

Job (14): a proper knowledge of sin leads to worship
Merciful Savior, 174

Hymns 188, 10,000 Reasons/Wonderful,

Over the past several weeks, I have been using the imagery of a tempest or storm (imagery suggested by Job himself in 9:17). Job feels as if he's in the midst of a severe storm. And because of the intensity of the wind, he is unable to see clearly. It's for this reason, much of what Job says is unclear. He has lost sight of God as reconciled. He has lost sight of His Savior. And thus, he often views God as against him.

Now this doesn't mean that everything Job says is unclear or wrong. There are times when he sees clearer and his words reflect that clarity, but for the most part he is confused, and fails to see things as they truly are.

I can illustrate this by that familiar account of the disciples in the boat with our Savior. Mark 4:37—"And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling." But Jesus was in the stern of the boat asleep on a pillow. Verse 38—"And they awoke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?'" Because of the wind and waves, they were unable to think clearly. To see things as they truly were. They thought He didn't care for them or wasn't concerned for them.

This is similar to Job. He too is in the mists of a great storm (but one far greater than any literal storm), and he too feels as if God is unconcerned with him, and even worse, actually against him. This is his perception.

This is true for all of us. It's easy to lose sight of the truth as a result of the wind and waves (that is, the pain, afflictions, hardships, suffering, and drama). Thus, we must view Job from three perspectives: (1) as a historical figure—he was a literal man from the land of UZ who suffered greatly; (2) as a picture of saints—he teaches all Christians how to endure suffering and affliction; (3) as a shadow of Christ—he typified Christ who suffered as the only perfectly righteous man.

I mentioned last week, that in coming to Job's response to Zophar, we come to something of a transition. Beginning in chapter 12, Job turns the tables on his friends. Thus far, he's been on the defensive, but now he goes on the offensive. And he doesn't merely respond to Zophar but to all three of his friends at once.

Chapter 13 contains two basic parts: he speaks to his friends (vv1-19), and he speaks to his God (vv20-28). The first half closely relates to the second, as many of the things he says to his friends, he repeats to God.

I. Job Speaks to His Friends (vv1-19)

II. Job Speaks to His God (vv20-28)

I. Job Speaks to His Friends (vv1-19)

1. Job basically does two things in vv1-19—he confronts his friends (vv1-12) and he exhorts them (vv13-19).
2. (1) He confronts them (vv1-12)—he confronts them for two things: their incompetence and partiality.
3. (a) Incompetence (vv1-5), vv1-2—"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."
4. If you remember, Job has already said something similar in 12:3—"But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these?"

5. If you remember, Job has a certain and specific knowledge in mind, both in chapter 12 and chapter 13.
6. He's referring to a knowledge of God's all-wise and powerful providence; the way God works in His creation.
7. If you remember, he gave an extended example of this in verses 13-25—this is specifically what he refers to in v1—"Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it."
8. Job is basically affirming that he too understands God is sovereign over the way He governs creation.
9. V3—"But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God"—this he will do in vv20-28.
10. V4—"But you forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians. Oh, that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom!"
11. It seems Job is contrasting his friends with God—your talk to me hasn't helped, thus I would prefer you remain silent, as I speak to the Almighty.
12. V5—"Oh, that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom"—that is, you would prove wiser if you said less or nothing.
13. Prov.17:28—"Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive."
14. (b) Partiality (vv6-12)—in these verses, Job accuses his friends of speaking wickedly in the place of God.
15. He accuses them of "partiality" or "judging him by earthly standards"—a "partial" person has a bias.
16. Job accuses his friends of judging him with a bias or prejudice—he refers to this as wicked and deceitful.
17. We usually think of "partiality" as showing favoritism based on something; here it simply refers to bias judgment.
18. They were showing partiality toward him in that they were judging him based upon his outward circumstances.
19. For example, in James 2:1 we are told—"do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, with partiality (if there comes into your assembly a man with fine apparel and another man in filthy clothes, do not pay attention to the one and ignore the other)."
20. The point being, don't be biased against the one merely because of his filthy clothing—don't judge unfairly.
21. This is what Job's friends were guilty of—they were judging him based upon his present circumstances.
22. V7—"Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him?" V8—"Will you show partiality for Him? Will you contend for God?"
23. Job points out of the fact, that his friends pretended to speak for God; they all spoke with force and authority.
24. This doesn't necessarily mean that God sent them to speak for Him, but they assumed the role of teacher.
25. In vv9-12 he warns them that they too will be searched by God, and that with the same strictness they searched Job.
26. V9—"Will it be well when He searches you out? Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man? He will surely rebuke you if you secretly show partiality."
27. Verses 11-12 describe the nature of that rebuke—"Will not His excellence make you afraid, and the dread of Him fall upon you?"
28. If and when God determines to rebuke someone, there's nothing they can do—there's no defense they can offer.

29. V12—"Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes, your defenses are defenses of clay"—what they've said won't help them.
30. Observation 1—Those who speak for God are physicians—those who speak God's word are soul doctors.
31. Now obviously, Job's friends proved to be worthless physicians, but they were nevertheless physicians.
32. The word rendered "physicians" literally means "to heal"—they were physicians or healers of the soul.
33. Prov.4:20-22—"My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh."
34. But for the word of God to produce life and health in our souls the medicine but be taken or swallowed.
35. Observation 2—Those who speak for God receive a stricter judgment—this is true for counselors and pastors.
36. Jas.3:1—"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."
37. In its original context, this verse is merely or predominately speaking about ordained ministers or pastors.
38. Anytime you speak about moral behavior you speak for God—you may speak untruth or even lies, but you still speak for God.
39. And thus, those who give counsel on moral behavior as well as those who more directly teach God's word, will be judged more strictly.
40. Observation 3—Those who strictly judge others will receive the same judgment—this is in many ways "the" sin of Job's friends.
41. Matt.7:1-2—"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgement you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."
42. While usually this verse is used as a weapon against God's people, let us never forget it is in our Bible.
43. (2) He exhorts them (vv13-19)—in these verses, Job exhorts his friends to be quiet and carefully hear his words.
44. He's compelled to speak come what may, v14—"Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hands?"
45. That is, why does he risk himself (further rebuke and ridicule), in correcting and rebuking his friends.
46. V15 contains one of the most famous statements in the book—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."
47. The later half of the verse is less known—"Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him"—that is, defend them from the false accusations of his friends.
48. I say this, because of the next verse, v16—"He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him."
49. Thus, by defending himself Job means, he will defend himself from the false accusation of hypocrisy.
50. Verses 17-19 expands upon this—his case is prepared, he shall be vindicated, and for this reason, he must speak.
51. V19—"Who is he who will contend with me? If now I hold my tongue, I perish"—he must defend himself.
52. Observation 1—Mature faith hopes in God regardless of circumstances—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him (or hope in Him).

53. The Hebrew word translated "slay" means just that—"to slay or kill"—it can mean literal or figurative death.
54. It literally refers to a brutal and vicious death, and thus it includes all man of suffering, affliction, and anguish.
55. Seemingly, this is how Job uses the word here—"Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him"—that is, Job assumes he will survive the slaying.
56. Even if God inflicts the greatest pain upon me—even if I am forced to endure great suffering—I will trust Him.
57. The reason being—God is infinitely worthy of trust because He never changes in His person, purposes, or promises.
58. Circumstances change—people change—we change—everything changes—but God always stays the same.
59. Now, I want to briefly suggest three circumstances we must trust God, even though it feels as if God is slaying us.
60. (a) Intense temptation—here I refer to any prolonged spiritual conflict or battle with sin and temptation.
61. (b) Prolonged suffering—here I refer to physical sickness, financial hardship, or relational conflict (not all suffering is physical).
62. (c) Delayed expectation—by this I mean, you are waiting for something that you greatly desire (and you are even convinced would honor and glorify God).
63. And yet, for whatever reason the Lord has kept it from you, and you beginning to feel the pain of rejection.
64. In all three of these circumstances, you have to take your place along with Job and say—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

II. Job Speaks to His God (vv20-28)

1. The words of Job to God in vv20-28, basically consist of two things: petitions (vv20-23) and questions (vv24-28).
2. (1) Petitions (vv20-23)—the first petition is found in vv20-22 and is twofold—"Only two things do not do to me, then I will not hide myself from You."
3. The twofold petition is found in v21—" (do not) withdraw Your hand far from me, and let not the dread of You make me afraid."
4. That is, for God to withdraw His hand far from him, will result in him being filled with carnal fear and dread.
5. Let me remind you, there are two kinds of fear—one is carnal and harmful and the other is Christian and helpful.
6. True Christian or gospel fear doesn't leave us afraid of God, but brings us trembling to God in love and trust.
7. This is why Job asks God this twofold request—"than I will not hide myself from You"—that is, in carnal fear.
8. The final petition is found in v23—"How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin."
9. Job doesn't suggest, that he can actually know the exact number of his sins—there's too many of them.
10. But he wanted to know if there were any unknown sins, that might have brought upon Him God's rod.
11. Ps.51:3—"For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me"—that is, he knew his sin so as to confess it.

12. (2) Questions (vv24-28)—these questions in vv24-28, are closely related to the petitions in vv20-23.
13. Basically, he's complaining in vv24-28, because what he's requested in vv20-23 hasn't come to pass.
14. In other words, vv24-28 are the result of God withdrawing His hand from him which results in carnal fear.
15. V24—"Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy?"—that is, remove the sense of adoption.
16. V25—"Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro? And will You pursue dry stubble?"—this describes carnal fear.
17. V26—"For You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth"—this refers to an unsanctified knowledge of sin.
18. Job felt that God had written bitter things against him, as if God had kept a record of his iniquities from his youth.
19. V27—"You put my feet in the stocks, and watch closely all my paths. You set a limit for the soles of my feet."
20. He felt as if he were imprisoned; he not only lacked the joy of his salvation, but sensed he was enslaved.
21. He felt as if God was his enemy—that He was against him—and that he was a criminal on death row.
22. Verse 28 best fits with chapter 14, and so we will consider it next week (let me close with three observations).
23. Observation 1—A proper knowledge of sin leads to worship—by proper I mean a healthy knowledge of sin.
24. How do you know whether or not you have a healthy knowledge of sin? Well, simply put—it leads to worship.
25. A proper sense of sin brings us to God in worship, while an improper sense of sin drives us from God.
26. A proper sense of sin is necessary to become a Christian, and a proper sense of sin is necessary to live as a Christian.
27. In fact, there's fundamentally two lessons necessary to learn to become Christian and mature as Christian.
28. We have to know our sin and Savior—we have to know these to become Christian and we have to know these to grow as Christian.
29. Let me ask you this, when was the last time prayed with Job—"Make me know my transgression and my sin."
30. (a) The means to know our sin—there are two basic means or ways to know sin—the law and the gospel.
31. The law, Rom.3:20—"for by the law is the knowledge of sin"—because sin is a violation of God's law, we can never truly know sin apart from the law.
32. But and this is very important, for us as Christians to have a right view of sin, we must have a right view of the law.
33. The same Scripture that says we are not under the law, are dead to the law, and have been delivered from the law, also teaches us to cherish and obey the law.
34. Thus, we have to look to the law as "the law of Christ"—which in substance is one and the same with the TC.
35. But the difference is, as the law of Christ, the law comes to us as redeemed in the hand of our Redeemer.

36. Ex.20:1—"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (as such the law no longer condemns)."
37. The gospel, Rom.3:25-26—"God crucified Christ to demonstrate (reveal) His righteousness and justice."
38. We can behold the law in all of its exacting and demanding glory as Christ suffers under its just demands.
39. We can learn of our sin by looking into the law (as the law of Christ), but we can also see as we stand beneath the cross.
40. (b) The reasons to know our sin—let me suggest three reasons to properly know our transgression and sin.
41. First, it makes us humble—it reminds us of what we were—it reminds us of what we natively deserve.
42. Second, it makes us gentle—that is, it breeds meekness which refers to a humble gentleness towards others.
43. This will give us a true sympathy with others, both weak Christians as well as open and heinous sinners.
44. Third, it makes us grateful—that is, it makes us thankful for the blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin.
45. Joseph Caryl—"To know sin and not know Christ is sad. One sin seen without a sight of Christ swallows up the soul; but a sight of Christ swallows up all our sins."
46. Observation 2—An evangelical fear of God drives out dread—that is, Christian fear drives out carnal fear.
47. Scripture speaks of two types of fear—one is forbidden and harmful; the other commanded and helpful.
48. If you remember, at the very heart of Christian or gospel fear is the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.
49. That is, a knowledge of God as reconciled—a knowledge of God as holy, just, gracious, and merciful.
50. 1Jn.4:18—"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."
51. The word "perfect" means "mature or complete"—"perfect love" refers to a complete or full knowledge of God's love.
52. The more knowledge of God's love for us we have, the less fear we will have—the one drives out the other.
53. John describes the nature of the fear that love drives out as "torment"—that is, fear of being tormented.
54. Observation 3—A true sense of acceptance leads to freedom—job lost his liberty because he lost sight of his acceptance.
55. Put another way, because he viewed God as his enemy, he felt as if he were shackled or in chains (stocks).
56. Let me remind you—there's a big difference between BEING free and living within THAT freedom.
57. Was God actually Job's enemy? No. Was he actually in bonds? No. But he felt AS IF both were true.
58. Rom.6:11—"Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our LORD (to reckon is to consider or calculate – to know and live in such a way that reflects reality)."
59. Remember the disciples in the boat—"Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?' Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace be still?' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm."