

**Job 6: 11-30; “The Kindness of a Friend”, Sermon # 13 in the series entitled –
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul
Rendall on October 4th, 2020, in the Afternoon Worship.**

In this section we find Job complaining of the way that his friends and brothers in the Lord are treating him, as though he had in some way sinned to bring upon himself this horrific trial. They thought that perhaps he had been a secret hypocrite in the way that he lived his life. This he denied throughout this passage, as we shall see, and he gives his friends many good reasons why they should pity him and show him kindness during this great trial of his. This is what we want to think about at this hour before we partake of the Lord’s Supper; Christ our Friend, in times of trial and affliction. I would like to set forth for you the ways in which our Lord Jesus Christ comforts and encourages those who believe in Him, during our greatest moments of trial and affliction.

This is one of the reasons that our Lord has suffered and died for us; so that He might apply the benefits of His great redemption to us, in such a way that our souls are strengthened and they are upheld during such times. The Lord Jesus is the best of Friends to all of His dear people. 1st of all – Christ our Friend has died for us so that we might have help within us. (verses 11-13) 2nd – Christ our Friend has died for us so that we might never ultimately forsake the fear of the Almighty. And 3rd – Christ our Friend has died for us so that by His sufferings our righteousness shall be established. May the Lord open our eyes and establish these good truths to our hearts we as partake of the Supper.

1st of all – Christ our Friend has died for us so that we might have help within us.

Verse 11 says – “What strength do I have that I should hope?” “And what is my end, that I should prolong my life?” “Is my strength the strength of stones?” “Or is my flesh bronze?” “Is my help not within me?” “And is success driven from me?” The strength that Job is speaking of here in verse 11 is both his bodily strength and his spiritual strength. In his bodily strength he was very weak, in that Satan had struck him with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Emotionally, that he was grieving the loss of his children, and the consolation which his wife and friends should have been bringing him was not there; and spiritually, his hope for the future usefulness of his life had died within him, due to these losses. Verse 13 is translated in the NASB as – “Is it that my help is not within me, and that deliverance is driven from me? The ESV says – “Have I any help in me when resource is driven from me?”

These last two translations seem to be indicating that Job could not find the strength in himself to deal with the awfulness of his predicament; that things were so bad with him that he felt that there was nothing in him to be able to face it any longer. It would indeed be better for him if he died. But I rather tend to believe, after reading Joseph Caryl’s explanation of this verse that what Job is saying here is this: Is my help not within me; meaning that he had a clear conscience in regard to this whole matter, and that even though he now felt that there was no hope for the future of his physical life, he still knew that he was a man of integrity, even if he could not convince anyone else. Let us all take this to heart, that God gave each of us a conscience, not only so that we might feel the guilt of any sins which we may have committed, but God also gave us a conscience, so that we might feel within us, it’s commendation when we have done what was right in the past. A commendation from our conscience is a part of why God gave us a conscience in the first place.

You will remember that the apostle Paul said in Acts 23: 1 – “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” Now that was a very radical statement for a man who was standing before the entire council of the Jews, and the high priest Ananias who was presiding over it. For many serious charges of wrong-doing were being brought against Paul at that time. They were false charges, but they deserved to be answered. Ananias then commanded those standing next to Paul to strike him on the mouth for that statement of saying that he had lived before God in all good conscience until that day That was a wrong thing for Ananias to have done,

and Paul knew it, and so he blurted out – “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!” “For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?” “And those who stood by said, ‘Do you revile God’s high priest?’” So look at how tender a conscience Paul had in this regard, that even though he had been wrongly mistreated, he said, ‘I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, ‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’”

What gave Paul a righteous confidence in that difficult situation where he was being made to look like someone who was doing something wrong? It was that his conscience was bearing witness to him that all that he had done in the past had been right, and that all that he was doing at that time, was right. He had a hope in God, even as Job did in his most difficult of situations. He says in Acts 24, verse 13, when he was speaking before the Governor Felix about these same charges – “Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me.” “But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.” “I have hope in God, which they themselves as accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” “This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”

How important it is then, for you and I to have a clear conscience before God, and also so that we might know how we might answer men who bring false charges against us. This was practically what Job’s three friends had been doing with him. And so he would point out to them that he had one who defended him. It was his own conscience. Even so, my friends, you have a help and a witness which God has put within you, that when people misunderstand you or fail you, or when wicked people accuse you of things which you know are not true concerning yourself, if you have walked in the light of God’s truth, if you have kept His commandments, and have a clear conscience, you will have the inner strength of heart and mind to be able to give an answer for the hope that is in you; yet with gentleness and reverence.

I hope, however, that you will see from the way that Job’s friends were treating him, that you will see the importance of your being a friend to brethren who are going through trials and afflictions. Remember what the apostle Paul said to the church of Corinth in 2nd Corinthians chapter 1, verses 8-14. He said – “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.” “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.” “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.” “For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand.” “Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

You can see how great a thing it was that Paul and Timothy had thoughtful, praying brethren at Corinth, who saw them as dear friends. When they were burdened beyond measure, and that above their strength, yet the brethren in the Corinthian church would pray for them and think highly of them. For they saw that Paul and Timothy had conducted themselves in simplicity and godly sincerity toward them. We are not told what the affliction was, that Paul and Timothy were going through, but it was so great that they believed that they would die as a result of it. They had the sentence of death within themselves so that they would not trust in themselves, but in God who raises the dead. So it was with Job in the situation that he was going through. Only he had no praying friends. He only had accusing friends! And so you see how important it was for him to commit himself to God in faith, first of all, even though he did not understand why these things were happening to him.

Let us see, my brethren, that there is a Friend who sticks closer than a brother; the Lord Jesus Christ. He will never fail you nor forsake you. This Friend will never accuse His brethren. He will be an Advocate for them before the Father. 1st John 2: 1 and 2 – “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin.” “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” Ah, how great is Christ’s Friendship and His intercession! Let us praise Him for His help and His watchcare over our souls.

2nd – Christ our Friend has died for us so that we might never ultimately forsake the fear of the Almighty. (verses 14-25)

Job says here in verse 14 – “To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.” The New American Standard says – “For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; so that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty.” The word, “afflicted” in the original Hebrew signifies – Him who is melted. That is, melted down in his spirit, melted down in grief and sorrow because of the affliction. Now, looking at Job’s words here we can see that sometimes when a Christian is going through great trial and affliction, he might be tempted to forsake the fear of the Almighty. But the obligation of a friend is to show kindness to him, even though by his words and actions, he is not walking in the fear of the Lord. Job was saying to Eliphaz – You accuse me of forsaking the fear of the Lord because I have said that because of my afflictions I want the Lord to take my life. But instead of pitying me, in the affliction that I am going through, you accuse me.

And then from verse 15 onward to verse 23, Job describes how his friends had failed to act as friends to him. My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away, which are dark because of the ice, and into which the snow vanishes. When Job really needed the comfort and real spiritual help that they could have ministered to him, it was not going to be given. The evidence of their love for him vanished. When things got hot for Job, their love ceased to flow, and it vanished away.(verse 17) The paths of their way, of becoming his accusers, he says, made it apparent to him that they were of no help to him at all. Their paths of their arguments were going nowhere. They were not effectual to bring needed comfort, and so they would perish. (verse 18) He says that his friends were disappointed because because they came to him confident that they could prove their point against him. But now they were confused, he says in verse 20. For now, Job says, you are nothing of a friend to me (verse 21) because you see things in me which make you afraid and cause you to be terrified.

Let us understand that a true friend loves at all times, and a brother is born to adversity. It says this in Proverbs 17: 17. But that verse is not implying that that a brother is born for adversity, in the sense that he becomes your adversary or your accuser. It implies that he is born to love you during times of your adversity. He will not put a false and sinful construction on what has happened to you in your affliction. In the adversity that you are going through, he will love you at all times. In adversity he is born, that is, he proves himself to be a true and faithful brother and a friend. Couple this with another verse; that which is found in Proverbs chapter 27, verse 6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” What a tremendous verse to describe what happened between Christ and Judas in the garden of Gethsemane. Judas comes to the garden leading a great multitude with swords and clubs; coming from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

In the gospel of Luke it says that he drew near to Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said to him, Judas are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? In Matthew’s gospel it says – But Jesus said to him – Friend, why have you come? Was there ever such great deception and unkindness as this? Or was there ever such great faithfulness and kindness as our Savior’s, when he called Judas His friend? Judas had forsaken the fear of the Almighty. It would have been better for him if he had never born, Jesus said. A true and hearty friend, says John Gill, loves in times of adversity as well as in times of prosperity: there are many that are friends to persons while they are in affluent

circumstances; but when there is a change in their condition, and they are stripped of all riches and substance; then their friends forsake them, and stand at a distance from them; as was the case of Job. It is a very rare thing to find a friend that is a constant lover, such as is described here. (Gill on Proverbs 17: 17)

Well, Job then asks them whether he had ever asked them for anything before this, in verses 22 and 23. That is, to bring something to him, or to help restore him financially or to redeem him from the hand of oppressors? No, he had not. But now he asks them to teach him, in verse 24, and he would hold his tongue. He wanted them to cause him to understand where he had erred, but he knew that they could not do this. And so he sums it all up by saying – How forceful are right words! But their arguing with him, proves nothing. If we would be a friend to brethren who are afflicted, let us see to it that we do not draw rash conclusions about why they are undergoing the affliction that they are in.

Let us remember that the Lord Jesus was a perfect man, and yet He was falsely accused and put to death at the hands of wicked but religious men; men who wanted to win an argument with Him about their own supposed righteousness and His supposed sinfulness. They thought that they won the argument, for they condemned Him for His saying that He was the Son of God and that they needed to be saved by believing in Him. They railed at him on the cross and said – He saved others, let Him save Himself. But they lost everything in trying to win this argument. And so will everyone who thinks that Jesus was a mere man, or that somehow a person can be saved by their own works. Jesus is the Friend of sinners. And He died so that you will never forsake the fear of the Almighty, but the real question is – Will we learn how to show kindness and love to those who are afflicted?

3rd – Christ our Friend has died for us so that by His sufferings our righteousness shall be established. (verses 26-30)

“Do you intend to rebuke my words, and the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind?” “Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless, and you undermine your friend.” “Therefore, be pleased to look at me; for I would never lie to your face.” “Yield now, let there be no injustice!” “Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands!” “Is there injustice on my tongue?” “Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?” I would like us to think about the fact that Job felt “fatherless” in these circumstances that he was in. It was not just that his own physical father could not be there to comfort and encourage him in these circumstances. It was that these men who were addressing him with their unkind speeches, should have acted the part of a father to Job, and comforted him and been his friend. But instead they were undermining him, their friend. Who could be his friend in such circumstances? It was only the Lord Jesus Christ. It was our Lord, who said of Himself in John 15: 13 – “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” Well, Job was one of His friends, and he would not miss out on the application of Christ’s redemption just because he lived so long before Christ would come into the world. Job was one of God’s elect, and as such he was His friend.

How could Job say to his friends that they should concede; that his righteousness still stood, even after all that they had said to him? I believe that it was because He knew that His Redeemer would eventually come into the world to redeem him. He would tell them this in chapter 19, verse 25 – “I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself.” You see He knew at that time that there would be One who would purchase Him back from all of his slavery to sin; back from all the guilt and shame of sin; one who would be able to establish his own righteousness through His redeeming love; the Friend of sinners. He did not understand why this great and glorious God had ordained that he go through this awful trial. But he did know that the root of the matter was in himself; that it was God and His Redeeming love, Christ and His redeeming righteousness which was the basis of all of his spiritual life; all of his hope and all of his trust. And that was enough for Job. May it be enough for us as well.

