

Oh that I knew where I might find Him (Quality: Average)

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: 02 December 1990

Preacher: Farley, Raymond John (1939-2008)

[0 : 00] I will invite your prayerful attention to Job chapter 23, Job chapter 23, and in particular verse 3, Job chapter 23, and verse 3, O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. We come this morning, dear friends, to the word of God. We have read a portion of his scripture, which is one of the oldest records of scripture, and if the book was placed in its chronological order in the record of scripture, would be parallel in age with Genesis. We've read of the great loss sustained by godly Job in all things to do with his possessions and yea, even his family. It's been recorded these many years, I believe, for the instruction of God's people through the generations. We find Job in a situation that he was a godly man, and he sought the Lord and sacrificed regularly. And he was honoured of

God in the testimony which God himself gave, greater than that of any man that I know of, when Satan presented himself with the sons of God, and the Lord addressed Satan. And it's very enlightening to consider that first encounter, shall we say, that was made between God and Satan, as recorded in Job. You see, it's very notable, and struck me in considering this quite forcibly.

There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. You would think, would you not, that it would read that there was a day when the sons of men came to present themselves before the Lord. Now I believe, dear friends, there is a message here for us. Because, you see, there will be up and down our land and around the world circumference, and many sons of men today presenting their bodies before God. But that is, alas, where it will end. There will not be that spiritual blessing, that spiritual aspect of it. But here, you see, it was clearly the sons of God.

Now I believe this means spiritually alive men and women, sons and daughters of God, those who know the work of the Holy Spirit in their own souls of the Holy Spirit in their own souls experience, and note it is them that Satan presents himself among. Those who are not concerned about a true spiritual worship, Satan leaves well alone. He will never worry those who just merely go to church or chapel or some other exercise in an ordinary act of worship about anything at all. He will lull them to sleep. In fact, they're already asleep.

But when the souls of men are awakened and women are awakened by the power of the Holy Spirit, then we become subject in a spiritual way to the hindrances of Satan. And I feel this is a very, very much the case here with Job. Because in the conversation, you see, the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and that steweth evil? What a wonderful testimony that Job had of God.

[5 : 30] And it's as if God is saying to Satan, there is nothing that you can throw at Job which my grace is not sufficient to withstand. It is a greater context here than that which appears on the surface. This is a continuation, as it were, of that struggle from whence Satan was cast from heaven. This is, again, the very fact that Satan is arrogant enough to appear among the sons of God to present himself before God. It is an arrogance which we see in parallel in the first chapters of the Bible, in chapter 3 of Genesis, where that old serpent, even Satan, comes to Eve and he says, Hath God said? Yea, hath God said? He shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Question.

He plants a doubt. He plants a question. He questions God. He's arrogant. He then says in the third verse of the third chapter, you shall not surely die. It was a lie. That death was spiritual and complete in the Garden of Eden.

The same arrogance that Satan has here in presenting himself with the sons of God as they come to worship.

But notwithstanding all this, is it not a wonderful encouragement to us as we see that God gave Job sufficient grace that in the twenty-second verse, in all this, in all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

He was kept by the power of God, dear friends. God, the Holy Spirit, kept him from sin, much to Satan's disappointment and annoyance. So much so that in the second chapter, we read that Satan again presents himself before the Lord, and this time he wants to put his finger on Job and afflict him.

[8 : 06] But you see, blessed be God, he said, spare his life. There is an end stop which God puts against Satan between him and the children of God, beyond which even Satan himself dares not go.

We have that encouragement if we're numbered in that number which are called the sons of God, sons and daughters of God. We have that faith given, do we not?

Although at times it wavers and it becomes very low and as a vapour, and yet there is still that precious preservation of God as shown here to Job by God in that forbidding of any further hurt upon his life.

He allowed Job to suffer the loss of so much. When we consider what he has lost.

He's lost all his possessions. That's bad enough. He's lost his children. That's worse. Solemn thought.

[9 : 31] What a test the poor man was put to. In considering the subject of Job, it has given me thought as to why a man of God should be put to such a test.

I've come to the conclusion, dear friends, that it was because there was to be this record, left on record for us throughout so much of the passage of time that it's an early scripture as I mentioned.

Later you see that he suffers at the hand of his friends. They, I believe in all natural sympathy, came to try to comfort him.

Much as a neighbour would comfort a neighbour. They were his friends and they thought they could comfort him and I believe they were genuinely well-intentioned in their arrival and they sat, can you imagine, for seven days and seven nights without saying a word because they saw his grief was so great.

But you see, as we do prove sometimes with earthly friends, they start to analyse and to soon apportion blame and of course it soon was the fact that they were a great discouragement to poor Job and they, over the ensuing chapters of the early part of Job, they blamed him quite fairly and squarely for the difficulties which he finds himself in and poor Job is reduced to realise that even his wife has turned against him and he has to correct her and tell her that she speaks as one of the ungodly women of the world, foolish women of the world and he's left, as it were, reduced to himself but he's not alone.

[11 : 56] At the end of all this, he's not alone. No. You see, in all these things, he's still got his God. In Job chapter 13 and verse 15, he says, as though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.

You see, the faith that God had given Job was something else that Satan couldn't touch. Faith, as our old pastor used to say, as a grain of mustard seed, was real.

It was God-given. It was not something imparted by the muttering of some priest holding out his hands to someone. No, not that sort of faith.

That's worthless. This is God-given faith in the never-dying soul of man. This is something to be known and to be tried.

Faith is tried. God gives faith and God tries faith. And so he tried for Job. And so he thought, though he slay me, yet I will trust in him.

[13 : 14] Yes, though he slay me, yet I will trust in him. Then continue. He's speaking.

And he says, if a man die, shall he live again? This is a rhetorical question. He's speaking to his friends. All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.

He's sure of his change. He's waiting for his change. He knows that his present trouble is but one which is limited to this life.

He knows that he has something greater. He knows that he has an eternal, never-dying soul. And he's looking forward to that. He says, shall he live again to his friends?

As much to say, think about that. He says, all the days of my life, of my appointed time, will I wait until my change come.

[14 : 18] He's expecting it. He knows about it. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee. Thou will have a desire to the work of thine hands. For now thou numberest my steps.

Dost thou not watch over my sin? Here he is speaking to God in prayer. My transgression is sealed up in a bag and thou sowest up mine iniquity.

This is chapter 14, verse 14 to 17. And you see, what an encouragement here. You see his faith is on the ascendancy.

He's now beginning to really analyse his situation. He's not yearning for his camels, friends, the loss of his camels.

Not at this stage. No. His camels are the least of his worries, as we say. He is considering his never-dying soul and his transgression, which he knows he has before his God.

[15 : 27] but he knows that God is the only one that can deal with that. My transgression is sealed up in a bag and thou sowest up mine iniquity, he says to God.

He realises that salvation is of God, not of man, not of this earth, not of the level of day-to-day items. No.

This is something which is beyond. This is the gift of God. Yes. And so he speaks and you see he's encouraging himself in the Lord is God.

Yes. He says to his friends in verse 16 and verse 4 I also could speak as ye do if your soul were in my soul's stead I could keep heap up words against you and shake mine head at you.

So you see poor Job was hurt by his friends wagging their heads and pointing a finger. It says in verse 20 of chapter 16 my friends scorn me but my eye poureth out tears unto God.

[16 : 40] He knows better than to cry to man that's no good. He pours out his soul to God poureth out his tears unto God.

Yes. but you see the Lord did not shut up his ear. This surely is a lesson to us all here. When we find ourselves in tribulations of whatever sort they may be and we cry unto the Lord in prayer sincere the Lord will not shut up his ear.

He may not give us our whim he may not give us what we think is the answer but he will answer prayer he will supply our every need as opposed to our every want.

We want many things we need much less. We're all guilty dear friends I'm not casting any stones at you. No it's what we are by nature.

So if we consider Job in this position he comes now in our text oh that I knew where I might find him. There is that yearning of soul before him before God he's searching it's what it's everything his soul's desire oh that I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his feet yes he wants to know that spiritual communion with God he is lacking that spiritual communion with God which was lost in Adam in the Garden of Eden not only was man cast out of the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were cast out they were cast out of that physical enjoyment of that perfect environment which God had made so also they were cast out for that communion of the work of God when they were in the cool of the evening in communion with God as his voice walked with them in the Garden of Eden and so that spiritual loss and discommunication which was affected then was still being felt by Job and is still being felt by us here this morning dear friends and it is only by faith as we can look to Calvary can that communion be reconnected and there be that flow of sweet communion by the power of the Holy

[19 : 14] Spirit in faith in Calvary and the work there on yes here he is oh that I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his seat yes he wants to get that spiritual communion with God he needs to felt presence of God in his soul in his mercy is faithful and does answer Job because as you'll remember you see his faith reaches a pinnacle which I would suggest to any ordinary person is the greatest on record he says in verse 19 he speaks again firstly to his friends have pity upon me oh ye my friends for the hand of

God has touched me why do you persecute me as God and are not satisfied with my flesh oh that my words were now written oh that they were printed in a book that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever what this shows this wonderful description he wants to cut the words in solid rock with a hammer and an engraving chisel he then wants molten lead poured in and caught to make it a permanent fixture in the rock it's the nearest thing that Job has in his mind to something eternal which is understandable by the human mind and I say to you dear friends knowing somewhat of this subject that if you have lead which is in fact poured molten into an engraving in rock and it is then properly caught and faced it is one of the most difficult jobs to remove there is very little that you can do apart from apply colossal heat to melt the lead for it to run out because in so doing you will spoil the stone if you do attempt it any other way and so he's saying so important is this word that I would like it engraved in the stone and in lead for he says

I know that my redeemer liveth that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth here is a man who has just lost everything here is a man who has lost all that the world counts as worth having he's brought to a pinnacle of faith through God's dealings with him and the grace of God shed abroad in his heart that he comes to such a pinnacle for I know that my redeemer liveth have you ever been brought to that pinnacle dear friends by faith is there a time you look back on and you can say I felt then that my redeemer liveth my redeemer personal must be a personal thing not my dad's redeemer no not my best friend's redeemer must be personal friends

I know that my redeemer liveth have you been brought to that I hope so and if not I hope and pray that you will before you're taken from this world scene that you may know that wonderful experience of knowing that your redeemer liveth and he goes on to say you see and it's such a statement and even the world at large realises this is a wonderful statement although they don't believe it often I went to a most unhappy occasion recently to a crematorium and I quickly noted that they were playing the tune which goes to the words I know that my redeemer liveth but I had very sad grave doubts about the situation if any there did it was the most cold and terrible experience I've experienced for years it's a very solemn thing to stand by the grave or to go to see the end of a person of whom you know they have openly all their life rejected anything to do with religion even to the point of allowing their children to go to

Sunday school it leaves one with a very hollow feeling that I cannot describe but you probably know what I mean 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 rains be consumed within me yes he knows he will see himself he will see his redeemer himself what a pinnacle of faith the dear man has risen to in this and yet you see it's not the man it's the gift of God and Job I'm sure if he was here present this morning he would correct me in using the word man because you see there's so much more to this this is the gift of God what a privilege dear friends if we have as I said just now one little grain of mustard seed of faith faith as a grain of mustard seed what a blessing if we have but I want to come just a little bit further because he goes on you see oh that

[25 : 46] I knew where I might find him now you see here is something else that I might come even to his seat even to his seat now we all have to come as I mentioned in prayer to stand before the judgment seat of Christ that is one of God's seats and if we stand there without an advocate we shall be lost eternally lost as long as God shall God remain so long shall last hell's lingering pain so long the joys of heaven shall be long delights long misery the judgment seat is something that we need very much to consider how shall we stand in that great day when we go back in history

Job may have been before this particular event I don't know I'd be very interested to know in one sense although it alters not the truth which I hope to bring out of this but you see when the law was given to Moses in the mount the first set of tables were brought down by Moses and as he came to the bottom of the mountain you will remember that the children of Israel had made a golden calf and he was so displeased that he cast the stone the tablets rather down and they were broken yes dear friends the broken law of God that is what we do by nature that is our first inclination because we are born as in Adam all dying it is our aptitude to sin which broke those first tablets of the law spiritually individually in our own souls in our own lives we're born in sin shaping in iniquity and before we're very old at all we are lumping up as it were a great mound of sin a mountain of sin of our own committing and so we are total but the sweet thought that came to me was this that that first set of tablets of the law were broken but you see when God in his mercy gave the second set of tablets of the law he commanded that the ark should be made that they be kept safe in the ark now you'll remember that the ark was made of sheeting wood and overlaid with gold you'll remember that they were it was made specifically and singularly to contain the law the law was kept safe in the ark the ark represents

Jesus Christ himself in him the law was kept complete every jot and tittle of the law was kept and fulfilled in the ark Lord Jesus so much so that heaven's opened and a voice from heaven said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased complete satisfaction for the justice and the holiness of God was found in Christ Jesus was kept as in the ark of the old of the testament in the old testament dispensation but wait there's more because you see over the ark was set the mercy seat the mercy seat was set above the complete and kept tablets of stone of the law kept safe in the ark but set above was the mercy seat and what was on the mercy seat again it was overlaid with gold and was headcast gold rings and so on as you'll read it's a very instructive piece of bible study to read it and you see as that ark bore on it the mercy seat the mercy seat had above it again the cherubims and they were looking in toward the mercy seat the posture of looking in toward the mercy seat but their wings were stretched over and this depicts that sheltering wing of the mercy of God over his people and if I can find it in

Ruth Boaz is speaking to Ruth yes he says and Boaz answered and said unto her it has fully been shown me all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore now this is the piece which I like the Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust under whose wings thou art come to trust you see he was thinking of the emblem of the mercy seat with the cherubs over it with their wings to shelter the soul of man in that the law had been atoned for it had been kept and the broken law had been atoned for in the death of the

Lord Jesus Christ he died to atone for sins not his own the father punished for us his dear son that us is the people of God that's the sons and daughters of God not the world at large there is nothing there to give any liberality to the thought of universal redemption my dear friends at all under whose wings they are come to trust he's speaking lovingly to Ruth how lovingly the Lord Jesus Christ invites his people to come to him in that same way and to come as it were under his wings under those wings but you see there's more still to that picture because it says that it's between the cherubims that the kind of glory of

[33 : 58] God shone forth to the people of the old dispensation and the presence of God was known above the mercy seat and so you see it depicts of that foretelling that foreshadowing that prophetic emblem of that re-uniting of the soul lost soul of man to that re-connection of the communication lost in the garden of Eden as I mentioned earlier at Calvary and so you see that Jesus himself kept every jot and tittle of that law I like that verse our old pastor used to quote it in him in Jesus in him the father never saw the least transgression of his law in him we then perfection view and blessed be God in him the saints are perfect too and that is the crux of the matter to be found in Christ that I might win

Christ and be found in him to be one for whom that covenant was kept now you might say to me well what can I do if I'm not my dear friends the election the electing love of God is the business of God in that it's not for us to question but I like something that I heard Mr.

Ramsbottom many years ago now quote about election known by Paulin and it's the story of the shepherd I may have said this last time I come it's so sweet I'm not going to apologise if I say it twice to you because it's been so sweet to me it's like this the poor farmer had two socked lambs out of his herd that were fed by his wife around the house and they became friends of the family rather than a commercial flock times were hard and the farmer had to sell his sheep but he kept the two pets last and times got even worse and he was forced to take them to the local market which was an open marketplace where all the sheep were herded together and he said to the auctioneer sell these two sheep for me and he said just as he lost the sheep as it were in with the others the man who owed him all this money which had brought him into such circumstance came and paid him and he said I want those two sheep back so he went to the auctioneer he said

I want those two sheep back I don't want to sell them he said well how are you going to sort them out of that that mass of sheep he said you wait a minute just stop hold the bidding and he went back and he took out of his bosom a little tin whistle and he whistled a little tune and that there was two sheep started to edge and push and edge and push and edge and push until they went up the bank to where he was playing that's effectual calling dear friends the other sheep didn't know anything about that tune did they the other sheep didn't know that that meant there would be rich provision at the farmhouse liken that to your spiritual condition dear friends if you feel a yearning toward the things of God take courage pray on if free grace why not for me we sung in that first hymn lovely hymn that is one of my favourites yeah you see we can take courage if we have a desire the world knows nothing of that desire we mustn't rest in the desire itself as a mark of grace don't rest press on pray on seek ye first the kingdom of God but you see

I want to just consider for one more moment that Job at his latter end he's been brought in his soul's experience to this pinnacle of faith that he says as I read to you I know that my redeemer liveth yes now he's brought to that high pinnacle he's brought there I thoroughly believe for the good of his own soul but I believe it was for the good of the church militant throughout time because this book of Job has been greatly used to God's people throughout the years and the generations and now you see Job was sinned on his lips and then you find that he says a little bit lower down in our same chapter in verse 10 but he knoweth the way that I take and when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold so he knows that

[39 : 08] Lord knoweth the way he knoweth your way dear friends he knoweth mine he knoweth that sometimes we have a job to carry on we have many pressures in life that we think we should never manage to cope with from the youngest to the oldest we have problems perhaps it's weakness of old age perhaps if you're in the heat and burn of the day it's the responsibilities which are forced upon us and sometimes we could do very well with half of them and we wonder how we should manage he knoweth the way that I take it is a trial isn't it dear friends but if you're one of God's people you have something that the world has not and that is a God to go to a God to pray to somewhere to renew your strength for are we not told in Isaiah that they that fear the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint

I think perhaps some of you have already proved that but I remind you of it just the same and I remind myself of it too because it is a truth dear friends sometimes we brought to our wits end and all our wisdom swallowed up and yet we cast it before the Lord as good as Ezekiah he spread that letter before the Lord and we can spread our problems before the Lord and I verily believe that my life's minutest circumstance is subject to God's eye and I think some of you have proved that as well even in the small things we think and sometimes those small things are so important and God undertakes for us in them and can we not look back over the way the Lord has led us and can we not say that of all the way the Lord our God has led us we've lacked nothing by the way nothing by the way he's provided every need emphasise the need again yes and so with dear Job the poor man has been put to all this as it were at

Satan's behest one little thought Satan brought the evil upon Job God withdrew his hand to allow Satan to do as much as he would allow him to Job Satan was the one who brought the evil evil I know that does the way it's worded it does give a possible misunderstanding but I'm clearly convinced in my own mind that what the Lord does is to take away the protection of his preserving hand to a degree in his infinite wisdom for the good of our souls to allow Satan to do so much only and then as it were he squeezes Satan out at the end of that appointed time that the evil is not from God the evil is from

Satan and you see God overrules Job's circumstances and when we come to the end of the book of Job you see he is his daughters are the fairest in the land and he has his goods restored to him and the other interesting thing is this that the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends his friends who had been a discomfort to him in real terms the Lord enabled Job to pray for them and in so doing his own captivity was changed and also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before then came there unto him all his brethren and all his sisters and all that had been of his acquaintance before and did eat bread with him in his house and they bemoaned him and comforted him and over all the evil that the

Lord had brought upon him now as I say I actually believe that that is in the permissive hand and not the active hand there as I just said and every man also gave him a piece of money and every one an earring of gold you could ask the question what took them so long why did they allow poor Job to get to all this before they came along and gave him a piece of money or an earring couldn't you I think there's a lesson there dear friends we have to consider the humanity of our best friends we're all sinners we all let our friends down God never lets any down God has that all power of both things in heaven and in earth to be that friend which sticketh closer than a brother and so you see

[44 : 40] Job finds himself at the end of this period having had the greatest blessing of his faith in the pinnacle that I know that my redeemer liveth and he ends up being the richest man in the east again and the daughters among the fairest in the land and so is God so apt to bless his people I worked with a man once who said you people that go to chapel you've always got plenty of money he couldn't think of anything other than money or beer he said I know why you're in a religious religion he said because you're all so well off quite convinced of it and I said well let's just think about that a minute I was only very young at the time I said you earn your wages and you go and give them all to the publican at the end of the week I said God gives wisdom to his children or words to this effect they save their money and so they have an old car to come to work in instead of having to wait for someone else or a bus or get wet or whatever but he could never see that all his life he went as soon as he got his wages and gave them to the landlord now the natural stupidity of that is quite surprising but you see what the Lord gives his people wisdom he gives he is that source of wisdom in ordinary earthly things and I very believe that

God does provide for his people in a most liberal way and it's a direct result of answer to prayer God doesn't seem fit to give everyone riches he doesn't seem fit to make everyone poor he in his wonderful providence gives a cross section for a need for his work or for whatever purpose he has in his infinite wisdom but we can all look back and say not one good thing has failed can't we we've all been brought here we've all been preserved to this very morning and may we each know that eternal preservation of the soul that we might be found as him to do his love him