

Job 16:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

Analysis

'My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.' The contrast is devastating: 'friends' (מְרֵעִי, mere'ay) offer 'scorn' (לְעָגָה, la'agi—mocking, derision) while Job's 'eye poureth out tears' (דָּלְפָה עֵינִי, dalefah eyni) to God. Human friendship fails precisely when most needed, leaving only God as refuge. Yet God seems distant (earlier verses). This is faith's crucible—friends fail, God feels absent, yet Job continues praying. Psalm 142:4 expresses similar isolation. The image of eyes pouring tears 'unto God' (לֵאלֹהֵי, el-Eloah) shows prayer as the last refuge. The Reformed emphasis on God's faithfulness when all else fails undergirds persevering prayer. Job's weeping prayer models faith under maximum pressure.

Historical Context

Ancient culture highly valued friendship and community. Job's experience of scorn from friends would compound his suffering, leaving him socially isolated and religiously accused, with only direct appeal to God remaining.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do we continue praying when both friends and God seem absent or hostile?
2. What sustains faith when all human support systems fail?

Interlinear Text

יְמַלִּיצַי	רַעֵי י	אֶל	אֶל לַוְה	דָּלַף ה	עֵינַי:
scorn	My friends	H413	tears unto God	poureth out	me but mine eye
H3887	H7453		H433	H1811	H5869

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 5:7 (Parallel theme): Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Psalms 142:2 (Parallel theme): I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

Psalms 109:4 (Parallel theme): For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.

Job 16:4 (Parallel theme): I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

Job 17:2 (Parallel theme): Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?