

Job (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: 11 April 2007

Preacher: Dawson, Peter (1925-2014)

[0 : 00] seeking the help of the Lord, I would ask your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Job, in the 10th chapter and the 12th verse.

The book of Job, chapter 10, verse 12. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

I think I can say sincerely that this is a given text. Had it been a matter of choice, I might have hesitated.

And on this occasion, I think two years ago, I also spoke from Job in the 19th verse. I have also once, several years ago, perhaps nine years ago, spoken from this text at Raleigh.

But it was brought rather beautifully, not only into my mind, but into my very being. It came in my morning reading.

[1 : 24] I tried to read through the Word of God this year with a little more time to sit than perhaps normally I would. I came into this book, and one day, possibly Sunday or Monday, I read this verse, and it stuck.

You know what it's like, that sometimes you can read through the Word of God, and yes, you can take it in, you might even be able to go over the passage afterwards. But there are those times when it pleases God to open the Word, and yes, it seems that the Word stands out.

This is one of those, I looked into this Word, and I felt the blessedness of it. Not only did I feel how thankful Job must have been, that he, in the midst of all his troubles, was from time to time able, as he entered into that debate with his so-called friends, and if you read through the debate, we must admit there was much that Job said that was unwise, and of course, even by the testimony of God, much that friends said that was also unwise.

But, we do find that from time to time, Job, and yes, from time to time his friends, were able to set forth the truth. I think we shall find there are ten special parts of Job's sayings that show that he had the root of the matter within him.

And I feel this to be one. And as we look upon it, we have to think, too, of the circumstances under which such a Word was spoken.

[3 : 16] It was not a time of ease for Job. It was a time of stress. And yet, look again. Search the Word of God.

Take your hearts, as you are able, into the experiences of those who are set forth in it. And sometimes I go through more solemn parts of the Word of God.

Yes, my natural mind is a bit reluctant. Who likes reading the Lamentations? Yeah, it's getting to somewhere toward the middle of the third chapter. And we find a most blessed testimony in the heart of Jeremiah.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness. And my friends, yes, he began it, but by the time he got to the end of it, I used the wrong pronoun, didn't I?

He lifted up his heart. He was not making complaints. He was giving praise. Great is thy faithfulness. And oh, my friends, this is how the Lord works in his people.

- [4 : 33] Yes, my dad used to use an expression that when a jeweler wanted to show something especially beautiful in his window, he would often put it on a dark-colored oak cushion.
- And I remember going by a window and seeing just exactly that, a most beautiful piece of silverware, put on a very dark, yes, beautiful cushion.
- It was velvet, but nonetheless it was black. And of course, the silver showed up beautifully against it. And I remember what my dad said.
- But then we were looking at something different to black cushions and to silverware, we're looking at life. But we're looking at more than this. We're looking at the grace of God toward his people in their lives.
- Yes, the way may be hard, the way may be difficult. And sometimes we might even have something of that spirit that came into the hearts of the Israelites in the wilderness when they were much discouraged because of the way.
- [5 : 47] Well, there's no sin in being discouraged. There is sin in complaining and murmuring against God as they did. But, yes, it is like temptation.
- There is no sin in being tempted. But, there is sin when the temptation is yielded to and even the temptation to complain. Yes, we have to wash our hearts, don't we?
- But I'm getting off the point a bit. But let us come back to my text. I like to think of Job. Yes, he was passing through the clouds.
- But just occasionally there was a break. Just occasionally he could see the sun. And when he saw the sun, yes, his heart was lifted. Isn't it so in your life, your spiritual life?
- Do you not find those times when amidst the gloom, amidst the difficulties, the burdens, yes, very real burdens, I'm not talking about imaginations, I'm not suggesting that we do not have reason sometimes to feel the burden in the way.
- [7 : 00] All of us know that it is so. It would be useless for me to deny it. Your own experience would give the lie, wouldn't it? But do we not also in the grace of God have those times when the light has shone through?
- The times when the light, yes, came through so much that for the moment the difficulty was forgotten. I think this is partly why this text so beautifully came into my own mind.
- It was recent experience. And the same evening our reading, which is in a different order, came into the chapter we read together.
- And as we read what the Spirit of God is to the people of God, do you notice as we read down how often we have that thought of the work of the Spirit within us?
- And I will not read it again now, but you can read it to yourself later. You'll see perhaps we can say in the first 16 or some verses we have what the Spirit of God, the visitations of God to his people in these days do for them.
- [8 : 21] how the visitations of God become the very essence of their lives. And again, I need to be just a little personal for a moment.
- As most of you know, I've passed through a time, I think the first time in my life that I have had a rather severe illness. And during the worst part of it, I was unable even to think or to pray an utter confusion of mind, agony of body, you know, I didn't know what to do or what to expect and it seemed, well, it seemed to me that all things were wrong.
- The Lord appeared. There was an instinctive prayer, I won't say it was an express prayer, it was one of those that we thought of in our opening hymn.
- It's a precious hymn, isn't it? And an answer was given. the word came, strangely, or perhaps not strangely, it was the last word I tried to preach from before I was taken ill.
- And that had been nearly three weeks before. And the word came. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things ensure.

- [9 : 44] the confusion of my mind remained, but not the confusion of my spirit. I had something to lay hold upon. I could say, thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.
- And, not strangely, for nothing is strange when it's ordered by God, it may seem strange to our minds, when I was able again to go as a listener to our chapel.
- The first three ministers that I listened to all brought that text in. They didn't preach from it, but it came in the course of their discourse, and it seemed to me such a confirmation.
- And, as I came to this text, I thought, Peter, you know a little of this. yes, you're able to look at it just a little differently.
- I have that hope, I've had these visitations before, but not in quite the same setting. I have not been in the place of Job. Oh, we think of the patience of Job, and when we read the beginning of the book, we see by whom his trials came, by the very evil one, and in a lesser degree, we know something of it, but we don't know this, that the Lord knew that Job was in his hand, and that Job would be preserved.
- [11 : 19] It was that which could not fail. I need to just go on a little longer before I begin to look more particularly at the text. It's hard to think of Job's time.
- Before the law, before the gospel, yes, as far as we can tell before any written word, yes, there may have been written words, but we had no record of them.
- Job does not speak of what he read, does he? And yet, it was the teaching of the Spirit, the visitation. And oh, my friends, this is something we have to leave.
- we cannot begin to, as it were, speculate, postulate as to how these things came to pass. But we do know that they did.
- For this word is the testimony, isn't it? Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. Those times of visitation.
- [12 : 30] Strangely, I looked up the word visitation. It's used four times in the Bible in this sense. And three of them, I think, are in the New Testament.
- All the other visitations in the Old Testament, and I think there's ten or eleven of them, are all negative. God's visitations upon his people in chastisement.
- But God was not chastising Job. No, he was permitting it, but it was the visitations, the positive visitations, that Job is speaking of.
- The minister came into our pulpit last week, and he asked us a question, and he said, when did you last have a word from God?
- And I had to think about it. A moment or two before, I might have said, yes, and that night I was so ill, but I thought I've had them since.
- [13 : 41] And in the few times I have tried to preach, I have had them. And I just think of this word as a word of such encouragement, that if every one of us is just able to say this part of the text in honesty, before God, thy visitations have preserved my spirit.
- And if in the mercy of God we are brought into that blessed place where we look upon the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, our testimony will be to this end, our praise will be this, God.
- Yes, we shall look upon the source of all good. Now I must try to look rather briefly upon the text more orderly fashioned.
- First, we have to see sovereignty. Sovereignty of God. You ask man in the street, and it won't mean a thing to him, as he means so to us.
- Do we acknowledge a sovereign God? Are we able to look upon a God whose sovereignty we not only acknowledge, but we rejoice in?

[15 : 07] There are many ways of looking at it, I'll just be very brief, if we haven't thought of the sovereignty of God's choice, and then we hear the Lord Jesus saying, ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and then we think again of the hymn writer when he said, had not thy choice preceded mine, I ne'er had chosen thee, we should think of that sovereignty in a rather different way, we should rejoice in it, but we have to look at that sovereignty just a little, I don't just want to grope for the word that I want, I'll just say practically in the things which we look upon here, thou hast granted me, oh do we look upon this that every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, and then that blessed thought again, who changeth not, in whom is no variableness, nor the shadow of turning, thou hast granted me, and if once we are able to look upon a gift of God, that is a spiritual gift, every one of you can look upon temporal gifts, you've got natural life, haven't you, we can look at it in a moment, and you have natural health to some degree, and you could perhaps look upon the times of natural blessing, yes, but don't despise the good gifts of God, those which come into our temporal life, but even at times when the prayers seem to be answered in the things of time, oh, look upon them with thankfulness, and continue to pray, but raise your sights, pray for the things which are eternal, pray for Christ, yes, you'll find a prayer hearing, a prayer answering God, but then, thou hast granted me, I think the first thought that struck me on this came back to my text given when the

Lord said, when David said of the Lord, he hath made with me, there was sovereignty there, there's no claim upon it, you have no claim, I have no claim, it is only of mercy, it is only of grace, it is only of sovereignty, the sovereignty of God's choice, the sovereignty of God's love, the everlasting love, the sovereignty of grace, oh, my friends, what a blessed thought it is, if, experimentally, we can join with Job, and we can say, thou has granted me, we are looking to what has been granted in a moment, there needs to be something, yes, we rather insist upon it as a denomination, rightly, known and felt, something experienced, we have that rather strange word which we use, experimental religion, religion,

I believe that Dr. Philpott, Mr. Philpott's son used to say it should be experiential religion, but, well, I think we understand what is meant by the ordinary term, and as we think upon it, something known, experienced, tasted, handled and felt, the apostle would have said, have you tasted, handled and felt, of the good things of God, the good gifts, the perfect gifts, can you say, it's a blessed expression to be able to use, thou has granted me, and then, how did Job put it, thou has granted me life, now, I think we could interpret this very literally, and shall we say temporarily, to do with natural things, to do with temporal life, yes, he was born, and life was given, and in the same sense, as that life was given to

Adam when he was made, it was God breathed, in the sense that God breathed into him, life, but then it says man became a living soul, and as we see the illustration in Adam, so we see the second illustration here, Job could say, thou has granted me life, I can prove it, I'm here, I'm alive, I fear, I hunger, I thirst, I have pain, yes, sometimes I have sickness, and he shows me I'm alive, because I notice the difference, if I was dead, temporarily, I wouldn't notice that there was anything wrong, or anything right, think about it spiritually, oh my friends, I'll be able to take this to a deeper meaning, thou hast granted me life, remember the

[20 : 47] Lord Jesus speaking, to Nicodemus, he must be born again, and how often he showed that the words of his mouth, their spirit, and their life, more than once it's reiterated in several expressions of the dear Lord, and we know anything of this inner life, yes, I don't know what to call it, I can't say second stage life, or anything like that, but it is, it is different, you see, you could be alive, in your body, but not alive in your soul, but here, I think we've got to look deeper, we know that Job was alive in his body, and for the moment his body, his life, was causing him considerable pain, he had sore boils, and he was physically miserable, but, yes, in the midst of this misery, of his body, he was still able to lift up his heart, and to say, unto God, thou has granted me life, there's more than this, yes, my poor temporal body is suffering, and already

I have wished that its sufferings would come to an end, that is, that death would be given, but no, it was not in the purposes of God, there was life to be given, restoration of health, in the first sense, but, it was to be more than this, it was to be the greater realization of the life within, but what is the realization of the life within, have you followed how it was worked out for Job, when did Job express this life within, yes, as I said ten times we find in this book, as Job is speaking, he says things to show to us, that he is alive within, but right at the end, behold, I am vile, and friends, what it is, when the spirit brings life into the soul, just as nature, if I can put it life into the body, and because we have life in the body, we are aware of our sicknesses, our illnesses, our diseases, when life is brought into the soul, we are aware of the sicknesses, one great sickness, the leprosy of sin in the soul, and yes,

Job, having tried to live righteously, like the soul of Tarsus, before he was the apostle Paul, all his life, yet, he had to say all his righteousness was as filthy rags, when he was brought into that realization of the state that was within him, but then, my friends, when we look at it, what do we know of it?

not all of us were brought in the same way into the realization of this sinfulness of our natures, our hearts, and the, well, yes, know that our souls are not fit to stand before God, in the same way, but all, in some degree or another, will be made aware of what they are in the sight of God, sinners, and when that awareness is given, what a blessed experience it is, we may not think so, we didn't think so when I was brought so low spiritually and to some measure physically, that it seemed there was no hope, and then the Lord appeared, and there was hope, and then I was thankful that I had been brought into such concern, but until then, I cannot admit there was any thankfulness about it, there was concern, yes, burden, but looking back, there is thankfulness, thankful that the Lord did not leave me ignorant of what I was, he showed it,

I always say, and we have to be simple, there are two things the Holy Spirit reveals, the first is the need of Christ, and the second is Christ to fulfill the need, and my friends, he works in this way, yes, different degrees, different methods, his prerogative, his own, we do not put any passion on how he will reveal, but he will make known, and the revelation of first the need, and then the remedy, brought by the Spirit of God, will bring to us the awareness of life, and we can say, thou has granted me life, oh my friends, what a blessing it is, and then he says favour, cannot re-translate the word of God, but I thought of

[26 : 25] Job, I haven't checked the book to see, and I think it was Job's expression of grace, because, do you know, we use the expression sometimes in our national fears, grace and favour, don't we, putting it as two things, but they put as two things together, and there is a favour shown by grace, and surely we have to look upon all that God has done within, and without, in this understanding, and assurance, it is all of grace, the grace of God in Christ, yes, quoted so many times in my childhood, that I shall never forget it, and I hope I never forget the reality of it, every grace and every favour comes to us, through Jesus' blood, grace and favour, thou hast granted me life and favour, just stop to think a little of the grace, sparing mercy, any one of us to say we have not saved, we have not deserved the wrath of God, and the wrath of

God has been withheld, we're not from our, not saying in one sense, we have that hope, but it wasn't withheld, it was spent upon the Lord Jesus, but it has not been applied to us, and if it has not been applied to us, it is grace, it is favour, it is mercy, it all comes from the love of God, it comes from Jesus' blood, to create life and favour, and I do not think I need to start, as it were, trying to itemise the many aspects of the favour of God, that has come into your lives and into mine, we have wonderful, I don't ever wonder at the grace of God in opening his heart to a fallen race of mankind, yes, I wonder about the conversations, those gracious conversations that were in

Eden, before that the serpent came in, but afterward, immediately, there was grace, the grace of hope was given by the word of God, my friends, have you found that grace, the grace of hope by the word of God, then of course, as you look upon this word, you see a very great measure of the favour, the mercy of God towards you, and then, it does not matter in what aspect of our lives that we look, we shall find that there is a realisation of the grace and favour of God.

Think of it, when you wake up tomorrow, and you see the sun rising or risen, and you look and remember, already quoted to you, great is thy faithfulness, God demonstrating his faithfulness in creation as a token of his faithfulness in grace, his faithfulness in Christ, yes, the things that he has begun, they will carry on, and be brought to a glorious conclusion, and the glorious conclusion will be to his glory, and to the good of his.

We read in that part of that rather wonderful chapter in Romans, all things work together for good to them that love God.

[30 : 30] And if this grace is given, and we need it, we are able to see again and again the grace, the favour, the mercy of God to us, we'll almost continue.

The time is going and the strength, but there is more to say yet. We must come into this second part of the text. Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Yes, as I said, we cannot look and think. Yes, we believe to be contemporary with Abraham and we can look by the record of God at those times of God's visitations to Abraham.

I think we find nine times in Abraham's life there were special visitations and we can look at them in a very real sense because they are recorded and he heard his voice, yes, and spake to him.

There is the evidence of it. We have no narrative in so far as Job is concerned until we come to the end of it and this was after that Job had said this.

[31 : 50] So it wasn't the visitation he was speaking of. There must have been those before which caused him to say this. How? Well, it's not shown and as I said before we mustn't speculate.

but the visitation of God's spirit is experienced in these times and surely it could be equally experienced in those times and there must have been something that came into Job's heart and mind.

You see, he was a very gracious man in some senses and careful he was over his family and yes, how instructed he was regarding sacrifices and that's something to think about, isn't it?

We have no illustration before the law as to how the sacrifices were taught to God's people. It must have been God. How did Abel know what was right for him to sacrifice and the sacrifice was pleasing unto God?

Likewise, Job we find offers sacrifices, sin offerings for his children. And we see, there was that working within Job.

[33 : 15] It wasn't formal, it wasn't ritualistic, it was real, it was taught of God. And by what means it was pleasing to him, God had taught him.

Those visitations were all in Job's heart and his very spirit and he felt them to be the source of the life of his soul.

Thy visitations have preserved my spirit. Before we go any further, are we able to bring such a testimony of praise and of thanksgiving to our God?

To be able to say to him, thy visitations have preserved my spirit. Oh, sometimes it seems to us we go on through this journey of life and we go on in hope and we seem to go on sometimes with very little experience.

Yes, we have instruction, we read the word of God, but then just from time to time there comes to us a time of visitation.

[34 : 28] Almost inevitably not entirely inevitably but almost inevitably in the times in which we live when the word of God is given God speaks in and by his word.

But we know the difference when we read it as something which we read and when God brings it to us. Yes, we might even be reading it.

When God brings it, it becomes a visitation of the word of God. And then that takes us a little further. A visitation of God's word.

You go back sometimes to, well, two things. First, the scriptural one. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Yes, who brings the word to your heart to mine?

The Holy Spirit. Who sent the Holy Spirit, both the Father and the Son? and we find what is the work of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Jesus and to show them unto us.

[35 : 35] And when that blessing occurs, we come into this verse, thy visitation, revelation, making known, opening our hearts, opening our eyes, making us to fear.

oh, my friends, what a blessing it is. A time of blessing, thy visitation. I had to think of this very differently. I cannot say, because the word doesn't tell me, of Job, as could be said, of Abraham, and the Lord himself said it, your father Abraham saw my day.

He saw it and was glad. Now, there's just a glimpse of this in Job, but I dare not interpret it as being in the person of Christ.

Now, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. I think it was resurrection, wasn't it? And yet, when we think of a visitation, yes, Job, by the testimony of God, was one that feareth God and disheweth evil.

He had the spirit of God in his soul, the life of God in his soul. And therefore, it can only be because he had been chosen in eternity in Christ, Christ not yet born, the anointed one, the Son of God having undertaken to redeem all those given to him by the Father.

[37 : 14] God. And we, in the time in which we live, able to look upon the gospel and to find in the gospel, to visit Emmanuel, God with us.

Oh, my friends, just try in your own hearts to reason this out. How much more reason if we are brought into that faith in Christ?

That God given faith, that spirit taught faith, have we to say, as we look upon the gospel, thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

For salvation, Christ Jesus made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Oh, do you look at it like this?

Are you able to see the blessedness of such a world, as I said, brought experimentally into your soul, into mine?

[38 : 20] Oh, sometimes I look upon these things, and I am able by the mercy of God to find a little joy in them. And sometimes when my heart seems to be so hard, and sometimes, well, we wonder, we have to say, can ever God dwell here?

And then, yes, there is the longing. And when there is the longing, it comes into our first hymn. There is a lifting up of the heart to God.

There is a lifting up of the spirit. There is a silent prayer, uttered or unexpressed prayer. And when we think in those thoughts toward God, what has happened?

Thy visitation. Yes, Paul had it. Those of you that listen to me more often, you know how I love the eighth chapter that we read, but it's so much better because it follows the seventh.

I know that's the logical order, but you read the last part of the seventh. Paul looking into his own heart. This was Paul. This was not sort of Tarsus, recently brought into the realization of what he was in the sight of God.

[39 : 41] This was Paul, long, an apostle, long used of God, and then brought to see the depravity of his own heart. And, yes, read the words yourself until he come to that place.

I thank God. There is deliverance through Jesus Christ, my Lord, thy visitation. The Holy Spirit directs our hearts, makes us to look unto Jesus.

This is visitation, and we think of his coming. And those of us that gather around the Lord's table, and we think of his suffering, of his death, yes, and then we think of his ascension, his glorification, and yet the work of grace continuing, interceding.

Oh, my friends, how we need that intercession. And when, by the grace of God, we feel, even as we try to pray, that we can plead the name of Jesus, it is this, thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Now, I should have to stop, but if you can just take this text home with you, thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

[41 : 09] Oh, my friends, what a blessing is given to us, what a blessing is given to you. If, by the mercy of God, we can feel to be spiritual relatives of this dear man, Job, O, may this grace be yours, may it be mine, to the glory of God.

Amen. Amen. Let us close by singing hymn number 634, and the two is Indulgence 547.

hymn number 634, when saints together meet, God's goodness to declare, the season will be sweet, if Jesus be but there, of Christ they speak, of Christ they boast, while Jesus lives, they can't be lost.

What, though their house with God, be not as they could wish, and oft a father's rod fills them with deep distress, yet in the Lord they firm abide, united to him, as his bride.

Hymn number 634. 634. How can you cry whet us we I will be straight if Jesus be at heaven.

[43 : 33] O Christ, praise me, O Christ, Savior, but Jesus lives may not be lost.

O Christ, praise me, O Christ, Savior, but Jesus lives may not be lost.

O Christ, praise me, O Christ, Savior, but Jesus lives may not be lost.

O Christ, praise me, O Christ, Savior, but Jesus lives may not be lost.