poet. Of course, we know that this passage prophesied the crucifixion of Jesus. The life of Jesus ended with the suffering and death of the cross. Although Jesus already prophesied his resurrection, humans had no expectation of his resurrection. At that time, Jesus' death seemed to be the end of everything.

However, we can know through God's appearance to Job and Jesus' appearance as the resurrection body that God always exists among us, no matter what the situation is.

Missionary story:

Let's hear the story of a missionary who had long since given up his faith. In 1921, the Swedish missionaries David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son to the heart of Congo in Africa. At that time, it belonged to the Belgian Order. They met another missionary couple there.

The four people decided to preach the gospel to a remote area where people had never heard of Jesus. However, when they arrived there, sadly, the chieftain of the tribe did not allow them to come into town.

So, they had to live about a mile away. There was only one boy they could contact in the village. The chieftain allowed the boy to sell food to them. Fortunately, Svea finally led the boy to believe in Jesus. But that was their only achievement. They had no contact with anyone else in the village. Finally, the other couple got stuck with malaria and left. Only then did the Flood couple stay there.

Not long after, the pregnant Svea caught malaria. She died a few days after giving birth to a baby. David buried his 27-year-old wife there and returned to the mission headquarters. He entrusted his newborn daughter to the missionaries there and said, "I will return to Sweden. I lost my wife, and I cannot take care of this baby. God ruined my life." He took his son away, and the missionaries adopted the baby girl and took her to America. The girl was named Aggie and grew up under her Christian parents.

One day Aggie looked at her mailbox and found a Swedish magazine. She turned over the magazine, and it showed her a picture of a crusty grave with a white cross. The name "Svea Flood" was written on the cross. She recognized her mother's name. Aggie took the magazine to a person who could translate the story along with the photo. She sat still and heard about the work her mother had done as a missionary.

Soon afterwards, she went to Sweden to find her father. Her biological father, David, remarried and had four more children, and because of alcohol, his life was a mess. After having a touching encounter with her half-sisters and brothers, Aggie said that she wanted to meet her father. They were a bit hesitant and explained, "You can talk to your father. But he is sick a lot. And all you have to know is that when he hears the name of God, he will be angry."

Aggie did not give up. She walked into her father's small apartment. There were empty liquor bottles all over the place. She approached a 73-year-old father who long ago abandoned her. As soon as she said, "Daddy?" he began to apologize repeatedly with tears. She smiled and said, "It's okay, Dad. God took care of me."

At that moment, her father's expression settled and his tears stopped. "God forgot all of us." He turned his face toward the wall and said, "It is all about God that our lives have become like this."

At that time, his daughter Aggie said, "Dad, I have something to tell you. This is a true story." "The little boy in Africa, where you and my mother led to God, grew up and led his entire village to Jesus. The seeds of the gospel that you had sown grew. Because you were faithful to God's call, more than 600 Africans are now serving God. It was not in vain that you and Mom went to Africa. Dad, Jesus loves you. He never hated or forgot you."

David was shocked and frustrated. He began to relax, and their conversation continued. That day he returned to God, who had been waiting for him for decades. A few weeks later, he went through the door of death and entered the eternal house of God in heaven.

#C.S. Lewis wrote a novel, "Till We Have Faces." There is this saying in it. "Lord, now I know why you did not answer. You are the answer yourself to me. Every question disappears in front of your face."

Job could not find God when he searched for him through his own means. But he met God by God's timing. However, we can always see God now. The reason is that he has given us his living word, and we now have it.

But sometimes we experience the absence of God even with the Word. Do not worry; be bold. This experience of absence is only through our own doing. The void will soon become a stepping stone to our greater experience of God's presence in faith.

I want to confirm with you the basic truth of our faith. When I do not see or hear Him, He is still forever with me. Also, when I do not experience Him, God is still at work. There is no place in the universe where God is not present. He is only silent to us according to his plan. Amen.

Reflections and Applications for Today's Sermon:

1) When have you called upon God and He was silent? What was your response? What spiritual guidelines does Job in today's text offer you?

2) I recommend that you meditate again on today's text, Hebrews 4:12-16. As you delve deeper into the power of God's Word and the great high priest Jesus, what will you repent of and what will you be encouraged by?

3) How does the story of the missionary introduced today impact or challenge your current faith journey?