

**Job 31: 1-40 & 32: 1 – “Job’s Righteousness & Christ’s”, Sermon # 37 in the series – “Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

At this point in this great trial that Job is going through, he has now decided to defend his own righteousness. He has decided to do this publicly, before all those who were then present to hear him. There are 12 subjects of his defense of his own righteousness which he sets forth here in this chapter. We know this because Job begins by speaking of each of these subjects with the word “if”. He is saying – If I had done such and such a thing, then I would deserve all of the consequences of the sins which I would have committed. I will begin by saying that Job does a good job here of defending his own righteousness.

But as we shall see later on in this book, Job’s great mistake was found in his not justifying God in regard to what He was permitting, and what He was ordaining in our life. This Job did not do at this point. And so, what I want to do in this message is to compare the righteousness of Job with the righteousness of Christ for our benefit. I will do this so that you will see that it is always right to justify God in terms of every situation that God ordains for you to go through.

The way that you will learn to justify God in all of your trials is by your seeing that you need a better righteousness than your own to cover all of the obedience which you would render to God. This comparison of Job’s righteousness with Christ’s righteousness will show us why each of us needs Christ’s righteousness to cover all of our personal obedience. It is Christ’s righteousness which must cover all of our works. When you see where you fall short in your obedience, or do not glorify God in your obedience, then you know how very much you need Christ.

And so, 1<sup>st</sup> of all – I want to compare Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of the sins of our eyes, our mind, and our heart that Job mentions here. 2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to compare Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of the sins which we commit against our God and other people. And 3<sup>rd</sup> – When we come to the Communion Table, I will compare Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of our evaluation of ourselves. May the Lord give each of us help in terms of seeing our own sins and our own righteousness clearly.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – I want us to think together of Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of the sins of our eyes, our mind, and our heart that Job mentions here.** (verses 1-12)

“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman? “For what is the allotment of God from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high?” “Is it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?” “Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?” Job made a covenant with his eyes. He made a solemn resolution in the fear of God not to look upon a young woman. And wanting to do what was right in regard to not sinning with his eyes, he evidently succeeded in being pure of heart from the time that he made this covenant, forward. He did not gaze upon a young woman with an eye of sinful desire for her beauty.

This is something that is to be admired in any man; that he learns to think in this holy way, in respect to the beauty of all women in his mind and heart, other than his wife. With his wife, he is to be ravished with her beauty, and her breasts are to satisfy him at all times. But having roving eyes and a heart inflamed with lustful desires, he falls in his heart and mind to desires that will ultimately never be satisfied. And these desires will imprison him forever, unless a man takes deliberate action. Job studiously avoided this sin, he said in verse 3, because he knew that it would lead to destruction forever.

He knew that it was possible to be enticed by a woman and to be an unclean person in his heart. But he knew that it would be a fire that would consume to destruction, he says in verse 12. The consequence would be, it would root out all of his increase. Oh, that we men would know and understand that God sees us in all of our ways and counts all of our steps to see where we go. We should often think of verses 12 and 13 of Psalm 19 in this regard. “Who can understand his errors?” “Cleanse me from secret faults.” “Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not

have dominion over me.” “Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.” But Job made this personal covenant with himself. He made it in the sight of God. And it was attended with much prayer, I am sure, in this regard.

Any man here: Can you say that you have done the same? What a great thing it was, that Job made a covenant with his eyes! I believe that he faithfully attended to what it meant to walk uprightly before God in this regard. He did have to learn the sinful tendencies of his mind and heart in his walk. He was perfectly sincere in the keeping of this personal covenant, I believe. But we must ask – Was he absolutely perfect in all of his thoughts, and all of his desires as we know that our Lord Jesus Christ was during the whole time of His earthly ministry?

No, we can say, without questioning Job’s sincere obedience in any way, that we must hold to the truth as is told to us in the Scriptures in Ecclesiastes 7, verse 20 – “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.” And also 1<sup>st</sup> Kings chapter 8, verse 38 – “Whatever prayer is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all men), that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.”

Job was most certainly a man of integrity, and he kept himself from his iniquity. He was a faithful man because he feared God and was turning away from evil. But what shall we say of our Lord Jesus Christ? We can say that He was a perfect man in this regard, in every respect. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. God made Him who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. His obedience was governed by His purity of heart and mind, so absolutely, that He never failed in it. He never fell short of God’s glory.

And so, I am sure that even Job knew that He needed a better righteousness of his own. Because he declared in chapter 19, verse 25 – I know that my Redeemer lives. Job knew that he needed a Redeemer; one who would buy him back from all of his sins. One, who would cut a covenant with God, to go to the cross and die for his sins in the future. And so, he knew that he needed a covering, an atonement, even to cover his sincere obedience. He would have prayed in the same way that David prayed in Psalm 19, verse 14 – “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.”

Job wanted more than anything else to be a man who was faithful to God. You see this in verse 5. “If I have walked with falsehood, or if my foot has hastened to deceit, let me be weighed on honest scales, that God may know my integrity.” “If my step has turned from the way, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands, then let me sow, and another eat; yes, let my harvest be rooted out.” You see here that Job strove for perfection in his obedience to God. His walk was not in falsehood. He was not trying to trick others in his business dealings with them. His heart did not walk after his eyes. He was not a covetous man.

I want you to see that Job’s righteousness was the best personal righteousness that a man could have, being a believer in the one true and living God. Obedience for him began in his heart. He had a regenerate heart. He was loving God with his heart in all of his obedience to God. He had the Spirit of God, and the Spirit was leading and guiding him into all the truth, even as He does with you and I who are believers today. But what he needed to understand was that in his heart, he was not justifying God for permitting this trial. And in trying too hard to justify his own righteousness, he was actually not honoring God or giving glory to God in the way that he should have.

This should show us something about the kind of obedience that we should render to God. Our obedience to all of God’s commandments must have, along with it, the highest of motives. That is, that whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God. Doing what we do to the glory of God means that we will remember to give Him thanks for His teaching us what we need to learn, to further glorify Him. This was what Job could not do at this point. It was what he should have been able to do at this point. But God would have to help him. God would have to teach him. God’s ways are not our

ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. But by the grace of Christ, who was perfect in every trial of His obedience, we shall grow to maturity in our faith, and in our obedience.

Christ was perfect in the attitude of his heart and mind, as He hung on the cross. Psalm 22, verses 1-3 – “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” “Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?” “O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.” “But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” You see how He justifies His God treating Him in this way, as a sinner, even though He was no sinner. You see His love for His Father in fulfilling the Father’s purpose and doing His will, even in the midst of His greatest sufferings. This is why His righteousness must cover all of our righteousness.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – I want to compare Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of the sins which we commit against our God and other people.** (verses 13-34)

In verse 13, we read that Job was a man who righteously considered the cause of his male and female servants. He says – “If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, what then shall I do when God rises up?” “When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?” Now, we do not have male and female servants in our day. But we can consider this in terms of our employees if we are a boss or a business owner. When Job’s servants complained against him, he listened to them. And we see that he thought of things from their perspective. He made right the things that his servants thought were wrongs done to them.

The way that he thought of it, was to say to himself – Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same God fashion us in the womb? This was Job’s righteousness to think this way. Job not only thought about his the welfare and well-being of his servants, he also thought about the poor. Verse 16 – If I have kept the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail, or eaten my morsel by myself, so that the fatherless could not eat of it (But from my youth I reared him as a father, and from my mother’s womb I guided the widow); if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or any poor man without covering; if his heart has not blessed, me, then (verse 22) let my arm fall from my shoulder.

That’s how strongly he felt about helping the poor and loving his neighbor as himself. Truly, this was a good thing in Job. And it will be a good thing in us if we think this same way, and do these same things; to help those in need, and to truly care for their estate. This was righteousness in Job. And he excelled many other believing people in it, in his day. But what shall we say of Christ’s righteousness in this same regard? He was absolutely perfect in His help to everyone around Him. He healed the sick, He gave sight to the blind, the lame were given the power to walk again, the lepers were cleansed, and the poor had the gospel preached to them.

All this took place so that the Lord Jesus could perfectly fulfill the law on our behalf. And then humbling Himself, He became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. He who was rich became poor so that we through His poverty might become rich. This is why His righteousness must cover our righteousness. It is because ours never goes far enough. Job says in verse 24 – “If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, ‘You are my confidence’; if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great and because my hand had gained much; if I have observed the sun when it shines, or the moon moving in brightness, so that my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth kissed my hand; this also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment.”

He says that he would have denied God who is above. But what about the Lord Jesus? Not only did He not deny His Father or His Father’s will, but He completely and totally fulfilled it. And He loved God with all of His heart, soul, mind, and strength, and His neighbor as Himself. So perfectly did He do this, that the Father said of Him at His baptism said – This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased. There was no flaw in Jesus, no fault in Him! And so He came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by John. And John tried to prevent him, saying – I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me? But Jesus said – Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to full all righteousness. This is what Job needed to know, and it is what we need to know here today as well. It is that Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness. And He did so! He did so for you and

me who will believe in Him for eternal life. And He did so, so that all of our personal righteousness would be complete, acceptable, and established in Him. This is because all of our works are covered by His blood and righteousness.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – I want to compare Job’s righteousness and Christ’s in terms of our evaluation of ourselves.** (verses 35-40, and verse 1 of chapter 32)

“Oh, that I had one to hear me!” “Here is my mark.” “Oh, that the Almighty would answer me, “That my Prosecutor had written a book!” “Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, and bind it on me like a crown; I would declare to Him the number of my steps; like a prince I would approach Him.” “If my land cries out against me, and its furrows weep together; if I have eaten its fruit without money, or caused its owners to lose their lives; then let thistles grow instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley.” “The words of Job are ended.”

Notice how confident Job was of his own righteousness. Like a prince he would approach his prosecutor, carrying the prosecutor’s book on his shoulder and binding it on him like a crown! I could say much more about these verses which we find in chapter 31. But I want to lead us to the Lord’s Supper by quoting Job’s words in chapter 32, verse 1. In chapter 31, the last phrase of verse 40 says – “The words of Job are ended.” In other words, Job had now made his case for his own righteousness, before God and men. And now he was content to be quiet. In verse 1 of chapter 32 it says – “So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.” This phrase tells us much about the subject which I am trying to bring to your attention at this time.

Job’s friends did not believe that it was a good thing that Job thought of himself as righteous in his own eyes. They did not believe that it was good that he had justified himself instead of God. And so, it says, they ceased answering him. They still thought that he was guilty of some sin which he had not confessed. Job knew that he was not guilty of any sin which they suspected him of having committed. Even though this was so, we should understand that Job had much to learn about God’s ways of bringing him to have a more mature view of himself and his own righteousness. He was trusting in his own evaluation of himself as to his being righteous rather than his trusting in God Himself and His righteousness, in relation to the trial that he was going through.

So, what I want to bring to your attention to now, which will be of benefit to us in partaking of the Lord’s Supper, is this. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 11, the apostle Paul says in verse 27 – “Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.” “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.” “But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”

When we come to this table we are to examine ourselves and our motives for coming. We are not to come in an unworthy manner, or partake in an unworthy manner, it says here. The unworthy manner is coming to the table believing that you are somehow worthy to partake because you have been a consistent godly Christian over the whole time between now and your last partaking of it. And so you feel worthy to partake of the Supper. You are worthy of all that Christ has done for you. Now, you may have been consistent and godly that whole time. And for this you should give thanks. But is that the reason that you may confidently partake?

No, I think not. Rather, you come here at this time and you partake, because you see your continual need of Christ’s grace. You see your continual need of Him. You come and partake because you realize that Christ had to die for your sins. And you must have Christ’s righteousness cover the best works of your righteousness. You realize that you must have His power and presence in your life to be a consistent and godly Christian person. Don’t be a person who is righteous in your own eyes, and fail to justify God in the trials that you go through. Instead, see that you have much to learn from God about what He would teach you of how to glorify Him. Let’s partake now of this Supper with joy and gladness that Christ has died for this.

