

Sunday Morning Worship – November 2

The Cruelty of a Graceless Gospel

Scripture References

Job 15; Ephesians 2:4–7; 1 Peter 4:7–19; Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22; Psalm 46:10; Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 51:5; Matthew 10:28; Ezekiel 36:25–27; John 1:1, 14; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Introduction

- **Series:** Continuing through Job; today—Eliphaz’s second reply (Job 15).
- **Setting:** Job’s friends grow harsher; Eliphaz offers a “graceless gospel.”
- **Aim:** Expose the danger of any message that omits grace and highlight the true, Christ-centered hope of redemptive suffering.

Key Points / Exposition

1. Eliphaz’s Six Accusations (Job 15:1–16)

- **Empty words:** likens Job’s talk to a scorching east wind (vv. 2–3).
- **Dangerous teaching:** claims Job destroys “fear of God” (v. 4).
- **Self-justification:** says Job speaks only to vindicate himself (vv. 5–6).
- **Arrogance:** asks if Job sat in God’s counsel or is wiser than the ancients (vv. 7–10).
- **Hurtful tone:** accuses Job of despising the “comforts of God” offered by the friends (vv. 11–13).
- **Unrealistic hope:** insists no man can be pure; therefore redemptive suffering is impossible (vv. 14–16).

Absent in every charge: any hint of divine grace.

2. Defining Grace

- *Matthew Henry*: “Free, undeserved goodness and favor of God.”
- *Jonathan Edwards*: “Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.”
- *R. C. H. Lenski*: Grace addresses sin’s guilt; mercy addresses its misery.
- Without grace, counsel becomes cruelty.

3. Shadows of Grace in Early Revelation

- **Genesis 3:15** — Promise of a serpent-crushing offspring (virgin birth hinted).
- **Genesis 22** — Substitutionary ram for Isaac, foreshadowing Christ.
- Even in the patriarchal era, God displayed grace; Eliphaz ignores these threads.

4. The Fate of the Wicked (Job 15:17–35)

- Eliphaz paints the wicked as perpetually terrified, impoverished, and doomed.
- Uses Job’s own laments as evidence, implying Job = wicked man.
- Tradition, not revelation, undergirds his reasoning (“what wise men have told,” v. 18).
- **Result**: Condemnation without remedy, judgment without mercy.

5. The True Gospel Contrasted

- Condemnation is our starting point (Psalm 51:5); grace is God’s intervention (Ephesians 2:4–7).
- “No condemnation for those in Christ” (Romans 8:1) counters Eliphaz’s verdict.
- All God’s attributes coexist fully—justice never at the expense of grace.

- Christ, the Word made flesh (John 1:14), embodies and secures grace (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Major Lessons & Revelations

- A message minus grace distorts God's character and wounds sufferers.
- Redemptive suffering is possible because a sovereign, gracious God stands behind it.
- Tradition and human logic cannot overrule revealed truth.
- Believers must hold grace "with trembling hands," even when circumstances are bleak.

Practical Application

- Lead every conversation—especially pastoral care—with grace, not accusation.
- Examine teaching: does it leave room for unmerited favor? If not, repent.
- Use "means of grace": Scripture, prayer, fellowship, to keep hearts soft.
- In counseling, avoid emotional manipulation; offer gospel hope instead.
- Reflect God's attributes holistically: uphold justice yet extend mercy.

Conclusion & Call to Response

The friends' theology left Job in deeper despair. Our calling is opposite: display the grace that lifted our own condemnation. Receive it anew, refuse to cheapen it, and extend it to a world that "stands already condemned" until it meets Christ.

Prayer

"Gracious Father, thank You that in Christ You withheld no grace. Cleanse us from our graceless words; season our speech with the mercy we have received. Equip us to reflect Your image so that others taste and see Your goodness. In Jesus' name, Amen."

References & Resources

- **Hymns:** “Lord, I Deserve Thy Deepest Wrath” (c. 1850s); “Victory in Jesus.”
- **Quotes:** Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, Martin Lloyd-Jones, R. C. H. Lenski.
- **Means of Grace Highlighted:** Word, prayer, church fellowship.