

**Job 29: 1-6; “Days When God Watched over Me”, Sermon # 36 in the series –
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
On October 1st, 2023, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

It will be good for us to remember that sometimes, when we are going through a trial, that we may not understand the reasons why God is permitting it. We do not understand why God has ordained it. It will be good for us to remember that God always does have the best of reasons. And the greatest reason is, that He would have us to be more conformed to the image of His Son. This is the purpose of our trials, that we might have fellowship with Christ’s sufferings, and come to know more of the power of His resurrection. God wants us to live by faith in Him. In this regard I want to open up to you the phrase – “As in the days when God watched over me”.

Job here is remembering God’s great watchcare over his life, before this great trial. At this point he thought that God had become his enemy. But he still fondly remembered the past, and how God had blessed him spiritually, and prospered him physically. 1st of all – He remembered when God’s lamp shone upon his head and when His light was upon his path. (verses 1-3) 2nd – He remembered the days of his prime, when the Almighty God was yet him, and his children were around him. And 3rd – He remembered when his steps were bathed with cream and the rock poured out rivers of oil for him. I want you to see that all the goodness and mercy that we experience, comes to us, from the Father having given to us, our Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

1st of all – Job remembered when God’s lamp shone upon his head and when His light was upon his path.

In verses 2 and 3 Job says – “Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.” When Job says that God’s light shone upon his head, he is I believe, talking about more than the physical light of the sun. Although it would certainly include that, I believe that he is talking about God’s showing him favor, and blessing him with understanding in many of the activities of his daily life. We need to see that according to His infinitely great and wise Being, our God is good and kind to all men in many ways, according to His purpose to reveal Himself to them in both common grace and saving grace.

Look with me over at Luke chapter 6, verses 32-36. Jesus is addressing all who would follow Him and be His disciple. And He says – “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?” “For even sinners do the same.” “And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you?” “For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.” “But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.” “For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.” “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

I think that we sometimes fail to reckon with just how loving and kind, and good and merciful, God is, to even unthankful and evil men. I think that sometimes we fail to reckon with how very concerned and intimately acquainted He is with us, in all of our ways; to think upon us, and to consider how He might do us good. Do you think of God as kind? Do you see how, when you are becoming more like God, that You are kind, and that you will be merciful? And do you think, often, about how you can keep God’s commandments better? God’s commandments are a lamp shining down upon your head.

Proverbs 6: 20-23 says – “My son, keep your father’s command, and do not forsake the law of your mother.” “Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck.” “When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you.” “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” This is the difference between a believer and an unbeliever. In a believer’s mind and heart, they will obey their parents when their parents are walking with the Lord. And so, we see here that this is also how a person becomes wise and holy, in living their life to God.

You see here how wise a thing it is for a young person to keep the commandments of their mother and father, when your parents are instructing you from the word of God. But you, the young person,

must not simply learn and apply the commands of your parents to your life, but you must have God's lamp shine upon your mind and heart; so that by His light, you can walk through the darkness of difficulty, opposition, and trial. You will learn by the light of this lamp, to walk through the darkness and into the light of God's word, by the power of His Spirit. You will have fellowship with God, the Father and the Son.

Let's think about David. David had saving faith. He had saving grace. God's lamp shone upon his head in the sense of blessing him and giving him the wisdom and the knowledge of the fact that God was the author of his life. David knew that He needed God's help every day in doing and keeping His commandments. David knew that God was the giver of every good and perfect gift. And he learned to be thankful for that blessed truth each and every day. He sought the Lord and He answered him and delivered him from all his fears. He looked to Him and he was radiant and his face was not ashamed it says in Psalm 34, verses 4 & 5.

Unbelievers will not learn this important truth about seeking God, through the truth of His word, except they find grace and will begin to cry to God for wisdom and understanding. But a believer loves spiritual light shining upon his mind. 2nd Samuel 22, verses 29-36. "For You are my lamp, O Lord; the Lord shall enlighten my darkness." "For by You I can run against a troop; by my God I can leap over a wall." "As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him." "For who is God, except the Lord?" "And who is a rock, except our God?" "God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect." "He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places." "He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend as bow of bronze." "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great."

You can see here that David confesses that God is his lamp. That is that the Lord enlightened his darkness. The light shone upon his head, and it was because God shined this light into his mind and his heart, and blessed him with saving grace, that he had the wisdom to know how to do many things righteously and rightly. This practical wisdom that he was given, by and through God's shining, helped him to walk upon the path of righteousness. God's word to him, as he says in Psalm 119, verse 105 was a lamp to his feet and a light to his path.

In other words, even though David was a regenerate man, he confessed that he needed God to daily shine His light upon his path. And by God's light shining, he then realized that he could walk through the darkest of situations. He confesses that God was his rock, his strength, his power and the One who made his way perfect. He was the one who mentally and physically gave him skill in battle. God made his feet like the feet of deer. He taught his hands to war so that he could bend a bow of bronze. We too, have come here this afternoon, to the Lord's Table, to confess that God has given us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, the shield of His salvation. He watches over all our steps and knows the way that we take, moment by moment. It is His gentleness with us that makes us great. May you remember this, and praise Him for it, when you come to partake of the elements.

2nd – David remembered the days of his prime, when the Almighty God was yet him, and his children were around him.

Verses 4 & 5 say – "Just as I was in the days of my prime, when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were around me...." Now, we need to see as believers in God and in Christ, that God is truly watching over us all through our life, in accordance with His eternal purpose, from beginning to end. Truly, He ordains all things for our good. He watches over us early in life when we are little, and can do so little for ourselves. He knows that we need parents to help us with everything. He watches over us in the prime of our life when we marry and have children, raise them to know God and perceive His glory. And He watches over us when we are old and cannot do as much for ourselves as we would like to, as much as we used to do.

Job here confesses God to be sovereign in his use of the word – Almighty, in verse 5. Do you see God as the Almighty God that He is? Job did. And yet, because of the great trial that he was going through, because he did not sense God's blessing over his life, he believed that God was no longer for him. He thought that God was against him. In these thoughts, Job was very wrong. And he will confess

himself to be wrong at the end of the book when God Himself appears on his behalf to resolve all things in his favor and will prove him to be a man of integrity before angels and the whole watching world. Why is it that we are so often in our experience like Job? Why do we question that God is with us, when we undergo a trial?

Well, it is probably because we know ourselves not to be perfect people, even though we are sincere followers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that we have much to learn about God and our heart and our life. And yet we do not want to learn these things that would cause us to grow spiritually, through adversity and trial. We choose rather to think about His goodness and mercy, rather than His chastening hand. We think of Psalm 23: 6 – “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” We think of God’s goodness and mercy as being the opposite of His chastening of us.

But, at a time like this, a time like Job was going through, God had a point to prove with Satan. The point was, that He was making Job over into Christ’s image, and he would become more like Him through his trial. The same is true of us. When we are undergoing trial, difficulty, and affliction, we must remember this great truth, that God chastens us for our good. He chastens us so that we might be partakers in His holiness, as it says in Hebrews 12, verse 10. Ah, there is so much for us to learn in this regard. Job had lost so much. He was looking back to the good time, when he had his children around him, in the days of his prime. It was a time when “the friendly counsel of God was over his tent”.

What I believe that God would have us to learn at this time is that God’s friendly counsel is always over our tent, when we are a true believer in Him. This is because of His sending Christ into the world to be our Savior and our Friend. Christ is God’s Wonderful and friendly Counsel to all of Mankind in the gospel. When you believe in Him, you find that you have One who took your place in judgment in regard to all of your sins. You find One who sticks closer than a brother. You find One who sympathizes with you in all of your attempts to do God’s will.

He is the Wonderful Counselor and Your near and dear Friend in every stage of life. And in the midst of all of the trials that you will face, you will be able to prove Him to be so, by faith and trust in God’s ordering all of the things in your life, whether they appear to you to be good or bad. Job was thinking that God was no longer with him because all had been taken away from him. This was not true. God was just as near to Job at this point, when he thought that all was lost, and he could not feel God’s presence, as those good days when he had his children all around him.

God’s friendly counsel had continued all through this time of Job’s greatest trial, and God was going to bring him through it, even though Job could no longer sense God’s favor, His Presence, or His blessing. How good it is when God gives us children. Children, as it says in Psalm 127: 3, are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.” “Like arrows in the hand of warrior, so are the children of one’s youth.” Ah, this is a very good thing, when God blesses us with children. In Psalm 128 you find the perfect picture of blessedness, when it says – “Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways.” “When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and shall be well with you.” “Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table.” “Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.” Well, Job had known these blessings. He had indeed feared the Lord. He had indeed turned from evil.

He had been so very happy in those past days. All had been well with His soul. His wife had been a fruitful vine in the very heart of his house. He had been blessed because he feared the Lord. And then sudden destruction came, of all of the blessings that God had given him. And he was left with nothing. Had God forgotten His faithfulness to him? He couldn’t understand. Perhaps you, too, have come to a point where you feel that you have lost much that is precious to you. You long for the days of the past when your children were around you and the friendly counsel of God was over your tent. What is it that you need to learn? Let’s come now to the Lord’s table.

3rd – Job remembered when his steps were bathed with cream and the rock poured out rivers of oil for him.

Verse 6 says – “When my steps were bathed with cream, and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!” Job is speaking of the best times of his life, the days when things went so very well with him. It seemed to him as though his blessings from God were so very great that all the steps that he took every day were bathed with cream. He had so many cattle, and milk coming from them, that he could make rivers of cream which he could literally bath his feet in. Those were the days when he was so very prosperous. Everything was smooth and easy and pleasant. And he related all of these blessings to his close and wonderful relationship with God. He knew that God was faithful to all of his promises.

He knew that God had once blessed him with every earthly and spiritual blessing that he had, because he was walking closely with God. That is what the picture is, that Job is giving us here. When he says that the rock poured out rivers of oil for him, I believe that he is speaking of God as His Rock in terms of Him helping him with all of the hard things that he had experienced in the past. In the difficult times, rivers of oil came to him in the midst of these hard times. That God would, by the precious grace of His Holy Spirit, pour out rivers of spiritual and physical strength for him to get through the difficulties, so that they did not seem all that difficult. But now he experienced a drying up of all of these things.

Job’s problem during this time was that He thought that God had forgotten to be gracious to him. There did not appear to be a reason why. But there really was. God was proving Job’s integrity. Let’s remember a verse from Deuteronomy chapter 32, which I think will help us to remember Christ in the Supper. Deuteronomy 32: 4 – “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are justice.” “A God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.” Let us remember at this hour what Job should have remembered at that time; that God’s work is always perfect. There is no unrighteousness in Him. All of His righteousness and all of His justice was fulfilled in what Christ did in His righteous life and His sacrificial death. His work was perfect.

It was perfect on our behalf; we who trust in Him. The Lord is the Rock of our Strength, and our refuge is in God. In fact, when Israel was being led through the wilderness for 40 years, Paul says in 1st Corinthians 10: 2-4 that “they all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and they all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.” “For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” I want you to remember at this time, dear Christian, that Christ is always following you, to observe closely where you go. Not only physically, but more importantly, spiritually.

In the hard and difficult experiences of life, He will pour out oil for you from the Rock of His love, and the Rock of His strength to save you and to keep you. Concerning Israel of old in the wilderness, it says in Deuteronomy 32: 9-14 – “He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.” “As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so the Lord alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him.” He made him ride in the heights of the earth, that he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, and oil from the flinty rock; curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, with fat of lambs; and rams of the breed of Bashan and goats, with the choicest wheat; and you drank wine, the blood of the grapes.”

The Lord did all of these things for them, but they were unmindful of it. It says in verse 18 – “Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the god who fathered you.” May it not be so of any of us. As we partake of this Supper let us remember to draw honey from the Rock of Christ’s finished work. Let us draw oil from the flinty work of Christ’s sufferings to assuage the wounds of sin. May we now partake of the choicest wheat in the bread of this Supper. May we partake of the wine, the blood of the grapes of Christ’s having drunk the cup of wrath for us. Let us have joy in doing that now, remembering all that God has done for us in Christ, and all that He will do for us because He will keep us as the apple of His eye.

