

**Job 27: 1-23; “God Establishing My Justice”, Sermon # 34 in the series –
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on August 6th, 2023, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In this chapter Job is still addressing his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; Bildad being the last who attempted to speak to Job. All three of his friends have assumed something that was not true of Job. That is, they all thought that this great trial that had come upon him, of his losing all of his children, his possessions, and his health, was because of some hypocrisy that he had carefully concealed in his life. All three of his friends steadfastly held to this position all through the book so far. And Job, just as steadfastly, held to his innocence and to his integrity.

The awful place to which Job was now brought, was his belief that God had taken away his justice, he says in verse 2. This was absolutely not the case. And Job was not speaking rightly when he said this. He would continue to defend his integrity and maintain his own righteousness until Elihu and God Himself would righteously reprove him later on, after Job ends his own self-defense at the end of chapter 31. So what I would like to do in this message is to show you that not only had God not taken away Job’s justice. He was indeed establishing it all during this trial.

God would establish justice for Job on the basis of His sending His only begotten Son to fulfill all righteousness, and to bear Job’s sins on the cross. He would show this forth by raising Jesus from the dead. So, even though the details of what Christ would come to do were not known to Job, they are known to us. And I will reiterate them here. 1st of all – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead in order to establish our justice. (verses 1-4) 2nd – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead to establish our perseverance in faith and righteousness. (verses 5 & 6) And 3rd – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead to save us from hypocrisy. (verses 7-23) Let us store these truths up in our hearts as we come to the Lord’s table.

1st of all – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead to establish our justice.

(verses 1-4)

“Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said: ‘As God lives who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, as long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.’” I think that we need to understand and to sympathize with Job’s plight. His own friends did not believe that he was a man of integrity, and he had heard no word from God, thus far, concerning why these things had happened to him. He felt that God had become his enemy and had set him up as His target. He believed that God had taken away his justice. And he thought that He was the One who had made his soul bitter. This was a tremendous mistake on Job’s part.

At this point, I think that it will be good if we can attempt to define what the word integrity means. Because what Job was saying here was that he thought that God had taken away the ability of other people to see that he was a man of integrity. And that he found it hard to be a man of integrity as long as he could not sense that God was for Him. That is, that God approved of him. The Dictionary defines integrity as – “Soundness of moral principle and character; uprightness, honesty.” This is a good simple definition. And Job had this in God’s sight. If you are a man or woman of integrity, it is a very great thing in the sight of God and man.

It is true that only God fully knows how much of a person of integrity that you are. And in God’s sight, you either are, or you are not a person of integrity. God either knows you to be trustworthy or a person that He cannot depend upon to do what is right. But it is also a great thing too, if your integrity can be seen by the brethren, your family, and your friends. Job was such a man, before this trial came to him. But when the trial came, his integrity was much harder to see by men. Let us always remember that God sees us as we really are, because He is always able to see your heart perfectly.

He is always able to see and to know the reasons that you have for doing what you are doing at any given time. Remember that He is the One who made you. He is the One who formed you in your

mother's womb. He knows your down sitting and your uprising. He understands your thought afar off. As it says in Psalm 139, verses 3 and 4 – “You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.” “For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.” God also knows what natural and spiritual gifts and abilities that He has given to you, and what He would make of you according to His purpose. He is the One who is able to see whether you are trusting in Him in relation to all that you are doing. And He knows whether you truly love righteousness and hate lawlessness.

What is it that makes a man a man of integrity? Well, look with me over at Psalm 26. Look at verse 1. “Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity.” “I have also trusted in the Lord; I shall not slip.” We see here that the man of real integrity is a man of prayer and a man of faith. David here prays to be vindicated. He is asking that God would defend his righteous character and actions, to show other people around him that he is righteous. He is praying that God would remember that he had walked in his integrity; that is, in the uprightness of his heart and actions. He also reminds the Lord that he was trusting in Him, and that because of that, he would not slip. (that is, he would not fall into sins, but remain on the path of righteousness.)

He prays in verse 2 that God would examine him and prove him to be a righteous man who was walking in his integrity. He asks that God would try his mind and heart to see if he was righteous. He was saying that he was not a self-righteous man, and that he continually needed the Lord's grace, to do what was right in the right way; that is, to God's glory. If a person is truly trusting in the Lord they will not be trusting in themselves. And God will help and vindicate such a person. There are many other aspects of moral integrity which are mentioned in this Psalm. Daily remembering the lovingkindness of the Lord and walking in God's truth, the Bible. (verse 3) Not sitting with idolatrous morals or hypocrites. (verse 4) Hating the assembly of evildoers, and not sitting with the wicked. (verse 5)

In verses 6-8 David talks about his love for being in the assembly of the saints. Washing his hands in innocence so that he could go about God's altar with a clear conscience. Proclaiming the name of the Lord with thanksgiving, and telling others of all of God's wonderful works. David loved the habitation of God's house and the place where His glory dwelled. If we would be people of integrity, we too must have a love for God's house and the Lord's Day. In verses 9 and 10 David asks the Lord that He would not gather his soul with sinners, nor his life with bloodthirsty men. He asks that he would not be gathered with those wicked people in whose right hand was a sinister scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes.

Verses 11 and 12 show us that his resolute purpose was to walk in his integrity. And yet he also prays that God would redeem him and be merciful to him in all the situations in which he would find himself tempted and tried and even sometimes failing. And then he concludes the Psalm by saying that his foot stood in an even place. He means that his foot was standing in a sure place. That is, his trust was in Christ the coming Messiah. Christ who was the sure foundation and the Way to eternal life. And that he would give God the glory for His preserving him by His grace in the midst of all the troubles that he might come into. Redeeming him and being merciful to him.

Let's return now to Job. Had the Lord taken away his justice? No. His justice was found with the Lord. Job's justice was being established behind the scenes by the Lord. In the heavenly places, Job was held in high regard by God Himself and the good angels. Remember that God had boasted to Satan – Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? Job's justice was going to come to him from God in His watching over him to preserve him in his faith. And then in time He would also take away his bitterness of soul by restoring his fortunes. What would be the basis of all this? All of this would be accomplished by means of Christ's death and resurrection.

What was it that enabled Job to have the confidence to say in verses 3 and 4 – “As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit?” It was the grace and Spirit of Christ which was in him. Even though the

situation that the apostle Paul was facing in Philippians chapter 4 was different from Job's, the principle of truth that God was with him to establish him in doing what right in all things was the same. He says in verses 11-13 – "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound." Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

How I do pray that each of us will learn this lesson that both Paul and Job learned; of being abased and to abound. And how to be content in whatever state we are in. We can be content if we will but realize that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Job took a vow in verse 2 saying – As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and made my soul bitter, as long as the breath of God is in my nostrils, I will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceive. His vow showed his both his faith and his works, and thus proved his righteousness before God was the righteousness of faith. Not faith in himself, but in the Lord.

2nd – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead to establish our perseverance in faith and righteousness. (verses 5 & 6)

In addressing his 3 friends in verse 5, Job says – "Far be it from me that I should say you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me." "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live." In this part of the message I would like to talk about our righteousness in relation to our perseverance in our faith in Christ. I want to speak about this in relation to Job's statement: My righteousness I will hold fast, and will not let it go. When he says that he is holding fast his righteousness, he means that he is holding fast to the fact that he had not only not done something which would have brought about these terrible things that had happened to him, but that he was also pursuing doing what was right and good at every point in his life. Job's was a righteous cause. He will go on to amplify on this in chapters 28-31.

You and I have a righteous cause to maintain as well. Our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. Theirs was an outward righteousness. They appeared righteous to men around them. But Jesus castigated them with these words in Matthew 23: 27 and 28 – "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to me, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Now, here were men who looked righteous to men around them and yet Jesus knew them to be hypocrites in their hearts.

In Job's case, he appeared to his own friends as a hypocrite, and yet in his heart, as well as his life, he was righteous. But he couldn't convince them of his righteousness because he had suffered the loss of all things. What allowed Job to persevere in faith and righteousness in this awful situation? It was that he was ultimately trusting, not in himself, but in Christ. James chapter 5, and verses 10 and 11 say this: "My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience." "Indeed we count them blessed who endure." "You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."

That word for "endure" in verse 11 in the Greek is *υπομονη* (hupomeno). It means to persevere. Indeed we count them blessed who persevere. This is what Job was doing. He was persevering in faith and in righteousness. Yes, he was defending his own righteousness very stridently. Perhaps much too stridently. But God would have him to learn something more about this during the time of his trial. What God would have him to learn is the same thing that the apostle Paul learned and told us about in Philippians 3: 7-10. "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted as loss for Christ." "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but the righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I

may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.”

My brethren, have you come to see your cause and your righteousness can only be established in, and through, and by, the righteousness of Jesus Christ? This was why Paul counted all things to be loss, counted all things as rubbish. It was so that he would be able to gain Christ and be found in Him. Wasn't Paul already in Christ at the time of this writing? Yes, in his justification he was. But in terms of His sanctification, he had more to learn, and more to receive of Christ's grace. He wanted to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, and be made conformable to His death, so that he might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

My brethren, this is what you and I should desire as well, as we come to the Communion table. We should desire a greater communion with Christ; a greater understanding of the greatness of His power in bringing us into greater conformity to His blessed image. Greater understanding of His love and grace leading us to be willing to suffer for His cause and kingdom to go forward, in accordance with His will. Let's come down front to the Table now, and partake of more of these spiritual things.

3rd – Christ lived and died and rose from the dead to save us from hypocrisy.

(verses 7-23)

I will not re-read all of verses 7-23. I will only read verses 8-12. “For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life?” “Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him?” “Will he delight himself in the Almighty?” “Will he always call upon God?” “I will teach you about the hand of God; what is with the Almighty I will not conceal.” “Surely all of you have seen it; why then do you behave with complete nonsense?” It is good for us, as we have come to the table of our Lord, to here deal with any hypocrisy that we may find in our lives. A hypocrite is a pretender and a playactor.

He looks as though his righteousness is a real thing outwardly. But although he may look good and even speak well in some ways, yet there is a grave deficiency in his life. He secretly wants something more than Christ and His righteousness. He may want to impress people around him with his own wisdom and righteousness. He may want to hold on to all of his sensual and worldly pleasures. If he is truly a hypocrite, he will be living these things out in his heart, and he will not repent of them. He will not really know Christ. I want you to see that Christ died for sinners. Sinners of all kinds, sinners great and small.

Christ died to save His people from their sins, and even to bring them to the place where they will have dealings with Him over their hypocrisies. How do you know whether you are a true Christian or a hypocrite? Well, we are told in the questions that Job asks in verse 10. A true Christian delights in God. The hypocrite does not. And the true Christian will always call upon God for everything that they need for life and godliness. It is for this that Christ died. He died for us so that we could live to God. And more than that; that we would always delight ourselves in God. A hypocrite does not delight himself more in God, than he does in his own secret sins.

A true believer feels ashamed of himself because of his secret sins and his presumptuous sins. He will continually be calling on God to be forgiven of them, and to be able to be delivered from them. He will call upon God all during the time of his stay upon the earth to make progress in holiness and righteousness, and to walk consistently in uprightness before God. This is why we come to the table. It is to renew our covenant with God. It is to see the Lord Jesus as the One who died for our sins, and who will give us grace to save us from our hypocrisies if we find them in ourselves.

Let us be thankful now, for the greatness of His grace. All sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven men. Let us believe His promise in John 15: 7 & 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 My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” Let us now partake with thankful hearts.

