

I was dumb ... because thou didst it. (i) (Quality: Very good)

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Preacher: Hyde, Leslie S B (1916-2001)

[0 : 00] the blow of thine hand. I was dumb. I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from me. I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

Many of the passages in the Old Testament scriptures may be taken to have a twofold meaning.

First, as the psalmist here was passing through a bitter and crying experience himself, and secondly, as these words speak prophetically concerning the sufferings and the experiences of the Lord Jesus Christ when he came as the surety of his people and endured in the same way, in the same flesh, yet without sin, the things that they themselves may have to endure as they pass along life's journey.

Now, the psalmist speaks in these psalms of a situation which evidently was a painful one to him. He freely admits his own foolishness and the Lord's chastening upon his spirit.

And in these two psalms we find him speaking in some detail about the exercises of his soul.

[2 : 20] The expressions used in the psalms are truly the exercises of the soul.

We may not find words to describe what the soul passes through, except sometimes we should look into the book of psalms.

We have at times observed that David's outward life, as men see it, is recorded in the book of Samuel. David's inward soul life, as God sees it, is revealed to us in the book of Psalms.

What a disparity there is between the outward appearance and that which is inward. Some of the psalms are specifically connected with the passages in the book of Samuel.

Samuel. And if we should compare the two, or shall I say, look at one without the other, we may well consider David to have embarked upon all sorts of escapades and entered into war and been the subject of this and that without any soul exercise at all.

[3 : 54] Many would view him, maybe, in many respects, in quite a worldly sense.

But God, in his gracious providence and tender mercy, has then caused a psalm to be composed of his disciples, which shows to us what was taking place in the heart of David at that time.

Now there is a situation here which describes to us what was engaging his soul under evidently painful affections from without.

We see his difficulties expressed in words like these. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope.

There was here, O Lord, my God. For I said, hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me.

[5 : 15] When my foot slip it, they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

For I will declare my iniquity. I will be sorry for my sin. And this is the expression of the soul before God.

Men might say, I don't believe it. God will never say that. Because he knows whether it is true or not. He will never say, I don't believe it.

If we should be a hypocrite, he will not be slow to tell us so. But on the other hand, he will always receive that which is said undoubtedly, as in the case before us, when it is under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

And then further down, he says, forsake me not, O God. O my God, be not far from me.

[6 : 32] Afflictions and trials. The rising up of enemies to fill us with dismay. May God a reality. May God a necessity. Make haste to help me, O God. By these things men live.

And in all these things is the life of my Spirit. Our nature is such that we continually recommend independence.

And if we could get along, then we should be quite happy to get along without God. But this is not God's will or purpose.

It is the Lord's purpose that we should walk as godly people. And godly people will cry out unto the Lord.

[7 : 31] For take me not, O Lord. O my God, be not far from me. We live in a day of lethargy.

And if we are to have our prayers answered, that we may be lively, then we must be delivered out of a lukewarm spirit.

And the only way in which we may be delivered out of a lukewarm or false spirit is for the winds of adversity to blow.

And the winds of adversity may blow using various instruments. In this case, it would appear that men, women, children perhaps.

Job found it to be so. In the 11th verse, he says, My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off.

[8 : 42] I was done with silence. I held my peace even from good, and my sorrow was stirred. And this brought the psalmist down to such a place that he said, My heart was hot within me while I was musing.

The fire burned. Then spake I with my tongue, Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am.

As long as we are blessed with health, and we should not despise that benefit, as long as we are blessed with an easier path, we should never think about our end.

We should never think about the prospect of heaven at last. And this is why afflictions and sorrows and temptations and fears come along in order that we might pray with the psalmist, Make me to know mine end.

And yet this remains so wonderfully true, they may on the main of temptation be tossed, their sorrows may swell as the sea, but none of the ransom shall ever be lost, the righteous shall hold on his way.

[10 : 19] Now in the opening verse of our text today, we find, I was dumb, I opened up my mouth.

This is brought about sometimes by the solemn dealings of God with us.

We go back to Leviticus to read of the occasion when Aaron had to endure the dreadful sight of two of his sons being solemnly dealt with.

There went out fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the Lord. This was solemn because it bore out what was subsequently to be written by the apostle to the Hebrews.

Our God is a consuming fire. But it had an effect upon Moses, it had an effect upon Aaron.

[11 : 40] Then Moses said unto Aaron, this is that that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.

Before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. Solemn judgments, dreadful wrath of God falling upon his children seem necessary to impress upon the heart of Aaron that under all circumstances in every consideration that it was important to remember this, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me and before all the people I will be glorified.

A solemn truth was brought home into the heart of Aaron and Aaron held his peace. peace. Maybe a solemn truth has been brought home to us sometimes by those things that have come into our lives with the result that we have held our peace.

We could say nothing. It is the Lord enthroned in light whose claims are all divine, who has an undisputed right to govern me and mine.

How easily we may sing it, how different the matter is when we come into it. But remember this, that the Lord will be gracious and merciful, long-suffering and full of compassion to every one of his own children, not in anger, not in anger, but in his dear covenant love.

[13 : 55] I was dumb. I opened not my mouth. mouth. He couldn't even form his lips to try to make somebody understand what he wanted to say, even though his vocal chords, so to speak, in a spiritual sense, seemed to be lacking in vocal noise.

I was dumb. I opened not my mouth. It is good for us sometimes to be dumb before God.

True religion is quite distinguishable. Some think that they should be heard for their much speaking, and in consequence may know nothing of being dumb before the Lord.

that the people of God may sometimes be dumb before the Lord, and what they do say is in brokenness of heart and in brokenness of expression, speaking, and yet what they speak, seem to be so disjointed, because God had done it.

He had spoken by action. We have the word, the axiom in the world, actions speak louder than words.

[15 : 44] Can we go so far as to say this, that God may speak, and he may speak again, and he may speak a third time, and yet the person takes no notice, and then he speaks by action.

We shall listen to action where we do not listen to words. On the other hand, where the word of a king is, there is power.

God is sovereign in all his ways, but if it comes to action, if it comes to action, how loudly that may speak to us, I was done.

I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. And then we may look at the case of Job.

Job put his hand upon his mouth, hand. And this was when God arose. Now, God did not appear to Job as he appeared in respect to Aaron's sons.

[17 : 04] But the Lord came down to Job after a great trial of his faith, and he spoke to Job. And as he spoke, so surely the Lord was magnified in his greatness, in the eyes of Job, and Job realized his own sufficiency and baseness until he comes to the point where he says, Behold, I am vile.

You don't very often get a man calling upon God to behold him. The Lord may use this word a number of times in the scripture, behold.

And when it is used, the general inference is that we need to bear some special attention toward the point which God has spoken.

Well, now we find Job saying, Behold, I am vile. have we ever been in such a case as to draw God's attention to our vileness?

Behold, I am vile. How can we know that? We know it by beholding God's purity.

[18 : 36] Then, when thou with rebukes doth correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a mark.

Surely every man is vanity. But Job says, Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer thee?

So we have done this in this respect, for we know not what to say. And therefore, we must be done before God. What God has said to us, what God spoke to Job in the two preceding chapters was so powerful that Job could answer nothing.

It only intensified the greatness of God and the vileness and insignificant of Job himself.

And so he says, I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer, yea, twice, that I will proceed no further.

[19 : 54] Now we should observe what God says after this. Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind and said, gird up thy loins now like a man.

I will demand of thee and declare thou unto me. You see, sometimes when we get to a state like Job did, we're ready to give up.

And I can speak no longer and I shall never speak again. But the Lord says, gird up thy loins now like a man.

Job had already spoken his words to men. We read in one of the chapters that the words of Job are ended.

But God says, gird up thy loins.

[21 : 00] There was yet something more to be done. Do we think that God has finished with us when we say, behold, I am vile? Job had to be brought lower.

We have to be brought lower when we think that we've reached rock bottom. Our thinking is sometimes wrong. where Job had to be brought to was this.

I know that thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Now Job's trial was penetrating.

How many may look at Job's trial and feel a deep sympathy for him because he lost his home and his family.

Feel a deep sympathy for him because he was so much afflicted in his body and yet have no realization that what God was doing was to bring him to this point to say I know thou canst do everything and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

[22 : 23] Did you not know it before? Perhaps some of us might be able to answer that question when we thought yes God can do everything but have our lives and our actions supported what we have professed?

Who is he that hide his counsel without knowledge therefore have I uttered that I understood not things too wonderful for me which I knew not here I beseech thee and I will speak I will demand of thee and declare thou unto me I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear but now mine eyes seeth thee and this had the effect to a large extent of the this good old man being in this place I was done I opened up my mouth his eyes saw his ears heard but the words that he spoke were none until after God had finished speaking and then they were few but now mine eye seeth thee wherefore

I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes Job acknowledged that this was God's work you know if you come to abhor yourself it will be God's work and from that aspect I was done I opened not my mouth because thou didst it will be an accomplished fact in your experience differentiate and so we come to the psalmist himself all sorts of situations arose people arose and circumstances arose he might well have uttered the words of one of our hymns as he has known them from sinner and from saint we meet with many a blow and as we pass through these things very often so unexpectedly we are bound to say I was done

I open not my mouth because thou didst it but then there's something else for us to observe and that is to see God's wonderful working in the background of our helplessness in the background with the background of our well nigh hopelessness God works he worketh according to the counsel of his own will God worked in the days of Moses and Aaron God worked in the days of Job God worked in the days of Moses God works in our days Christian experience hasn't altered one which we speak of modern developments but though modern developments might have an effect upon us outwardly yet inward Christian experience has not one with we've all been brought if we are taught of God to observe God's work

I was done I open not my mouth because thou didst it and so we may well be quiet when we say it is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good Eli had nothing to say apart from it is the Lord let him do what seemeth him good and therefore we are silent before God and yet our heart looks up for the mercy of God hear my prayer oh God Lord and give ear unto my cry hold not thy peace at my tears for I am a stranger with the inner sojourner as all my fathers were these kind of tears for the most part are not seen by men we all have our moments when we are alone and maybe some of those moments if we were able to observe it in others would show a tear and that tear would be the reason of soul exercise and conflict between the flesh and the spirit how much goes on within our souls

[28 : 05] I was almost going to say much more than goes on with our hands or outwardly our mind is working all the time or more or less so because even when we are asleep our mind is working this is betokened when we may wake up and our mind is going it is very very soon but I was dumb said the psalmist I open not my mouth it is one thing to see God's work that won't necessarily make us dumb it is another thing for us to see God's work and the glory of God revealed in his work then we shall see the majesty of the great God we shall see the glory of the God of the great God being revealed and that will make us dumb it made Job dumb and it will make us dumb because God's work you know is different from man's my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are my ways your ways saith the Lord for as the heaven is high above the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts the area of Christian experience is wide we come to the same

Christian experience I was dumb I open not my mouth but the contributory factors might be so very different in individual cases we noted it from those references that we have made already in the word of God this morning we may reflect upon it in respect to the new birth I was dumb I open not my mouth because thou didst it the new birth in respect to ourselves the new birth in respect to those that we have looked upon and watched over some parents in regard to their children others the people of God in respect to those that have been laid in their hearts they watched over it and when it's happened because it is God's work they've been amazed they've been awed and from that point of view

I was dumb I open not my mouth because thou didst it now the psalmist says in the next verse remove thy stroke away from me so he was feeling this stroke to be immeasurably bitter he was feeling this stroke to have taken such a toll of him that he could endure it no longer remove thy stroke away from me now it is good you know that we should be in the place for as David was to acknowledge that it was God's stroke because whatsoever the Lord doeth he doeth is done forever and he doeth for our benefit whatever cross lies at thy door it cometh from the Lord we shall not be able to join with the psalmist remove thy stroke away from me unless we believe that

God has sent it or shall I say has overruled so that it should come to us now if God has sent it we can only apply to one to remove it and that is God himself but in the meanwhile we should ever remember this he giveth more grace the apostle Paul passed through a very painful experience and one would judge that it remained all his life some trials do remain all our lives others are of passing nature maybe for a week a few days or a week or a month or a year or so but some may last all our life now remember the occasion when

Paul said to God that he might remove the thorn in the flesh the thorn in the flesh we may see a thorn in a person's flesh but we can't tell what pain they're enduring because of that thorn we may see a person in trouble but we can't estimate what they are feeling within their very soul because of that trouble we can therefore understand Paul when he besought the Lord Christ that he would remove it remove it Paul's situation of course may be considered to be so different from the others that we referred to because Paul had been caught up into the third heaven had had wonderful revelations that it was unlawful that is it was impossible to speak about human language would not be sufficient to describe what he saw and what he felt and then he says unless I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations there was given to me a thorn in the flesh the messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I should be exalted above measure not many verses in the scripture begin and end with the same words it just shows to us how important it was that this point should rest upon his spirit lest I should be exalted above measure will this give us a reason if we have a thorn in the flesh lest I should be exalted above measure can we begin our speaking about it lest I should be exalted above measure until we conclude our narrative lest I should be exalted above measure but for this thing I have sought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness most gladly therefore will

[35 : 56] I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me remove thy stroke away from me God will not always answer the petitions that we present but he will magnify his grace he will give us grace to bear up and to hold on this is what he did to the apostle doubtless David found it to be the same and yet the prayer is recorded recorded for our instruction recorded for our consolation recorded in that in the in this that we may know what is the movement and feeling of the human soul and yet the holy soul of David remove thy stroke away from me how we are reminded of our

Lord's words when he said if it be possible let this cut pass from me nevertheless are not my will but thine be done I am consumed by the blow of thine hand a blow may well knock a person down and yet not knock them down beyond recovery of getting up but the psalmist here speaks of being eaten I am consumed by the blow of thine hand as though the very blow of God's hand entered into his very vitals and began to attack his strength elsewhere he speaks like this there has weakened my strength in the way our strength decreasing naturally can very often be very alarming we may be alarmed when there's no need to be alarmed because we still have a lot of strength and may continue for a long time but it is alarming

God's work was thorough here God's work will always be thorough God's work therefore will not fail whatever comes upon us God has a purpose in it and he intends that purpose to be accomplished I am consumed by the blow of thine hand if we should make a confession to God concerning this are we not making a confession of that which God intended did you know a sharp blow can be very effective sometimes a touch can seem to enter into our vitals at sometimes I am consumed eaten up well and I finished by the blow of thine hand the blow concerning

Aaron was solemn because it reminded him of his sin and iniquity in not sanctifying the Lord the blow of God's hand in Job's case was solemn because it reminded him of his own vileness and his sinfulness all mainly one would judge from the self righteousness of his spirit the blow of thine hand has God touched us God looked at the heart this Hannah declares with certainly some strength and forcefulness by him actions are weighed and it brings brings

Hannah through to a good end her experience was painful you are familiar with it wanting a child and not having one and coming under persecution from Peninnah now Hannah she spake in her heart only her lips moved but her voice was not heard therefore Eli thought that she had been drunken and Eli said unto her how long will thou be drunk and put away thy wine from thee perhaps nothing is more trying to bear than to be misunderstood but you have a companion in Hannah if you are misunderstood understood by the misunderstood by the servant of God she had to be done before

[41 : 51] God but you see she prayed unto the Lord subsequently and how much blessing came out of the day of adversity of Hannah my heart rejoices in the Lord mine horn is exalted in the Lord my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies and mine enemies mouths were enlarged over me at one time and all because I rejoice in thy salvation there is none holy as the Lord for there is none beside thee neither is there any rock like our God so there was this benefit that accrued to Hannah she was established in this present truth there is no rock neither is there any rock like our God talk no more so exceeding arrogant proudly let not arrogancy come out of your mouth for the

Lord is the God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed those of the mighty men are broken and they that stumbled are girded with strength and that which is written the fourth time is written for our learning and the same development will take place in all the lives of God's people the thing which may appear to them to come within the first the Lord killeth will he make us alive he bringeth down to the grave but he bringeth up do we find a single case in the scripture where he bringeth down to the grave and doesn't bring up in regard to the trials of the people of God do we find a single scripture where the Lord maketh poor and maketh rich he bringeth low and lifteth up there's much to be learned in the low places as well as in the higher places and then there is this to be learned he raiseth up the poor out of the dust well we can't be raised up out of the dust until we're there and

God brings us into the dust of what we sometimes hear spoken of self abasement that was where Job came to he raised it up the poor out of the dust and lifted up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory now we behold the work of God here secretly going on secretly bringing to pass that which would issue in his glory not only the glory revealed but the glory of God felt and expressed as Hannah does my heart rejoices in the Lord my horn is exalted in the Lord but in the meanwhile I am consumed by the blow of thine hand but underneath are the everlasting arms of love if the blow knocks us down then

God will raise us up if the blow pains us then God will heal us faithful are the wounds of a friend what a mercy if we can ever lay claim to God being our friend which he is which he is if we are saved in the Lord's everlasting salvation we sometimes refer to those words what a friend we have in Jesus now Jesus is a close friend and sometimes the words he speaks the actions that he takes may wound the psalmist felt this stroke was too heavy because he said remove thy stroke away from me I am consumed by the blow of thine hand he has a companion in

Jeremiah because there Jeremiah in the third chapter of the lamentations he says I am the man that has seen affliction by the right of his wrath and the terminology is such that one would almost judge that Jeremiah had come to the conclusion that no man had seen affliction like he had seen but in the next few verses we may read a great deal which might lighten our own path at times he hath led me and brought me into darkness but not into night but you know there are treasures of darkness maybe we don't always see the treasures of darkness at the time and this brought poor Jeremiah to this conclusion surely against me is he turned he turned his hand against me all the day

[47 : 45] I was done I opened not my mouth because thou didst it remove thy stroke from me Jeremiah says I cry and shout and all my prayer and he shouted out my prayer he hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone he hath made my path crooked but he comes to this point eventually that this my that these things were an infirmity to him and he has to change his tone as we shall have to change our tone when God shines upon sacred truth it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed and this brings us to the point here to see judgment and mercy the psalmist in the 101st psalm he says

I will sing of mercy and of judgment judgment which was brought upon him in his life remove thy stroke far from me I am consumed by the blow of thine hand but as Jeremiah had to take another look so we shall have to take another look and our feelings do not always correspond with truth I am consumed by the blow of thine hand was not true it was very penetrating it was very painful but nonetheless it was not true because grace supported him because God's mercy was round about him otherwise it would have been true Jeremiah has to say it is the Lord's mercies we are not consumed is not this a brand plucked out of the fire consumed by the fire you see we may say that the psalmist was in the fire

I am consumed meaning the consumption of fire not the consumption of eating but the consumption of fire so he was learning this and we may be learning this that the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is but that which is of God will last whilst that which is of the flesh will be burnt out and then we shall value the words in Psalm 37 a little