

THE GRIEF OF GOD

Introduction: God grieves.

Grief and joy are opposite characteristics of personality.

I. Grief of Sin (caused by sin).

A. Genesis 6:6 "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

1. Sin is a terribly destructive thing.

2. "The Broken Pinion" by Hezekiah Butterworth, d. 1905

"I walked through the woodland meadows,

Where sweet the thrushes sing;

And I found on a bed of mosses

A bird with a broken wing.

I healed its wound, and each morning

It sang its old sweet strain,

But the bird with the broken pinion

Never soared as high again.

I found a young life broken

By sin's seductive art;

And, touched with a Christ-like pity,

I took him to my heart.

He lived with a noble purpose

And struggled not in vain;

But the life that sin had stricken

Never soared as high again.

But the bird with the broken pinion

Kept another from the snare;

And the life that sin had stricken

Raised another from despair.

Each loss has its compensation,

There is healing for every pain;

But the bird with a broken pinion

Never soars as high again.

B. Ephesians 4:30 "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God"

1. Sin in the believer's life easily grieves the indwelling Spirit of God.

2. The lines of Vachel Lindsay cause us to wonder if even nations and religions do not sometimes grieve the Spirit of God:

"This is the sin against the Holy Ghost:--

To speak of bloody power as right divine,
And call on God to guard each vile chief's house,
And for such chiefs, turn men to wolves and swine:--

To go forth killing in White Mercy's name,

Making the trenches stink with spattered brains,

Tearing the nerves and arteries apart,

Sowing with flesh the unreaped golden plains.

In any Church's name, to sack fair towns,

And turn each home into screaming sty,

To make the little children fugitive,

And have their mothers for a quick death cry,--

This is the sin against the Holy Ghost:

This is the sin no purging can atone:--

To send forth ^{under} rapine in the name of Christ:--

To set the face, and make the heart a stome."

II. The GRIEF OF SORROW.

A. Isa. 53:3,4, "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with
griefs....Surely he hath borne our griefs and ~~hakk~~
carried our sorrows" ..{~~hympathetixakkx~~}

1. His own griefs.

2. He carried our griefs sympathetically.

B. The grief of God the Father when His only Son died.

1. Think not that God was stoically unconcerned.

2. His grief is not expressed openly as ours, but it
is nevertheless real.

C. God often uses sorrows to reach our heart for Himself.

"Eyes, which the preacher could not school,

By wayside graves are raised,

And lips say, 'God be pitiful,'

Who, ne'er said, "God be praised."

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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III. The GRIEF OF SUSPICION.

A. Psalms 78:40, "How oft did they grieve Him in the desert"
1. Referred to by the writer to the Hebrews (3:10-12)

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be an any of you an evil heart of unbelief."

2. Any distrust or lack of faith grieves God, for He likes to be trusted.

B. Suspicion is hostile distrust based on unsupportable evidence.

1. Any unbelief or distrust of God is unsupportable.

2. Poem "Blind" by John Dendrick Bangs (d. 1922)

"Show me your God!" the doubter cries.

I point him to the smiling skies; I show him all the woodland greens; I show him peaceful sylvan scenes; I show him winter snows and frost; I show him waters tempest-tossed; I show him hills rock-ribbed and strong; I bid him hear the thrush's song;

I show him flowers in the close--

The lily, violet and rose;)

I show him rivers, babbling streams; I show him youthful hopes and dreams; I show him maids with eager hearts; I show him toilers in the marts; I show him stars, the moon, the sun; I show him deeds of kindness done; I show him joy; I show him care, And still he holds his doubting air, And faithless goes his way, for he Is blind of soul, and cannot see!"

Doubt that yonder golden sun will rise in the morning, Doubt that fire will burn, or that ice is cold,

Doubt that there is power in electricity, in the atom or in the gasoline engine,

But doubt not that there is a God who has revealed Himself in nature, in history, in the Holy Scriptures, in

Jesus Christ, and human experience,

And doubt not that He will surely keep HIS WORD.

IV. The GRIEF OF INGRATITUDE.

A. What a wonderful virtue gratitude is. We would all do well in joining in the following prayer by George Herbert, a great Christian poet of Elizabethan days:

"Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more---a grateful heart;
Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare days;
But such a heart, whose pulse may be

Thy praise."

B. Romans 1:21 - one of the indictments of degenerate heathenism is that they were not thankful.

C. An ungrateful child can bring great grief to the heart of a parent. Note the experience of King Lear, who said, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

D. God is merciful to the ungrateful prodigal -- a word tell story of Dr. James Middleton, when he was a boy in Mississippi and was unconditionally expelled from college and went home.