

Job 8: 1-22; “The Joy of God’s Way”, Sermon # 16 in the series entitled – “Remember to Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 7th, 2021, in the Afternoon Worship.

I have determined to preach concerning this chapter from verses 19 and 20 particularly. In the New King James Bible and the New American Standard, verse 19 says – “Behold, this is the joy of His way, and out of the earth others will grow.” “Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold evildoers.” The word “Behold” at the beginning of each verse seems to indicate to me that both verses are referring to God Himself. In other words, this is a revelation of God about Himself, which we need to think about this afternoon before we observe the Lord’s Supper. The word “His” in verse 19 is capitalized in the NKJ translation and in the NAS, and therefore we should understand that the translators thought this “joy” being referred to, was God’s joy. Behold, this is the joy of His Way.

I agree with this capitalization here. The International Standard Version reads – “Indeed, this the benefit of God’s way: from the soil, other plants will sprout.” In other words, from the soil of God’s just judgments which come upon sinners, we can learn things that will help us. And even more than that; from the soil of God’s just judgment upon Christ at the cross, other plants, that is, many people will be saved; they will sprout up to serve God. This is a great truth for us to think about now. Let me give you 3 Observations:

1st of all – It is the joy of God, in His way of perfect judgment, to test and to prove men.

This is what God was doing with Job in this trial of his faith. As we begin to think about this passage, I would have you remember that most of what Bildad says here is true concerning God’s judgment of hypocrites. But it was really adding insult to injury for him to have said these things to Job, in his most difficult situation of grief. Job had lost his children, his possessions, his health, and the approval of his wife and friends. And now he was being called a hypocrite by Eliphaz and Bildad. Job was not a hypocrite, for we know from the 1st chapter, he was a man of the highest moral integrity and character. It was not a good thing for Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar to state God’s revelation of Himself as a judge Judge and then misapply that truth to infer that Job, who had been an obvious man of proven character for many years, was really a hypocrite.

After reading the words of this chapter we should think that it was actually Bildad’s words which were a strong wind at many points. In building off of verse 19, as I am doing, I think that it is good that I tell you that verse 19 is thought of by John Gill, John Calvin and Joseph Caryl and many other commentators, as referring to the joy of hypocrites which is temporary, and will most surely come to an end. They believe that verse 19 refers to the hypocrite’s joy that he has only in this life. No doubt this is true, and many of the applications that these commentators make are valuable. But I believe that it will be good if we can simply look at this whole chapter from the standpoint of God’s joy in being a Just Judge, both in regard to the wicked and the righteous, even a blameless man as Job was.

It is true that God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. He says so in Ezekiel chapter 33, verse 11. “Say to them: ‘As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.’” “Turn, turn from your evil ways!” “For why should you die, O house of Israel?” But, even though this is true, we should understand that He does take joy in His way; that He gets glory for Himself, and has real joy in the demonstration of His perfect righteousness, justice and judgment, being displayed. It shows forth how righteous and holy, how just and true that He is. This brings real joy to His great heart.

Turn with me over to Psalm 76, verses 7-10 and you will see words which will confirm this. “You, Yourself, are to be feared, and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry?” “You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to

judgment, to deliver all the oppressed of the earth.” “Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; with the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.” So, we see here that even though hypocritical and other wicked men will be angry at being judged by God either in this life, or in the unending eternity of hell, it says here that their wrath shall praise Him. He shall gird Himself with it. It is His joy; not in their having to suffer pain, but in His being perfectly faithful to Himself and His Justice.

But, here in our text, when we find Bildad saying in verse 3 – “Does God subvert judgment?” “Or does the Almighty pervert justice?” “If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression,” we must pause and consider the real lack of discernment on Bildad’s part, in applying this truth in this way to him, so personally, in relation to the recent death of his sons and daughters. It is most certain is true that the Almighty does not pervert justice! But it is not at all a sure thing that Job’s sons and daughter’s deaths were because they were sinning at the feast that they were at, together, on that day that they all died! Bildad is assuming something that he does not know!

We who have the written Book of Job right in front of us now, we have the word of God made sure for us. And because of that, we know that it was Satan who demanded the permission from God to bring the strong wind which hit the house that they were having their birthday party in. And, yes, the storm took away all of the lives of the young people that day. We can say that in terms of God’s decrees, that God most surely did ordain this, even as He ordains all things after the counsel of His will. But we can also surely say that there was no joy in the heart of God over Satan’s malicious intent to do this to the young people, or to Job.

And we should go even further than this. We should be able to understand that the truth that just because these young people died in this storm, it is not in itself conclusive evidence that they were wicked young people, and that this was the reason why this happened. And so, we should not conclude necessarily, they were being cast away by God, as Bildad was boldly telling Job, took place! Bildad did not know their hearts. And He did not know God’s mind in this whole matter. And so, we must learn this lesson, as those who are dedicated to knowing God and fearing God; that God is the perfect Judge of things that He providentially orders by the counsel of His own will. He knows how to judge the wicked and He knows how to judge the righteous.

But we should learn to distinguish between the work of Satan and the work of God when we speak to people who are suffering the anguish of the loss of loved ones who have died sudden, violent, or unexpected deaths. Do not wrongfully attribute things to God that you do not know were His direct responsibility. God’s sovereignty is not rightfully understood when it is misapplied; when a person thinks that all violent deaths, God somehow in His ordaining of them, approves of them. Yes, He permissively has ordained it in His decrees. But the responsibility for sinful actions of Satan and men, are totally their responsibility. God is not the author of sin. God is a just judge, and does not approve of wickedness.

In regard to the righteous, men like Job, God says in Lamentations 3: 31 – “For the Lord will not cast off forever.” “Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.” “For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.” “To crush under one’s feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the justice due a man before the face of the Most High, or subvert a man in his cause – The Lord does not approve.” Let us think of God in this righteous way. We should not make judgments and say things that will compound the grief of the person who we are speaking to, regarding the loss of their loved ones.

The reason that all of this happened was because Job was the most righteous man on the face of the earth, and it was Job’s real integrity which brought about this contest, this interaction between God and Satan. And yet we find Bildad saying in verse 6 – “If you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful dwelling place.” “Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.” What condescending, hurtful speech! It was because Job was sincerely pure of heart by the grace of Christ His Redeemer, and upright in

God's sight, that He was experiencing these things. He did have things that God would teach him through this trial. He would have to go through this trial of his faith and learn that this was the joy of God's way, to order things in this way, just for him, to show forth Job's righteousness before the watching world of men, and angels, and demons.

2nd – It is the joy of God in His way perfect judgment, to show the futility of what hypocrites are building with their lives. (verses 8-18)

When Bildad says in verse 8 that Job should inquire of the former age, and consider the things discovered by their fathers, he is probably thinking of the times of the Antediluvian world, when God judged the world with bringing a flood of waters upon the ungodly. Noah, who came out of that judgment with just his own family, and Abraham who was the first Hebrew, a man who personally saw the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, they could tell you Job, Bildad is saying to him, that wicked men and hypocrites, though they flourished for a while, yet they were eventually destroyed by the judgments of God upon them. Whereas, good and upright men were never cast away by the Lord. This, Bildad says, is what they would tell you Job, if you would inquire. And then he gives certain illustrations to prove his observations about hypocrites.

Papyrus can't grow without a marsh. Reeds cannot flourish without water. (vs. 11) For a while it will be green, but it will wither shortly. So is the man who is without saving grace. Such are the paths of all that forget God. God is not in many of their thoughts, even though they profess Him, by their deeds they deny Him. He has done many great things for them, but they forget the benefits and the blessings of His goodness. They are not really thankful for God's continual help to them, and by their lives, they weave a spider's web of deception, Bildad says in verse 15. You know how intricately and finely the spider can weave his web. But it is easily knocked down by a broom or even a hand. A hypocrite will lean on his house; on his riches or his outward prosperity, and thinks that it will stay that way for a long, long, time.

This is the picture that Bildad is trying to show Job, in order to intimate that this might be him. On this basis, the hypocrite thinks that he is in God's good favor; trusting in his own works of righteousness, even regular in his going to public worship; he believes that in the final analysis that this is what will meet with God's approval. In this regard he is like a great green tree in the sun, which spreads its branches out in his garden. You see this same description in Psalm 37, verse 35 where David says – "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree." "Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; indeed I sought him, but he could not be found." Bildad was saying that a green tree like this one being described, is hypocritical, because it makes a great profession of religion, it has the leaves of real profession, but it has no fruit to bear for God.

But Bildad should have remembered that Job had given every evidence of his being a true and faithful believer in God by his fearing God and turning away from evil. Bildad had no reason to conclude the things that he was speaking were true of his friend Job. How could he look Job in the face and say that his roots were wrapped around the the rock heap of his life, and if he was destroyed from his place that it would deny him, saying: I have not seen you! Yes, it is the joy of God's way in His perfect judgment to show men the futility of the life of a hypocrite; a person who is storing up wrath for the Day of wrath and God's judgment. It may lead the hypocrite or the careless person to repentance. But in Job's case, Bildad's words only compounded the pain and grief that Job felt in his heart as he said to himself – Where is my God? But now, let me give you a third observation that will bring Christ into this sad picture, and show us more of the joy of God's way of doing things.

3rd – It is the joy of God, in His way of perfect judgment, to give His Son, so that even the blameless may be saved.

Verse 19 says – Behold, this is the joy of His way, and out of the earth others will grow." "Behold God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers." "He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing." "Those who hate you will be clothed with

shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing.” And so, Job confesses in verse 1 of chapter 9 – “Truly, I know it is so, but how can a man be righteous with God?” What I believe Job was grappling with at this time, was how he could be perfectly righteous before God. It does not appear that he knew all that we do now, based upon the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, about the doctrine of Justification. He was a righteous man, but he realized very well that he was not a perfect man. He knew that even though he was a blameless man, that still he had sins which needed to be forgiven.

He could not understand why God was putting him through this trial that he was going through. And his friend Bildad wasn't helping him much, by saying the things that he had said. But Bildad did say something here in verse 19 which perhaps even he himself didn't understand completely. And it was something very good. It was kind of like what the high priest Caiaphas said in John 11: 47-52, when the chief priests and scribes gathered a council together to discuss the effect that Jesus' ministry was having on the people. In that council they were saying, “What shall we do?” “For this Man works many signs.” “If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

And Caiaphas said to them – “You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” He was simply speaking from the perspective of a man who was loyal to Israel, even though He was not being loyal to God. Actually, in relation to Jesus' being put to death, he was being a complete hypocrite who God would eventually judge for his hypocrisy, in his not believing in Jesus as His Messiah, the Savior of the world. For John comments on what he said in this way in verse 51 – “Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.”

In other words, there was a greater plan and purpose behind the death of Jesus, that Caiaphas did not realize. It was that Jesus, through His death, would save His people from their sins. He Himself was crucified and was buried in the earth where He would lay for 3 days and 3 nights, and then He would rise again. This was the joy of God's way; to make make His Son the sacrifice for sins and for sinners. And then, having made propitiation for the sins of all of His elect people, God would raise Him from the dead, and men, men even like Job who were blameless and who needed a Redeemer, would be saved and helped to become holy. Jesus said in John 12, verse 23, the next day, before He went to the cross – “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.”

This ties in with our text, because it was for the joy that was set before Him, that Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame; He suffered and died for all kinds of sinners, both hypocrites who see their hypocrisy, and want to repent of it, who want to be forgiven of their sins. And also, then, men like Job who needed forgiveness. Men who need to understand justification by faith better; men who are blameless, and yet they need to be forgiven of seeing God as their enemy. This is what Christ came to do. This was the joy of His way. Out of the earth of His death and burial, and resurrection, others like us would grow. We have become the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. Our righteous life, grows out of His. Let us now partake of these elements.