

**Job 33: 18-33; “A Mediator, One of a Thousand”, Sermon # 40 in the series –
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on April 7th, 2024, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Elihu is speaking to Job, following Job’s three friend’s addresses to him. They had ceased answering Job when it became apparent to them that he was trying too hard to justify himself. When Elihu began his discourse, his anger was aroused, it says in chapter 32, verse 2, because Job in his speeches had justified himself rather than God. And so now Elihu is going to show Job in the remainder of this chapter why it was that he needed a Mediator.

This Mediator that Elihu is speaking about, one among a thousand, is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us consider then, 1st of all – That this Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, is needed so that men might not go down to the Pit. (verses 19-24, and verses 28 & 30) 2nd – This Mediator is needed in order that man can be restored to His (that is, God’s) righteousness. (verses 26 & 27) And 3rd – This Mediator is need in order that our souls will continue to be enlightened with the light of life, all through our Christian life.

1st of all – That this Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, is needed so that men might not go down to the Pit.

(verses 19-24, and verses 28 & 30)

“Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, and with strong pain in many of his bones, so that his life abhors bread, and his soul succulent food.” “His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones stick out which once were not seen.” “Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, and his life to the executioners.” “If there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand, to show man His uprightness, then He is gracious to him, and says, ‘Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom.’” Verse 28 – “He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit.” And verse 30 says – “To bring back his soul from the Pit...”

Now, the reason that Elihu mentions “the Pit” so much in these few verses is because he knew that Job felt as though he were going down to the Pit, even though he knew himself to be a righteous man, a man of integrity. The Pit that he is talking about is the Pit of hell, or being damned by God because of not repenting of your sins. Job had spoken of himself as being blameless, though not understanding himself, back in chapter 9, verse 21. He said that he did not understand himself, and he despised his life. Farther on, he explains his predicament in verse 32.

“For God is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together.” “Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both.” It is amazing, is it not, that the most righteous man upon the earth in that day, had come to the place in chapter 9, verses 22-24, where he says – “It is all one thing; therefore I say, ‘He destroys the blameless and the wicked.’” “If the scourge slays suddenly, He laughs at the plight of the innocent.” “The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.” “He covers the faces of its judges.” “If it is not He, who else could it be?” Well, in these statements Job was not right. He was misrepresenting God. Job needed better understanding of these things. God does not laugh at the plight of the innocent. Rather it is Satan who ever laughs at the plight of the innocent. It is not God who ever destroys the blameless. But Satan will attempt to do so with everyone who knows God.

When Job thought back concerning the trial that he was going through, he thought that it was not right for God to reward him in the way that He had. He was a righteous man who had lost everything. He had just spent chapters 30 and 31 defending his own integrity. His argument for his vindication, he believed, was really with God, and not with men. And so in chapter 30, verses 16-19 he says – “And now my soul is poured out because of my plight; the days of affliction take hold of me.” “My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest.” “By great force my garment is disfigured; it binds me about as the collar of my coat.” “He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.”

But what Elihu is trying to tell him here is that it is this experience of being chastened by God which is what keeps men from going down to the Pit. The pains of afflictions are a messenger to us, so that we should seek God Himself to deliver us, and not blame God for taking these radical actions of chastening. God has very good reasons for chastening all those whom He will save. Whether it is a person who doesn't know the Lord yet, or does know Him now, the Lord sometimes takes these actions of bringing the person into His chastening of them, for their everlasting good.

It is not for their destruction. It is for their salvation. It is not because He hates them, but it is because He loves them. Job needed to know that He had a Mediator. A Mediator is only mentioned one other time in the Old Testament scriptures and it is found in Job 9: 33, the very passage I just quoted from before. "Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both." In other words, even though Job knew that his Redeemer lived, he did not realize that his Redeemer was also a Mediator who would help him come through this awful situation that he was in.

He did not know that thousands of years from the time period that he lived in, His Mediator would come, and suffer and die for him. He would be raised from the dead on his behalf, and it was on this basis, that Job would be saved from all of his sins, and delivered from the pit. Delivered from the punishment of hell. But also that his life would be delivered all distress. What he could not know, unless it was revealed to him, was that the Lord Jesus Christ was both his Redeemer and His Mediator. The Lord Jesus was, even at that time, Job's Mediator, based upon what He would come to do in His Incarnation and His earthly ministry. Because of this future ministry, He would become the Author and Perfector of Job's faith, even then.

Christ's ministry to believers in the Old Testament times was just as effective to them in that day as it is in ours, even though it was not at all well understood. And so Elihu says in verse 23 – "If there is a mediator, one among a thousand, to show man His uprightness, then He is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom.'" This is what we celebrate in the breaking of bread today. We have found a ransom. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 28: 20)

A Mediator is a go-between. He is the One who lays his hand on both God and man and represents them both perfectly. He brings together the 2 parties or people who are at odds with each other. This is what Job wanted. And this is why he says in chapter 9, verse 34 – "Let Him take His rod away from me, and do not let dread of Him terrify me." "Then I would speak and not fear Him." "But it is not so with me." Ah, Job, that was true of that time in your trial, but you will learn better what the ministry of your Mediator is to you.

There is only one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, it says in 1st Timothy 2: 5. He is not only one of a thousand, but He is also the only one who was, has been, and is, a perfect Man, without spot or blemish to His character or His actions. Because He is both God and Man, He can be our Prophet to teach us, our Priest to offer Himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and a King to rule over us and deliver us from all of our enemies. He can sympathize with us in our weaknesses and He can bear us up in His loving arms spiritually speaking, when we are overwhelmed with grief and sorrow in the trials that we go through.

2nd – This Mediator is needed in order that man can be restored to His (that is, God's) righteousness. (verses 25-28)

Elihu is speaking here in our text about the real and personal benefits of having a Mediator between yourself and God. He says in verse 24 that God can be gracious and merciful to any sinner, to anyone who finds this Mediator. He can deliver them from going down to the Pit because of the ransom of Christ. And Elihu says, there is more yet to be said on God's behalf, in His giving the gift of salvation through His Mediator. In verse 25 he says – "His flesh shall be young like a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth." "He shall pray to God, and God will delight in him, he shall see God's face with joy, for He restores to man His righteousness." These are the great, great, benefits of having Christ as your Savior and Lord. When God saves you through Christ's work, He personally shows you Fatherly love, through and in, and by Christ's Mediatorial work. He is implying to Job, that God could actually

come and comfort him in the midst of all of his bodily, physical weaknesses and afflictions. Job had known God's help and comfort and renewing power in his life, experientially, before he was attacked by Satan. But now it was non-existent in his experience. And he had wrongly attributed to God what Satan had done to him.

So now Elihu presents God's faithfulness to His own work in the life of the one who knows Him. He says – If there is a messenger, an angel, for him, a mediator, one in a thousand, to show him how he can once again have hope, then Job, you should believe this. God has the ability to renew your physical strength Job, and to renew your spiritual strength even, according to His purpose. Elihu was saying – This, Job, should cause you to hope and wait upon the Lord, now, even in your silence.

Elihu's words here should lead us to understand that God is completely sovereign over our physical strength and our ability to do anything that we do, each and every day. Psalm 18, verses 31-34 – “For who is God, except the Lord?” “And who is a rock, except our God?” “It is God who arms me with strength, and 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 a bow of bronze.” We find here that God weakened the Psalmist's strength at one point in his life.

Whether this was David or not, we do not know, but he says in Psalm 102, verse 23 – “He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days.” By this statement we should see that God ordains all of the strength and the weaknesses that we experience in our afflictions. And He means this for our good, not our discouragement. You will say to me – What good can affliction possibly bring to me? And I would answer you: God knows that it is for our good, in that we learn to look to Him more, trust in Him more, pray to Him more, and come to know His power being perfected in our weakness.

In terms of Job's trial here, we find Elihu saying to him that it is good from the standpoint that each of us learns to come to terms with our sins, our shortcomings, and our failures to do God's will at many points. We learn to confess our sins and repent of them, and to come to know the reality of our being cleansed of them. But it is also for our good if we are truly seeking to have fellowship and communion with Him in the midst of our trial. Perhaps your physical and spiritual strength seems to have come to nothing. What should you think? That all is lost?

No, all is not lost. We must remember His promise. Hebrews 13: 5 & 6. “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.” “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” “So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.’” “What can man do to me?” Not only this. But God can heal you if it is not his purpose to bring you to Himself. He can renew your strength so that you mount up with wings like an eagle. He can so work that you will run and not be weary and walk and not faint.

He can teach you the goodness of waiting upon Him for everything that you need. In being converted to Christ, a sinner repents of their sins, and finds times of refreshment from the presence of the Lord. You have been born again, and your repentance will sometimes even renew your physical body so that you feel young again. You, as it were, return to the days of your youth. You find a delight in prayer. You shall pray to God, and God will delight in you, and you, the person who has been saved, and you shall see God's face with joy.

Why? Because God has restored to you His righteousness. Not to your own righteousness so that you are trusting in yourself. But He restores you to His righteousness through His Son. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to all of your thoughts and all of your actions. He sees you as accepted in the Beloved. You come to find that you are covered with a righteousness better than your own. You are clothed in garments of salvation. And you are wrapped in a robe of righteousness, spiritually speaking. Let us remember that it was because of Job's being a man who feared the Lord, and was turning away from evil that he was attacked by Satan. It was because of his not being able to see God's hand in this trial, his not being able to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, that he was at the end of his rope. Job very much needed this message from Elihu to come to his heart with power. And no doubt, God made it effectual. What can we learn from what Elihu is telling Job here? It is this.

It is because God sees you in Christ that He can be the God of all comfort to you in your worst afflictions. Look at 2nd Corinthians 1, verses 3-11. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”

“Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.” “Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” “And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.” “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”

“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.” You can see here what Paul was so thankful for, can’t you? It was that God the Father was comforting him in all of his tribulation and affliction. God was doing that with him so that he would be able to comfort those believers who were in any trouble, with that same comfort.

Sufferings may have been abounding, but so did the comfort and consolation of Christ. Paul said he was burdened beyond measure by the persecutions and afflictions he was suffering. So much so, that he despaired of life. He had the sentence of death in himself. But even that, was so he would not trust in himself, but in God who raises the dead. However, he and those with him, did not die, but God mercifully granted them deliverance from whatever trial they were going through. The gift that was granted to them through the prayers of many was their being delivered from this trial. This should show us, that for us to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

3rd – This Mediator is need in order that our souls will continue to be enlightened with the light of life, all through our Christian life. (verses 29-33)

“Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man, to bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life.” “Give ear, Job, listen to me; Hold your peace, and I will speak.” “If you have anything to say, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you.” “If not, listen to me; hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom.” So, as we have come here to partake of the Lord’s Supper once again, I want to remind you of God’s patience with us, during the time of His teaching us, His holy way.

God’s way with us is as a great Teacher of how we should live and think. Jesus is the standard of righteousness. Jesus is standard of truth and love. God has given us great grace in the covenant of grace in the New Covenant in Christ. Ours is to be His disciples, His learners. He works all these things, not only once, not only twice, but even three times with us in His patiently teaching us. He does this so that you and I might be enlightened with the light of life. It is Christ who has within Himself the Light of Life, as He says of Himself in John 8, verse 12. Jesus said – “I am the light of the world.” “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

What this means is that if you believe in Jesus, you have consciously decided to become a follower of Jesus. You want to learn from Him the way of truth as it is found in the Bible. The word will teach you how to walk in the spiritual light of His guidance. He will lead you and guide along the path of righteousness, which is the path of life. But He will also shine His light into your mind and heart, by means of His Holy Spirit, to show you how you can glorify God and come to a better obedience over time, to His word. His light will make it plain to you what you should do in terms of Your obedience to God. His grace will give you the strength to go about to do and keep His commandments. We will now remember that this is why He died; so that our sins would be forgiven, and that we will make progress in wisdom, holiness, righteousness and truth. Let us remember Him now.