2nd Sunday after Trinity
Bessemer - 1958

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

Job 1: 20-22 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fel down upon the ground, and worshiped, and said; Naked came I out o my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not no charged God foolishly.

THE CHRISTIAN FACES SORROW

As the Christian pastor Sunday after Sunday steps into the pulpit and faces his congregation, he is sometimes frightened at the awesome responsibility that is his. He sees children who are just beginning the long, rough journey of life and who are all too soon to find out that life is real and earnest. He sees young people, many of whom are somewhat bewildered by the sudden seriousness of life, others of whom are assailed by doubts and questions that never before disturbed them. He sees those of middle age, men and women whose splendid ideals, high plans, and great hopes of yesterday are somewhat worn and tarnished. He see the old folks who are facing the sunset years and who are increasingly aware of t inevitable summons.

He sees men and women whose problems he knows. He sees those who have recently placed a loved one into an open grave and those who will soon undergo an operation; he sees those who are grateful for the arrival of a new baby and those who are inexpressible happy because they will soon be married; he sees those who are truly repentant over their past sinful life, and those who are living in a country far from righteousness, wasting the precious things of life, but who have not yet seen the folly of their ways. He sees a husband and wife who have been quarreling and whose home has become like a corner of hell, and he sees a husband and wife whose marriage is like a bit of heaven on earth. He sees a father and mother deeply concerned about a wayward son or daughter, and another father and mother joyously proud of their son or daughter. Under God the Christian pastor tries to bring to each of them a word of consolation and courage, of hope and cheer, of counsel and guidance from God's Word of Truth. But above all the Christ ian pastor sees all human beings as pilgrims journeying through life into eternity He knows that they are all sinful children of men in need of forgiveness before th they can again become children of God. Under God he tries to bring them to the

way of faith in Christ the Savior, so that all of them may someday be numbered with the eternally blessed. His is a tremendous responsibility.

It is inevitable that in certain sermons the pastor should be particularly mindful of a group with a special problem. Jesus demonstrated his concern for specific problems of individuals in today's Gospel when he left a throng of people standing by the Sea of Galilee to go to the home of Jairus and turn the hearts of saddened parents into joy by raising their daughter from the dead. On the way He stopped to bring health to a woman who had been suffering from an incurable desease for twelve years. But more than that, He brought them healing fc their sin-sick souls, so that henceforth they could face all sorrow and hardship with triumphant courage and expectation. Therefore, when I now speak on the topi The Christian faces sorrow, it is with the hope and prayer that those who are not sorrowful will listen carefully too, so that they may know how to meet it when it does come into their life, as it inevitably will. Every day there are more than 100,000 burials in the world, and every day there are, therefore, several hundred thousand people whose hearts are touched by grief. Death strikes like lightning, or crawls like a snail; but whether it is fast or slow, it is absolutely sure of its mark. No individual has ever been able to escape it, and no family can forever close its doors on the sorrow it brings. Therefore, when sorrow come, we want to be prepared for it; we want to know what we, as Christians, can do. How can we adjust to the disaster and go on living courageous, effectively Christian lives?

Into the life of Job of old sorrow came crashing like a wild meteor. Job's life had turned suddenly into the dark mile. The sun had set, and the choud were shutting out even the twinkling of the stars. In the morning Job had been or of the richest men in the Orient; by nightfall he had become a pauper. All of his temporal possessions had been swept away in one day. Messengers had come throughout the day, and each had brought more distressing news. Finally when Job had heard that all of his cattle, oxen, mules, sheep, and camels - more than 10,000 of

them - had been stolen or killed, and that his barns had burned to the ground - there came another message with an announcement that was shattering. Job's children had died in a hurricane, all ten of them. Did Job grieve? What do you expect? Of course, he did. The Bible story relates that he arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground. It was the custom of his day thus to express deep grief. And we don't blame him for giving such vent his feelings. Did Job despair? Certainly not! The storm had broken, the winds were blowing violently, but they did not touch the calm of Job's heart. His trust in God was not shaken, and he gave expression to a most remarkable faith as he confessed: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

When sorrow comes, it must be accepted without rebellion. Job did not insist on asking questions that God was not ready to answer. He did not torture himself by trying to explain why it had all happened. He readily confessed to God: I know that Thou canst do everything. He accepted God's providence with an all-consuming And though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Where can you find a more beautiful expression of a man's recognition of his complete dependence on God and his readiness to submit without complaint to God's control of everything: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Job did not blame himself or others for his misfortune. In sorrow we may be inclined to condemn ourselves for not doing this or that, or the doctor for not being more skillful. And so we complicate and compound our sorrows. The Bible reports clearly: In all this Job sinned not. Often when sorrow comes we are inclined to ask, What have I done that I must suffer so? Usually sorrow is not the result of a personal sin. To search within ourselves and in personal behavior for a reason for the grief that has overwhelmed us can be as disastrous as opening a wound with an infected needle. You can open a flower bud in one of two ways. You can force the petals apart, but you'll almost certainly destroy the flower. Or you can let it alone until God with warmth, sunlight, and rain finally unfolds it. You can tear at your sorrow if you want to and so add to its pain, or, like Job, you can

patiently wait for God to reveal its hidden and blessed meaning. He may not ful reveal it until all sorrow is finally at an end.

When sorrow comes, it must be expressed. Where did the idea originate that tears are always a sign of weakness? Have you ever noticed how freely the heroes of the Bible expressed their grief? All the world can see their tears anc their sackcloth. Even Christ, as He stood by the grave of His good friend Lazaru did not hold up His chin, bite His tongue, and assume a smile as though He felt i not. He wept. How we seek to cover the ugliness of death with flowers and music How we try to make a corpse beautiful! Death is horrible; there's no denying it. Grief, as it is felt, is to be expressed. The findings of modern psychology and psychiatry will twice underline that observation. There's an oft-quoted and very wise saying among counselors on personal problems, to the effect that when the ey have forgotten how to weep, other organs in the body are likely to begin. God made the human body with tear ducts, so that they might be useful to express grie

When sorrow comes, the Christian soul begins to grow. Great spiritual truths which had been stored in the head suddenly move to the heart. Theodore Cuyler tells of a unique painting called Cloudland, hanging at the end of a long art gallery in Europe. As one approaches it, the painting looks like a confused daubing of paint; however, stepping closer, one is able to distinguish a cloud of angel faces. What appeared to be meaningless is suddenly remarkably meaningful Sorrow is like that. Out of the confusion that at first overwhelms us, there appears a cloud of angel faces in the form of promises of God that become always more clear and more meaningful. Let me mention a few: We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Be still, and know that I am God. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. When sorrow comes, turn to the Bible, which is a well of God's eternal and overflowing comfort, and cling to God's deathless promises of assurance!

Above all, remember the death of God's own Son, Christ Jesus, for the sins of the world in order that death might forever lose its sting for those who by faith have embraced Him as their Savior. When the body of Abraham Lincoln was taken to his home town for burial, the streets of the city were lined with mourne It is said that at one place a Negro woman held her small son up above the heads the people and said to him: Take a good, long look, son; he died for you. When sorrow comes, take a good, long look at the Savior. He died for you and for your loved ones. As they have learned to know and trust Him, you can confidently look forward to a blessed reunion in heaven.

When sorrow comes, remember that God heals with time, if we let Him. J discovered that truth, though at first he would have found it hard to believe. When a wound is fresh, it is sore to the touch. But it will heal until finally there remains only a scar with all the soreness gone out of it. Sorrow is like that. The loss of a loved one is never forgotten, but gradually the soreness goe out of its remembrance, unless one insists on keeping the wound open with self-pit A mother who for years refused to be comforted over the loss of her daughter had a dream in which she saw a group of children, each holding a lighted candle. She recognized her daughter, but her candle was always going out. She asked why. Th daughter answered: Because of your never-ending tears, Mother.

When sorrow comes, plans for the future must often be changed. New friends must be won. New interests must be found. God would have it that way. W have here no continuing city. Never do we realize that as forcefully as we do whe sorrow comes. But God does expect us to live a life of service to Him as long as earth does remain our home, until He summons us to where there is no sorrow and where tears are dried forever.

There is a way of meeting sorrow when it comes, facing it, accepting it without rebellion, and sanctifying it with God's help and by His direction. With Christ at our side we are able to say with Job - out of tears and sackcloth - The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Amen.