

**Job 13: 20-28; “Why Do You Hide Your Face?”, Sermon # 25 in the series entitled –  
“Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall  
on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in the Afternoon Worship.**

In these verses, Job is addressing God in prayer. He is reasoning with God, and he is asking questions of Him, in order that God might explain to him why he was putting him through this horrific trial, and more specifically, why He was hiding His face from him. He wanted to speak to God, and have conversation with Him over why these awful things had taken place, and why he was in the predicament that he was in now. We can ask ourselves the same question that Job asks here. Why is it that sometimes God hides His face from you, the believer, a person who is sincerely walking in His ways? Well, let me give you 3 reasons from Job’s statements which I believe will help you when you are going through this experience.

1<sup>st</sup> of all – Sometimes, God hides His face so that you will pray to have greater fellowship with Him. (verses 20-22) 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sometimes God hides His face so that you will pray to be shown your sins. (verses 23-26) And 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sometimes God hides His face so that you will know the greatness of His loving care. (verses 27 & 28) I want you to see that this horrific experience of Job’s was ordained for his good, so that He might know God better, as he went through it. The way that we come to know God better, is when we will pray to know the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Sometimes, God hides His face so that we will pray to have greater fellowship with Him.**

In Job’s relationship with God, he did not know all that we know now, theologically, about God and Christ and the Devil. But, nevertheless his fellowship with God had been very extensively developed by him over many years. God had blessed Job abundantly, both in spiritual and physical things. He prayed often to God, he walked with Him in joy, and spiritually speaking, the friendly counsel of God was over his tent, his children were around him, his steps, he says in Job 29: 6, were bathed with butter, and the rock poured out rives of oil for him. We may think of our own relationship with God in this very way too. We have real spiritual fellowship with God over the various things that we do every day and what He is providentially leading us into. Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son.

We have this real and personal relationship with Christ, and yet we have never seen Him. The apostle Peter in his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle, chapter 1, verses 6-9 – “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.” “Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.” Let’s think together for a few moments about how Job was brought to pray that He might have greater fellowship with God.

We understand, by reading the book of Job, that toward the end of his great trial that God actually spoke to Him in an audible voice, in the whirlwind in Chapter 38, verse 1. And in Job 42, verses 5 and 6 he says – “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You.” “Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” Certainly, this was something more than just the voice out of the whirlwind, if he said that his eye saw Him. He had already heard His voice. He probably saw the Pre-Incarnate form and face of the Lord Jesus who had come to speak to them all. When He spoke, He spoke personally to Job, and to Job’s three friends as well. The voice out of the whirlwind became much gentler to Job when he repented and confessed his sins. But His wrath was kindled, He said toward Job’s three friends. He spoke to them all, face to face I believe after this trial.

This revelation to Job and his three friends was most certainly a much greater step up, in regard to the personal fellowship that they had with Him there that day; much more than when

these words of Job were spoken here in chapter 13, in the time of his greatest pain and grief. But I want you to see that God's purpose was that He wanted Job to live by faith in Him during that time of his greatest affliction and suffering. And He wants us, similarly, to live our lives by faith in Him as well; even when He hides His face. Part of our growing up into Christ is our learning what we should do when God hides his face from us. What does this mean, for God to hide His face? To hide His face for Job meant that he could not sense God's presence, His blessing, or His approval at all. It meant that Job felt like God was regarding Him, not as His child and friend, but as an enemy.

For God to show His face, or to make His face to shine upon you, spiritually speaking, means that He, out of His great grace and mercy, has determined for Christ's sake, to be favorable to you. God is always favorable to His people in Christ. But sometimes there are situations in which we are not sure if God is favorable to us because of situations that He leads us into. But turn with me over to Exodus chapter 33. Here in this chapter we see that God was fulfilling His promise to bring Israel out of Egypt and into the land which He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But since the people had sinned and made themselves a golden calf, God was angry with them. He said that he would not go up in their midst because they were a stiff-necked people. (verse 3) When the people heard this bad news, it says, they mourned, and they took off their ornaments, there by Mt. Horeb, until it could be determined what God would do concerning them.

Moses, was their mediator. Here in verse 11 it says – “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” This was the great and wonderful relationship that Moses had with God; that God was favorable to him in every respect. But we need to understand why the Lord was favorable to Moses in all of these difficult situations in which the children of Israel sinned. Verse 12 says – “Then Moses said to the Lord, ‘See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ “But You have not let me know whom You will send with me.” “Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight.” “And consider that this nation is Your people.”

Now, notice what God says to him. Verse 14 – “And He said, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’” Moses said to Him – “If Your Presence does not go with us, (that is, if His face did not shine upon them, and convince them of His favor), do not bring us up from here.” “For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?” “So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who ware upon the face of the earth.” Well, the same was the case here with Job. He knew that if God was not with Him, if His face was not favorable to Him, how could he continue to live at all? In Moses' case, He said this to him in verse 17 – “So the Lord said to Moses, I will also do this thing that you have spoken, for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”

I hope you see that it was the same with Job. He had found grace in God's sight and God knew Job by name. But it had seemed to him that God had hidden His face from him. And so he prayed – “Only two things do not do to me, then I will not hide myself from You: Withdraw Your hand far from me, and let not the dread of You make me afraid.” “Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, then You respond to Me.” So, Job needed this, very, very much. He needed to be led into a deeper, greater, and more meaningful fellowship with God, where God renewed their fellowship or he could not go on.

Sometimes this is the case with you and I, as well, in our relationship with God. We feel downcast over all of the things that God has permitted and ordained in our life. We do not feel that we can go on. We feel like hiding from God. The dread of Him makes us afraid. We very much need to know a greater fellowship with Him, to assure our heart before Him. In this case with Moses, in verse 18, Moses said to the Lord – “Please show me Your glory.” This was a very good prayer for him, and it is a good prayer for ourselves as well. We need to remember what God said to him in verse 19 – “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of

the Lord before you.” “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” “But He said, ‘You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.’ “And the Lord said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.’ “So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.” “Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

What does God mean by these words? What He means is that He was going to give Moses a revelation of His glory in Christ. All of God’s goodness is seen in Christ. The name of the Lord is fully proclaimed in Christ. God will be gracious and compassionate because of Christ. No man can behold the full revelation of the glory of God and live. But there is a place by Him on the Rock of His revelation in Christ; His Person, and His future work of redemption at the cross, where every man who would know God, might see His glory and live. God covered Moses with His hand while He passed by, to protect him from the full revelation of His glory.

He took away His hand for a second and Moses saw His back parts. We should understand this of his being able to behold a glimpse of God’s full glory, but only enough that it would not take His life. His full facial features could not be seen by Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant. But because Moses was one of God’s elect people he had New Covenant grace. He beheld as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord Jesus, and he was being transformed from one degree of glory to another, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. This transformation takes place in each believer’s life as they have fellowship with God through Christ by His Spirit. Sometimes that fellowship needs to be renewed when we go through trials. Because of Christ dying for our sins, and ever living to make intercession for us, it can be renewed, when we seek for it.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Sometimes God hides His face so that you will pray to be shown your sins.**

(verses 23-26)

Verse 23 says – “How many are my iniquities and sins!” “Make me know my transgression and my sin.” “Why do You hide Your face, and regard me as Your enemy?” “Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?” “And will You pursue dry stubble?” “For You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.” Job was saying these things out of his complete frustration with God’s not having told him what he had done wrong, to bring these things upon himself. He is, no doubt, speaking these words in prayer to God, before all of those who were looking on. It is evident that he was losing patience, and that he actually did believe that God was regarding him as His enemy. His prayer here, was to be shown how many his iniquities and sins were, and for God to make him know his transgression and his sin.

Even though this was Job’s prayer, we can’t help but notice that the way that he goes about this, he was showing some amount of impatience, and irreverence, and even a lack of understanding of how he should look at himself in this situation. Even though he was such a righteous man that the Lord had said, before the trial started, that there was none like him upon the earth; an upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil, he was not speaking in a righteous way here. It is always a good thing to want to know, in God’s sight, what your sins are; to ask God to make them know to you, so that you might repent of them. But, we must always do this in a reverent way, with a humble submission to God’s evaluation.

Job was a righteous man and he knew that he was a man of integrity. But from this point on, to chapter 38, we will find him trying too hard to establish his own righteousness, and not trying hard enough to justify God in bringing him into this trial. Psalm 139: 23 and 24 – “Search me, O God and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” No matter how righteous a person you are in your own righteousness, you still need to see yourself as a sinner, as the Psalmist did here. Yes, you are a person who has been justified by faith in Christ. You are a forgiven sinner. But this does not mean that you do not have more to learn about yourself in relation to your occasionally falling short of the glory of God. This is what was happening to Job at this point. He was not seeing God rightly

when He said that God was regarding him as His enemy. In Ecclesiastes 7: 16-20, it says – “Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?” “Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?” “It is good that you grasp this and also not remove your hand from the other; for he who fears God will escape them all.” “Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city.” “For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.”

So, what is Solomon saying in these verses? Is he saying that it is possible to be too righteous? Well, yes it is possible, in one sense; in the sense that you go about trying to establish your own righteousness apart from Christ’s righteousness. Christ is the only perfect man who ever lived, and your righteousness must always be seen in His perfect righteousness, or God cannot accept it. This was the lesson that Job had to learn, even though he was the most righteous man in all the earth in his day. This is a lesson for both unbelievers and believers. When you do not know Christ, all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God’s sight, for He can only accept a perfect righteousness. But when you believe in Christ, all of your righteousnesses, all of your good works, are seen by Him in Christ, and that is the way that they are accepted by God.

But as a believer, when you assume that because you are pursuing righteousness that you either cannot sin, or you will not sin against God in any way, because of your own evaluation of yourself, you are making a big mistake. We all stumble in many ways. God sees your heart perfectly, and He knows all that you are doing for Him in righteousness. And He also sees, in the most righteous of men, what they still need to learn from Him in order for them to become more like His perfect Son. During that process of learning, you the believer, are always seen as justified in His sight, for Christ’s sake. Yours, in Him, is a perfect righteousness. He never writes bitter things against you, and He will never make you inherit the iniquities of your youth. God was looking with complete favor upon Job, all during this trial, for Christ’s sake. And yet, there were sins that he committed, and, there were great things that Job needed to learn so that he might glorify God. The same will be true for us.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – Sometimes God hides His face so that you will know the greatness of His loving care.** (verses 27 & 28)

In verse 27 Job says – “You put my feet in the stocks, and watch closely all my paths.” “You set a limit for the soles of my feet.” “Man decays like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten.” This was how Job felt in his experience. But once again, he was wrong in attributing these things to God. As we come to partake of the Supper, let us remember that Satan will seek to get permission to sift us like wheat, at times in our Christian experience. He may rile up unbelieving people against you simply because you are a person of integrity, but he wants to prove your supposed hypocrisy, if he can. And then he brings it to God to make a point that you really only serve Him for the benefits that God gives to you.

You must be ready for this, but your readiness must not be to prove your complete innocence and righteousness as you look at yourself. Your readiness must be to confess that you are a righteous person by Christ’s grace. You are clothed in His robe of righteousness, and you wear His garments of salvation. As a Christian, you will always need these in order to be victorious over the world, the flesh, and the Devil. But this is why Christ died. He has suffered for your sins and even for your inconsistencies in your obedience. He has been raised from the dead, for your justification and for your sanctification; for your being seen by God as perfectly righteous, and for your learning to be righteous and holy by the strength of His transforming grace.

The real thing that He is looking for from you is your love for Him, and your willingness to learn to walk with Him and to learn to practice righteousness. If you love me, keep my commandments. And as you go about to learn to do God’s will, by Christ’s grace, He will cover you. He will watch all of your paths closely, but it will not be to condemn you, or to set a limit for the soles of your feet. But to help you to learn to do what is right consistently, and give you help all the way to glory.

