

Job

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject which you will find in the book of Job, chapter 12, and a question that is to be found in the seventh verse, but ask now the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.
- Chapter 12, the book of Job, and a question you will find in the seventh verse.
- As you read the word of God, if you are helped to read it to purpose, you are sometimes impressed with the illustrations which the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the word of God, has been pleased to use to help poor sinners journeying on through life to enter into what is the meaning of the word of God.
- I have often admired how the Holy Spirit has sought to come down to the level of what our understandings are.
- And you find the dear Savior, when he dwelt on earth, he often used illustrations roundabout. The illustrations were often before the people's eyes, and he proclaimed the truth that those illustrations set forth.
- [2 : 07] Yet those who lived in the area, maybe, had looked on the fields and the fowls of the air, and seen nothing but fields and fowls of the air.
- But the Savior, he made his disciples to understand that there was a deeper meaning, and there were lessons to be learned.
- And like sometimes you sing, nature with open volume stands to spread her maker's praise abroad. And every labor of his hand shows something worthy of a God.
- I read to you, are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And not one of them is forgotten before God.
- And now that was to instruct his disciples that the meanest details in our lives, are subject to the eye of God.
- [3 : 14] Like sometimes, as one in writer has said in You Sing It, The picturesque power of chance and fortune I defy, my life's minutest circumstance is subject to God's eye.
- Then the Savior said again, Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have stored house nor barn. God feedeth them.
- And how much more are ye better than the fowls? And now, I want, as the Lord shall help me, to call your attention to two or three instances in the word of God, where the fowls have got something to tell us.
- If you have got ears to hear what the fowls have got to tell, and now that is important. The Savior said to his disciples, Blessed are your ears, for they hear, and the ears of the deaf need to be unstopped.
- But ask now the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. I thought of one illustration the Holy Spirit has used in one psalm, which is wonderfully simple.
- [4 : 41] He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

You have all seen the picture of the hen with the little chicks nestling under her wings. And the Spirit of God uses that simple illustration to show that all sinners born again who have helped to put their trust in the Lord will realize it is well, living and dying under his wings.

There are two wings, speaking with great reverence, there to be remembered in that illustration. One is the wing of God's providence, and the other is the wing of God's grace.

If you are helped to shelter under his providence and his grace, it will be well with you while life endure, and well when called to die.

And now let us look at these illustrations I want to bring before you. But ask now the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.

[6 : 04] I will read to you an extract from the book of Leviticus, first of all, where you will find the fowls of the air have got something to tell, something of wondrous importance too.

Listen. Listen. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought unto the priest, and the priest shall go forth out of the camp, and the priest shall look, and behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper.

Listen. Listen. Listen. Listen. Then the priest shall command to take for him, that is to be cleansed, two birds, alive and clean.

The margin reading, sparrows. Cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

Margin living water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop.

[7 : 22] And shall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times.

And shall pronounce him clean. And shall let the living bird loose in the open field. There is a beautiful and blessed gospel truth.

It sets forth Jesus Christ in his life and death and resurrection. It speaks of the birds that they were to be clean.

And now, as that sets forth Jesus Christ, he is said, and he was, the holy, harmless, undefiled son of God.

The scarlet wool that was to be used, brings before us sins deep die. And there is a word which will help you to understand what is the teaching there.

[8 : 39] It is a word which I hope you dear young people will enter into in your soul's experience before you die. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.

Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. The scarlet wool was to call the attention of the godly.

None others would have eyes open to see the truth of it. But the godly would discern that it was to teach them Jesus' blood through earth and skies, mercy, eternal mercy cries.

And it says there was to be, with that sacrifice, cedar wood. And now that is to show to us that Jesus Christ was not only verily man, verily God.

Cedar wood is incorruptible, enduring, and it is fragrant. And that is to remind us of who Jesus Christ was, that he is the eternal Son of God in his divine nature.

[10 : 01] And that the life he lived on earth as verily man was indeed incorruptible. In him the Father never saw the least transgression of his law.

In him we then perfection view. And the saints in him are perfect too. Cedar wood is fragrant. And oh, what a wondrous fragrance there is in all that is to do with Jesus Christ, as you are helped by the grace of God to meditate upon it.

Thy name is as ointment poured forth. And then you find the mention of hyssop. And the psalmist uses that illustration in a prayer, a wonderful prayer in Psalm 51.

And he says there, purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

But it said in that which I read to you, that there was an earthen vessel to be used, and in it there was living water.

[11 : 22] And now that earthen vessel, do try to follow this along, I know it is rather a deep line of things. I say that earthen vessel was to show to us the humanity of Jesus Christ.

The cedar wood reveals him as verily God, incorruptible, fragrant, in all that he is, as the sinner's friend.

But this earthen vessel is to show to us what you read in Psalm 40, where godly David, inspired of God, spoke with prophetic truth.

A body hast thou prepared me. It was essential that Jesus Christ, as verily God, if poor sinners like you and me, were to be saved with an everlasting salvation, should come down into this world and be seen in our nature.

And in that nature, incorruptible, fragrant, holy, harmless, undefiled. And so, when you go to Bethlehem, you see that little babe, dear holy babe, that was born there.

[12 : 43] There you see the earthen vessel, a body hast thou prepared me. And Jesus Christ needed that human nature, and that he should be verily man, because he had to be made of a woman, made under the law, and fulfill it in every jot and tittle which he did, and in doing that he did love's redeeming work.

And then he went up Calvary's hill, and as verily man, he died. Died in the stead of poor sinners like you and me.

But, blessed be God, he rose again. And now, go back to what I read of those two birds, the one that was killed in an earthen vessel.

There you see Jesus Christ dying as verily man. And yet, in dying, he vanquished death by dying. But it says there was also the living bird.

And now that is to show us Jesus Christ as the resurrection. And that, on the Easter morn, long ago, he came forth from the grave, triumphant, over sin and death and hell.

[14 : 13] And a little later, ascended up on high. Yes, like you read, the living bird was to be let loose into the open field.

And now one hymn writer, I wish I could tell you his name, but just for once, I do not know his name. He put together a beautiful hymn, and one verse of it says this, dipped in his fellow's blood, the living bird went free.

The type, well understood, expressed the sinner's plea, described a guilty soul, enlarged, and by a saviour's death, discharged.

You see, when all sinners, born again, come down at length to die, their redeemed spirits, like the living bird was let loose in the open field, their redeemed spirits, soar on high.

Yes, and they enter into the rest that remaineth for the people of God. And in connection with this viewpoint of the subject, I would just name one incident that happened many, many years ago.

[15 : 39] There used to be a godly minister who was pastor of one of our London causes, and in his day, his ministry was much appreciated, but he was struck down by a fell disease which brought serious heart trouble, so that he had to live for some years with his life, as it were, always hanging in the balance whether he should live or die.

And then one Sunday morning in the cause where he was pastor, he took the subject I have read to you about the two birds, the one that was slain.

And in the morning service, he took up all the sermon, set in forth all I have just given you hints of regarding the bird that was slain and how it had to be done.

And when he ended the sermon, he said, if all is well, I will take up the other bird in the evening sermon and say what I am helped to do upon that.

But in between the two services, he went out into his garden for a little fresh air, and he just dropped down and he was that living bird.

[17 : 02] His redeemed spirit was released from its clay tenement and when the evening service came to be held, the people had to be told that the living bird was set free.

It must have been a sermon they never forgot, although it was never a sermon that was preached in words. But that is what happened to that dear minister who was owned of God in her denominational life and in his time was made a means of much good.

But ask now the fowls of the air and they shall tell thee. And now I turn again to Leviticus and read you just another verse or so.

And it says that when a mother had a babe in these far back times under the ritual of the Mosaic law she had to bring an offering if she could not bring a lamb then she had to bring a young pigeon or a turtle dove for a sin offering unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest.

And it says this is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. And if she be not able to bring a lamb then she shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons the one for a burnt offering do follow this along and the other for a sin offering and the priest shall make an atonement for her and she shall be clean.

[19 : 05] And now we come over into Luke's gospel and we see Mary the mother of Jesus and it says and when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child his name was called Jesus which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb and when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord as it is written in the law of the Lord every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord a pair of turtle doves for two young pigeons and now I've read that to you because it shows to us that when Jesus

Christ was born a babe by birth mysterious at what a very low level Mary his mother was and her husband Joseph as regards things providential that all they could do for this babe that God had given to Mary this wondrous babe Jesus Christ was to offer a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons they were not rich enough to bring a lamb and now what is that to teach us what are those two birds that Mary offered so long ago in the temple tell us ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ although he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich and it tells us this foxes have holes birds of the air have nests but

Jesus Christ hath not where to lay his head and do you know dear friends that ought to be a very salutary word to us we are living in days when there is very much material prosperity the things of this life around about us in a great abundance such as our forefathers never dreamed of and that some of us never knew in our teenage life and earlier still but it would do you good to go to Bethlehem and see the thing that came to pass there how that Jesus Christ came into the world and was seen among men deep down in poverty's veil and now I turn you to another part of the word of God where we have a different line of things but the fowls of the air have indeed got something to tell us that is well worth listening to as grace is given and

I'm taking you now to Noah and the ark and I would just read this and it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made and he sent forth a raven which went forth to and fro till the waters were dried up from off the earth also he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot and she returned unto him into the ark for the waters were on the face of the whole earth then he put forth his hand and took her and pulled her in unto him into the ark and he stayed yet other seven days and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark and the dove came in to him in the evening and low in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off so

Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth both the raven and the dove in their behavior as it were they told Noah what he desired to know and it will help us in following along this subject just to look a little at these two birds there is the raven and now the raven did not return at all to the ark because it could live on what it found on the face of the waters for a raven is a bird that lives on carry on and there was plenty of it for the raven to feed upon and now there are two classes of people in the earth the great majority

[24 : 40] I fear are very much like a raven and just live as they are born to be a raven as it were from that viewpoint is just to be living as worldlings do the word of God draws a very solemn line of demarcation they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh and to be like that is to be as a raven and the raven was an unclean bird and that is how God regards all who live as they were born and as worldlings do but then there was another bird and that was the dove and now the Holy Spirit has used that illustration again and again in the word of God and there are just two or three characteristics of a dove that I will name to you whereby you can see our deep down desire that you dear young people might by grace be made dove like and now a dove is a bird that was a clean bird and you find

I've already read it to you that it was acceptable as a sacrifice for when it says turtles it means doves as you all know and the dove is a clean bird God accepted it as a clean creature and that is to show to us that if you should be made to be like a dove as grace alone can make you you will have this to begin with the fear of the Lord is clean you will have that principle in your heart as an unctuous light to what is right and a barter what is wrong you will not always feel that you are clean because if God should give you as he will do if he makes you one of his doves a new heart a new nature the strange thing is that you will have to confess before

God that you are unclean and that is according to how you feel being the sinner that you are the word of God says whatsoever doth make manifest is life and when a sinner is born again and he looks within he knows the leprosy lies deep within and he can only say like the leper had to do unclean unclean and yet that is the outcome of the clean principle of the fear of the Lord which God has implanted in that poor sinner's breast yes the heart once hard as steel that's made for sin to feel bears tokens of a ransom soul so then there is that principle characteristic of the dove that it is a clean creature and by the grace of

God all people who possess it have such a nature and yet they are ever trying to pray creating me a clean heart oh God renew a right spirit within me and now another thing about a dove is that it is a mournful bird its note is mournful but do you know when a dove mourns ask ask now the fowls of the air and they shall tell me when you hear a dove mourning if you can search it out you will see it is alone its mate is absent and therefore it mourns laments until its mate returns eh but these people who were made dove light by grace they mourn too but how do they mourn oh you know how the hymn writer sings dear lord may

I a mourner be over my sins and after thee and when my morning days are o'er enjoy thy comforts ever more I have often admired how the hymn writer worded that over my sins and now that is the malady which is within and that you mourn over which you know every man the plague of his own heart but then the hymn writer says and after thee and now that is the remedy which a man cannot receive except it be given him from heaven and that you will mourn after Lord Jesus make thyself to me a living bright reality another thing about a dove I must not go into details else the address will be too long a dove is a meek creature and now

[30 : 20] God gives to all his doves that grace of meekness so that when trouble like a gloomy cloud gathers thick and thunders loud they're helped sooner or later the sooner the better to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God in his dealings and that knowledge the needs be for whatever the trouble may be to come upon them that they might be corrected thereby oh it is good to have this meekness I have felt it sometimes along life's way but it is rather a scarce grace dear friends young and old is meekness I remember once many years ago when I was ill and my sufferings were great that I got out of my bed and I tried to walk round the room and I said

Lord do show me the why and wherefore of this which has come upon me so that here I am and not able to do that work thou hast called me to do and this is what God said to me he will by means like these thy stubborn temper break soften thy heart by due degrees and make thy spirit meek and I said Lord do let it have that blessed effect and it shall be well and I began to get better and I was soon preaching again meekness now you find in the book of Zephaniah seek the Lord seek meekness I thought of that often as though meekness comprises all that you need it means that you are like clay in the potter's hand willing willing to be molded to whatever is the will of God for you to be or to do whether it to be silent or to speak whether it be to go or to stay you say it is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good meek dove like blessed grace yes another thing about a dove they only eat pure food and now it says in Isaiah about clean provender winnowed with a shovel and a fan and that means that

God's doves whom I'm describing just a little hoping I'm describing some of you dear young people too following on to know the Lord God's people are given a spirit of discernment and they can only feed on pure food it must be the word of God what we call experimental truth you may say what do you mean by the word experimental the word experimental you will find the meaning of in the first epistle of John where godly John says that which we have seen tasted handled and felt of the good word of life declare we unto you out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speak it and it says here you get it the meat shall eat not only hear the gospel eat it the meat shall eat and be satisfied and increase their joy in the

Lord just one other thought about these doves and that is you do not need me to tell you that doves always seek to shelter where there is safety they build their nests in a sheltered place and there is a wonderful word to set that forth in Solomon's song which is a great word even for you dear young people who are seeking to enter into the things of God to ponder in your hearts as though Jesus Christ himself being the speaker in the text is saying to you oh my dove that art in the clefts of the rock in the secret places of the stairs let me see thy countenance let me hear thy voice for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely and now what does that mean first of all it means this that if you are one of God's doves you are in sweet agreement with good top lady when he said mark the word in top lady said rock of ages cleft for me let me hide myself in thee but you will begin by saying rock of ages shelter me until you know by his grace you are there in that shelter then you will know cleft for me and he says let me see thy countenance let me hear thy voice what does that mean this will help you to understand it in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto

God and you are not to think your own thoughts about drawing near to God as though God will not welcome such a sinner as you feel to be nor will he hear your poor attempts to pray for he says let me hear thy voice let me see thy countenance for sweet is thy voice and when out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is speaking before God a poor sinner's voice in God's ears does indeed sound sweet I say that with great reverence and he says thy countenance is comely and that is the countenance of a poor sinner who approaches God like Ezra did Ezra is one of my special friends and he says oh my God I am ashamed I blush to lift up my face unto thee and God says thy countenance is comely and he makes that poor sinner welcome and what have you read many a time let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need you see then the raven in

[37 : 16] Noah's day and the dove that was in the ark oh they have got something to tell us and it will be well if you and I can ponder it in our hearts and profit by it but let us look at another picture but ask now the fellows of the air and they shall tell thee and now let us come a little farther on and see where there is something else you and I can learn and Elijah the Tishbite who was of the inhabitants of Gilead said unto Ahab as the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand there shall not be dune or rain these years but according to my word and the word of the Lord came unto him saying get thee hence and turn thee eastward and hide thyself by the brook

Tirit that is before Jordan and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there so he went and did according to the word of the Lord for he went and dwelt by the brook Tirit that is before Jordan and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening and he drank of the brook there you see ravens birds of prey I told you carrion birds yet God causes them to go against what is their nature and they brought to dear Elijah bread and flesh morning and evening it must have been a wonderful time in Elijah's life while he dwelt by that brook

Tirit and I have no doubt his eyes looked toward the horizon in the morning and he could see the ravens were coming and there they were again in the evening and it was too dark to see them in their flight yes what does all this mean to you to me it means this the hearts of all are in the hand of God to dispose as he pleases and there are some scriptures where you may ponder this subject from other viewpoints like the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just and such like words but this is what this raven teaches us one of them has to tell us who was in the flight that carried bread and flesh to Elijah morning and evening you find good

John Newton has got a hymn on it more likely to rob than to feed were ravens that live upon prey but when the Lord's people have need his goodness will find out a way this instance to those may be strange you know not how faith can prevail but sooner all nature shall change not only ravens change their nature for a little while than one of God's promises fail nor is it a singular case the wonder is often renewed and many can say to God's praise he sends them by ravens their food thus worldlings though ravens indeed though greedy and selfish their mind if God has a servant to feed against their own wills can be kind there is just another word about that where is the Lord God of Elijah Elijah lived long ago you may say oh but do you think

God would do things like that nowadays yes God is at no loss to magnify his name which is Jehovah Jireh the Lord will provide I can give you an instance where a godly man who lived in Germany hundreds of years ago three or four hundred at least he was a godly man and it was when Germany was a much better country than it is nowadays as regards the things of God and this godly man was very poor and he was in debt and he had not the means wherewith to meet it but in his little cottage he knew what it was to seek the Lord and wait upon him but alas in the street where he lived there were some young people not like Union Chapel people and those who come from other causes I trust but they used to irritate this young man and when they knew he was in family worship they would do all they could to oppose him and hinder him outside by shouting and other things like that and on one occasion when this godly man was in prayer seeking the

[42 : 58] Lord the window was open and one of them threw through the window a dead raven and when the family worship was ended the godly man picked up the bird and looked at it and he could see nothing whatever whereby it should have died and he was rather impressed and then he felt its crop and he found there was something there which evidently was not food and so the raven being dead he cut it open and there was a gold necklace found in the raven's crop and that was the means whereby it died and he took it to the jeweler in the place where he lived to ask him his advice about it and the jeweler knew to whom it belonged and it belonged to the king of the province wherein this godly man lived and the jeweler restored it to him and the king sent a wonderful help in hand to the godly man in his time of distress that helped him not only to pay all his debts but go on for quite a good while afterwards and now even even that dead raven had something to say to that godly man at that time and it simply said this trust in him at all times ye people pour out your hearts before him god is a refuge for us and I could have told you about a godly covenanter who in those days when they had to flee for their lives because they worshipped god aright alas what a sad state was our land in then when soldiers pursued those who were true worshippers of god and desired to live aright and were really the strength of the land they lived in being the salt of the earth to preserve it but so it was there was this godly covenanter hidden and he had no food but god caused a hen to go every day and lay an egg in the entrance and he lived on that until there was a time when he could escape and be sheltered better elsewhere and now don't you think that hen coming day by day to lay an egg like that had got something to say to that godly covenanter did he not the hand of god in it and his arm is not shortened that he cannot save neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear no and now where

I come to the amen there is just one more little picture I want to look at and there you will see this from another viewpoint and there is a word in Jeremiah a rather striking word it is mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird the birds round about are against her and now if any of you dear young people have ever seen a canary or a budgie for that matter escape out of a cage and fly about round the garden you will soon find the other birds will search it out because they look on it as a foreigner and they will be against it and it will have to defend itself if it can or get some shelter to gain some relief and now

God says that is how his people will ever be in the world at large wherever they go they will be speckled birds the birds round about will be like the raven worldlings birds of pride and it says in the Acts of the Apostles as for this people and that is the people of God it is a sect everywhere spoken against and you dear young people as you desire many of you I hope to serve the Lord be not cast down or surprised if sometimes you find the birds round about you or against you where you live in your sphere of labour it may be as you go about in the world in which you live and move you will find what the saviour said marvel not if the world hate you but know this it hated me before it hated you and now

I just give you one illustration of one who was a speckled bird and how God appeared on his behalf you know who this is now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem then he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime you all know there was a proclamation made that no one should pray unto any God but unto the king in that day then these men the birds round about then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God then they came near and spake before the king concerning the king's decree has thou not signed a decree that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days save of the old king shall be cast into the den of lions the king answered and said the thing is true according to the law of the

Medes and persons which alter it not then answered they and said before the king that Daniel oh you can see the scorn in that word that that Daniel they should have spoken of him because of who he was with much greater respect than that but there was the wickedness of their hearts and their jealousy and envy that Daniel which is of the children of the captivity of Judah regardeth not the king nor the decree that thou sign but maketh this petition three times a day yes he was a speckled bird was Daniel you all know what happened dear Daniel had to go down into the lion's den but what did he find my god hath sent his angel and hath shut the lion's mouths yes and he was delivered and they that were the cause of him being put in the den were put into it themselves and they all died yes the word of god says their bones were found at the bottom of the den just look at this word again mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird the birds round about are against her and now you dear young people if you should be called at any time in any way to suffer for

[51 : 00] Jesus sake or to make a stand for what you believe to be right before god and do remember let your yea be yea and your nay be nay lest ye fall into condemnation let this petition of the hymn writer be of help to you if on my face for thy dear name shame and reproaches be all hail reproach and welcome shame if thou remember me ask now the fowls of the air and they shall tell thee what did you sing a little earlier there is a safe and secret place beneath the wings divine reserve for all the hairs of grace oh be that refuge mine and yours my dear friends young and old amen temples thanks