

Job's repentance

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Komplimenter, Mein Freund, und mein wunderschöner Freund.

Ich liebe dich von meinem Herzen.

Das ist ein kompletter Komplimenter. Aber, wenn ich darüber nachdenke und darüber spreche, dann werde ich es nicht tun.

Das ist die Art von Kompliment.

Das ist die Art von Kompliment.

Jeder, der komplimentiert hat, weiß, wie gut es ist, wie wunderschön es ist, wie gut die Heilung ist, und er weiß es in der Realität. Und natürlich kann es nicht gehabt oder genießt werden, außer wenn man es komplimentiert hat. Es ist traurig zu sagen, dass es ein Thema ist, das wir in diesen Tagen selten hören. Tage, in denen der Gospelsprachverhalten schallig ist, I'm not particularly referring to what takes place in our little meetings, because I think the standard of preaching is very, very high indeed, and very, very worthwhile. [00:01:02] But in the main, I think it would be right to say that this is something that's not over-popular, and not very often heard of it, as it should be in preaching to men and women who are away from God. But I want to say a little about it tonight. This passage that we read from the book of Job is a very encouraging one, because we read right through from the beginning of the book to the end, and we find that there is a man whom God describes as upright, and one who feared God, and one who eschewed evil, he separated himself from evil, and he certainly was a moral man by any standard, a very upright man.

And it wasn't someone else who gave him this commendation, it was God himself.

And God doesn't make any mistakes when he gives commendations. So Job was an exemplary man in many ways.

[00:02:04] But he passed through some very, very trying experiences, God allowing Satan to take him, and to put him through those experiences, and they were trying indeed. But Job came through, and he never sinned with his mouth. Whatever he thought, he certainly never gave expression to anything that was contrary to the mind and will of God. In that condition, three friends of his came along, sat beside him for some time, and then Job began to speak, and they sought to answer him. And I'm not going to attempt to go through the book, but you know it very well, that they certainly didn't contribute

anything to his health and encouragement. And he evidenced a spirit of self-righteousness that became very, very trying indeed, [00:03:01] that whenever they presented something that indicated God was perhaps working with him, he turned it the other way and presented himself as an exemplary man, a righteous man, a good man, and really God would never punish him. But then Elihu and God, they took over from the three friends, and they began to ask Job a few questions that he couldn't answer. I've often called the book of Job the book of questions. Job asked questions, his three friends asked questions, Elihu asked questions, and God asked questions. And when God started to ask them, Job couldn't answer.

He was suddenly overwhelmed by the greatness of God, overwhelmed by a sense of his own nothingness. And it's one of the outstanding cases in the Bible [00:04:02] where a man was presented with the creatorial glory of God and was broken down by it, humbled by it, and converted by it.

What a wonderful moment that was in the life of Job.

And so where we read, where we read, we find that he abhors himself with dust and ashes, and he repents.

Now, it's very, very obvious when we read the account in the book that he wasn't an immoral man, he wasn't a godless man.

There was really nothing that anyone could point their finger at, but the story develops and we can see he was a very self-righteous man. And that, in the sight of God, was a very great failure indeed. And it is this that Job repents of, that he sees himself in his true light [00:05:01] in the presence and greatness of God, and in that way he abhors himself.

Now, I think you will agree with me that it's one of the most difficult things we can do, either men or women, to say that we are sorry.

It doesn't matter in what realm, whether in the home or in business or anywhere, to be confronted with some form of wrongdoing and then to confess freely, yes, I was wrong.

It's one of the last things that we'll do. We'll twist and turn and try and find some way out of the problem without frankly confessing, yes, we made a mistake. Well, this is something that Job came to after this long experience with his friends and with Elijah and with God.

[00:06:01] Yes, he says, I'm willing to confess I was wrong.

I'm not righteous, I'm self-righteous.

And from that moment onwards, there was a tremendous change in his fortunes, in his life, and in his prosperity. And what you see in the life of Job is true in every person's life, principally in relation to God, and in every other walk of life, whether it be as Christians, or whether it be employees or employers, or whatever realm of life at all, those who are willing to say, yes, we've done wrong, is the first step towards a better condition. It's an honorable thing to say that we are wrong when we know we've done wrong. It's a dishonorable thing to try and cover it up and try and vindicate or justify ourselves. We might be extremely successful in accomplishing this in our dealings with each other, [00:07:03] but it certainly doesn't work when we try it with God. We certainly can't cover up with Him.

We may try it, but it's a hopeless business. And Job was glad, I'm sure, perfectly glad to come to this point where he abhorred himself and covered himself with dust and ashes and repented. That's what he says, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.

Now, when we come across this expression in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, of people who covered themselves with dust and ashes, it was an indication that they had come to the end of their tether in their dealings with God, that they had bottomed things, as we say today, and they were quite willing to take this place of humility, this place of confession.

[00:08:01] And we always find, wherever we find it, that those people who did that kind of thing, they were blessed, blessed by taking this low place, blessed when they came to an end of themselves and accepted God's judgment of themselves.

And that's a very wonderful thing in all our experience when we do this. But I want to point out what happened after Job repented.

It says, Ye have not spoken of me, the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Now that was true, that all the time these three comforters were speaking to Job, not once did Job say anything wrong about God. He always vindicated God.

Every time.

Never did he say anything wrong about God. But, the part that I want to refer to [00:09:02] is in the end of verse 9, the Lord also accepted Job.

He accepted the offerings that the three friends offered up, but he accepted Job.

That is, here was an upright man who had done what was right, and God says, this is the man that I want to bless. And he did bless him.

Step by step, Job's circumstances improved, and at the end of all the experience, and how very harrowing it was, he was a better man at the end than he was at the beginning.

Now we should point this out, that in Christian matters, material prosperity is not always a sign of God's blessing.

Not always.

Having said that, we take account of the comforts we have, [00:10:01] and any possessions that we do have, any blessings of the material kind that we have, and freely and happily, we acknowledge that they have come from the hand of God. But immense amounts of material things do not necessarily mean that we are blessed by God. To the Jew, yes, this was a clear indication that God had blessed him. Abraham, he increased in his flock, and in his silver, and in his gold, and many others too.

Isaac increased, he got greater and greater and greater because God was blessing those people, and was an indication of his blessing the material things that they possessed. But never, never, never in Christianity does it necessarily mean that an amount of material things is an indication of God's

blessing. Indeed, it may be the reverse.

It can often be a curse. [00:11:03] It can often be a hindrance to spiritual progress in a Christian's life, because it opens the door to many things that otherwise would not be there in the Christian's life. But we have to say in this case that the blessing that Job got of the material kind was an indication that God was blessing him because he was a repentant man, an upright man, a wholeheartedly genuine man, and God blessed him accordingly. Yes, praise God, there are a great deal of benefits that accrue to us when we repent. For an unconverted person, nothing can be better than a happy conscience.

And I believe this is one of the great things that comes through repentance.

[00:12:01] The most outstanding case is when we read in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, after the Lord Jesus Christ had been crucified in Jerusalem, after he had risen out from amongst the dead and ascended into glory, the Holy Spirit was sent down, Peter preached the gospel effectively on the day of Pentecost, and he accused the people who were listening that they had crucified the Messiah. And God had made him Lord and Christ.

God had reversed their decision and placed his Son in the sphere of supremacy and glory.

Now, says Peter, when they asked him, what shall we do? He says, repent.

Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is unto you and to your children, [00:13:02] to as many as are a part of, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. And they did that.

They repented. And 3,000 were converted on that day.

And the first thing they got was a clearance of their conscience of that awful thing that had been done in Jerusalem, the crucifixion of the Messiah, the Son of God.

My, it's a grand thing to have a good conscience. It's a good thing to go to bed at night and not worrying about the question of our guilt and sins. We're gone.

Gone forever. Because repentance has taken place.

We've acknowledged that what God says about us is true. And we're convinced that He is right and we are wrong and we acknowledge what He says is true of us and we tell Him so.

[00:14:01] We repent.

We change our minds in relation to our guilt, our sin, and our folly. It's all of ourselves. God's not to blame. We're to blame. And we take that position and God forgives us.

Oh my, what a wonderful thing forgiveness is. And so that's the first thing that we have when we repent. Our consciences are set at rest. There's another thing, not so much to do with us, but it's a very, very wonderful thing indeed. But it's consequent upon our repentance. And that is, the whole of heaven is agog with joy.

Isn't that wonderful?

The moment a sinner upon earth repents, the Lord Jesus said, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.

Look at that humble person.

A person of no significance whatsoever in this world. [00:15:05] Just an obscure little person, whether it be a man or a woman. But they've come to this conclusion that they're sinners in the sight of God and they need blessing. And if they're going to have blessing, it can only be through repentance. And they repent.

Nobody pays any attention upon earth.

There might not be a soul near them knowing what's taking place. But my, get a glimpse into heaven. What a change!

This simple transaction that has taken place on earth in the history of one soul, one simple soul, and all heaven is interested.

Joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.

My, that shows the work that heaven puts upon repentance. We might think it's a very ordinary thing. [00:16:03] I'm sure we all think it's a very wonderful thing when it takes place.

But heaven says it's a marvelous thing. And so marvelous that it sets the joy bells of heaven a-ringing. My, that's marvelous.

It shows to me the value that heaven places upon repentance.

Oh, the worldly might say there's no particular value in that. The intellectual might dismiss it with contempt. The philosophers and so on. But heaven enjoys, heaven sets a ringing because one soul repents.

Again I say this indicates to me the value of repentance.

I want to speak a word of warning. The Lord Jesus, when he spoke about the joy that repentance brings, he also pointed out the awful judgment that non-repentance brings.

[00:17:06] Do you remember he spoke about those who perished when the tower fell in Siloam?

And he said, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

Now these were the words of the Son of God. He showed the joy that comes through repentance. He showed the solemn judgment that comes through those who will not repent. I'm sad to say there are such people who will not repent.

Indeed it comes to mind in the book of Revelation, after the church is gone, the tide of evil that's

going to spread over this country and over Europe will be awful, just too awful to contemplate.

We see the beginnings of it today. [00:18:02] The spread of witchcraft in this country is appalling. The spread of fornication, the spread of burglaries and violence of every kind, murders, all these things are increasing in every hand in this favored country and too in Europe where the greatest light has shone. Now I read in the book of Revelation that when the judgments come, they will not repent of their witchcraft, of their fornication, of their violence and of their robberies.

The things that are widespread today will get worse and worse and worse until they reach appalling heights after the church is gone and they will not repent.

And you know what happens when the awful judgment of God comes upon that condition. [00:19:02] Praise God we are in the time of repentance.

Job repented.

The 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, they repented.

We find the story that the Lord Jesus told about the two who went up to the temple to pray, the Pharisee and the Publican.

The Pharisee did not repent. He was self-righteous like Job and he had no intention of repenting. He indicated to God what a wonderful man he was. But the Publican, no.

He certainly indicated the features of repentance. And he smote upon his breast, wouldn't look up to heaven, to God, said, Oh God be merciful to me, the sinner.

That's a better translation. Not a sinner, the sinner.

As far as that man was concerned, he was the sinner upon earth at that particular moment. [00:20:05] He says, that man went home justified.

He took the low place and God blessed him.

Now I think it's wonderful to see these things. It shows to us the importance of repentance. And if we're not speaking about it, it's a clear indication that Satan doesn't want us to speak about it. Because it's so vitally important in order to obtain blessings. Not only in the lives of unconverted, but also in the lives of Christians. Because we find in the seven addresses to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, nearly without exception, the Lord says to them, repent, repent, repent.

And so Christians have to repent. And I'm sure if we all took a close look at our lives, [00:21:01] we would all find plenty to cause regret, and to cause us to repent, and to change our minds and our lives, that we might be more fruitful and more useful to God. There is a verse that I am fond of referring to, because it gives two sides of this matter.

I want you to turn to it, because I think it's important. It's better I quote it correctly than rely upon my memory, which isn't of the best. It's in 2 Corinthians 7.

And it's verse 10.

And it reads like this.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, or not to be regretted.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be regretted, [00:22:05] but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Now we have two excellent illustrations of this verse in the Bible.

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, never to be regretted.

You remember when Peter was standing in the court when the Lord was being tried before the high priest.

And the little maid spoke to him and said, weren't you along with the Galilean? Not me, he says, not me.

And then he was addressed again with the same question, oh no, not me. And the third time he denied the Lord with oaths and curses.

I think we should say at this juncture that oaths and curses in those days [00:23:03] didn't mean what it means today. It wasn't that he gave a mouthful of obscene vulgar language. It was even more serious than that. When he cursed, he was bringing down a curse on those people who were associating him with the Galilean. When he gave an oath, it was to state on oath that he didn't belong to the Galilean.

So you can see how much more serious it was than even vulgar and obscene language. Very, very serious indeed.

And you remember when the Lord Jesus came out from being tried by the high priest, he just looked at Peter and Peter remembered what the Lord had said to him and the Bible says he wept bitterly.

Peter realized how he had denied his Lord, how he had failed him, [00:24:03] and it went home to his conscience, and I have the slightest doubt that what this verse says applies to him. Godless sorrow, work of repentance to salvation not to be regretted.

And all that Peter went through, consequent upon that denial, was for his benefit, his outstanding benefit. For forty days afterwards, he stands in the middle of Jerusalem and he tells the people that they denied the Lord Jesus Christ. We might say that's a contrary presumption in a man in his position to accuse other people of having denied the Lord when he had done it himself in such a solemn way. But you see, he was so completely restored on the basis of repentance that now in the full joy of restoration to the Lord and practical salvation, [00:25:01] he was standing not regretting.

I know this salvation that he'd experienced was so good that he wasn't standing and saying, oh I'm very sorry, I'm very sorry what I've done. He had gone through that with the Lord and he was able to stand in front of those people and accuse them of denying their Messiah.

The recovery was complete in all its ways.

So Peter is an excellent illustration of godless sorrow, working repentance to salvation not to be regretted.

What about the other man? The sorrow of the world worth his death.

Surely this is applicable to Judas.

You remember what he did? For 30 pieces of silver, he was quite willing to sell his master into the hands of his enemies.

[00:26:02] And then the time came when he realized the awful thing that he had done and confessed that he had betrayed the innocent blood. Oh, what a moment for Judas.

The money that he had acquired was of not the slightest use to him and he flung it down.

No use whatsoever.

And he went out and he hanged himself. Oh, what an end.

No repentance.

No attempt to get right with God.

He had missed his opportunity.

Three and a half years he had been in company of the Messiah. Not once did he ever say Lord to him. Not once did he ever indicate that he benefited from the ministry of the Lord Jesus. And now when it came to the end, this was it. The sorrow of the world worth his death.

Because in Judas' case, there was no repentance connected with his sorrow. [00:27:03] We know that there is something mysterious about Judas.

Something very mysterious indeed. The Lord says have not I chosen you the twelve and one of you is a demon. And there we find something extremely mysterious about this man. Never mind. I believe that that verse clearly indicates two sides of the matter. Repentance that brings salvation and a great deal of other blessings and then a sorrow that brings no repentance but death.

Now for a few moments this wonderful scene in Acts chapter 17.

Paul is a very wise man and he gives us a great deal of instruction in the way he preached.

When he preached to the Jews, he read the word of God to them or referred the word of God to them. [00:28:03] When he preached to the Gentiles who had no knowledge of the word of God, the ancient scriptures, he didn't refer the word of God, didn't refer to it. He referred to things that they were perfectly acquainted with and used them to bring home to their conscience their need of God. And of course the great trial, the great difficulty in this place was idolatry. I want to say this to you,

dear brethren, reading your Bible. Every time you come across a mention of idolatry in the Bible, just put a mark against it and look closely at it.

And you'll find it's a thread that runs through from the beginning to the end of the Bible and God is always against idolatry in the most severe terms.

And it's very easy to understand this because every idol that is reared is God being displaced. [00:29:04] The first chapter of Romans tells us this. And that's why God is so severe against idolatry in every shape and form.

I might be wrong, but I've often wondered if the troubles of our country are not largely stemming from the large amount of idolatry that is now being introduced into it. We may take great pains to make things economically viable, but we cannot ignore God.

And where idolatry is encouraged, promoted, then God will have something to say to the people who allow it. Because God hates idolatry irrespective of where it is found. Every idol that is reared is an affront against God.

And idol temples are being reared all over this country. [00:30:03] And I honestly believe that God is having something to say to the country because of that. And you'll find that there will be problems that are insoluble as far as they're concerned because it's God who is putting his hand upon the country in chastisement. Now, if you disagree with me, please tell me. But I strongly believe that this is one of the reasons why this country is going astray in so many things. However, Paul, he makes known to those Athenians that there is a God.

They say there's an unknown God. Paul says, I'll make him known.

And he did. The God who made the heavens and the earth. Evolution is not a modern thing. The Greeks had a scheme of evolution, very crude compared to what is set forth today in the schools. [00:31:02] Nevertheless, it began then.

And in that early time, Paul says, the God who made the heavens and the earth. He refers to the creator God.

And then he went on to explain that what was required was repentance.

They had affronted God. They had insulted God. It was a tremendous thing to rear idols and to displace God.

They were ignorant of him, of course. And so he began to make him known, which he did very effectively. But notice what he says. The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.

Now, we're all familiar with what a command means.

If the police tell us to move on, that's a command that has to be obeyed.

[00:32:02] And if we don't move on, we'll suffer the consequences. If we're in any of the services, Army,

Air Force, Navy, commands have to be obeyed.

And in many other realms, realm of law, if commands are given, the legal authority has to be obeyed. If we don't, we suffer the consequences. Now, this is the highest authority in the universe, God. God is saying, I'm commanding men everywhere to repent.

For the simple reason that men everywhere need to repent. And God's commanding them to repent. And if that command is refused and disobeyed, then the consequences will come. Inevitable. Inevitable.

So, dear friends, that's a very, very solemn consideration. It's perfectly obvious here that people of some standing, Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman, Damaris, [00:33:06] their names are mentioned, obviously, names indicating people of some standing and influence. And then it says, and others with them.

Not named, nevertheless, people who obeyed the command. They repented, and they received blessing, and they cleaved to the Apostle Paul, and they became Christians.

What a wonderful thing it is to obey the command of God.

What an awful thing to disobey the command of God.

We suffer the consequences in secular life and in army life, or in any of the services, if we disobey. It's inevitable. Discipline has to be maintained. But it's nothing compared to what we'll suffer if we disobey God. God commands men everywhere to repent.

[00:34:04] And he's not concerned whether they're high or low, rich or poor, influential or otherwise, illiterate or learned. He's not concerned. All he's concerned about is that they should repent. They've sinned against him. It's him that has the right to command them. He has the right to command them to repent. And he does so today, tonight, everywhere.

And it's a very wonderful thing when people obey and bow their knees to this great and pardoning God who delights to forgive, who delights to give blessings into the lives of men and women on the basis of their repentance and the acceptance of his terms. My, how we like to deal with God on our own terms. And God won't allow that. Not anyone. No one can deal with God on their own terms. God issues the terms. God lays them down clear and distinct. [00:35:05] And if they have disobeyed, there cannot be blessing. Job repented. Those in Acts chapter 2, they repented.

Acts chapter 17, Dionysius and Damaris, they repented.

And they all got blessing. I wonder, is there one here tonight who has never repented? There are three wonderful illustrations of people repenting and receiving blessing. Be wise then.

And those of us who are Christians, yes, praise God. When we repent, we receive blessing in our lives. Put things right. Do the things that are pleasing to God. Follow his will, not our wills.

And then blessing comes into our lives that is substantial, that is lasting, and that will be a blessing for all eternity. May the Lord help us to see the importance of this great truth [00:36:05] that's from the

beginning of the Bible to the end. And if you just read Psalm 32 or Psalm 51, you see the value of repentance in a man of God. Real man of God, upstanding man of God, David. But he sadly went astray, but he didn't try and hide it, he confessed it. And he got the blessing. And what a wonderful man he became in the latter years of his life, in pleasing God and surviving for God, for the temple. And what a wonderful man he was in the sight of God. May we be encouraged for his namesake.