

Seeing Eyes Repent

Job 42:1-6

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction:

- A. Today we will be considering the first 6 verses of the very last chapter of the Book of Job, chapter 42, verses 1-6. But I'd like to introduce this message by first directing your attention to Matthew, chapter 13.
- B. In Matthew 13 we read how Christ stood before a multitude by the seashore and began to speak to them in parables. As you know, parables are stories utilizing simple, common, earthly elements to teach spiritual truths. And immediately after Christ finished with the first parable, the disciples came to Him and asked Him why He spoke to them in parables. And in Matthew 13:11 we read, ***“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”*** And then down in verse 13 He continues saying, ***“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing <i.e. – with the physical eye> see not <i.e. – that is they see not with the spiritual eye of God-given faith>; and hearing <physically> they hear not <spiritually>, neither do they understand.*** Then down in verse 16, He adds, ***“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.”*** Now from this we know that a sinner must be miraculously blessed by God if they are to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven – if they are to gain the understanding that comes from God to all those He saves. This revelation of faith must be given unto them.

II. Introduction to Today's Text:

- A. Now in today's text, Job chapter 42, in verses 5 & 6, we read of Job speaking to God saying, ***“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*** Here at the end of this book, Job is telling us that he had heard some things of God, but that now he sees God in a different light – seeing God as He is, different to how He had seen Him before this time, before this “now” when his “eye seeth.” And in verse 6 he says that because of that, “wherefore,” he now repents.
- B. A few years back I read through the entire Book of Job and went I got to these 2 verses, what struck me was the definite linkage set forth here between these 2 things: Job's “seeing” and Job's consequential “repentance.” He saw, and so repented. And that's where I'd like to direct your attention this morning in this message I've titled, “Seeing Eyes Repent.”

- III. Background on Job: To set the stage, let me give you a brief overview of the Book of Job and the events that lead up to Job's repentance here in this last chapter.
- A. In the very 1st verse of this book, Job is described as a man that was "perfect and upright" and "one that feared God." Accordingly, we know that Job was both a justified sinner, (declared not guilty, perfect, and upright through the redemption that is in Christ) and he was a regenerated sinner, a born again believer who had been blessed with spiritual eyes to see God by virtue of the God-given, blood-bought gift of faith – the fruit and effect of the redemption that His promised Messiah would accomplish in time.
- B. Now I point this out because today I will be speaking of Job's repentance that we will read of at the end of this book – the repentance of a one who had already manifested the evidence of having spiritual life – having already come to God by God-given faith and in initial repentance that cannot be separated from true, genuine faith. We know from scripture, that due to remaining sin and the sinful fallen nature that inflicts us all until we leave this body of death, even born again believers are plagued with periods of unbelief and thoughts that dishonor their God and Savior.
- C. As this book progresses, Job having endure a series of tragic calamities, ends up harboring some idolatrous thoughts of God – thoughts contrary to the nature of the true and living God that Job had come to know by God-given faith. But Job was a child of God and God chastens His children and continually brings them to repentance. And while born again believers may have already been taught better, as we walk on this earth and endure various trials, we can fall into thinking some pretty awful things – including things pertaining to God.
- D. Now I say all of this because I believe that this same linkage that exists between being brought to (1) see God as He is and (2) the subsequent and sure repentance that results from that divine revelation is manifested whenever God reveals Himself as He is – whether this is the revelation of faith and repentance that takes place initially in the regeneration and conversion of a sinner or that which takes place when God brings a saved sinner back to his or her spiritual senses so to speak – continually bringing us to remembrance of the God in whom we've placed our trust. And this would describe the repentance of Job that we're considering today.
- E. Now as the book progresses, we're told how God granted Satan permission to try or test Job. Job was a very rich man whom God had blessed greatly and Satan asserted that if God would allow him to take away all those things that Job would curse God. So God basically said to Satan, "Have at it – take all he has away, but don't you lay your hand on him."

So, in accordance with God's sovereign purpose, He allowed Satan to bring tragedy Job's way. It's recorded how the various types of Job's livestock were either stolen, killed, or consumed by fire. His many servants who were tending to Job's livestock were also killed. And then to top it off, all of his children were killed.

- F. And yet Job, exhibiting great faith and grace from God continued to worship God after this first round of combat with Satan as evidenced by what Job said at the end of chapter 1, ***"...Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. ²²In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."*** Now I don't know about you, but I can't imagine losing everything, especially all of my children and not falling into the "Why me Lord" type of questioning and the harboring of thoughts toward God that stand opposed (rather than in submission to) the sovereignty of God and to His holy justness in all that He does. But at this stage, Job had endured Satan's trials quite well. Satan had been allowed to touch and take all he had but Job did not curse God as Satan had predicted.
- G. So in the 2nd chapter, Satan in essence says to God, "Let me at him again. And this time let me hurt him physically." And God in His infinite wisdom, again turned Satan loose on Job but with the restriction that he could not take his life or kill him. And so Job is struck with a painful disease. He had boils all over his body from head to toe. If you've ever tried to talk serious issues with someone who is in pain, (particularly if they are painfully near death), you know that it is difficult for them to reason well above all of their misery. And then to add insult to his injury, Job's wife tempts him to curse God and yet he resists doing so.
- H. And so then Job's 3 friends, his so-called comforters, came to console and advise him. And miserable comforters they turned out to be. Much of the book is taken up with their counseling Job about why such calamity had fell upon him. To summarize, they all approached Job from a religious standpoint that is natural to all of us – that is from a works – reward philosophy. Much of it fell into the category of essentially saying, "Job – if you had not done this or had done that – none of this would have come upon you." And Job responds to this and so quite a bit of dialogue between them is recorded for us.
- I. Following this discourse with his 3 friends, Job receives valuable correction and instruction from Elihu who attempts to get Job to refocus as recorded in chapters 32 - 37. And then God himself speaks to Job in chapters 38-41, speaking to Job out of the whirlwind as I'm sure some of you recall.

And so when we get to chapter 42, where I intend to focus most of our remaining time, Job comes to repentance of his previous sinful thoughts. Let's read there, beginning in verse 1.

IV. Job 42:1-6: *Then Job answered the LORD, and said, ²I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. ³Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. ⁴Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. ⁵I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Now let's look closer at these verses.

A. Verses 1-2: Now here at the beginning of chapter 42, notice that Job acknowledges 2 of God's attributes: (1) God's omnipotence – "...*thou canst do every thing,*" and (2) God's omniscience – "...*no thought can be withholden from thee.*"

1. We can learn much about what Job was thinking prior to this expression of his repentance by observing the corrections from both Elihu and from the Lord as He spoke to Job out of the whirlwind starting back in chapter 38. There in verse 4 God said to Job, "***Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.***" He's basically saying, "Job, who do you think you are compared to me?" And from the beginning of chapter 38 all the way up to chapter 42, God, the almighty, all-knowing Creator and Sovereign ruler of all describes Himself as such in sharp contrast to Job, the creature. Time will not permit us to review that in detail but in summary, God reminds Job how He sustains all things and can and does manage every creature, citing those who would be no match for man. God cites many instances of what He could do that Job could not do, including humbling the proud. And God, knowing Job's thoughts, being omniscient as Job so acknowledges here – brought Job to repent of those thoughts – to bow in submission, bringing Job to resign himself to the perfect will and purpose of God.
2. So Job here is acknowledging that which God had brought to his remembrance in the preceding chapters – that He, God, can do all things, that He, God, has every right to do what He pleases, and that whatever God does He is acting in perfect wisdom, righteously, and justly for God is righteous and just.
3. And when Job says "...*no thought can be withholden from thee*" he seems to be acknowledging that God, who knows all – certainly knew his (Job's) own secret thoughts as well. God knows the thoughts (good and bad) that Job had entertained as it pertains to God – thoughts he had concerning God's wisdom in allowing all the tragic events to fall upon Job, concerning His righteousness, and concerning His goodness (lack of it) in all that God providentially brings about. And God also knew what thoughts Job had of these things now, as He had graciously revealed Himself afresh again to Job.

4. Now it may also be understood here when Job says, “...*that no thought can be withholden from thee*” that He is speaking of the thoughts of God’s own heart as if to say that whatever secret purpose God thought in accordance with His infinite wisdom, cannot be withheld from becoming reality. That would be in keeping with what God says through the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 46:10b, “*My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*”
 5. Regardless of how you interpret that particular phrase at the end of verse 2, it’s clear here that Job is voicing his submission to God as God has described Himself in the preceding chapters. Job now saw that all that takes place is according to God’s counsel – His purpose and will that is accompanied by and a product of His infinite wisdom. And so it is above being questioned by man. Job had come to know that not only could God do everything, but He also could and does do whatever God is pleased within Himself to do.
- B. Verse 3: Now Job’s remark in verse 3 is very similar to what God had actually first said to him back in chapter 38, verse 2 when God begin to speak to Job out of the whirlwind. His first words to Job there were: “*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*” And here in chapter 42, verse 2, Job essentially repeats this by saying “*Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?*”
1. Some think that this phrase is better understood if it’s read like this, “As you have said to me, God, *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?* – it is I.” And that may be the correct understanding.
 2. When read with verse 2, I think Job may be saying ²*I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee*, <I> “*Who is he < -- he, the one,> that hideth counsel without knowledge?*” In other words Job is saying in response to God’s accusation in chapter 38, yes – you’re right God – I darkened or hid counsel without knowledge.
 3. Now what I believe Job is confessing that indeed he had misrepresented what God providentially had brought to pass as being unwise and not good, not just, and not equitable. Consider what Elihu had said of Job back in chapter 34, beginning in verse 5, where we read, “*For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. ⁶Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.* <In other words, I’m struck with these tragic circumstances and I didn’t do anything to deserve it> ⁷*What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?* ⁸*Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.* Now how was Job keeping company with the wicked here? That’s revealed in the next verse as Elihu continues saying...>

⁹***For he <Job> hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*** Job is saying His trusting in God has done him no good. You see how Job has fell into the natural, works / reward mentality of false religion here. Why I've trusted God and He owes me for it. Today men say it this way – I've done my part – now God is obligated to save me. That's certainly not salvation by grace.

4. But now, by chapter 42, Job is agreeing with God here in verse 3, admitting “I am that foolish man that hideth or darkeneth counsel without knowledge.” Here Job is owning up to having misrepresented (both in his thoughts and words) the truth that God is in sovereign control of all things and that His counsel, His purpose, in all that God does is right, righteous, and just. Job hid that in that in this sense – Job's perspective had become similar to that of his miserable friends. He was looking to himself to explain as he complained about his circumstances, as if he had lost sight of (or set aside) the truth that God remains in control of all things and that all He does is right.
5. And furthermore, we often do not understand why God does what He does – particularly in His providential dealings with men. So Job says, I was reasoning from man's natural perspective of things. So Job adds there in verse 3, ***therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*** Job is saying that I spoke about things beyond my understanding concerning how God deals with men in providence, bringing bad things to the righteous such as he had experienced while allowing wicked men to prosper. And so Job had maligned the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God as if circumstances should have been different than God had ordained them to be in His sovereign purpose. But now, God has graciously opened his eyes resulting in his repentance whereby Job owns up to his ignorance and sinful folly.
6. With things back into the perspective of God's reality, Job says these things are too wonderful for me – beyond his capacity to understand. Job seems to be acknowledging that he should have simply marveled at God's doing with wonder and admiration and with a humble resignation and stopped there. As Romans 11:33 reads, ***“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”***
- C. Verse 4: Now in verse 4, when Job says, ***“Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me,”*** he is simply responding to God's command as given in chapters 38 and following – the command that Job answer him. And when he says ***“I will demand of thee”*** – that is to be understood as “I will petition you God as one who has access to boldly go before the throne of God, having been made acceptable in Christ.

And so Job says, “...*declare thou unto me,*” so as to emphasize – “You teach me God (not the other way around) and let my understanding be what You say is so.”

D. Verse 5: And then Job speaks there in verse 5 of having heard of God by the hearing of the ear, and then he adds but “...*now mine eye seeth thee.*” The “now” in that statement tells us that Job is speaking of something He didn’t see or perceive the same way previously.

1. Some believe that Job is referring to the fact that He actually saw a pre-incarnate appearance in human form of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, who spoke to Him out of the whirlwind. And this may be the case as it is recorded how that Christ had so appeared to others before His actual birth and subsequent walk on this earth. But regardless, there can be no doubt that Job certainly is speaking here of the eye of his understanding – seeing something clearer than he had before.
2. I think the sense of this is that Job is saying, I’ve heard of you God. Job had been taught well that God could do all things and knew all things. In fact, given the testimony concerning Job at the beginning of the book, we know he actually had seen God as He is known in Christ with the eyes of faith in belief of God’s gospel of grace. And yet I believe we can see how Job’s temporary lapse into these sinful thoughts of unbelief is akin or similar to the same ignorance and unbelief of all unregenerate or lost sinners who have yet to be delivered from their spiritual blindness.

E. Verse 6: And so Job says, now seeing, verse 6, “*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*”

1. “Wherefore” is an important word here linking these 2 verses. Job is saying that now seeing things aright, he is brought to abhor himself and repent.
2. Now repenting in “dust and ashes” was an external ceremony used by those who were sorrowful or mourning. And it was used to express the truth or the sincerity of one’s repentance. And believers, you know there is no greater ashamedness and repentance or more genuine confession of sin than that which springs from the eye of God-given faith wherein a sinner is brought to behold God as He is uniquely revealed in Christ – not only as a Sovereign, all powerful, all knowing, just God, but as a God of mercy and grace, seeing what it took, the blood of their Substitute for a holy God to forgive their sins.
3. You know, I like the description you’ve heard before from others describing what takes place when God first reveals Himself to a sinner in regeneration and conversion under the Gospel. It’s been described this way – God causes us to take sides with Him against ourselves. And I think that helps us understand what it means when it speaks of a truly repentant sinner coming to abhor (hate) him or herself.

4. Those of you who were here last Sunday may recall that Gary Shepard referred to Luke 14:26, where Christ told the multitude gathered there, ***“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”*** Having already begun my study for today’s message, I was struck by that phrase there, “...and his own life also.” I think that is exactly what all who come to Christ initially for salvation experience. And it is also what happens as one like Job continues in a spirit of repentance with the eye of faith, looking to Christ. When we see God as He is uniquely revealed in Christ, we’re reminded of how we must have Christ’s righteousness as our own. There is no hope to be found elsewhere. And in seeing that, we forsake self – we forsake the universally held, natural notion that salvation and my eternal well being is at least in part a result of some condition or requirement that I, the sinner, am able to meet. And when God opens our eyes to the truth of His gospel of grace that puts that notion in the dust, it is in that sense that we abhor ourselves as we flee to Christ alone for all of our salvation – pleading His righteousness alone and forsaking any self-righteousness – any condition or requirement that we had presumed to be able to meet in order to be saved.

5. Recall that at the beginning of that great passage on repentance in Philippians 3, Paul said there in verse 3, ***“For we are the circumcision, <the chosen people or Israel of God, chosen unto eternal salvation in Christ> which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”*** That’s what it is to abhor yourself in Godly repentance. You repent of ever having imagined that God could save you or keep you saved based upon some work of your hand – no confidence in the flesh.

V. Closing / Summary:

Now today you’ve heard me mention over and again how Job’s repentance sprung from His seeing God aright – as He is. He begins this last chapter by citing 2 of God’s attributes – what God is like. And this is no small matter. Remember what Christ Himself prayed in John 17:3, ***“... this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”***

You know, true believers in every age can relate to Job in saying, “I’d heard of you God.” You see, this hearing would be like hearsay as in “I’ve heard tell.” In my case, I was taught and thought that I truly believed many true things about God. I was taught He was omnipotent or all-powerful, omniscient or all-knowing. I was taught that God did right, was just, was all-wise, and in control.

Now all of this was at a time when I was still blind to the truth of the Gospel and of the Christ revealed therein. Yet, at that time I would still have sincerely and adamantly asserted that I truly believed all of these attributes of God to be so. I even thought that what I believed was the gospel of God's grace.

But, oh when God opened my eyes under the sound of His gospel wherein His righteousness is revealed, – I discovered I knew those attributes of God in word only. I had not seen with the eye of faith that God was truly all powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, just, and the sovereign of all things. And all of this was exposed by the true gospel that sets forth how God saves sinners in and by Christ alone, based upon His finished work of righteousness alone.

For true godly repentance to take place (as it does for all who come to Christ for salvation), one must be confronted with the reality of their idolatry. No one knowingly worships an idol. If you've never comprehended your own idolatry, then it would be impossible for you to have repented or turned from it. Idolatry consists of wrong thoughts about God –who He is and what He is like. As we just read, life eternal is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ. So in salvation we repent of idolatry.

Consider my own former thoughts of God, – inconsistencies that God confronted me with so as to expose my own former idolatry. While knowing much about God and what Christ did, I knew nothing of Christ's actual accomplishment in establishing righteousness. I considered Christ's death on the cross as the ultimate expression and supreme example of God's love, yet I mistakenly believed that multitudes perished from among those for whom He died. Even though I thought that Christ died "for their sins," I also believed that many, even most, of these presumed objects of His love perished.

So while I had heard that God was just, my view of how God saves sinners at that time actually denied God's justice – until God gave me eyes to see differently. My view of God required that He forego His holiness and justice in order to express His love. If I had thought sins were truly punished in Christ on the cross, then I should have seen that only an unjust and ruthless tyrant would send any folks to hell whose sin debt had already been paid by Christ, His beloved Son.

I failed to recognize this slanderous assault on His character. I certainly would not have knowingly made such an assault on the character of God, yet in the blindness of my lost condition, that's exactly what my erroneous thoughts of God and His way of salvation amounted to. You see if your own view of God and how He saves sinners is such that He must act contrary to even one of His attributes as revealed in the Bible, then your concept of God is fatally flawed – actually not the true and living God at all since God cannot act contrary to Himself.

Consider how I believed, (as do multitudes in our day), that God loves everyone, that He tries to save everyone, and that He sent Christ to die for everyone without exception. I've just shown how this denies His justice, but what does it say about His other attributes? For example, what does this say about God's love, grace, faithfulness, wisdom, and power? My doctrine – my gospel – my flawed understanding of how I thought God saved sinners was equivalent to saying that even though God loved these sinners, He lacked either the desire or the power or the wisdom to insure their salvation.

That false gospel accuses God of one or more of the following:

- 1) He loves those that perish, but isn't wise enough to foresee the obstacles to their salvation. I had heard He was wise – but my gospel / my doctrine denied it.
- 2) Or alternatively it makes this accusation: He loves those that perish, but isn't powerful enough to overcome the obstacles and difficulties in order to save them. I had heard He was omnipotent – but my gospel / my doctrine denied it.
- 3) And thirdly, you would have to say His love is certainly not infinite. Actually, it is worthless – for although He is infinitely wise and powerful, He opts not to intervene and engage Himself to insure the well being of the objects of His love, allowing many of them to perish. I had heard God was love – but my gospel / my doctrine denied it.
- 4) And finally, as typified by Job, think of how many avoid and refuse to accept the clear scriptural truth that God is indeed sovereign and in control of all things. That means He is sovereign in salvation as well. I had heard God was sovereign – but my gospel / my doctrine denied it.

In Romans 9, beginning in verse 15 we read how God had said to Moses, “...*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*”¹⁶ *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*” As Jonah put it, “Salvation is of the Lord” – the whole kit and kaboodle – all of it!

And in salvation, God blesses His children with eyes to see that truly it is of the Lord – that every requirement and condition for the salvation of His children was fully met by the righteousness Christ established for them as their Substitute on the cross as He bore the penalty due unto their sins.. This He accomplished for all those whom God, according to His own sovereign will, was pleased to show mercy.

So what God in essence said to Job to bring him back to his senses, he says to all those He saves. When God gives us the spiritual faculties of life that we might see Him as He is, we agree with Him as if He has awakened us to the answer of the questions that seem to summarize His correction to Job. God basically confronted Job anew with this: Who do you think I am? And Who do you think you are?

Convincing us of sin, God humbles us and causes us to say with Job, “Oh, I uttered that which I understood not. Why, it’s beyond my understanding to know why God you providentially act as you do. I don’t know why you chose me and not someone else. But I now know I’m one of them because you’ve drawn me by faith to Christ for all of my salvation and caused me to repent of my former idolatry. You’ve humbled me to bow to your sovereign right to choose whom You will and I must rest there and not go beyond that which you are pleased to reveal through your Word.”

So by God’s grace, those He saves can say with Job, “now that mine eye seeth, I abhor myself and repent. I repent of ever imagining that anything done by, in, or through me, a sinner could merit my salvation. And we realize this when God reveals to us what it really took – the precious blood of my Savior. Not one drop of that precious blood was shed in vain. He redeemed all those for whom He died.

Have your eyes seen God as He is? If so, you have experienced this radical change called repentance. Those blessed by God with spiritual eyes, change gods. For as I hope you’ve seen today, “Seeing Eyes Repent!”

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God’s grace found in the only infallible source, God’s word itself – the Bible.