

**Job 12: 11 – 13: 3; “With God is Wisdom & Strength”, Sermon # 23 in the series entitled – “Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in the Afternoon Worship.**

Job was a man who believed in the Providence of God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that God’s Providence is His most Holy, Wise, and Powerful, Preserving and Governing of all of His creatures and all of their actions. This is a doctrine which you and I ought to think about often, because God’s providential care over His saints is something which we ought to remember, and glory in it continually. Job was having trouble doing this. All of the statements which Job makes to his three friends here in verses 13-25 have to do with God’s providential ordering and governing of men and nations; especially focusing on sinful men and nations. In verse 13, Job speaks of God as having wisdom and strength. He has counsel and understanding.

It is these descriptions of God that I would like us to focus on at this time. I want to open up these verses in relation to Christ our Savior, and what our Triune God was doing for Job during the time of his perplexity and sufferings. In thinking about what God did for Job during that time, I pray that you will apply these truths to yourself, so that you will be upheld in your spirit when you find yourself at your weakest point either spiritually or physically. This afternoon we want to remember that with God are wisdom and strength, counsel and understanding. And these are found by us in our believing in Christ; they are found by our remembering Christ as we are doing here this afternoon.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – I would like us to remember that with God is Wisdom.**

Verses 14 and 15 say – “If He breaks a thing down, it cannot be rebuilt; if He imprisons a man, there can be no release.” “If He withholds the waters, they dry up; if He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.” Now, this is altogether true in regard to God’s great wisdom in his ordering things in nature. But I want you to see that Job is using this truth in a way which refers to his own life as well. He saw God as breaking his life down so that it could not be rebuilt. He believed that God had imprisoned him in this awful experience of loss, and there was now no release unless God gave it. He saw God as withholding the waters of life from him and he was now dried up. God had brought the waters of judgment upon him, and he was overwhelmed.

And yet, here we find that Job is confessing before his friends that God is wise in ordering all things as He does, even when so many things were going against him personally. But he was also confessing that God’s wisdom in regard to what He had ordered for his own life went far beyond his own understanding; infinitely so. This is true for us as well, even though our sufferings are not, thus far, on the same level that Job’s were. I want to read to you some of the comments from John Calvin’s sermon on this text of Scripture, and then build off of them. He says – “It is noteworthy that here Job intended to repeat with many words that there is a perfection of wisdom in God so that we will not think it needs to be supplemented, as we see that men are so foolish, that if they receive some blessing from God, something must be added to it to make a concoction.”

“No, no!” “It is not a question of patching or mending.” “When God displays His wisdom, it has to be pure and simple.” “Men must add nothing to it.” “But Job still intended to say more, as we have said, that there is a secret wisdom in God which surpasses all human understanding and which we cannot attain.” “It is true that God in Himself is not wise in one respect but is in another, for His wisdom is indivisible and cannot be separated.” “But from our perspective, God is wise in two ways.” “We can say there are two types of Divine Wisdom.” “There is wisdom contained in His word, which He communicates to us so that we are wise when we receive the instruction he gives us.” That is the wisdom of God which He shares with His creatures.” “And then there is that wisdom which He keeps within Himself” “And what is that?” “It is the wondrous counsel above and beyond anything we can conceive, by which He governs the world.”

Let me build off of those statements of what John Calvin has said. When God providentially orders things for our lives as Christians, He always does so in relation to His own word, and His own eternal purposes of what He wants to bring about in our lives. He has a plan specific to you. He has told us in His word that He causes all things to work together for good, for those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose.” “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8: 28, 29) This we know, Paul says in verse 28, that God does this. And yet you and I come into situations where we tend to want to question the truth of this verse.

But wait a minute. Let’s think of the wisdom of God in terms of His Wisdom which is found in our Lord Jesus Christ. All of God’s eternal purposes were conceived in infinite wisdom in relation to Christ. Indeed, they were conceived by the Father in relation to all those whom He would save, in just this way. Our being predestined to salvation was conceived by God in relation to our being conformed to the image of His Son. That was the wisdom of God. That’s what He is working out in our lives as believers.

So, what every saint needs to remember, when they are passing through trials of various sorts, and they cannot understand why, please remember that your going through them is the means that God is using to make you more like Christ Jesus. Receive this truth by faith. And live your life by faith in the Son of God who loved You and gave Himself for you. Let us remember what the apostle Paul said in Colossians 2, verses 1-3 – “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understating, to the knowledge of the mystery of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Paul’s conflict for those at Colosse was that they might be taken in by false teachers; those who were teaching philosophical views of God, and who were trying to convince them that Christ was not God made manifest in the flesh. Let us apply this to ourselves in this way. With God is wisdom. That is, Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, is presently seated at the right hand of God. And He is your Advocate with the Father, dear Christian. In Job’s case, Satan was behind the scenes accusing Job of serving Job only because He was blessing him, and that if everything was taken away from Job, then Job would curse God to His face. God was going to prove Satan wrong.

But what we do not always remember when we are reading the book of Job, is that Job needed a Redeemer to be able to prove Satan wrong. And he had one in our Lord Jesus Christ. Was Job a man of integrity? Yes. And yet he was that man of integrity because He had Advocate with the Father. Was Job sinless? No, at a number of points during this trial, and no doubt, even before he came into it, he needed an Advocate with the Father. Job was blameless, but he was not sinless. But the Apostle John says in 1<sup>st</sup> John 2, verses 1 and 2 – “My little children, these things I write to you, so 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.”

This is the wisdom of God which every believer finds in Christ; that Christ will defend us against our greatest adversaries and accusations against us; whether it is Satan or whether it is men. Listen to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1: 30 – “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption – that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’” That is what we are doing here this afternoon in remembering what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us at the cross. We are glorying in the Lord. We are glorying in the wisdom of His eternal purpose in Christ.

We are glorying in the Father’s great love for the world that He would give His only-begotten Son for sinners such as we were. His blood and righteousness cover us now, most completely,

most perfectly, most acceptably, in God's sight. And dear Christian, when you are troubled in your mind with not understanding why God has ordained that you go through certain trials, if He has put a crook in your lot, as Thomas Boston used to say, will you not remember that Christ has died so that you might come through this trial? And that when you come through it, out on the other side of it, that you will be more like Christ? That is the wisdom of God. God's wisdom is seen and found and known in Christ in just this very way.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – I would like you to remember that with God is Strength.**

“In verses 16-25, Job says this – “With Him are strength and prudence.” “The deceived and the deceiver are His.” “He leads counselors away plundered, and make fools of the judges.” “He loosens the bonds of kings, and binds their waist with a belt.” “He leads princes away plundered, and overthrows the mighty.” “He deprives the trusted ones of speech, and takes away the discernment of the elders.” “He pours contempt on princes, and disarms the mighty.” “He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings the shadow of death to light.” “He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations and guides them.” “He takes away the understanding of the people of the earth, and makes them wander in a pathless wilderness.” “They grope in the dark without light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man.”

Now, how does God do all of these amazing things with sinful men and nations? And how does He do these things with His saints and the nations that they live in? He can do these things because He has the strength to do so, and because He has the prudence to do everything that He does, in perfect righteousness. The word prudence means that God knows exactly the right way to go about accomplishing His purposes. He chooses the right means in every case, to accomplish His purposes. Here in the situation with Job, we see that the deceived were actually Job's friends, and the one who deceived them was Satan. We see that even Job was deceived about God's purposes in ordaining and permitting these things to happen to him.

This truth of the deceived and the deceiver are His does not mean that God deceives anyone Himself. They are “His” only in regard to His decreeing to use them for His purpose to bring a greater righteous purpose on behalf of His elect. God leaves them to their own sinful thoughts, lusts, and desires, so that they will ultimately be brought to see that they have been deceived by the deceiver; either their own heart, or Satan. And He will bring them to either confess their sinfulness and repent of it, or continue on their sinfulness and be overthrown and destroyed by it. God's purpose in permitting and ordaining these things is ultimately to do good to His people through his toleration of the deceiver for a time.

What you and I as believers need to glean from all of these awful things over which God sovereignly superintends, is that our God has the strength and the prudence to restrain evil, bound evil, and even turn the works of evil men to work on behalf of His own purpose to establish His elect people in righteousness and to overrule it for their good. He does this so that they will become more like Christ, and find it ultimately the greatest of blessings that they had to endure these things. Remember the words of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5: 8-11 – “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” “To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever.” “Amen.”

Remember also the words of Isaiah chapter 45: 22-25 – “Look to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth!” “For I am God, and there is no other.” “I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.” “He shall say, ‘Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.’” “To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him.” “In the Lord all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory. Now, as we come to the Lord's Supper once again; to remember the Lord Jesus Christ and all that He has done for

us, let us remember that He would have us to look to Him in faith. It was by looking to Him in faith that we were saved. And we came to know Him personally.

Our God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has sworn by Himself that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess, or take an oath. This is what we remind ourselves of when we come to this Table. We remember that “only in the Lord are righteousness and strength”. We remember that we are justified by Christ’s righteousness and our strength to do and keep His commandments is not from ourselves, but from Christ and His Spirit. Let us come down front now and let us think deeply about all that God has given to us of Himself in giving us Christ.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – I would like you to remember God has Counsel and Understanding.**

In chapter 13 verses 1-3 Job says – “Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it.” “What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.” “But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.” As we come to partake of the Lord’s Supper now, I would like you to remember that God is well able to answer all of your questions as to why you go through the trials and afflictions that He has ordained that you go through. He will fully answer Job personally in the last few chapters of this book as His being wise in ordaining what He did for Job. You should know that you may not always be able to receive the answer to your questions in this life. But God will give you the answer when He believes that it is the right time.

Job wanted to speak to God and he desired to reason with God; and not to argue the point of his own righteousness before his friends. This ought to be our own attitude as well, now that we are here at the Lord’s table. In coming to to observe the Supper we are all confessing that we are sinners. We are no longer sinners in the sense that we once were before our conversion to Christ. Because of Christ, we have been set free from the law of sin and death. Sin no longer has dominion over us. But still, we need to confess our sins when we come to this time. Our sins of the thoughts of our hearts, and the words of our mouths, and even no doubt some of our actions over the past month.

We do not need the cleansing of the washing of Regeneration. But we need the cleansing for our falling short of the glory of God in so many ways. Even now, each of us ought to want, like Job, to reason with God over the state of our own heart. If your heart does not condemn you, you can have confidence before God, but you will reason with Him over what you might do better in your acts of loving obedience, in relation to Him, and to people around you. Reason with Him over how you might become more like Christ, and pray that you will be transformed more and more into His blessed image. Remember that Christ Himself has counsel and understanding to give to you from His word and by His Spirit.

John 15: 1-5 – “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.” “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.” “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” “Abide in Me, and I in you.” “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” “I am the vine, you are the branches, He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” And verses 7 and 8 – “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” “By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. Let us now remember the Lord and all that He has done for us.