

Job

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 27 May 1990

Preacher: Mercer, Seth (1930-2017)

[0 : 0 0] Lord's merciful help, I must venture again this afternoon in reading from the second chapter of the book of Job, verses 11 to 13. The book of Job, the second chapter, verses 11 to 13. Now, when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came, every one, from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Namathite. For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept. And they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights. And none spake a word unto him. For they saw that his grief was very great."

Very, very briefly, just to make it clear that the way in which one has been directed to these verses is through that which has transpired in the last few days in connection with God's servant, Mr. Peter Simmons. And as God has seen fit to come in this way and to take his wife from him, in all that that means, and all that it especially means to his eldest daughter and her husband and her husband and her husband and her husband and her husband and her husband and her mother is at Eastbourne, a member there, her son is a deacon, and Mrs. Simmons, one of her daughters, is also with us with her husband and children. And therefore, through this, which surely we have to say as we view it, a tragic happening. And yet, known to God in his sovereign purposes of grace.

And how we need, and how here Peter Simmons does need, and I trust the Lord has granted it and will grant it to him and to the whole family. And indeed, as one feels that this is a voice to Zion itself, and I believe the Lord will sanctify it for her good. Now, this morning we try to look a little into this subject, first to speak of Job in all those things which God saw fit to bring upon him.

And yet, God, so strengthening and helping his servant, that he was able to say, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

And then when the stroke became even heavier in this, that Job himself was smitten with sore boils from the sole of the foot to the crown of his head, and sat down among the ashes.

[4 : 4 7] His wife saying to him, curse God and die. And yet, further grace being given to him to resist, and to honor his God in his most solemn dispensation. And being able to say, what?

Shall we receive good at the hand of God? And shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

This is what the devil wanted him to do. This is what the devil thought that he might do. But dear friends, the devil is a conquered foe in a very special way regarding the whole election of grace.

And it is true still regarding Satan, thus far shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stained.

We went on then to speak of how God permitted those solemn happenings, and as Job was stripped of all his cattle, and all that that meant to him, and then as his whole family was taken from him.

[6 : 14] Let me seek to remind you, dear friends, of what this means. His whole family was taken from him in one stroke.

And then, of course, as we've mentioned, he was afflicted in his body. Now, we have tried then to speak in that way of what transpired in Job's life.

But in it, we do have this exercise concerning those of you that are here today, and those of you that are now here this afternoon.

And I'm sure of this, it would be right to say that we all have our trials. We all have our troubles.

We all have the things that are in our lives. And yet, whatever may be upon us, as our friend, as it were, brought this thought before the Lord in the vestry just now, and if and when, and we are favoured to see it in this night, Job was favoured in this, and yet we know he had to walk it out.

[7 : 39] And this is the solemn part of affliction and trouble and distress. Yes, it is to be given grace to walk in it, and to seek that it may be sanctified.

But our friend mentioned this in prayer in the vestry, he causeth it to come. Now, whatever may be upon you in your life today, have you been brought to recognise this?

Have you been favoured to look at it in this light? He causeth it to come. The Lord has caused it, your it, to come.

There is for a purpose. It was so in Job's life. I hope to be able to look just a little into this. But it was so, and it is so still in the lives of the Lord's people, in a very special way.

Now, what does that word? It's in this book that I've mentioned. But how is it worded? He causeth it to come. That is, we might say, the first step. But then there's this.

[8 : 53] Whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy. And oh, how often the three things are joined together by God in his purposes of grace to his people.

And I think of this beautiful word. Maybe a word for someone here now. Destroy it not. You're ready to do so.

You're ready to conclude that it will bring you to nothing. You may have felt that it would bring you to the grave. But destroy it not. For there is a blessing in it.

There's going to be a nevertheless afterward. A yielding of the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And we may well consider that word regarding our own hearts to them who are exercised thereby.

Now, there's this question then. Are we exercised before God in the things that are upon us and in our lives? If they are being sanctified, the Lord will use it to make us pray to seek that God may come out of whatever might be upon us.

[10 : 18] Now, in all this then that transpired in Job's life, we would now desire to look into it a little further in, first of all, in this way.

What good came out of it? Much good did come out of it. But what good did come out of it? Why did God permit all this to come upon his servant?

And we might put it again in this way. Why does God permit the things that happen in the lives of his people to come? Well, again, we mention it. He causeth it to come.

Whatever is in your life, dear friend, it does not come by chance. Why did the Lord then deal with Job in this way?

Why does he deal with his people still today in this way in some very little measure? For I'm sure it would be right to say that few people that have walked upon the face of the earth have ever had to walk in the same depth as Job did, I mean, in his actual experience.

[11 : 36] Now, the first thing we must mention is this, in Job's case, and I trust we shall be favored to feel that it is so in ours. Job must be humbled.

Job must be brought down. Job must be brought into the dust. Do you find response in your heart to this?

Friends, as I stand here this afternoon, I feel that I can sincerely say that I know that I need to be humbled. And I need it every day of my life.

I constantly need it. And I have great need to be humbled. You see, Job was a very favored man.

The Bible tells us that he was the greatest of all the men of the East. And wouldn't every one of us here have cause to say that we have been favored by God?

[12 : 47] Whether you realize this or not, whether you understand this or not, are, and yet it is true. But we are surrounded with mercies, favors, blessings.

Oh, how true the word of God is in this thought. Thy mercies are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness. Now, haven't we much to be thankful for?

Haven't we much to mourn over? But the thought then particularly is this. Job presently, he tells us from his own heart, he said concerning his past life, if you read the 29th chapter of this book, you'll read there what Job had been favored with.

Not only had he been highly favored in providence, and he certainly had, he had great possessions. God had given him ten children.

God had favored him in so many ways. But he also tells us in the 29th chapter of this book, former blessings that he had received.

[14 : 08] He had been a very favored man in his soul. He speaks about that particular time in his life, when his children were yet about him, and when the jail lay all night upon his branch, and when he was very evidently favored in his soul.

Surely we perhaps could speak of this in Job's life, and I trust in ours in some little measure, but friends, couldn't it be said that Job in the 29th chapter was speaking of his first love, the days of his espousals, the days of blessing, blessing, not only in his own soul, but what the Lord did for him, and through him to others.

But what does he say? Concerning those particular days of great blessing, he said, I sat chief. I sat chief.

He was very favored. He was very blessed. blessed. Now, as the Lord brings trouble into our lives, affliction, sorrow, distress, it is to this same end, because, dear friends, we need to be continually humbled.

when is it Christians all agree and let distinctions fall, when nothing in themselves they see, and Christ is all in all?

[15 : 52] Can you begin to understand a little why things are as they are in your life? You may well have been brought, and you will have been brought, to ask the Lord to search you and to try you, that he might see if there is any wicked way in you, and lead you in the way everlasting.

You may have been pleading that the Lord would bless you in your soul, that he might come and bless you in your family, that he might come and bless you here as a church and people, but what is the Lord's way into this?

If I know anything about it, the way into true blessing, whether individually or collectively, is this, that we must be brought down. we must be humbled, we must be brought into the dark.

Now this is just what the Lord did with his servant Job. To add to all his distress, and surely we find it very difficult to begin to really understand, if we could just think of it like this, friends, if the Lord took away everything that you possessed, if he took away your children, if he caused you to have affliction in your body, and in all that that meant, and yet here the Lord was working, his purposes were being worked out.

And I hope this may reach some heart here this afternoon, and so it is with you, and I trust that so it is with me. But to add to Job's distress, his friends were not permitted to understand him.

[17 : 44] Think of what happened, the chain of events, until the Lord comes in the last part of the teaching, if I may put it that way, and here you will find how Job's three friends, and what do we read in this verse?

They came every one from his own place. Now, the Lord saw fit that it should be like this, and it's still like that in the Lord's dealings with his people and his church still.

It was the Lord's doing, but his friends didn't understand him. You think of it, his three friends, they were his friends.

They'd been very close, that is evident. They'd been favoured together. You see how the Lord dealt with the dear man. His three friends, you might say, had been stripped of everything.

His wife had spoken as she did, and now to add to it, here are his three friends. We know how the Lord dealt with them. We know this, and I'm so thankful that God does not leave his word in this book of Job without there being a day of deliverance and a day of blessing.

[19 : 03] But in the intervening passage of God's purposes with him, he had to prove that his friends just didn't understand. Now, I need help, I feel now, to try and bring this before you.

In many instances in the Old Testament, there are those things recorded of God's people in which they are a type of the Lord Jesus.

Now, let me emphasise this, they are a type of the Lord Jesus, and I believe that Job is. And may our thoughts then be directed now to the Lord Jesus in all this.

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. What do we read in the prophecy of Zechariah, I believe it is, where this question is put, what are these wounds in my hands?

What is the answer? Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. He came unto his own, his own received him not.

[20 : 29] Think of it, may we think of it, his visage was so marred, more than any man. God. Now, to my understanding, the Lord was really leading his servant Job a little into the sufferings of Christ.

Friends, how do we feel about this? I wonder if there are those here that have been praying that you might have prayed in the very words of the Apostle Paul when he said that I may know him.

Now, that's one step. And the power of his resurrection, that is another step. And the fellowship of his sufferings, and that is another step.

And to be made conformable unto his death. And now the Lord is answering prayer for you. You're walking in deep paths.

You're walking in distress. And what do we read again of the Lord Jesus? All men forsook him and fled.

[21 : 46] His own disciples forsook him and fled. You see how he suffered. See that that he bore for his dear people. And this can come very close in our lives sometimes.

And yet, if the Lord should favor any of you this afternoon to see your sufferings in the light of this. To see it in the light of the sufferings of your Saviour.

To see that prayer is being answered for you. I remember an occasion in my own life when I felt so burdened.

It was that that laid upon me and I felt it would crush me. And then the Lord drew near, as it were, and gave me a glimpse of Christ in Gethsemane.

And it was an experience, I could take you to the spot of ground, but it was an experience in which I believe the Lord revealed to my soul just a little of the sufferings of Christ for his people and I trust for me.

[23 : 08] We shall only understand this by divine revelation. for dear friend, are you walking in a path of suffering? Are you in distress?

Are you in your feelings in the deep waters that cross life's pathway? Are you suffering persecution in one form or another?

Let me remind you of your Saviour in this. What do we read of Jesus? in the judgment hall, we read this, and Jesus held his peace.

And Jesus held his peace. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her, as shearers is done, so he openeth not his mouth.

Now that he is our example. Didn't you begin to see how Job was walking a little in this? And he was walking in it.

[24 : 16] His friends didn't understand him. The Lord intended it to be so. But then again, regarding Job, in all this, what did he learn?

What was the purpose? I've said it was to humble him. It was to bring him into the dust. That is verified by the word of God itself.

Where did the Lord bring him in chapter 40 when he had to say so feelingly? Have you had to say this feelingly? The speaker has from time to time. Have you ever had to say, behold, I am vile?

And you've really felt it? You've felt it to be true? You've felt to be the vilest of sinners? And you've joined, as it were, in companionship with the apostle Paul when he said, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?

This is the way that the Lord brings his people. But I must add this thought, when our trials and our troubles and our afflictions are sanctified to us, oh, we need this sanctification.

[25 : 35] That the Lord may favour us in this, and that we might be given, as it were, a glimpse of our Saviour. And that will relieve you, and that will help you, and that will help you to go on your way.

It will strengthen you, if you get a glimpse of Christ in this, that's in your life. Job certainly had it, did he not, in that that we've read together in the 19th chapter.

And if you care to read that chapter again in secret, and see where the dear man was in every detail of his life, and he comes in this to a point which surely comes closer than any other point in any man's life, and it's this I think of, my breath is strange to my wife, though I am treated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Now can anything come closer to any man or woman than this? You think of how it was with him, and in the connection with his life, his servants and everything.

But where do we find sacred sanctification? Where do we find Job very, very close to his Lord? God, have you ever been able to take this language up?

[27 : 02] For I know that my Redeemer liveth. Have we ever been able to say that? Friends, this is the effect of sanctified trouble.

Are you seeking for it? You see, we so need this in our health and life. Whatever we might be in, we need it sanctified, and we need the Lord to use it.

We shall have to pray for this. You will see that there cannot be any blessing in your path, only as it is sanctified. But you will say, Lord, sanctify it to me.

Now the Lord did sanctify it to his servant Job, and as he brings him to this, for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

See what a sight he was given. This is a very old book, one of the oldest books in the Bible. This was recorded many, many, many years ago.

[28 : 12] But see where the Lord brought Job. He gave him a sight of the day of judgment. He gave him a sight, as it were, of the end of all things, and his own great need of being found among the redeemed.

But the Lord gave him this, for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.

And I also think of another very precious word. You see, what came out of all this, there was something that came out of it. Friends, this is where we need to be brought constantly in our lives.

Has there been any blessing in our trial? Has there been blessing in our trouble? Has there been blessing in the distress that we've known? I think of you here as a church and people.

But in mercy, if we can sincerely say this, that the Lord has set it apart. He's used it. Now in chapter 16, again, the dear man is favoured.

[29 : 51] And what does he say? He speaks first like this. He says, I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and if I have my horn in the dust, my face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.

Not for any injustice in mine hands also, my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

But then, in the depths as it were, he breaks forth and he says, also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

What a wonderful thing to be able to say that. In the midst of whatever we might be in, to say, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

But then we would go a little further in this, in the way that the Lord dealt with his servant, and not only in the way that he dealt with him, but in the way that he still deals with his people.

[31 : 12] The Lord takes Job by the hand. If you read the 38th chapter of this book, and you would find it very profitable if you were helped to read it, and of course, other chapters.

Thank you.