

**Job 9: 1-20; “God is Wise in Heart”, Sermon # 17 in the series entitled –  
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul  
Rendall on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, in the Afternoon Worship.**

Job, in these verses, is responding to Bildad’s word to him in the last chapter, that justice is the joy of God’s way. Bildad said in verse 19 that God is a just God, and that He will not cast away the blameless man, nor will He uphold evildoers. He said that God would yet fill Job’s mouth with laughing, and his lips with rejoicing, and that those who hated him would be clothed with shame. That is, if Job would repent of whatever hypocrisy was in his life, which had brought about all of these tremendous adverse providences which had come upon him. Job responds to Bildad by saying, here in verse 1, that – “Truly I know that it is so”. Not that he was a hypocrite, as his friends thought, but He agreed with Bildad that God’s joy was in His being a Just Judge.

But Job had some questions that he wanted answered; questions that when he asked them, he hoped that God would answer him Himself. They were questions which he thought could not be answered by any of his friends. They were questions in relation to this terribly difficult situation that he was going through, and He wanted the answer from God. The questions which he asks are, 1<sup>st</sup> – How can a man in my situation be righteous before God? (verses 1-4) 2<sup>nd</sup> – How can a man in my situation understand what He (God) is doing? (verses 5-13) And 3<sup>rd</sup> – Who will appoint a man in my situation, a day in court with Him? (verses 14-20)

For our purposes, we need to see that these questions can only be answered by our looking at why God sent His only-begotten Son into the world. In doing so, we will see that His giving Christ was the answer, not only to Job’s most difficult questions, but to ours. In the next few minutes, then, I will attempt to show you how wise in heart God was, in regard to Job’s situation; how mighty He was in strength, in ordaining everything that took place in Job’s life. You and I, in remembering these truths, will be able to see and to prove that God is wise in heart and mighty in strength towards us, as well, in Christ. This is how we will prepare to partake together of the Lord’s Supper in a few minutes, and to give God praise that it is so.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – How could a man in Job’s situation be righteous before God?** (verses 1-4)

It shows the fine relationship with God here, that Job had, that he did not focus on the provoking analysis of his situation that Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar had concerning him in this situation. He focuses on God in the midst of it. He is saying to Bildad – Yes, I know that what you are saying to me is true, that God is Just; that being Just, is the joy of God’s way. But how can a man be righteous before God? In other words, Job knew that God rewards a man according to his work, and that His judgment was perfect in regard to this whole situation that he was going through, but he was wondering what His reasons were for having him go through this awful situation that he was going through.

He knew that he had consciously and carefully served God, and that he was a righteous man as far as he himself could determine. He did fear God, he was turning away from all evil in his thoughts and in his actions. As he thought about his life, he knew that he was engaging in good works towards his neighbors, before these awful providences had come to him. Now that he had experienced these things, of the death of all of his children, the loss of all of his possessions, the loss of his health, and the loss of his good reputation among his wife and friends, he was wondering now, just how righteous does a man have to be before God, to be continually blessed by Him? It must be a continual and perfect righteousness, and he knew that he did not have that.

But still, it did not seem right to him, all that had happened. It did not seem righteous of God to permit these things. And yet, he knew, that if he wished to contend with God, to present to Him his best arguments, as to why He should not be allowing these things to happen in his life, that he could not answer Him one time out of a thousand. He states the matter straight out:

God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. He knew that God was infinitely wise and holy; infinitely wise and holy in heart. This expression, “wise in heart” is a very wonderful expression indeed. It implies very much in terms of God’s perfection of wisdom and understanding. He not only knows all things, but He has perfection of right motives for all that He does, and the way that He goes about to do it. He is essentially good, and toward His people He is essentially loving and kind. Because He is Almighty in power, coupled with this wisdom, He is able to do all things well, and He does do them well.

Some men want to contend with God over what He does; what He allows, and what He permits, even the things that He decrees and ordains for our lives. But Job knew that God was far above him in His wisdom and power, and he knew that he could not contend with Him. He knew that He could not win any argument against Him. Job knew the difference between inherent and imputed righteousness. Inherent righteousness is what righteousness we have in ourselves in the sight of God. And it is very important for each one of us to see that it is God’s evaluation of our inherent righteousness which should show us, just how very much we need Christ, and His imputed righteousness. The question is this: Do you compare yourself with other men, or do you compare yourself with God in your inherent righteousness?

I like what Joseph Caryl says in his commentary on this verse. “The way for us to humble ourselves for our own sinfulness is to look up and to consider the purity and holiness of God.” “If we set ourselves before Him, we shall see how vile and corrupt we are, His fulness will convince us abundantly of our emptiness, His purity will show us our spots, and His all sufficiency our nothingness.” “If we bring a coarse piece of cloth before a fine, we shall see what coarse stuff it is: if we lay a better in any kind, beside a worse, the worse will appear worsen than before.” “For the most part, we who are coarse stuff ourselves, compare ourselves with those who are as coarse as ourselves.”

“While some men compare themselves with men, they begin to think they are like God Himself.” “A man looking upon his neighbor that is just before him, or sees him no better than himself, of no purer thread, of no better dye in his life than he; he says – I have faults, and so have others; I have failings, and so have my neighbors; if you charge me with my sinnings, who is it that is without sin?” “As our usual phrase is – ‘If the best man’s faults were written in his forehead it would make him pull his hat over his eyes.’ Well, that is the way that it is when we look at ourselves is it not? If we look carefully, we understand just how deficient we are, in every way, our own inherent righteousness is. in the sight of God. “If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” And in regard to the indwelling remaining corruption of the flesh, even in believers, we must agree with the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7, verse 18 – “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.”

If this was true of Job, my brethren, then how much more is it true of ourselves? This is why we must know that we have the imputed righteousness of Christ if we are to be seen as righteous before God. We must understand and believe that our salvation is not by the very best of our works, or because we know that we fear God and that we are turning away from evil at every point in our life. Even though it may be true for us, as it was with Job, that we are a blameless person, still, being examined by God, in His perfect light, there would still be many particular deficiencies in us, in the thoughts of our heart. There would be many imperfections in thought, word, and deed, in relation to our obedience to God, which could be found. And indeed God will do this, with Job, toward the end of the book.

What is the imputed righteousness of Christ that we must be seen in, every day of our lives here upon the earth? It is the righteousness which comes to us on the basis of faith in Christ. Think of Romans chapter 4, verse 5. “But to him who does not work, but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are

those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute iniquity.” So, in justifying the believer in Jesus, God does not impute that believer’s own sins to him. He is not charged with them; they are laid on Christ at the cross. And what is just as wonderful, by faith, the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed, it is charged to your legal account, and God wraps you in a robe of Christ’s righteousness and constantly looks at you in that righteousness, which then becomes a covering for all of the sins which are committed by you, the believer, from the time that you first believe, until the time when your spirit goes to heaven at your death. How glorious is this?

What Job needed to do at this point was to stop focusing on his own righteousness. As a mature believer in God, as a believer in the future Christ who was coming, he needed to think only about the perfect righteousness of Christ, and study to be consciously found in that. We see this in the apostle Paul, lived out by him as a mature believer, in Philippians 3: 7-11. “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.” “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know him and the power of His resurrection, and fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to his death, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Notice the wording, “the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death”. That is what Job was coming to know, even though he hadn’t asked for it. The reason that he was going through all of these things, was so that He might understand Christ better. It was so that He would be made conformable to His death. At the cross, Christ died to sin once for all, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. His death was so that we would be able to die to sin and live to righteousness, and thus fulfill the purpose of God for our lives, as His saints and His witnesses; that we might learn to love and help other people see, the greatness of the glory of what Christ has done for us. This is what we see in the Lord’s Supper.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Job is saying in these verses – How can a man in my situation understand what God is doing?** (verses 5-13)

What we find here in verses 5-13 is Job describing to his friends the great things that God does, each and every day, or whenever He chooses to do so; and if this is the case, how could he (Job) understand what God was doing with him now, in the situation that he was in? “He removes the mountains and they do not know when He overturns them in His anger; He shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; He commands the sun and it does not rise; He seals off the stars; He alone spread out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea; He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south; He does great things without number.” So, what Job is confessing is God’s inscrutable purpose; that as it says in Romans 11: 33 – “Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” “How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”

That passage is speaking in the context of the future conversion of the Jews, and the great mystery this is, to everyone thinking about it, and wondering if, and how, this could come to pass. Well, it will come to pass, in God’s good time, and His good way, according to His good purpose, no doubt with much difficulty coming to the nation beforehand. It was the same thing here with Job. He was one of God’s eminent saints. Behind the scenes, God was asking Satan to consider His servant Job, that there was none like him on the earth, a righteous man who feared God and was turning away from evil. And yet, his friends think that he is a hypocrite because of the things that he is suffering. Brethren, we need to confess with Job, that we do not understand God’s ways, lest we begin to look askance at each other because of the things that we go through, in our identification with Christ and righteousness. If God does these great things with the

physical creation, and He does, can He not also intervene in your life and mine in order to bring about advances in our sanctification through the shaking of our lives?

If you study the prophetic sections of the Scripture, you can see how Job could word these things the way that he did. If God removes the majestic mountains and He shakes them out of their place, if He overturns mountains, which are the Biblical word picture for nations and kingdoms, if He shakes the earth out its place, which is a Biblical word picture for the great empires and governments around the world, so that their foundations tremble, if He seals off the stars, which is a Biblical word picture for ministers, whether in the church or in false religion, if He commands the sun, and it does not rise, the picture of Christ who arises with healing in His wings, then how can any person, any brother or sister who wants to glorify God through their life, be exempt from His scrutiny, to do them good, sometimes by leading them into and through great trials, like Job?

Job could not understand if God was doing right by him. He could not see Him. He says that God would move past him, and he couldn't see Him. The same is true for us. A proud person and all of his allies, all of his proud friends, lie prostrate beneath our God, when He purposes that it be so. But, brethren, this is why God sent His Son to save us from ourselves, to save us from our sins. It was so that He might teach each of us His way, and that we might leave our proud selfish, self-justifying ways behind us, and confess that He is wise of heart. That is why He sent us His Son; to show us what perfection looks like; to show us what love looks like, the love of God in Christ Jesus. He shows us that He can indeed make us over into the image of Christ, and will do so, through ways and means in His providential ordering of things in our lives, that will teach us to receive the lessons of truth that we need to learn, and then, we can better glorify Him, in the way that we live our lives for Him.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – Job asks, who will appoint a man in my situation, a day in court with Him?**  
(verses 14-20)

“How can I answer Him, and choose my words to reason with Him?” “For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him; I would beg mercy of my Judge.” “If I called and He answered me, I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.” “For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause.” “He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness.” “If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong; and if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?” “Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.”

Ah, you see that Job did still see himself as a sinner, even though he was the most righteous person on the face of the earth at that time. He knew that he was not a hypocrite, but that he had sincerely, lovingly, and righteously lived his life before God with a clear conscience. This is how we ought to live as well, my brethren, walking in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Sometimes, because of the things that we are going through in our walk with Christ, we think that God has become our enemy. This is because of the way that things providentially fall out for us in relation to our family, or our friends, or even our church family. It seems as though we are being completely opposed when we have given God our best, and we truly love the brethren.

At those times, we might wish that we could have our day in court with God; a time where we could prove our case to Him. But we are wrong to think this way. God knows us better than we do ourselves. Job thought that it was God who was crushing him with a tempest, and multiplying his wounds, and filling him with bitterness, when all the while, behind the scenes, God was lovingly watching over every aspect of this trial of Job's righteousness. It was Satan who wanted to destroy Job, not God. God wanted to vindicate Job's righteousness like the noon-day sun. And in a little while, He would. Will you not remember, dear brethren, that God is doing the same with you and me, and as you partake of this Supper, remember that this is why Christ died.

