

Job 29:1-25 (NIV)

1 Job continued his discourse:
 2 “How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me,
 3 when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness!
 4 Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God’s intimate friendship blessed my house,
 5 when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me,
 6 when my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil.
 7 “When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square,
 8 the young men saw me and stepped aside and the old men rose to their feet;
 9 the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands;
 10 the voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths.
 11 Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me,
 12 because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him.
 13 The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing.
 14 I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban.
 15 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.
 16 I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger.
 17 I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth.
 18 “I thought, ‘I will die in my own house, my days as numerous as the grains of sand.
 19 My roots will reach to the water, and the dew will lie all night on my branches.
 20 My glory will remain fresh in me, the bow ever new in my hand.’
 21 “Men listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel.
 22 After I had spoken, they spoke no more; my words fell gently on their ears.
 23 They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain.
 24 When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them.
 25 I chose the way for them and sat as their chief; I dwelt as a king among his troops; I was like one who comforts mourners.

18-29-01-Remembering Blessings

New Year, remembrance, blessing, character, gratitude

Job 29

Recalling past blessings with praise inspires faith in God for the future.

INTRODUCTION: (Text for the Scripture reading)

–Holidays are for remembrance: Valentine’s, Memorial Day, July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas. In celebrating the New Year, we remembered the old year and said “goodbye” before saying hello to a new one.

–In ch. 29, Job, reflects on blessings of the past and wants to go back.

He says, “*How I long for the months gone by...*” In his loss, grief and illness, his remembering was painful, [even as Tennyson, poetically wrote, “this is truth the poet sings,/ That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.”].

–Grief can overshadow our better sense. Job once said, “the LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” Now his mourning overcame his praise. We should follow Job’s earlier example, because **HOM.idea**. But the pattern of this lament can guide us in...

I. Praising God for Former Spiritual Blessings, v.1-6, Job continued his discourse: “*How I long for the months gone by, for the days when God watched over me, when his lamp shone upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness! Oh, for the days when I was in my prime, when God’s intimate friendship blessed my house, when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me, when my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil.*”

A. Remembering past times of blessing is good:

1. We recall times of divine protection: “*God watched over me*”
2. Divine guidance: “*by his light I walked*”
3. Divine fellowship: “*God’s intimate friendship blessed my house... my children were around me*”
4. Divine presence: “*The Almighty was still with me*”
5. Divine provision: “*my path was drenched with cream and the rock poured out for me streams of olive oil*”

B. But we must say “good-bye” to these blessings with praise:

1. Job looked back regretfully, knowing that he couldn’t go back.
2. Praise, in contrast, gets us ready for the future.

TRANS: Is this “truth the poet sings... that a sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remembering happier things”? That may be, but it doesn’t *have* to be. *Grief*

can review past happiness *with sadness* or *with appreciation*. [A man whose son died at 21 was unable to overcome his mournful grief, until one day his minister asked him, “*If you had been offered the choice of having him 21 years or not at all, which would you have chosen?*”] When storm clouds come, they don’t have to dim the joy of reviewing God’s past blessings. **Recalling past blessings with praise inspires faith in God for the future.** We don’t want to follow Job’s pattern of regret, but his pattern of remembrance in Chapter 29 can guide us in...

II. Praising God for Former Prominence (even if occasional...)

A. Job remembered various positions of esteem in v.7-11, 21-25, “*When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, the young men saw me and stepped aside and the old men rose to their feet; the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands; the voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, // ...”Men listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel. After I had spoken, they spoke no more; my words fell gently on their ears. They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain. When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them. I chose the way for them and sat as their chief; I dwelt as a king among his troops; I was like one who comforts mourners.*

1. Do you remember your first time riding in the front seat?
2. How about a time when people really listened to you?
3. Was there a time you remember getting applause?
4. Do you remember ever getting picked to be a leader?

B. Job also recalled his benevolent habits in v.12-17,...*I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him. The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth.*

1. In v.14, he said that his righteousness and justice were habitual, not just talk. [“A creed in deed is a creed indeed!”–DLH]
2. He had shown righteous compassion—a heart moved to right action toward those in need: the *poor, fatherless, dying, widow, stranger, needy*, the *victims* of injustice [Prestige in the ancient East was weighed in terms of one’s social involvement: who do the helpless have but God? If so, who will choose to be *god-like* and come to their aid?)]

TRANS: Can you hear Job’s heart? “Oh! *How I long for the months gone*

by’... when I was known for my care of those in need. But look! Now I stand in utter need myself! Even God has abandoned me!” Is this “truth the poet sings”? [Corrie ten Boom’s story is a good one to set beside that of Job. What did she get for participating in rescuing Jews from Nazi oppression? She suffered tragedy and brutality in a concentration camp. She lost everything, home, family, possessions, status, security. Through these losses, she said the Lord taught her “*to hold everything loosely,*” so that He never had to pry open her fingers from a tight grip.] God has a future for us to meet with faith, if we will **recall past blessings with praise**, and release them back to Him...

III. Praising God for Future Prospects, v.18-20, “I thought, ‘I will die in my own house, my days as numerous as the grains of sand. My roots will reach to the water, and the dew will lie all night on my branches. My glory will remain fresh in me, the bow ever new in my hand.’

A. Doubtful circumstances robbed Job of his faith for the future:

1. He despaired of having a long life (*long life is not the treasure, but a useful life in God’s service*).
2. He despaired of further blessing.
3. He despaired of strength to go on (30:11a, “God has unstrung my bow”-- no more fight left in me...).

B. Doubtful circumstances lose their control over our thinking in the presence of praise (which often becomes a sacrifice to offer)—Heb 13:15 (NKJV), Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name.

CONCLUSION:

—[Harry Garriepy wrote a devotional study of Job, and has this prayer for his readers: “*Dear Lord, help me not to let the shadows of the present dim or obscure the sunlight of the past. Help me not to live this day regretfully but joyfully.*”]

—*Never wallow in regret*, longing “*for the months gone by*,” wishing to go back, to return to the blessings of the past. Instead, put the godly seal of praise on all the blessings of former days:

Praising God for Former Spiritual Blessings; Praising God for Former Prominence; Praising God for Future Prospects

—Praise for past blessings recalls God’s faithfulness. Praise prepares us to meet the future with faith that God will bring us through every doubtful circumstance of life. Let us remember our past blessings with praise! It will inspire us and strengthen our faith in God for the future.