

Job 16:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should asswage your grief.

Analysis

'But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should asswage your grief.' Job imagines how he would respond if positions were reversed: he'd 'strengthen' (אַחַזְקָה, achazqah) with words and 'moving of lips' (נִידְסָתָה, nid sefatay) would 'asswage' (יַחֲסֹךְ, yachsokh—restrain, hold back) grief. This is biting irony—Job would offer genuine comfort, unlike his friends. The passage models pastoral care: strengthening the afflicted, restraining rather than adding to grief. James 1:19 counsels being 'swift to hear, slow to speak.' Job's hypothetical demonstrates the friends' failure. The Reformed pastoral tradition emphasizes compassionate presence over hasty correction. Job shows what godly friendship looks like.

Historical Context

Ancient friendship obligations included comforting the afflicted. Job here contrasts what true friends should do with what his friends have actually done, highlighting their failure to fulfill basic friendship duties.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can we offer strength through words without adding to grief?
2. What does Job's hypothetical response teach us about pastoral care for the suffering?

Interlinear Text

שְׁפַת־יְהוָה אֶעֱמֹד בְּמִזְבֵּחַ וְבְמִצְבֵּה
But I would strengthen you with my mouth and the moving of my lips
H553 H1119 H6310 H5205 H8193
תִּחְשַׁרְתָּ
should asswage
H2820

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 6:1 (Parallel theme): Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.