

Job 30
September 27, 2026

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Why do you think suffering can sometimes make a person feel isolated, even when there are others around? [Let people engage]

Transition: That sense of isolation is something we see very clearly in Job 30. Job isn't simply suffering physically; he feels rejected, humiliated, and misunderstood by the people around him. Even more painful, he feels as though God Himself is distant and no longer listening to his cries. As we read this chapter, let's pay attention to how Job describes that loneliness and what his words reveal about what happens to our faith when suffering seems to separate us from both people and from God. Let's begin.

BOOK:

30 “But now they mock me,
men younger than I,
whose fathers I would have disdained
to put with my sheep dogs.
² Of what use was the strength of their hands to me,
since their vigor had gone from them?
³ Haggard from want and hunger,
they roamed the parched land
in desolate wastelands at night.
⁴ In the brush they gathered salt herbs,
and their food was the root of the broom tree.
⁵ They were banished from their fellow men,
shouted at as if they were thieves.
⁶ They were forced to live in the dry stream beds,
among the rocks and in holes in the ground.
⁷ They brayed among the bushes
and huddled in the undergrowth.
⁸ A base and nameless brood,
they were driven out of the land.
⁹ “And now their sons mock me in song;
I have become a byword among them.
¹⁰ They detest me and keep their distance;
they do not hesitate to spit in my face.
¹¹ Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me,
they throw off restraint in my presence.
¹² On my right the tribe attacks;
they lay snares for my feet,
they build their siege ramps against me.

¹³ They break up my road;
they succeed in destroying me—
without anyone's helping them (or me).
¹⁴ They advance as through a gaping breach;
amid the ruins they come rolling in.
¹⁵ Terrors overwhelm me;
my dignity is driven away as by the wind,
my safety vanishes like a cloud.
¹⁶ "And now my life ebbs away;
days of suffering grip me.
¹⁷ Night pierces my bones;
my gnawing pains never rest.
¹⁸ In his great power God becomes like clothing to me (or God grasps my clothing);
he binds me like the neck of my garment.
¹⁹ He throws me into the mud,
and I am reduced to dust and ashes.
²⁰ "I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer;
I stand up, but you merely look at me.
²¹ You turn on me ruthlessly;
with the might of your hand you attack me.
²² You snatch me up and drive me before the wind;
you toss me about in the storm.
²³ I know you will bring me down to death,
to the place appointed for all the living.
²⁴ "Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man
when he cries for help in his distress.
²⁵ Have I not wept for those in trouble?
Has not my soul grieved for the poor?
²⁶ Yet when I hoped for good, evil came;
when I looked for light, then came darkness.
²⁷ The churning inside me never stops;
days of suffering confront me.
²⁸ I go about blackened, but not by the sun;
I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.
²⁹ I have become a brother of jackals,
a companion of owls.
³⁰ My skin grows black and peels;
my body burns with fever.
³¹ My harp is tuned to mourning,
and my flute to the sound of wailing.

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:

Recognize the danger of comparing past blessings to present pain. The chapter's opening "but now" signals a dramatic reversal—Job experienced a massive shift from a life of favor, honor, and authority to one of pain and shame.¹ When we focus on pain while comparing it to our good days, we risk deepening our distress.¹ Instead, consider your present sufferings against the future glory God will reveal rather than against your past honor.¹

Understand that compassion without reciprocity tests faith. Job's former activity consisted of charitable works flowing from faith—he knew himself in fellowship with God and practiced charity from the fullness of that relationship.² Yet there is no compassion for one who constantly showed compassion for others, and no matter how great Job's suffering, there is no relief.³ This teaches that genuine compassion cannot depend on receiving it in return—a hard but essential lesson for sustained mercy-work.

Recognize abandonment as part of suffering's sting. Job's brothers are alienated from him and his friends have forgotten him. ([Job 19:13–22](#)) Social rejection amplifies physical pain—a reality that demands we actively maintain community with those who suffer, resisting the natural human tendency to distance ourselves from pain.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W.W. (1996). Be Patient. (pp. 113-117) Victor Books

2. Job looks around at God's judgment (Job 30)

From the delightful past, Job is suddenly thrust back into the dismal and disappointing present. You can almost hear him groan his first words, "But now" (Job 30:1; see vv. 9, 16). Job was wise enough to know that he had to face the reality of the present and not escape into the memory of the past. People who refuse to come to grips with life are in danger of losing touch with reality, and soon they lose touch with themselves.

"In their unsuccessful effort to fulfill their needs, no matter what behavior they choose," writes psychiatrist William Glasser, "all patients have a common characteristic: *They all deny the reality of the world around them*" (*Reality Therapy*, p. 6). By refusing to live in the past and by honestly facing reality, Job took a giant step in maturity and integrity. In his lament, Job contrasted his present situation with the past and showed how everything had been changed by the judgment of God. His five "complaints" parallel the joys that he named in chapter 29:

"I have no respect" (30:1–15, see 29:7–11)

"I have no blessing" (30:16–23, see 29:2–6)

"I have no help" (30:24–25, see 29:12–17)

"I have no future" (30:26–28, see 29:18–20)

"I have no ministry" (30:29–31, see 29:21–25)

"I have no respect" (Job 30:1–15). Young men who once stepped aside for Job (Job 29:8) now mocked him and even spit in his face (30:1, 9–10). But the worst part of this experience was that these young men were the sons of men so despicable that Job compared their fathers to donkeys wandering in the desert. He called them "children of fools, yea, children of base men" (v. 8). They were outcasts from society who had to forage in the wilderness to find food and fuel for their fires. At one time, Job had been the greatest man in the East; and now he was the song of the rabble (v. 9).

These men were unworthy to carry Job's sandals, and now they were openly ridiculing him. What made the difference? *Job was now an outcast like themselves*. When Job's bow was "renewed in [his] hand"—a symbol of vigor and success (29:20)—these men respected him. But God had "loosed" his cord and afflicted him, so these rebels set aside their restraint and despised him (30:11). When formerly they had honored Job, it was not because they respected his character and integrity. It was because they respected his position and wealth and hoped to benefit from his favor. Their friendship was fickle, and their respect was hypocritical.

Because this rabble had "thrown off restraint" (v. 11, NIV), they made life miserable for Job. Job pictured them as a ruthless army, building siege ramps, laying traps for his feet, breaking down his defenses, and attacking him (vv. 12–14). They were also like a storm that frightened Job, blew away all his dignity, and destroyed his safety like the wind blows a passing cloud (v. 15). Job experienced sufferings similar to those of our Lord Jesus Christ. The basest of people falsely accused Him (Matt. 26:59–64), spat upon Him (v. 67), and ridiculed Him while He was suffering (Luke 23:35–39); and He became "the song of the drunkards" (Ps. 69:12). Job didn't know it, but

he was being honored by God to share in “the fellowship of His [Christ’s] sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). Though sitting in an ash heap, Job had been promoted in the highest possible way!

“I have no blessing” (*Job 30:16–23*). “And now ... the days of affliction have taken hold upon me,” groaned Job (v. 16). What a contrast to the days of cream and oil! (29:6) Instead of enriching him with blessing, God was robbing him of even the basic enjoyments of life. In the daytime, Job endured unbearable suffering; and at night, God wrestled with him, made his clothing like a straitjacket, and threw him in the mud (30:16–19, NIV). Every night, God wrestled with Job; and Job lost.

Job prayed to God. He even stood up and cried out for deliverance; but his prayers were unanswered (v. 20). Instead of God’s hand bringing help, it only attacked Job ruthlessly and tossed him about like a feather in a storm (vv. 21–22). Job begged for his life, but death seemed inevitable (23).

“I have no help” (*Job 30:24–25*). Job had faithfully helped others in their need (29:12–17), but now nobody would help him. They wouldn’t weep with him or even touch him. He was treated like a leper who might contaminate them, or like a condemned man whom God might destroy at any time. It just wasn’t wise to get too close.

Where were the people that Job had helped? Surely some of them would have wanted to show their appreciation by encouraging their benefactor in his time of need. But nobody came to his aid. Mark Twain wrote, “If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man.”

Our motive for serving others is certainly not to obligate them to serve us (Luke 14:12–14). We help others because we love Christ and want to glorify Him (Matt. 5:16), and because we sympathize with their needs and want to help them (Rom. 12:15; Luke 10:25–37). Missionary doctor Wilfred Grenfell said, “The service we render for others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth.”

“I have no future” (*Job 30:26–28*). During the days of his prosperity, Job had expected to enjoy a long and comfortable life and a peaceful death (29:18–20); but now that was all changed. He looked for good, but God sent evil; he looked for light, but God sent darkness. Instead of comfort and peace, he experienced constant turmoil within. “The churning inside me never stops; days of suffering confront me” (30:27, NIV).

The British essayist William Hazlitt wrote, “Hope is the best possession. None are completely wretched but those who are without hope, and few are reduced so low as that.” Job was, and even the Lord seemed not to care. Job’s body was weak and feverish, and his skin was black from disease.

“I have no ministry” (*Job 30:29–31*). In the past, Job’s words had brought encouragement and hope to many (29:21–25); but now his words were like the howling of the jackals and the moaning of the owls and ostriches (Micah 1:8). Because his hope was dead, Job’s song was a funeral dirge. His harp and flute were tuned to a minor key. How could he speak encouraging

words to others when he himself was in the pit of discouragement? “And where is now my hope?” he had asked earlier in the debate. “As for my hope, who shall see it?” (Job 17:15)

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. 752-753) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

30:1–8. Job bewailed his present misery, which contrasted so starkly with his pre-disease days. He now was disrespected socially (vv. 1–15), in pain physically (vv. 16–19), abandoned spiritually (vv. 20–23), opposed socially (vv. 24–26), and exhausted physically and emotionally (vv. 27–31).

Young people, rather than respecting Job, mocked him (cf. vv. 9–10; 12:4; 16:10; 19:18), an unthinkable discourtesy in the ancient Near East. Having enjoyed “the respect of the most respectable” he now suffered “the contempt of the most contemptible” (Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 235). They were urchins of no **use** to him whatever, with no physical stamina (30:2), thin, hungry, and wandering about the desert (v. 3), rummaging for **food** (v. 4, **broom tree** roots tasted bitter), chased from normal society (v. 5), living in wadis, **among the rocks ... in holes** (v. 6), sounding like braying wild donkeys, and hiding under **bushes** (v. 7). This scum of society—a **brood** without even names—considered *Job* scum!

30:9–15. In their attitude toward the poor, afflicted sufferer, these urchins mocked (cf. 16:10) and detested him and even **spit in his face** (cf. 17:6). In his God-induced affliction (cf. 16:9) Job was as weak (cf. 16:7) as an **unstrung ... bow** (cf. 29:20). Even so, they unrestrainedly attacked him like an army (cf. 16:13–14), making it impossible for him to do anything (**they broke up his road**). No wonder Job spoke again of being overwhelmed by **terrors** (cf. “terrors” in 6:4; 13:21; 24:17; 27:20 and “terrified” in 21:6; 23:15–16). No longer did Job feel respected or safe.

30:16–19. Job then spoke of his physical agony. As his life was vanishing, nighttime was miserable, like a sword piercing to his **bones** (cf. 33:19), causing unending **pains**. Again, for the eighth time, he mentioned God’s **great power** (cf. 9:4; 10:16; 12:13; 24:22; 26:12, 14; 27:11). He felt **God** had grabbed him by his clothes (NIV- if this is the meaning of this difficult Heb. sentence) and thrown him **into the mud**. To be like **dust and ashes** means: (a) that he looked haggard and emaciated, ashen in color, or (b) that he actually had ashes on his sores (cf. comments on 2:8), or (c) that he felt inwardly dejected. Ironically this anticipates Job’s later words about repenting in dust and ashes (42:6).

30:20–23. Added to his social rejection (vv. 1–15) and physical pain (vv. 16–19), was his feeling of being neglected by God (vv. 20–23). His **cry to God** was ignored (cf. 19:7; 31:35) even though God saw him (cf. 7:19–20; 10:14; 13:27; 31:4). In fact God even turned against him, Job felt, attacking him (cf. 16:12) and tossing him **about** as in a violent windstorm (as Job had said God does to the wicked, 27:21).

30:24–31. His three peers had done to Job what no one else would think of doing: they opposed him when he was **broken** and **in ... distress**. Yet Job had sympathized and **grieved** with people

in *their trouble*. Hoping to get some help (**good** and **light**) from his friends Job got the opposite. Certainly their antagonism was undeserved!

Then Job again elaborated on his physical and emotional pain: inner **churning** or turmoil, **days of suffering** (cf. v. 16), **blackened** skin (from his disease; cf. v. 30), crying for relief, wailing like **jackals** with their doleful howls, and like screeching **owls** (or, perhaps better, “ostriches,” as in the NASB with their weird groans; cf. Isa. 13:21; 34:13; Micah 1:8), blackened and peeling **skin** (cf. Job 19:26), and intense **fever**. Consequently, his joy (harps and flutes often played joyful tunes) became grief; he was **mourning and ... wailing** like someone in a funeral dirge. His emotional pain is expressed in 30:24–26, 29, 31; verses 27–28, 30 relate to his physical pain. Such manifold misery, as Job voiced in this chapter, had led him down a path of great depression.

LOOK Section:

1. [*Africa Study Bible*](#) (Oasis International Ltd, 2016), [761](#).
2. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [*Commentary on the Old Testament*](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), [4:599](#).
3. Lawrence O. Richards, [*The Bible Reader's Companion*](#) (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), [341](#).

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Job 30). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.