

**Job 2: 11-13; “The Importance of Godly Friends”, Sermon # 6 in the series entitled –
“Remember To Magnify His Work”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on October 6th, 2019, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Now that Job’s awful plight had become known to the people around him, they began to think about what they should do, and how they might possibly minister to him in this most difficult of situations, that he continued to be in. This was not going to be an easy thing, because Job was still in the midst of this great trial, and it was apparent that it was not going to go away anytime soon. Job was a man who was experiencing great grief over the loss of all of his children. He was experiencing great bewilderment over why God would permit that, as well as the loss of all of his possessions. And now, having also lost his health, Satan having struck him with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of head, and his having lost the confidence and support of his wife in his spiritual battle to maintain his integrity, he was indeed in great need of the encouragement which godly friends could bring to him.

Before we observe the Lord’s Supper this afternoon, I want to bring to your attention the things that Job’s three friends did, which give us a good example of how we can help those Christian people who are going through terrible trials and afflictions in their life. My proposition to you is this: When a Christian is going through great and awful trials in their life, it is the responsibility of those in their church, or others around them who know the Lord, to think of how they might minister to such a one in the name of Christ, and on behalf of Christ. I want to link this proposition of truth with the trials that Christ Himself went through, and show you that our being able to effectively minister to others going through trials, is based entirely upon the grace of Christ and the leading of the Spirit; which things He purchased for us, when He suffered and died upon the cross.

Yes, we know that Christ suffered for us, so that we would be forgiven of all of our sins. But He also suffered for us in order that, by His help, we might come to know the right ways and the best ways, to minister to those who are suffering while they go through their trials. This is one of great lessons of the book of Job, and so we need to take notice of it. We are going to see, as I take you farther into this book in coming sermons, that Job’s three friends did not do very well in their ministering to Job. They were very spiritually minded men, but as they beheld Job’s words, defending his own integrity, they were provoked by them, and they ended up not being able to speak the things of God which were right, or to really help Job at all. God Himself says this at the end of this book. Job’s friends sinned against God in some of the things that they said about Him. And they also sinned against Job in the way that they spoke to him, and how they attempted to minister to him.

But at this hour, I want to show you that their intentions were good, at least in the beginning. They started out well, and so we can learn from them. I want to show you 1st of all – Their thoughtfulness in their coming to see Job. (verse 11) 2nd – Their thoughtfulness in their reaction to his awful predicament. (verse 12) And 3rd – Their thoughtfulness in their willingness to continue with him in this great trial. (verse 13) It is my prayer that each of us here will take notice of ways that Job’s three friends did right, so that by the grace of Christ, which He purchased for us at the cross, that we too might become more thoughtful and more helpful comforters to people around us, when they are going through the trial of their lives.

1st of all – I would have you to take notice of the thoughtfulness of Job’s friends in their coming to see him at this time.

Verse 11 says – “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each on came from his own place – Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.” “For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him.” It seems apparent to me that the book of Job was written sometime around the time of the life of the Patriarch Jacob and his son Joseph, as Teman was a descendant of Esau, Jacob’s

brother. And you will recall that Esau lived in Seir, a neighboring country to Canaan, the Promised Land. In Genesis 36: 10, we read – “These were the names of Esau’s son: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau.” “And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.” This man Teman, I am told by the commentator Joseph Caryl, who descended from Esau, is supposed to have been the father or the Ancestor of this Eliphaz here in the book of Job, and that is why he is called Eliphaz the Temanite.” It is encouraging to note that even though Esau was a godless man, that at least one of his descendants became a believer in the true and living God.

At any rate, these three men were Job’s closest friends. I suppose that Job had many other friends beside these three, but these three were his closest friends and confidants. Even as our Lord Jesus called all of His closest disciples, His friends, if they did what He commanded them; nevertheless, when he went up on the Mount of Transfiguration, and when He went a ways away in the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, He took with Him Peter, and James, and John. It is a good thing to have a few close friends; those whom you can call your bosom friends or buddies, those whom you can confide in, and talk over matters of greatest importance with, no matter how great or serious the matter of concern is. These were no fair-weather friends, friends who were with Job in all the days of his prosperity, but who would not take notice of his predicament, now that he had been lowered to the dust. They were those who right away, when they heard of what had befallen Job, they got together and they made an appointment, our text says, to come and see him. We ought to be those who do the same, and be those who are able to sympathize with, and truly try to help, those who are undergoing serious trials.

The reason that they wanted to come and see him was not mere curiosity; that is, they didn’t simply come to him to gain knowledge of his condition, but they came in order that they might mourn with him, and to comfort him in this affliction. It will be good to ask ourselves the reason why we want to go to see someone who is going through a great trial, or someone who is sick and dying. Do we do so for the right reasons? Sometimes we may not be thoughtful in our approach to ministering to people in such situations. We might come to see them bringing a number of people with us. And we rush into the presence of the one who not feeling well, or even dying, and then we sit and talk, not so much with them, but we talk with others in the room, in voices which may be too loud, about things which have no real concern to the one who we came to visit. It may have not been our intention, but we may actually have weakened them by our coming to visit, rather than our having strengthened their heart during the time of their greatest difficulties.

People in these situations do not need to be overwhelmed with socializing in such situations. A visit like this is not a group-think situation. It is not even a time of fellowship. A person in this kind of situation needs you to speak thoughtful words, if you speak at all; words which will minister to their particular predicament. Those of us who would minister comfort, must ask ourselves, what is our purpose in coming to visit those who are going through dark and difficult days of trial? Have we really come to minister comfort and hope to them, to comfort them with verses of Scripture and pray with them? Or have we come merely to satisfy our own curiosity about how God is dealing with them?

This is not only not right, but it is inconsiderate and unhelpful, and it can even become a problem to the person who is going through the trial, or drawing near to death. I want you to see that these friends of Job’s were thoughtful men; at least at this time, in the beginning of their time with Job. They made an appointment, they did not simply rush right in. They wanted to come at a good time. And they came for the right reasons; to mourn with him, and to comfort him. This was a time of the utmost sadness and grief for Job. He had lost everything in Satan’s attack against him, and yet he still maintained his integrity.

Let me say by way of application that it is good to be able to sympathize with the one going through the trial. It is good to be a good observer and a good listener, even more than a speaker. Listen to Psalm 41: 1 – “Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of

trouble.” “The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.” “The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; you will sustain him on his sickbed.” What is being said here? The principle of truth that we should learn from this, is to remember, when you go to visit someone who in the midst of a trial: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Ask yourself – How would I want to be treated in such circumstances? What would I want to have said to me? Wouldn't I want someone who will sympathize with me; a brother or a sister who will be thinking of how they can encourage me with God's promises and express their best wishes for me? It is good to ask ourselves – How long would I want someone to stay when they visit me? Well, probably long enough to express sympathy and pray. And short enough that they do not impose upon my privacy and my need to personally grieve in private or think over my situation in private. People who are suffering do need space, in order to privately interact with God. I should think to myself – What would I want to discuss if I were passing through a great and dark time of difficulty? This is the best thing that you can do if you want to minister to those who are going through great trials.

2nd – I want to show you the thoughtfulness of these men in their reaction to Job's awful predicament. (verse 12)

Verse 12 says – “And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven.” In verse 11 it said that they each one came to mourn with him. Here we find that when they got there and saw him, they couldn't even recognize him as the man that they had known before, and so they lifted up their voices and wept. They wept for Job's loss. They wept because his condition was far worse than they had originally conceived. They could not think of anything worse, that could have happened to him, and yet they could see that he was still alive. They each one tore his robe, which was a sign of their full sympathy with the agony of his loss; that truly it was a very great loss. They sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven. This meant that all things had come to a state of sorrowful confusion, both for Job and for them as they beheld him.

Joseph Caryl says – “This act (of sprinkling dust on their heads) signified that all things were full of sorrowful confusion, the earth and the air were mingled, the Heavens also were cloudy and darkened, therefore they cast dust toward Heaven; for as by a stormy wind and tempest, the dust is raised, which thickens the air, and obscures the Heavens; so by that act of casting or sprinkling dust in the air, stormy, tempestuous and troublesome times were signified.” (end of quote) By way of application, we should act and react to great and tragic events that our brethren are going through, with expressions of sorrow and grief which are appropriate for such a time. We should not act as though nothing has happened and that life will go on. We should not be casual about another's loss. Life will go on, but things great and terrible have happened, and you should know that there is a time to mourn and show your grief in godly way. (Ecclesiastes 3: 4)

They wept vehemently, and they wept exceedingly. They wept in their sorrow, and they wept in the agony which they felt for Job. In our sympathy with what our brethren are going through, in what we behold them having to endure, in watching their suffering, pain, and loss, we ought to appropriately express our emotions, as those who know that we have real hope. 1st Thessalonians 4: 13 – “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. “For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” In other words, when a brother or a sister is dying, we ought to sorrow, but we must sorrow with the hope of all that the Lord Jesus died to bring to us, and the certain hope of heaven that they are moving toward.

We have the knowledge of sins forgiven. We have the sure hope of the resurrection of Christ; that He has overcome sin and death. We know and believe that He will give our failing hearts and souls spiritual life to sustain us, in the worst of situations which we face. Therefore, we ought to look upon all the situations that our suffering brethren are going through, in the faith of Jesus

Christ. We think of our suffering brethren as fellow-believers who we can identify with, who we can sympathize with. And so we view their sufferings and loss as things which we can lovingly enter into, with them. Let us now come down front, and I will have a few more thoughts to share with you before we partake of the Supper.

3rd – I would like us to think of Job’s friend’s thoughtfulness, in their willingness to continue with him in this great trial. (verse 13)

Verse 13 says – “So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.” In thinking about these men’s actions, I want to declare to you that I believe that they acted very wisely. They sat down with him on the ground for seven days and nights, and they didn’t say a word, because they saw how great his grief was. They saw how very difficult it was going to be to minister any comfort at all to him. But this did not deter them from continuing to think of how they could minister to dear Job. I am thankful that as we come to this Supper of Remembrance that we have much to bring us eternal hope and good comfort by grace. For we remember that Christ suffered and died to bring us real comfort and hope in an ongoing daily basis. The thought of His resurrection, and our spiritual resurrection in Him, and our physical resurrection on the Last Day; these thoughts delight our hearts.

I believe that what He has done for us ought to cause us to lift up our heads, and on the basis of our hope, we ought to think about taking the initiative to minister to others around us who may be hurting terribly. This will usually begin, not with speaking many words, but just sitting there with the person who is going through the trial, and your assuring them that you are there for them. Do you remember what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane? He took His closest friends Peter, James, and John, and He asked them to watch and pray with Him for one hour. Well, they were not able to do it, and they fell asleep, for sorrow, it says in one place. They did not see that at this critical time, what it was that the Lord Jesus really needed. He simply needed faithful friends who would stand with Him in His darkest hour.

But listen to what Jesus had said to them before, in Luke 21: 24 – “Now there was a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.” “And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.” But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.” “For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves?” “Is it not he who sits at the table?” “Yet I am among you as the One who serves.” “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials.” This last statement was something that the Lord Jesus was commending His disciples for; sticking with Him, as He went through all of these trials of His being rejected for being the ultimate man of Integrity, and sticking with Him when He was being despised and rejected of men.

He was not looking for something from them that was dramatic; like what Peter did that night, when he cut off the high priest’s ear. He was looking for them to faithfully stand with Him while He was arrested and taken away to the mock trial, standing with Him when He suffered the shameful death on the cross. But He knew that this was something that He alone could do. This is why we remember our Lord Jesus each month in the Supper. Jesus paid it all, all to Him we owe. He died for our sins, that we by His grace, might come to understand how we might become more like our Him in our service to Him; that we might be friends to His brethren. “For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Christ having served in this holy self-denying way, accomplished His mission to redeem a people for the Father’s possession; a people who are zealous for good works. Some of those good works are going to be your learning how to minister to other believers when they are going through their trials. In this holy way, you will become more like Him over time.