

Job 6
March 22, 2026

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: In today's study, Job defends his right to complain. Do you think it's okay to question God or lament to God? Why or why not? [Let people engage]

Transition:

If it's not okay to question God, then this chapter shouldn't exist. But it does. So instead of avoiding hard emotions, this chapter pulls us right into them – and forces us to wrestle with what faithful suffering really sounds like. And I realize that some of us were taught to hold back these kinds of questions – but Job doesn't. He opens his heart fully, and by listening to him, we might learn something about how God meets us in our own pain. Let's read the text and see what we can learn.

BOOK:

6 Then Job replied:

² “If only my anguish could be weighed
and all my misery be placed on the scales!

³ It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas—
no wonder my words have been impetuous.

⁴ The arrows of the Almighty are in me,
my spirit drinks in their poison;
God's terrors are marshaled against me.

⁵ Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,
or an ox bellow when it has fodder?

⁶ Is tasteless food eaten without salt,
or is there flavor in the white of an egg?

⁷ I refuse to touch it;
such food makes me ill.

⁸ “Oh, that I might have my request,
that God would grant what I hope for,

⁹ that God would be willing to crush me,
to let loose his hand and cut me off!

¹⁰ Then I would still have this consolation—
my joy in unrelenting pain—
that I had not denied the words of the Holy One.

¹¹ “What strength do I have, that I should still hope?
What prospects, that I should be patient?

¹² Do I have the strength of stone?
Is my flesh bronze?

¹³ Do I have any power to help myself,
now that success has been driven from me?

14 “A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends,
even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
15 But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams,
as the streams that overflow
16 when darkened by thawing ice
and swollen with melting snow,
17 but that cease to flow in the dry season,
and in the heat vanish from their channels.
18 Caravans turn aside from their routes;
they go up into the wasteland and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for water,
the traveling merchants of Sheba look in hope.
20 They are distressed, because they had been confident;
they arrive there, only to be disappointed.
21 Now you too have proved to be of no help;
you see something dreadful and are afraid.
22 Have I ever said, ‘Give something on my behalf,
pay a ransom for me from your wealth,
23 deliver me from the hand of the enemy,
ransom me from the clutches of the ruthless’?
24 “Teach me, and I will be quiet;
show me where I have been wrong.
25 How painful are honest words!
But what do your arguments prove?
26 Do you mean to correct what I say,
and treat the words of a despairing man as wind?
27 You would even cast lots for the fatherless
and barter away your friend.
28 “But now be so kind as to look at me.
Would I lie to your face?
29 Relent, do not be unjust;
reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.
30 Is there any wickedness on my lips?
Can my mouth not discern malice?

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What stood out to you? What questions do you have? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about man? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you learn about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit? [Let people engage]

Q: What is your takeaway? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Job 6 is deeply practical because it shows what suffering, honesty, and friendship look like in real life – not in theory. Here are some meaningful applications to consider:

It's okay to speak honestly about your pain. Job doesn't hold back. We don't have to sanitize our prayers. God can handle our raw emotions-grief, frustration, even confusion. Honest lament is not a lack of faith; it can be an expression of it.

Pain affects how we think and speak. When people are hurting, they may not speak perfectly. Instead of judging their words, try to understand their pain. And when we're hurting, give ourselves grace too!

Don't assume suffering equals wrongdoing. Job invites correction if he's wrong (6:24), but pushes back against his friends' assumptions. Let's avoid jumping to conclusions about why someone is suffering. Not all hardship is a result of personal failure or sin.

Faith includes longing for relief. Job expresses a desire for death – not out of rebellion, but out of overwhelming pain (6:8-9). Seasons of deep struggle don't automatically mean weak faith. Believers can experience intense despair and still be within the story of God's grace. This also reminds us to take others' pain seriously and respond with care.

Invite accountability – but expect compassion. Job says, "Show me where I'm wrong." But he expects his friends to engage fairly. Healthy relationships balance honesty and compassion. We should be willing to be corrected – but also careful in how we correct others.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Job 6)*. Victor Books.

II. Job's Arguments

After each man spoke, Job replied, except in the case of Elihu, where God Himself stepped in to answer. Job's argument went something like this: (1) I believe God is just and powerful as you do; (2) But I am not a hypocrite—I know of no sin between me and God; (3) I would argue my case with God but I cannot find Him; (4) Nevertheless, I will trust Him, for He will vindicate me either in this life or in the life to come. It took a great deal of faith for Job to argue this way in the light of his circumstances. No wonder James 5:11 points to the endurance of Job.

C. He appeals to his basic integrity.

In each of his speeches, Job denies that he is secretly a sinner. He knows his own heart and he confesses that his friends have cruelly misjudged him. At the end of the book, when God reveals Himself to Job, the man does bow in dust and ashes and confess his worthlessness (40:3–5; 42:1–6); but this was not a confession of sins. Rather, it was a humbling of himself before God as he realized his own ignorance and worthlessness in the presence of the Almighty. God never does accuse Job of sin. He accuses him of not realizing the greatness of God and of trying to fit God into the confines of a little argument, but He does not judge him for the sins that his friends accused him of committing. See chapter 31 for Job's defense of his godly life.

E. He appeals to die.

From his first complaint in chapter 3 to the end of the argument, Job asks to die. Read 6:8–12 and 7:15–21. Do not be too critical of Job for wishing to die. He was suffering great physical affliction; friends and neighbors were abusing him (chap. 30); and it seemed that God had abandoned him. Moses, Elijah, and Jonah fell into the same error. The ways of God are above and beyond the mind of mortal men and women.

Zuck, R. B. (1985). *Job*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 727-728) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

a. Job's defense of his complaining (6:1–7)

6:1–3. The patriarchal sufferer said that the reason he was complaining was that his **anguish** or irritation (*ka 'as*; cf. 5:2, "resentment"; 10:17, "anger"; 17:7, "grief") was heavy. But if his complaining were compared **on the scales** with his **misery**, his misery would be heavier, in fact, heavier than wet **sand**. His **words** (chap. 3), seemingly **impetuous**, were nothing compared with his suffering.

6:4–7. God was shooting poisoned **arrows** at him (cf. 7:20; 16:12–13; Lam. 3:12–13). As a **wild donkey** does not bray and an **ox** does not **bellow** when they have food, so Job would not have complained if his situation were more normal.

Food tastes better with **salt**; the two go together. And **the white of an egg** needs some flavoring; otherwise Job refused **to touch it**. So Job's trouble and his wailing went together, and his complaining, he said, should be excused.

b. Job's despair in his suffering (6:8–13)

6:8–10. Job hoped for death; he wanted **God** to **grant** his **request** that he die (voiced in 3:20–23 and also in 7:15; 10:18–19; 14:13). His misery would end if **God would ... crush** (cf. 4:19) him, **loose His hand** from sustaining Job's life, and **cut him off**. The Hebrew verb translated "loose" carries the idea of setting prisoners free (e.g., Ps. 105:20) and the Hebrew verb rendered "cut off" pictures a weaver cutting thread. The one **consolation** and **joy** in Job's pain was that he was innocent of defying God. This is the first of several of Job's affirmations of his innocence (cf. Job 9:21; 16:17; 27:6).

6:11–13. Job had no need to **be patient** (cf. 4:2) because he had nothing to **hope** for (cf. 7:6; 14:19; 17:15). His **strength** was gone. Did Eliphaz think that Job had **the strength of stone** or that he was as insensitive as **bronze**? Job's next question (6:13) should be taken as a negative statement, introduced by a strong affirmative particle meaning "indeed." Thus Job stated that he had no **help** in himself and no resources.

c. Job's disappointment in his friends (6:14–23)

6:14–17. When a **man** is in despair (cf. v. 26) **his friends**, Job felt, ought to be loyal. Job in his pain had not turned from fearing God (cf. **the Almighty** in 5:17), but even if he had, he would still need companionship.

His friends had been like a riverbed. In the rainy season, a wadi is filled with rushing, raging water from **melting snow**, but in the summer when it is most needed it dries up. So his friends, when most needed, disappointed him (cf. v. 21).

6:18–23. Travelers in **caravans** from **Tema**, in northern Arabia, and **merchants** from **Sheba**, in southwestern Arabia, both known for their trading, had gotten lost looking **for water** in the riverbeds. So they were **distressed**. Similarly, Job was **disappointed**, expecting **help** from his three fellows (**you** is plural) but getting none. In fact, seeing Job's **dreadful** condition (cf. 2:12) they were **afraid**. Perhaps he meant they were afraid of being punished by God if they sympathized too deeply with one who had supposedly offended God. Job had never asked for their help before, but why wouldn't they help him now when he needed their aid?

This expression of disappointment in his friends is the first of several themes Job repeatedly came back to in his speeches (see the chart "Repeated Themes in Job's Responses").

d. Job's plea to the three (6:24–30)

6:24–27. Having voiced his keen disappointment in his friends' lack of help, Job then pleaded with them to tell him **where** he had gone **wrong**. "Where's the evidence for your idea that I have sinned?" He could benefit from **honest words** even though they might be **painful**, but how did *their* words help? Not only were their words of no help; they even treated his **words** like **wind**.

The three friends seemed as opposed to him as if they were taking undue advantage of an orphan or even selling a **friend!** (**Cast lots for** can be rendered “overwhelm” or it can mean “cause [a net] to fall on.”)

6:28–30. Perhaps his friends could not bear to look on his disfigured **face**, for Job asked them **to look** at him. He wanted them to note his honesty (**Would I lie?**), and to turn from making **unjust** and false accusations. He was not speaking wickedly, but he could easily **discern** (lit., “taste”) **malice** on their part.

Garrett, D. A. (1998). *The Poetic and Wisdom Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (p. 205). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Job Responded and Prayed (6:1–7:21). Job argued that Eliphaz’s doctrine, however orthodox and tidy it might be, failed utterly to answer the hard facts of his experience. Animals only bellow when they are hungry. Likewise, Job hungered for some answers. He cried out for wisdom to deal with the calamities and questions that had filled his life. But he would not accept cheap and phony answers, such as Eliphaz had just given. They were as inspired as unsalted egg white. Job lamented his agonies and identified with the sufferings of people everywhere, especially slaves and day-laborers.

Job prayed for mercy. Wondering how he could possibly have been bad enough to merit this treatment from God, he reversed the meaning of Psalm 8. Instead of asking, “What is man?” that God would take notice and exalt him (Ps. 8:4–8), he asked, “What is man?” that he deserves such intense scrutiny and punishment. Job again alluded to Leviathan, here portrayed as a sea monster. Was Job such a threat that he needed to be caged like a wild animal?

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Job 6). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.