

# Seeking and finding the Lord (Quality: Very good)

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- [ 0 : 00 ] A word that is upon my mind to speak from this evening, as the Lord may help me, will find in the chapter that we read, that is the 23rd chapter in the book of Job.
- I will speak particularly upon the third and fourth verses, verses 3 and 4 in the 23rd chapter of the book of Job.
- Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat.
- I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I presume that we all are fairly well acquainted with the good man Job.
- A man who is outstanding in the scriptural record for the trial of faith.
- [ 1 : 14 ] And God was very gracious to him. But there are things about his temporal position and condition initially recorded in this book of Job, which make us realize that he was a man of great integrity.
- He was a man highly respected. He was a man who had standards in his dealings with men that were honorable, commending him to those round about him.
- And how good was God to him in thus raising up for him these particular characteristics.
- I'm going to read from the first chapter just a few lines to indicate the situation as it was.
- And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.
- [ 2 : 41 ] His substance also was seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred shiattas, and a very great household.
- So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. Now that gives us a word picture of Job in his prosperous temporal situation.
- But together with that situation was this feature, one that feared God and eschewed evil.
- He was a man of very high principle. He was a man who was, as I've already said, greatly respected for his character.
- But nevertheless, it is obvious that he was not just well known for his prosperity, he was well known by the power of evil, Satan.
- [ 4 : 06 ] And the Lord asked him the question, Hast thou considered my servant Job? And we find there a very clear indication that Satan pays special regard to those who fear God to those who fear God, those that seek, as it were, to live honorably among men in the fear of God.
- But that doesn't mean that the Lord preserves them, maintains them free from all temptation.
- temptation. And we go on in the book of Job and realize how the Lord permitted Satan to try Job.
- And how Job was the subject of calamities in quick succession that seemed to bring him into a very low position and condition.

I was thinking in my reading of the scriptures of this record in the first chapter. There came a messenger unto Job and said, The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them and the Sabaeans fell upon them and took them away.

[ 5 : 38 ] Yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then the next verse, While he was yet speaking, there came also another.

And the next verse, verse 17 in the first chapter, And while he was yet speaking, there came also another that said, The Chaldeans have come.

And then in the verse 18, While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young men and they are dead and I only am escaped to tell thee.

My friends, it's not just the calamities that came upon the situation of Job.

It's the swift rapidity which one followed the other. Calamity after calamity in quick succession fell upon Job and this man who obviously was in a sumptuous situation initially is brought down to realize the heaviness of trial, the bitterness of loss in so many and various ways.

[ 7 : 25 ] Well now, yes, Job had a ministry brought to him by his three friends and they failed to understand his situation.

They failed to interpret the manner of life that was developing in his experience and they blamed Job for the difficulty that he was in as if it was his own failure in the fear of God that had brought these adversities upon him.

Well now, Job was greatly tempted, greatly tried and Job was brought down to the deep experiences and exercises of godliness and it's upon that theme that I wish to speak.

Then Job answered and said, even today is my complaint bitter and my stroke is heavier than my groaning. What a verse that is, isn't it?

My complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning. But one of the things that obviously was of great trial to Job was the verse of the text, Oh that I might, Oh that I knew where I might find him, I might come even to his seat.

[ 9 : 23 ] He couldn't find his God. He couldn't find his God. And my friends, we may measure our spiritual health by this, what does the presence of God mean to us?

Can we be as it were in a healthy and right spirit while the Lord hides himself from us?

And only as we are brought to appreciate the separation as it were, or the distance between the Lord and our souls are we echoing the language of Job in the text, oh, that I knew where I might find him.

The presence of the Lord with his people and the I was going to say complaint that essentially arises as a bitterness in the experiences of the Lord's people when they can't find him, they seek after him, they call loudly as it were in spirit for the Lord to appear and to help them and deliver them but there seems to be no contact, there seems to be no constructive reply.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Now, I want to speak initially on a negative note. If we really seek the presence of the Lord, if we have that aching void within us, that cannot be satisfied without a consciousness of the Lord being mindful of us, being present with us, regarding our needs, hearing our prayers, and sending a timely help to us.

[ 11 : 58 ] My friends, oh, that I knew where I might find him. there are places and conditions where a negative answer seems to be the answer to Job's plight in this particular.

Only he could find the Lord. If only he might be conscious of the presence of the Lord to be with him, and that the hand of the Lord was working out in his experience what we know ultimately was the case, because the Lord brought Job through the trial, and he brought him out, that the latter end of Job's experience was better than the beginning thereof.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him. There are places where we never can expect to find the Lord.

There are spirits within our hearts that, as it were, create a barrier, that create a sense of the Lord's hiding his face from us.

You know, when we are in trouble, and the spirit of rebellion and bitterness takes hold of our hearts, and we begin to argue, as it were, within us, why has the Lord allowed this to come?

[ 14 : 03 ] Why has the Lord brought this particular trial upon me at such a time? And we begin, as it were, to militate against the dispensations of God with us, that it brings as such a distance between our souls and God.

The rebellious dwell in a dry land. And although rebellion is common to fallen nature, the spirit of rebellion never advances our souls in relationship with our God.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Now, while the spirit of rebellion is maintained in our hearts, we find no relief from the particular trouble or anxiety that is our experience.

love love to love to love to love to love to love to reply against God and brings us into a spirit of humility to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

For now, even today is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew, oh, that I knew where I might find him.

[ 15 : 56 ] That oh is a very timely expression of the depth of feeling that was in the heart of Job toward his God at this present juncture.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Now, the tempter may suggest that if we changed our manner of life and if we, as it were, didn't dwell upon the difficulties and trials that are our experience and as it were, as the world would use the expression, we stepped out of it, then we should find a goodly measure of relief.

My friends, by turning your back upon the Lord and going as it were in that way that's dimetrically opposite to the teaching and sanctifying experiences in our souls is not a way to find the very presence of the Lord restored unto us as is necessary to our spiritual comfort and our spiritual peace.

Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Yes, the spirit of the world.

Sometimes you might be tempted that your religion and its influences is not to your advantage and perhaps you're tempted that the sanctifying influence of godliness in your heart is robbing you of that which would be such a relief to the tensions of your spirit and what you want to do is loosen the reins of it you want to as it were go out and join with some of those activities that are present and on offer in the world it is to your advantage to change your manner of life in a certain degree that is not congenial with the real exercise of godliness in your heart my friends oh that

[ 18 : 57 ] I knew where I might find him you'll never find the lord by going in the opposite direction to the expressed will of god the world has no answer to the concerns and exercises of the souls of the people of god oh that I knew where I might find him I would say in affection especially to the young people worldly companions don't bring any relief and comfort to spiritually exercised people if you've got if you're under some burden and exercise before the lord if the language of the text is your language oh that

I knew where I might find him you neither feel maybe you neither feel at home in the world because of your spirit and you wouldn't feel you don't feel altogether at home in the church of god because you feel so different to the people of god you seem you seem to be a misfit in both areas my friend be conscious of this that the way to spiritual prosperity is to seek after the lord and to as it were not altogether turn your back upon the world and its friendships but not to go further and further with the world as a solution to your need and relief at such a time oh that

I knew where I might find him now the lord in that negative sense is not to be found in a wrong spirit is not to be found in wrong company is not to be found in loosing one's convictions with regard to the ways of the lord and as it were watering down your manner of life in hope of gaining some relief you cannot serve god and mammon oh that I knew where I might find him what a wonderful thing it is that the lord is found by his people that there is so much in the scripture to encourage the people of god to seek the lord and seeking is an essential fruit of the spirit the lord awakens us to the advantage of spiritual things then our hearts are disposed to pursue those ways wherein god promises to be with his people to bless his people to lead and teach his people that they might know more of him in all those things wherein he undertakes to be the god and guide of his chosen oh that

I knew where I might find him well now where do we find the lord where do we find the lord well there are certain places wherein the lord particularly manifests himself to his people one of the leading answers to the question oh that I knew where I might find him is the throne of grace the throne of grace I remember traveling with a man once and he said to me he said you know I'm in such darkness of mind that he said I just can't pray he said and I'm tempted to give it up all together I said oh don't do that I said look if you can't pray soft hearted prayers you try what hard hearted prayers can do you know the lord can look upon us in mercy and soften our hearts as we as we attempt to pray call upon me in the day of trouble

I will hear thee and thou shall glorify me cast thy burden upon the lord and he shall sustain thee there are so many inclinations set forth in the word of god that prayer is a profitable exercise to be found in and the lord hears the groaning of the prisoner you say well if I could only pray in a different spirit from what I feel to be plaguing me as I try to pray then there would be more hope for an answer to prayer my friend as you are where you are in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto god oh that I knew where I might find him

[ 25 : 47 ] Job there's a throne of grace there's a throne of grace and there is a mediator at the right hand of God who waits to be gracious who regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer don't listen to the temptations of Satan don't regard the intonations of your heart that there's no use for you trying to pray because God is not favourable to you as he is favourable to his people well my friends the Lord is a prayer hearing and prayer answering God all that I knew where

I might find him the throne remember is a throne of grace grace doesn't speak to us of creature merit grace doesn't speak to us of going to the Lord with some good thing to recommend ourselves grace speaks to us a sinner coming to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who is able to do more than we can ask or even think oh that I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his seat what a wonderful thing it is to know the turning of captivity in the answer to prayer oh that

I knew where I might find him the Lord is to be found in the scriptures of truth what a wonderful testimony is in the word of God you say but I read and I read and I read and I still seem to be hard hearted unmoved cold far off I read and hear of people who reading their Bible their hearts are softened their tears are moved and they weep to the goodness and grace of the Lord as revealed in his word I believe Jeremiah had an experience thy words were found and I did eat them thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart now my friends search the scriptures the

Lord reveals himself and he reveals himself to the different situations in which his people have been found that it is not hard to find a companion in the scripture with a similar burden to that burden that presents itself before you and seeks to discourage you in spiritual things search the scriptures when I owe that I knew where I might find him isn't it wonderful when the Lord comes through the power of his spirit and opens our hearts and minds to the truth of himself as revealed in the word and encourages us to go on looking to him for those things that we stand in need of oh that

I knew where I might find him now another thing I want just to touch upon is this the ministry of the gospel in the third chapter of the song of Solomon we read this by night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth I sought him but I found him not I will rise now and go about the city in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth I sought him but I found him not whom I said saw ye him whom my soul loveth it was but a little that I passed from them but I found him whom my soul loveth

[ 31 : 25 ] I held him I would not let him go until I had brought him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me the watchman that go about the city found me you know the watchman are set before us as the ministers of the gospel and sometimes the ministry is so directed of the Holy Spirit as to address your case address your circumstances spiritual or temporal there is a certain connection between what the Lord leads his servants to speak about and the situation prevailing in the personal experience or experiences of one or more in the congregation and obviously the church here is disappointed

I sought him but I found him not and you may have been the subject of multiplied disappointments but then the watchman that go about the city found me and my friends there comes a time when as it were the Lord using the ministry of the gospel directs things to our case and to our need and you may sit in the pew and feel that man knows all about me he knows the thing that's troubling me he knows the darkness that I'm in he knows the afflictions that give rise to all sorts of contrary thoughts and exercises in my heart and I feel rather than being a man of prayer that I'm a person full of rebellion fighting against God with all my heart well my friends the husbandmen have to be first partaker of the fruits and you know the ministers are led into situations that perhaps you can hardly appreciate ministers being brought into but they're brought into those situations that they may be of comfort and help and encouragement to those who are to receive instruction and through the preaching of the gospel that's a lovely verse the first four in the third of the song the watchmen that go about the city found me to whom I said saw ye whom him whom my soul loveth it was but a little that I passed from them but I found him whom my soul loveth it was a little that I passed from them it may not have been while as it were you were personally sitting under but things were said that affected your mind and spirit and sent you in hope that the

Lord was about to appear and you weren't disappointed because she says I found him whom my soul loveth I held him and would not let him go you see she had a full reward as it were in her spirit to the waiting prayerfully and practically upon the ministry of the truth oh that I knew where I might find him you may well find him in the means of grace it may not be necessarily through the preaching from the pulpit it may be the language of a hymn that you've sung many many times and never had any influence in your heart but now the very language of the hymn is the language of your soul and you feel uplifted you feel raised to a hope that the

Lord will come and the Lord will turn your captivity and restore the joy of spiritual experiences to you once more oh that I knew where I might find him not by going out into the broad road but holding to the narrow road that leads unto life following on in the footsteps of the flock maintaining and I want to speak just one more thing in regard to this oh that I knew where I might find him he's found sometimes in the fellowship of the people of God you know there's a ministry of communion under the spirit's guidance among the people of

God and we we find the Lord sometimes in the communication of relative experiences you may sometimes come into the company of someone and you've got no thought about it being a refreshing experience in your soul but as the Lord guides the conversation as the Lord overrules as it were the relation of certain things in your experience there's a flowing together there's as in water face answer to face so the heart of man to man and you're encouraged and you're comforted by those things that are presented to you through the instrumentality of a fellow believer oh that I knew where I might find him my friends seek the

[ 38 : 29 ] Lord where he is to be found where he is to be found and let the sanctifying teaching of the Holy Spirit and the word of God keep you from seeking to solve your problems in alternative ways because the Lord by his grace sanctifies and uses means whereby he relieves the tension of spiritual concern and the tension of contrary experiences in the lives of his dear people oh that I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his seat wonderful thing how the

Lord is seated at the right hand of this father in heaven our glorious intercession father he that knows not just what we say to him but he knows altogether the situation every aspect of it he knows the future development of it as well as the past the influences from the past he knows the way that I take says Joe fully absolutely and none can really inform him of any aspect of a situation of which he is not conversant himself that

I might come even to his seat and what is his seat well it's merciful isn't it it's gracious he waits to be gracious he delights in mercy he doesn't afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men my friends he is there performing those sovereign purposes of love and grace in the experiences of his people that will promote his own glory and be to their advantage to a never ending eternity the lord's ways with his people are not destructive of anything that is of value oh that

I knew where I might find him that I might come even to his seat I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments it's a wonderful thing when the lord so enables his people to present the details of their case those things that are worrying them perplexing them mystifying them if you like yes tell him all your heart oh that I knew oh that I knew Job obviously felt most deeply this situation of darkness that was beclouding him at this particular point of his experience and he had other things to pass through we know in the unfolding of God's will for him but to hasten to the amen this evening what about the end of the matter well of this we're conscious that the trials through which

Job was led by the sovereign will of God in no way interfered with the ultimate purpose of God in his love toward Job that Job is in heaven that anything and everything that Job possessed in this world world and in mysterious ways was taken from him and yet ultimately restoration was brought to pass in his experience so his latter end was better than the beginning nothing interfered with the fact that the Lord from eternity had loved Job with an everlasting love he permitted Satan to try him he gave

[ 44 : 24 ] Job many bitternesses to partake of but ultimately Job was crowned as it were with glory and that forever as the Lord took him beyond all the trials that had troubled him gave him a sorrow free experience in his presence forever in glory I've said many times I repeat it this evening there's no quarrel in any heart that's finally taken to heaven with regard to the way to the place Job he was sad and sorrowful he was misrepresented he was keenly tempted he went through seas of trouble but nevertheless

I believe Job is absolutely reconciled to perfection with the experience through which God led him to the great end of his soul's eternal safety he led him forth by the right way that he might go to a city of habitation and every one that possesses a place in that glorious habitation will never have a complaint with respect to the sovereign will of God in bringing them through this world and subjecting them to whatever he saw fit to bring upon them ultimately to deliver them and cleanse them and equip them and seek them in glory forever weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning my friends apply that principle to our present situation and look forward to the joy of paradise

Christ and we shall find any inclination to criticize and complain in respect of God's dealings with us will fall immediately from our hands oh that I knew where I might find him the dawn will follow the darkness the Lord in his own time and in his own way will lift up the light of his countenance upon his people there are days of darkness but remember days are controlled periods of time but in the issue light follows darkness joy follows sorrow in the purposes of our good and gracious

God Job proved it the people of God will ever prove it what a mercy to be one of that number numbered with them would I be now and to eternity Amen