

**Job 11: 1-20; “The Deep Things of God”, Sermon # 21 in the series entitled –  
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in the Afternoon Worship.**

Zophar is the third of Job’s friends to take up his discourse with him concerning the sin which he has supposedly committed. It is Job’s friend’s belief that there is some great sin or hypocrisy, unconfessed in his heart, which has brought him into God’s disfavor. All of his good defense of himself and his integrity, his friends have not believed. And sadly, we find, that as they continue on, trying to comment on what has happened to him, that they are more zealous to prove that he must have done something wrong, than they are to listen carefully to his defense of himself.

If only they would have prayed and sympathized with him. If they had only tried to think of ways in which they might have encouraged their friend in his trial, they would have done much better. However, remembering that all scripture is inspired by God, and it is profitable for our instruction, let me present to you 3 truths which Zophar sets forth here, which we can, and should, relate to what Christ has done for us in procuring our great salvation. .

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Because of Christ, God exacts from us, as believers, less than our iniquity deserves.**

It is evident from Zophar’s introduction here that he simply thought of Job’s words as empty words; words which needed to be answered with rebuke. He says in verse 2 – “Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated?” Should your empty talk make men hold their peace? “And when you mock should no one rebuke you?” “For you have said, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes.’ “But oh, that God would speak and open His lips against you, that He would show you the secrets of wisdom!” “For they would double your prudence.” “Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves.” He declares that Job had spoken, and said too much at many points, and that Job was mocking God by his speech.

He was probably saying this in reference to Job’s having said that his doctrine was pure, and that he was clean in God’s eyes. This, Zophar did not believe. It is probable that he is referring to chapter 6, verse 30 where Job had said – “Is there injustice on my tongue?” But, Zophar says, if God would speak, He would confront you, Job, with the secrets of being wise. He would do this according to His great wisdom and perfect discernment of Job’s thoughts and actions. There is truth in this assertion of Zophar’s. You can see this if you will turn over to Proverbs chapter 10, verses 19-21. “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” “The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little.” “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.”

It may be the case, even with godly people, that we say too much, and this may lead to transgression. The purpose of good speech is that the righteous may spiritually and practically feed people around them the truth of the word of God. We do this so that we might be able to instruct people around us in relation to truth and righteousness. But sometimes, if we speak too much, it only shows that we have not really taken the time to think about about what we are actually saying. And much of what we are saying may therefore not be glorifying to God, or that which will help, or build others up. And so, we must guard against much speaking, for in many words there is transgression, and sin is not lacking.

And, further, it will be a good thing for us if we will pray the words of Psalm 141, verse 3– “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.” This was the prayer of the Psalmist David asking that God Himself by the power of the Holy Spirit would keep watch over him to keep him from saying rash things. He was concerned, that when he spoke, he might say things which he had not thought through as to what God might think of them. He might say

things which would show that he was not really trusting in God, or showing that proper concern for how his words might be understood by people around him.

So, if we are given to much speaking, we need to pray to be people of fewer words. And that what we do say would really be thought out, and would truly benefit and help people around us. Verse 4 of Psalm 141 shows us that we also need to pray that God would not incline our heart to any evil thing to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity. This does not mean that God exerts any positive influence in leading the heart to do that which is wrong. But rather, it means that we pray that we would not be led by Him into circumstances in which we might say or do things which would dishonor Him, or where we might hurt or sin against other people, either in word or deed. Sometimes it is true, that we may need to receive reproof or even rebuke from a righteous person concerning this. For verse 5 says – “Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness.” “Let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it.”

It is certainly true, that as Zophar says that God exacts of us less than our iniquity deserves. The New American Standard Translation says – “For sound wisdom has two sides.” “Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.” How should we understand that? For if our God is a God of perfect and strict Justice, He certainly cannot pass by iniquity and sin arbitrarily. He must punish sin wherever He finds it. He will most certainly punish all sin someday at the time of the last judgment, for those who are wicked and unbelieving, unrepentant sinners. But what does it mean then, that God forgets a part of our iniquity? I believe that it means that since God is infinitely wise and perfect, He knows the way that He has made us, as His creature.

Since we are finite in our being there are things that God “overlooks” in us because we are not capable of seeing them well ourselves; that is, without being instructed by Him by His word and by the working of His Holy Spirit. Even as Christians we are not capable of seeing them well. He sees these things, but He is patient with us, and He is willing to teach us in the way of righteousness. “Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will teach sinners in the way.” “The meek (the humble) will He guide in justice, the meek will He teach His way.” “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.” He does all of this “overlooking” because of what Christ has done by His atonement for sinners and sins.

His atonement provides a righteous covering of sins by God, and our righteously covering the sins of others. The Bible says – “Love covers a multitude of transgressions”, in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4: 8. Yes, I know that it is being said in the context of one person covering another person’s transgressions, and not God’s covering a multitude of transgressions in overlooking any sin in us. And yet the principle is established by Christ’s atonement. We, through having been forgiven a multitude of transgressions ourselves, by having believed in Jesus Christ, we learn to overlook little faults in others; that is, some of the sins which other people commit, not understanding what they are doing. As Christians, therefore, we should not always be confronting people over every little detail of sin which we see in their life. Why shouldn’t we do that? It is because God Himself has covered our sins with the blood and righteousness of Christ, as an atonement for our sins, a covering for us sins, that He can deal with us in this gracious way.

He can do it without once approving of, or accepting any sin of ours in order to overlook it. It has been looked at, and it has been judged to be sin, but the sin has been laid upon Christ and punished there at the cross. God does not exact from us what our iniquity deserves. He exacted it from Christ. This then leads us to Psalm 103, verses 10-14 – “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, , nor punished us according to our iniquities.” “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west , so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” “As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him.” “For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.”

This is what it means when Zophar says that God exacts from us less than our iniquity deserves. It is that He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Yes, He will discipline every son whom He receives, and will scourge us spiritually speaking, when He sees that we need it. But this is so that we might share in His holiness, and bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness in our lives. Zophar says that when God shows a man the secrets of His wisdom, that is His wisdom in Christ, then it truly will cause us to double our prudence, so that we rightly and carefully will think matters over, in relation to our sins against God and against other people. “If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” “But there is forgiveness with You that You may be feared.” Psalm 130, verses 3 and 4.

If God should disclose to us all the sins of our hearts, even as a Christian person, it would be very dismaying to us, and this is the reason why we pray as David did in Psalm 19, verse 12 – “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 innocent of great transgression.” It is the blood of Christ which cleanses us from all sin, even that of secret faults. It is the power of Christ which keeps us back from presumptuous sins, so that they will not have dominion over us. And this is why we pray the words of 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.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Because of Christ, we can be wise in pondering the deep things of God’s sovereignty.**

Verses 7-12 say – “Can you search out the deep things of God?” Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?” “They are higher than heaven – what can you do?” “Deeper than Sheol – what can you know?” “Their measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.” “If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers to judgment, then who can hinder Him?” “For He knows deceitful men; He sees wickedness also.” “Will He not then consider it?” “For an empty-headed man will be wise, when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man.” These words are given by Zophar to Job as a challenge to him; that if he can, he should search out the deep things of God and find His limits on his own.

Certainly, Job cannot do it, Zophar is saying, for the heavens are higher than him. And the measure of the deep things of God is higher and deeper than anything that Job could possibly conceive of. The deep things of God’s understanding are higher than heaven and deeper than Sheol, or the grave, and broader than the sea. And He is also saying that God is sovereign in the way that He deals with all men. If he passes by, that is, if he cuts off people from everything that they have been pursuing with their life, or He binds them up in a prison of his own making in their experience, He is righteous in what He does.

Zophar is saying that this is what God had done with Job, cutting off the lives of his children, and coming upon Job suddenly to arrest him, and put him in a prison of His own making, then He cannot be hindered. But Zophar then goes on to openly intimate that Job’s deceit and wickedness had been seen by God, and that, He God, was bringing these things against Job because of his deceitful sin. Zophar was the one who was actually sinning against God and against Job in saying this. For He could actually not prove any such thing to be true concerning Job. Zophar then gave an illustration to Job; that is, that even an empty-headed nan could become wise, will become wise, when he sees his own stubbornness, in thinking that he is righteous and wise when he is not, and and repents of it. The truth for ourselves is this. It is true that God is sovereign in providentially ordering all things for the good of His people. This is the truth that Zophar should have encouraged Job with.

And so, if suddenly some terrible thing comes upon us, or our family members, we are not to conclude that it has come upon us for our sins necessarily, even though there are no doubt many

good things for us to learn and receive from God concerning the sinful tendencies of our mind and heart. We should not doubt that God has ordained them so that He might teach us many things. We may even come to the wrong conclusion like Job did, that somehow God has become our enemy. But we must pray to God at such times, and ask Him to teach us what He would want us to learn in such situations. We must believe the promise that He will so lead us and teach us what we need to learn, that we will rejoice at the end of our trial, in His great faithfulness to us.

Let us always remember that because Christ died for our sins, and rose again, that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8: 1) Let us remember that His promise is to “cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him, to those who are called according to His purpose”. (Romans 8: 28) Let us always remember that God is for us, and if God is for us, then who can be against us? (Romans 8: 31) The reason that God is this way is because of what Christ has done for us. He has suffered and died to bear the punishment due our sins. He has loved us and given Himself for us. (Galatians 2: 20)

We should also remember at such times, that the Devil is our adversary, not God. And the Devil will attempt to undermine our faith and confidence concerning God’s eternal and unchanging love for us, because of what Christ has done for us. But, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” “Shall tribulation or distress?” No, it shall not! Let us remember that the Devil will try to make God out to be a liar in relation to all of His precious promises to us, when all the while, he is a liar and the father of lies. Let us determine as we find ourselves entering such a trial, that we will resist him steadfast in our faith.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – Because of Christ we can lift up our face without spot, to God.**

In verses 13-320 we find Zophar making an appeal to Job to repent. He says – “If you would prepare your heart, and stretch out your hands toward Him; if iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away, and would not let wickedness dwell in your tents; then surely you could lift up your face without spot; yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear; because you would forget your misery, and remember it as waters that have passed away, and your life would be brighter than noonday.” “Though you were dark, you would be like the morning.” “You would be secure, because there is hope; yes, you would dig around you, and take your rest in safety.” “You would also lie down, and no one would make you afraid; yes, may would court your favor.”

Ah, these are true words which apply to any sinner who will trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation. Repent and believe. This is what every person must do to be saved from their sins. Those not believing in Jesus, as Zophar says in verse 20 – “The eyes of the wicked will fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope will be lost; they will lose their life; that is their soul forever in hell. As we come to partake of this Supper, let us remember that Christ died for us to secure all the blessings of our salvation, from beginning to end. Through Christ’s death we are granted repentance. We can prepare our hearts to seek God, and we will find grace to put away all of our sins with godly sorrow in repentance. We are able to lift up our faces to God without spot because we are justified by faith in Him. We can be steadfast and not fear the judgment of God or the accusations of the Devil, because we have an Advocate with the Father. Though we were once darkness, we are now light in the Lord. We have eternal security in Him. We have a hope because of Him, which is an anchor to our soul. It is both sure and steadfast and it enters within the veil, because the Lord Jesus has gone before us into heaven, and He is our High Priest forever. He ever lives to make intercession for us. With this in mind, let us partake of these elements.

