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hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.”

Or again, in Psalm 26:1: “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity.”

Then also in Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Yes, there are times when we fall into sin and must repent; and there are daily sins in our lives that also need repentance, but the child of God, as he lives a godly life with the determination and resolve that Job had, can live with a clear conscience before God and not have to live before the accusations of Satan and the world.

Is that because we are righteous in ourselves? No, but in our love for God and our commitment and resolve to serve Him, we do see the work of His grace. And though repentance is always necessary, we know the pardon of sin from this same gracious and loving God. Then, when troubles come, we know that they also come out of God’s love for us.

Then Satan has nothing to say, he is silenced. That is the effect of the words of Job here. Job’s accusers are silenced. Satan had said, Job is a fair-weather Christian, who fears

God only for what he has. Take it all away, he said to God, and he will curse thee to thy face. But it did not happen. Still Job clings to God, still he loves Him, still he confesses God’s sovereign love and mercy, and still he lives with a clear conscience as he serves God.

And so Job says, in verse 7, “Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.” Who is Job’s enemy? We could say it was his so-called friends, but Job speaks in the singular, one enemy. That is Satan. Let him be as the wicked, that is, let him be judged and cast out and silenced and come under the wrath of God, just as the wicked will. Job is clear before God, but Satan will be judged and vanquished for his hand in the troubles that came in Job’s life.

We see here that there is nothing in all this world that can separate us from the love of God. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Let us pray,

Father, give us the determination and resolve of Job, and give us a clear conscience, by searching our hearts and our way, and purging, and leading us in the way everlasting. For Jesus’ sake, Amen.

they hear not; having eyes, they see not; nor do they understand. And, you see, that is the natural and depraved state of everyone apart from the work of grace.

But where grace comes, that is where God comes by His Holy Spirit into the mind and heart of a person. Then, when the conscience accuses, there is repentance instead of excuses. And the child of God learns to live before God, not just in conduct, but with a heart of love and sincerity before Him. The heart of the child of God is not simply a voice that must be silenced, but it is subject to God's judgment, and it is directed by the Word of God. The unregenerate man wants to silence and escape from the witness of his conscience, but the child of God, because he loves God, realizes that in his conscience God is speaking, and he stands before God the judge, and his conscience is directed, not by his own desires and ideas, but by the Word of God. As he lives before God, his life begins to conform to the law of God, and then he can have a clear conscience before God, so that he can say with Job, "My heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live."

It reminds us of the famous words of Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, "Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils,

for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen."

And that, in essence, is what Job is saying to his friends. God is my judge, and I have a clear conscience before Him.

We must be warned here not to use this kind of language too quickly or too flippantly. Too many today talk this way in order to excuse their sin: "You leave me alone, God is my judge." But at the same time, their conscience is not directed by God's Word, and rather than standing before God in their conscience, they are excusing it and suppressing its testimony. That is fearful, because that is how the mind of the reprobate unbeliever operates. So, though others cannot judge our conscience, our conscience is clear only when our life conforms to God's Word. Otherwise, it should smite us and bring us to repentance.

But at the same time, every believer should be able to say what Job says here, or what Luther said at Worms. I think of the way David prays, many times over in the Psalms.

In Psalm 17:3: "Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

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Job's Absolute Trust in God
Rev. Rodney Kleyn

Dear Radio Friends,

The words we consider today are a great treasure, a gem, a jewel of great price. In Job 13:15, Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Great treasures are not easily come by. In fact, what makes them so precious is the pain and trouble that has gone into producing and accumulating them. That's true of Job's confession here. These words are a wonderful illustration of what Jesus says in Luke 6:45: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good...for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." Job's words do not come from nowhere, out of the blue, but rather they show what Job prior to this had been storing up in his heart, and now, out of that treasure-house, his mouth speaks. Job's words reveal that he is a man of great faith.

When Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," he answers both the slander of Satan and the charge of his three friends. Satan's accusation was that Job feared God only for his wealth and prosperity and good

physical health, that God with these good things had put a hedge of protection around Job, and that it was only because of this that Job feared God. His claim was that, should Job lose all he had, God's grace could never sustain and preserve him in his faith. How ably Satan is answered in these words of Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Job is saying, "Yes, God has taken my wealth and health and family from me, yet I still trust Him. And, should He go the next step and take away my life, I will still trust Him." In one sentence he silences the Devil. And we see here the importance of truth in fighting Satan, of the Word of God as a sword against our spiritual enemies.

In his famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress," Martin Luther wrote these words.

The Prince of Darkness
grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell
him.

One little word from Job's mouth, and Satan is silenced. You see, this is how you defeat Satan, with the Word of God.

This little word from Job also answers Job's friends, who had insinuated that Job was a hypocrite, that all his trouble had come because he was hiding some great sin, which he needed to confess, and from which he needed to turn in repentance. These words of Job are the best answer to their accusation, for no one but a sincere child of God would say this. Would a hypocrite trust in God, when God slays him? Will a deceiver cling to God when God is smiting him? Of course not. Job's faith and godliness shine through here, and it is only because of their own pride and arrogance that his friends do not see it.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Job's confession here is in expression of his absolute trust and faith in God. Job envisions the ultimate test of his faith, and says that even then, he will cling to God. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

To see that, we need to be careful to interpret these words of Job properly. What does Job mean when he says, "Though he slay me"?

Let us understand first, what Job is *not* saying.

Job is not saying that this

would be preferable, that he would prefer it if God slew him, that it would be easier for him to trust God, if God just took away his life. He is not advocating mercy killing, or begging God to kill him. Earlier in the book, in chapter 3, Job did this when, in bitterness of soul and deep dark depression, he said that he longed for death, and he asked, Why is life given to the man whose way is hid?

But now, instead of thinking of those earlier words of Job, we should actually think of God's earlier words to Satan, in chapter 2, "He is in thy hand, but save his life." God is saying to Satan, I will allow any agony in Job's life, but not the last and bitter enemy of death. I will keep Job from the worst.

Job also does not mean by this, as some commentators have it, that should God send him to hell, he would still trust in Him. That is impossible, because there is no one in hell who trusts in God. All who trust in God are spared from hell. The only one who suffered hell, and still trusted in God, was God's own Son, Jesus, who, when He in our place suffered the bitterest pains and torments of hell on the cross, cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" He expressed what hell is, to be forsaken of God, and yet, in that moment when He experienced such agony, He

He is not talking about heaven or hell, and his acceptance with God. Rather, these words are spoken in reference to his earthly life, and are his answer to the accusation of his friends. He uses the word "righteous" in reference to his living; his life is righteous. His conduct is in line with God's law. Yes, he is a sinner, but the general way and direction of his life is one that agrees with God's word. He is not a flagrant rebel. He has not committed some great sin, for which he is now being punished. And so, when he says, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go," Job is insisting on his innocence. He is saying to his friends, "You throw all these accusations at me, but none of you is able to point to a specific sin. Your words are just generalizations, and they don't stick, because there's nothing for them to stick to. I'm going to insist on it, that I am an upright man, and that God is not sending these troubles in my life as punishment for my sin." Back in verse 5 he says, "God forbid that I should justify you," and that fits here. "For me to say that God is punishing me, when I know that He is not, would be to agree with your wrong theology of God, and I'm not going to do it. God is sovereign over all that has happened in my life, God has the right to bring these things, but God is also a God of mercy, who doesn't operate according to

your strict view of justice. You have judged by what you see, by providence, but that doesn't always tell us what God's heart is. I hold fast to my innocence, because I know that in love and faithfulness God has afflicted me."

Really, what Job is saying is this, "My conscience is clear before God." Notice the end of verse 6, "My heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live." The word heart there refers to the conscience.

Everyone has a conscience. The conscience is the inner part of us that knows about God, and knows what is right and wrong. The Bible tells us that the conscience of the natural unregenerate man will either accuse him or excuse him. That is, it will tell him that he is not right before God, it will accuse him, and then he will either make an excuse so that his conscience is cleared, or he will suppress that witness of the conscience in unbelief, he will do what he can to drown it out with pleasure, or philosophy, or something else.

And so the Bible talks about having a conscience seared with a hot iron. That is the same as saying that a person has a heart that is hardened to God's Word and the gospel. They simply do not hear it anymore, or, when they do hear it, it does not go beyond their ears. Having ears,

in His way. In the gospel of John, Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Love for God is not just a feeling, it is not just words, but it is actions of obedience to God's Word, and a resolve to persist in that way.

Where does Job's resolve and obedience come from? It comes from his heart, it comes from within. Outward words and conduct always reveal what is in the heart. That is what Job means at the end of verse 5 and into verse 6. "Till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me." What is integrity? It has to do with character. Job has a heart that has been worked on by the grace of God, and by that inward power of grace. That work of God will continue. You see, by nature Job was born, just like every other person, dead in sins, and with a heart that was not willing to be subject to the law of God. But God in grace had changed him, so that God Himself gave this testimony concerning Job to Satan, "He is a perfect and upright man, one who fears God and eschews evil." The grace that God had worked produced this love in Job for his God, and out of that love comes the commitment.

Job's friends accused him of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is external conduct that does not come from a sincere heart. Speaking of the hypocrite in verse 10, Job says, "Will he delight himself in the

Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Of course not; trials will expose his hypocrisy and he will curse God. But you see, because Job's heart is sincere, he calls on God and determines to love God, even when God has afflicted him. Sometimes in our trials God seems far off, and we are tempted to doubt His love or our salvation, but the very fact that in trial we look to Him is an evidence of His grace in us. That should be an encouragement to us that we are His, that we are not the hypocrite or wicked person that Job describes later in this chapter.

So you have here Job's godly determination, which arises from a sincere heart of love for God.

Then in verse 6 we have Job's declaration that his conscience is clear. Job says this, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."

To understand these words, we should see first that Job is not justifying himself before God, nor is he saying that he is righteous by his own works. No, last week we looked at Job chapter 9 verse 2, and there Job says that no man can stand before God and be righteous in himself. We need Jesus Christ the Mediator. But here, Job is not talking about his legal and eternal standing before God.

still said, "My God." No mere man could do that. It was only because He was the eternal and all-powerful Son of God that Jesus could say that. There is wonderful comfort here for all who trust in God. God may slay you, but He will never send you to hell. Jesus has paid the price, taken our place, and redeemed us from eternal death.

Also, Job is not being reckless here with his words, in order to get one up on his friends who are spouting off. Job is not boasting here, "Though he slay me..." Someone who does not know what it is to be tested and tried might do that. Maybe a Christian who has never been physically persecuted for his faith, or who has never experienced the pain of death, might boastingly say, "When that time comes, I will trust in God." No, Job is not boasting in good times. Rather, he is already going through the most intense trial that any man could know. He has lost his wealth, his children, his support, his friends, his sense of God's love, and from the midst of that trial he expresses his absolute trust in God.

And neither is Job talking flippantly about death here. No, he knows the justice of God and he knows his own sin. He knows that at death we must all stand before God the judge. Later in the chapter he prays, "How many are my iniquities

and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin." Someone who prays that, does not flippantly say, Let God kill me. Job is not acquiescing here to the advice of his wife, Curse God and die.

No, still he acknowledges the sovereignty of God. "Though *he* slay me." He is saying that God has the right to do that, God is the one who kills and makes alive (Deut. 32:39). With the psalmist in Psalm 31 he says, "My times are in thy hand." The right to life belongs to God, God has the right to slay him and God might yet do that. And he realizes that should God slay him, that would be the ultimate test of his faith.

"Though he slay me" is an all-inclusive statement. Job includes here every possible evil that God could send to him. He includes in this statement all the trouble that God has already sent on him. Though God has taken away flock and field, family and friends, health and happiness; though all God has left me with is a pile of ashes and broken pieces of pottery, yet will I trust in Him.

Included in this statement of Job is also the physical and spiritual pain that he endures. Job is smitten with the most excruciating pain from his toes to his head; so sore is he, that he cannot sleep, that he has no appetite, and that he scrapes

away, hoping for the slightest relief. In his soul, he does not experience the love of God, he does not have peace and joy, but only bitterness, and yet he says, “I will trust in Him.”

This bold confession includes the loss of loved ones dear to him, his ten children. Let us think about that a minute. The Lord may suddenly take away from you the dearest person in your life—your husband or your wife. Can you trust Him then? He might take out of your home dear children. You may have to sit and watch a spouse, a child, your closest companion, suffer and die. Will you trust Him?

Commenting on this Charles Spurgeon says,

You may be the last of the roses, left alone, scarcely blooming, but bowing your head amid the heavy showers of sorrow which drench you to the soul. Now, believer, if you are in such a deplorable case as that, can you still say, “If the Lord should go even further than this, should his next arrows penetrate my own lacerated heart, even then, as I bleed in death, I will kiss his hand”?

You see, this statement not only includes what Job has experienced thus far, but goes to the extreme possibility, to what Job has not yet experienced, to death. Death is bitter. Death is the last enemy. Death is final.

We read Job’s words, and we wonder, Could I say such a thing? “Should God slay me, I will trust in Him.” Can you say that? Let us imagine that this week you find out you have terminal cancer that cannot be treated, and the doctor says you should count your remaining days not in years and months, but in weeks and days. The clear will of God is that you are going to die. Would you able to say, “God is slaying me, and I will trust in Him?” Maybe you are a family man, with seven or eight mouths to feed, and a wife who needs your daily moral and spiritual support; or maybe you are a young person, just coming into the prime of your life with a large and bright future before you; or maybe you are a mother who is constantly needed in the home—so much and so many depend on you.... And God says, “Your time has come!” You will die, not just by cancer or car accident or some other means, but God Himself says, “I am going to take away your life, I will slay you”—how, under such a trial, can the believer confess, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”?

This is what Job is saying.

It is an amazing confession of absolute trust in God.

Job’s faith here includes these four elements.

Job depends on God completely.

away,” we read that Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly. In chapter 2, when his wife says, “Curse God,” after Job’s response in which he tells his wife that we should expect both good and evil from the hand of the Lord, the Bible says, “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

So Job is a man who is concerned that he never use his tongue to dishonor the name of God. And that includes, for him, that he tell the truth, that he be honest. In response to his trials and the accusations of his friends, he is not going to pad his record by boasting and lying.

How refreshing it is to know someone whose word you can trust, who deals with facts, and not fantasy. You can trust his words, because you know he is not trying to manipulate you, because what he says is what he means.

Job was this kind of a man, and that is part of why his friends and Satan fall silent. His friends give long speech-

es on how just God is, and on what sinners can expect from God, but it is quite indirect. Job does not deal with people that way. He is forthright. In verse 5 he says, “God forbid that

I should justify you.” He means, I am not just going to agree with you because you are my friends, or just to keep peace between us. He is a man of his word.

This determination of Job to control his tongue is a determination with regard to his entire life. In the New Testament, James says that a man who has control of his tongue has control of the whole body. Job’s resolve here is not just about his words, but it includes his entire life, it is a resolve to live a life of obedience to God. Later, in chapter 31:1, he says, “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” He is resolved to control his eyes and his sinful desires. Then in the verses following he says, “Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps? If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit; Let me be

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ance, that
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Love for God is not just a feeling,
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was created in Genesis 2. God formed him from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. By creating man that way, God showed that man was different than all the animals and other creatures. Man became a living soul. He was made in the image of God. He was made to love and to serve God consciously. That is what Job is saying: “So long as I live, I have this purpose, from God, to serve Him.” Despite his circumstances, even though trouble has come into his life, still he will serve the God who has brought this on him. That is his resolve and determination.

In Psalm 146:2 we read, “While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” This is why I was made, this is why I am here on the earth, this is why God still gives me breath. So that I might praise and glorify Him.

Do you think about that? Today you are listening to this message. That means you are alive, you are breathing. Do you say, “While my breath is in me, I will serve the Lord”? You see, we are not here in this world for ourselves, for our gain, fame, happiness, or pleasure. No, we are here for God. We are not

here for the general well-being of humanity. No, we are here to serve God. This is man’s chief purpose, to glorify God.

That is so important for us to remember, especially as we are going through troubles and difficulties. It helps us not to become self-focused or overwhelmed. Our response is always a response to God. Every trial is an opportunity to bring glory to God in a new way. And the way that we respond to God in our trials is a testimony to others of our faith.

That is Job’s resolve and determination of heart. But you will notice it does not just stay in his heart. It is a resolve to control his entire life, and especially his tongue. In verse 4 he says, “I will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.” He means that he is going to be careful, in response to his trials, to watch his tongue. In Psalm 39:9, the psalmist responds to a severe trial by saying, “I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.” There his concern is that the name of God be glorified in the presence of the wicked. That has been Job’s motivation too. In chapter 1, when he makes the beautiful confession, “The Lord gave, the Lord has taken

Job believes in God only.

Job hopes in God entirely.

Job waits on God patiently.

This is his faith.

First, he depends on God completely. In faith, Job throws himself entirely on the Lord. Here, as Job considers the possibility of his own death, he realizes that there is nowhere else to turn, there is no one else on whom he can depend. Did you ever think about that? In death, there is no one else that can save or deliver you or bring you comfort or hope. In death, you lose all contact with the living and you are alone with God. Should God slay you, will you trust Him or curse Him? God is the only one who can bring any consolation and comfort in death. That comfort comes through believing in God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who through His death conquered the curse of the grave. You see, death is not just physical. You do not go to the grave and that is the end of it. No, there is also spiritual and eternal death, the torment of hell for sins unpaid. And trusting in Jesus Christ, who died for sin, is the only way that we can face death with any confidence. Job throws himself here on the Lord. Later in the book he specifically confesses his trust in Jesus Christ, when he says, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that even though this body will be eaten by worms, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. That is complete dependence.

Second, in faith Job believes in God only. His friends have said a lot of things to him. His bitter circumstances seem to tell their own story. But Job’s faith is in the supernatural, not the natural. He is not an evidentialist or a scientist who believes only what he sees. No, Job trusts in the revelation of God, in God’s promises, and in God’s greater unseen work of salvation. He knows God as Sovereign and Good. These are the treasures that Job has been storing up in his heart, and out of the abundance of that heart, he now speaks. His faith in God is a faith in God’s revelation. And that, dear friends, is true faith. Faith is not a leap in the dark. Faith is not a guessing game. Faith does not come through observation. But faith is a trust in what God has said about Himself, it is to believe for true all that He has revealed in His Word, the Bible. How privileged we are to have the Scriptures in our hands. Living in Abraham’s Day, Job did not have this. There was at that time no written Word of God. Instead, Job depended on an oral tradition of God’s promises and of history, and on occasional special revelations through an angel or a prophet. What Job knew was just a sketch compared to what we have in the Bible. And

yet Job's faith was this, that he believed in God alone.

Third, in faith Job hoped in God entirely. The word that is used in the passage here for trust, "yet will I trust in him," is actually the Hebrew word for "hope." "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." Job's situation looked hopeless. He had lost everything, and contemplating the possibility that God would slay him on top of all this, things sure

looked hopeless. But Job, in hope, looks beyond his circumstances to God and to the eternal things that God has in store for him. "Hope" describes

the child of God's life in this world. As Christians we live in hope. We do not live for the here and the now, but we live in hope of heaven. And again, this was something Job had always done. Even in his prosperity Job didn't set his heart on his wealth. He was a spiritually minded man, who had his eye fixed on God and heaven and eternal realities. He found out that health, wealth, and earthly relationships will disappoint, but he also knew that God would never disappoint, and so he hoped in Him. When we speak of our hope as Christians, we are not simply describing a desire for something different. Generally we

use the word that way. If we are sick, we say, "I hope I feel better soon"; or if it is raining, we say, "I hope the sun will come out." But we do not know whether what we hope for will actually happen. Our Christian hope is different from that. Yes, it is a desire for something different and better—that describes our longing—but our hope is also something sure, because the object for which we long is real and it has already been secured

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for us. Heaven is real, and Jesus has opened the way for us to go there. He is there preparing a place for us, so that he make take us to be with him. Our hope will never make us ashamed (Rom. 5:5). So Job's hope goes beyond death, to heaven. That is why he can say, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

Then fourth, Job's faith is a patient waiting on God. In faith he rested in God, he believed God's word, he hoped beyond the present, but also he waited. That is a part of faith, waiting on God. We do not always and immediately receive the thing for which we hope, and so we have to wait on God; we have to endure and persevere through difficult situations. That is what Job did, and here, especially, he stands out as an example for us. In James

means that God has denied him an explanation for his suffering. Throughout the book, Job has asked for a hearing with God, not only so that he can have an explanation for his suffering, but also to silence the accusations of his friends. But God has taken away his judgment. As we will see in the next message, here is where Job sinned in response to his suffering. He wants God to explain himself, but God is greater than man, and is under no obligation to explain Himself to man. But you see, this is exactly what makes Job's suffering so severe. His friends are accusing, his wife is forsaking, his children are dead, he is destitute and sick, and God seems to have withdrawn himself. So Job says that the Almighty has vexed his soul. His suffering is not just external and physical, but it troubles his soul and brings bitterness into his experience. And, Job says, the Almighty has done this. God, who is all powerful and sovereign, has brought this on me.

So this is Job's bitter experience. God has brought all this suffering into his life, and God is giving no explanation for it, and meanwhile he is being accused by his friends of hypocrisy.

How is Job going to respond? How will we respond to the bitter providences of God that come into our lives.

In these verses there are two things that Job expresses in his response. First, his godly determination, and then second, his clear conscience, and by this, Job silences both his accusing friends and the devil.

Sometimes Satan will plague us in our troubles, with doubts and accusations. He will try, like Job's friends, to tell us that we are suffering because we are really bad sinners, and that our suffering proves that God does not love us or care about us. How do we drive away the devil and the accusations of conscience? By responding as Job does here.

First, you have his godly determination in verses 3 through 5. Job has taken a vow before God: "As God liveth." And now he gives the content of that vow. "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove my integrity from me." So, God lives, and I am alive, and so long as I live, so long as I have breath, till the day I die, Job vows, I am resolved to serve God.

Job will do that because he realizes that this is why God has given him life. In verse three, when he says, so long as "the spirit of God is in my nostrils," he is alluding to the way man

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

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Job Maintains That He Is Innocent
Rev. Rodney Kley

Dear radio friends,

Today in our studies in the life of Job we turn to Job chapter 27, and we'll consider the first seven verses. This section is Job's final speech, after a lengthy discussion and debate with his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

In this speech, and particularly in the section that we look at today, Job vigorously asserts his own innocence over against the opinion of his three friends that his suffering is judgment from God against him for sins he had committed.

What Job says here is a part of his patient response to his suffering and it is written as an example for us. At the beginning of the book, after Job had received blow upon blow of suffering, Job's wife asked him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity?" Now, towards the end of the book, we see the same thing, Job retains his integrity under severe trial. What an example! Job not only clings to God, but he also guards his mouth, and resolves to continue living in a way that glorifies God.

Sometimes when we go through suffering we can become quite weak and fragile, and

then we think we have an excuse for sinful behavior—we can get snappy at our family members, or we indulge in some forbidden pleasure, or some will turn to a substance to drown their sorrows. But Job does not do any of those things, instead he retains his integrity, and that is what we see here in this passage.

In verse 2, Job begins by taking a vow before God. With the words, "As God liveth..." Job calls God to be a witness to what he is about to say. This is not a rash vow. Job realizes that God is alive, that God is real, that God is aware of all he does, and so he takes a vow of resolve and determination to live before God.

In verse 2, Job gives a description of God that is also a description of his own bitter experience. He says, "As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul."

Here, Job is again confessing that all the trouble and bitterness that has come to him in his life is from the hand of God. It is not wrong for Job to confess this. He says that God has "taken away his judgment." He

5:11, we read, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Trusting in God, Job endured under a very heavy burden and persevered through the trial. No, Job did not do this perfectly, he did ask questions that he should not have, but there was one thing Job did, this, that he clung to God. He did not let go.

And that is because God was clinging to Job. God did not let Job go. In Psalm 51, David prays, "Take not thy Spirit from me." God never took His Spirit from Job. Job's faith in God was the result of an inseparable and permanent union between God and Job, by the Holy Spirit. That explains Job's confession too. What Jesus said to Peter after his beautiful confession, applies here to Job, and to any believer who sits with Job and says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Jesus said to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Only by the powerful work of God's Spirit can anyone look death in the face and say to God who brings it, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Job's faith is the remarkable and miraculous fruit of the work of God's sovereign grace in his heart. We remember it was God

who challenged Satan with the words, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" God was confident that Job's faith would not fail, because God Himself had chosen, saved, and changed Job. And that is our confidence too as sometimes we contemplate difficult situations that we have not yet experienced and that we can hardly imagine having to go through. God's grace will sustain, and through the trial itself, God will strengthen our trust in Him.

The best place for Job to be, spiritually, was right here, on the ash heap, in pain and grief, because from here Job looked to God, and made this glorious confession, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Oh may God so sustain and teach us in our trials.

Let us pray,

Father, we can hardly imagine having to go through what Job experienced, and yet, unless Christ comes soon, all of us at some time will have to face death. Our times are in Thy hand. Lord, sustain us so that we will be able then to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Give to us the faith of Job, so that we depend on Thee, believe Thy Word, hope in things unseen, and bear patiently through trial. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

March 9, 2014
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Job's Resurrection Hope
Rev. Rodney Kleyn

Dear Radio Friends,

Today we are going to consider the amazing confession of Job 19:23-27, where Job says,

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job.” Those words come from the New Testament book of James, and they tell us how we are to remember Job, and how we are to read the story of Job. It is a story of patience. In our study of this book we have already seen much of Job’s patience.

Patience is the ability to accept trouble and suffering without getting angry or upset. For the believer, it is the ability to endure the trials that God sends in our lives, without losing our faith in God. This is the patience we see in Job.

In his patience, Job is held up as an example for us to follow. But just looking at what Job does and says in response to his trials is not enough to produce patience in us. We need more than to see that Job is patient. Many read the story of Job, and have nothing of his faith and patience. What we need is to understand the secret of Job’s patience. And that is what we have in the verses today.

These verses express the hope of Job, and hope is the key to patience.

What is hope? Hope is the confident expectation of a great good in the future; and hope includes also the certainty of deliverance from present suffering.

Job has hope. Even though he presently experiences grief and pain, even though death looms, and even though death brings horrible decay; even though all these things are very real to Job, he says, “yet in my flesh shall I see God.” This is what he confidently expects, and that enables him to endure. His hope saves him from his present troubles.

and eternal life is narrow, and there is only one way. We need to be specific in calling men to faith. Jesus is the only way, so believe in him.

Job anticipates Jesus the Mediator right here in Job chapter 9. Later, he will confess a living Redeemer. Here, in verses 32-35, he says in essence, “I would love to plead my case before God, but I cannot do that. God is not a man that he and I should argue this out on common ground. No, I need a Mediator, one who can put his hand on both God’s shoulder and my shoulder, one who is equal to God and equal to me; I need this Mediator to remove God’s rod of justice from me, to remove terror from my heart, so that I can stand before God, and speak with him.”

That is what Job says here. And it is marvelous, because everything he says he needs in a “daysman” or an abitrater, Jesus Christ the Mediator is.

And believing in Jesus Christ, there is a way for us to

be right with God. He takes the weight, the curse, the consequences, and the punishment of our sin on Himself at the cross, and he stands as our daysman to arbitrate between God and us. Justified through Him, we have the confidence that God is not against us. If God be for us, who can be against us?

How should a man be just with God? Through Christ alone.

Let us pray,

*We cannot stand alone
before God,
but we can stand with
and in Jesus Christ.*

Father, we are thankful for the gift of Thy Son Jesus Christ,

who stands where we could never stand, before Thy judgment seat, so that we are not condemned, but forgiven and accepted. Accepted in Him, we are sure when the troubles of life come that nothing can be against us, and that it is out of Thy love and faithfulness that we are afflicted. We know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted us.” Amen.

and faith, trusting God, and acknowledging that God is just in all His ways.

John Calvin says that it is important for us to meditate on the justice of God so that when He afflicts us we will remain humble and will acknowledge that He, God, is just and blameless. That is exactly what we should learn from this too.

It is not our place to put God on trial, or to question His dealings. Who are we, to think that we can do

that? And yet we all do this. Maybe not so directly as Job, by asking for an appearance before God so that we can argue our case, but we do have other ways of questioning God. We do this by complaining against, or by becoming angry with God. We do this when we get anxious and fearful, and think that God is getting it all wrong. Let us remember to be humble, to confess that God is right and just in all that He does, and to acknowledge that in mercy and faithfulness He afflicts His own.

How should a man be just with God? Standing alone before God, he cannot, and so we humbly bow under the chastening of the Lord.

But now, is there no answer to Job's question, How can a man be right with God? We do need

an answer to this important question, do we not?

And there is an answer. A man is made right with God through the blood and righteousness of the Mediator, Jesus Christ. We cannot stand alone before God, but we can stand with and in Jesus Christ. This is the good news of the gospel, to all who stand empty and condemned before God.

It is not our place to put God on trial, or to question His dealings. Who are we, to think that we can do that? And yet we all do this. Maybe not so directly as Job, by asking for an appearance before God so that we can argue our case, but we do have other ways of questioning God. We do this by complaining against, or by becoming angry with God. We do this when we get anxious and fearful, and think that God is getting it all wrong. Let us remember to be humble, to confess that God is right and just in all that He does, and to acknowledge that in mercy and faithfulness He afflicts His own.

Here we have one of the exclusive claims of Christianity: there is one Mediator, not many, and not an assortment, but only one, the man Christ Jesus. That is specific and exclusive. There is no other way to stand before the righteous God. As Christians, we should never be embarrassed of being that specific. Jesus is the only way. He Himself spoke this way. In John 14: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

We live in a day when people want to muddy the waters, when too many want to present a Christianity that is accepting of other religions, and so they won't say, Jesus is the only Mediator. But the way to heaven

|| *It is not our place
to put God on trial,
or to question His dealings.* ||

condemned before God. I Timothy 2:5-6: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the

man Christ Jesus."

In the book of Romans, chapter 8, the apostle Paul says this, "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Hope is not something we have now, but something we expect to receive; and having hope, then we patiently wait. Job was waiting for something else, something different, something better, and that was the key to his patience under trial.

What was Job's hope? What did he expect from God that would be better than his present grief?

It was not this, that he expected his earthly situation to improve. No, Job expected death. Here in the text he describes the reality of death, of his own death, and it is not pretty. The face of death is always ugly. Job says, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body" and "though my reins be consumed within me." The skin is a kind of covering of protection that keeps us intact, and that shows our color and health. "After my skin" refers to death. The first thing that happens when a person dies is that his skin is drained of all color and it has no purpose any more—there is no life for it to protect. After my skin, Job says, worms shall destroy this body. When he is

buried in the ground, an army of worms will come, invade the wall of skin, and go on in to eat up the decaying body. When Job says, "though my reins be consumed within me," he means that the most important parts of his body, the organs on the inside, will also become food for the worms. That is what happens. It is a reality. Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.

Job's hope was not that he expected to be spared death. No, he expected to die of his disease, an empty, poor, grieving, lonely man.

Now we know from the end of the book of Job that God restored to Job double what he had previously, and that God blessed him with a peaceful marriage and ten more children. But Job did not know this was coming. This was not what he expected. This was not his hope. He expected that God would slay him.

That is important for us to remember. Even though, as James says, the story of Job shows "the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy," this does not mean that God will always restore to us earthly peace and health when we are going through a trial. That is not our hope and that is not our comfort. As a pastor, and as members of the body of Christ, we do not

say to distressed saints, “Take heart, things will get better for you here on earth.” Words like that would have brought no comfort to Job, for they are empty words. We simply cannot say that because we do not know what God has in store for us here on earth. A young mother may well die of cancer and leave her family behind. A man may remain unemployed for years and not have the means to support his family. God does not promise earthly health and wealth, and that is not Job’s hope here.

Rather, Job in hope looks beyond this earthly life, and beyond the decay of death, to the eternal reward that awaits all of God’s people. Job’s hope is in the resurrection of his body and the bliss of seeing God face to face in glory.

He says, “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

Job’s hope is that the very same body in which he suffers, which is ravaged with disease, and which will rot in the ground, will be raised from the dead, that it will become alive again. “Yet in my flesh” he says, “I shall see God.”

Job means that literally. The resurrection is not a mystical and spiritual afterlife for the soul. Yes, at death the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory to be with Christ, but that is not our full and final hope. Our hope is that our bodies and souls will be reunited and made one again. If that were not our hope, then death in the end has the victory. In death body and soul are torn apart, but death does not have the final word. My hope is that my body will some day be raised again.

That is why the Bible describes the burial of the believer’s body as sleeping. As Christians we fall asleep in Jesus Christ. The body is laid to rest in the ground, in hope of the resurrection—much like when you lay down to sleep at night, expecting to wake up refreshed in the morning. So also the Bible compares the burial of our bodies to the sowing of a seed. The seed of the body is put in the ground, and one day it will sprout up and live again.

And it will not be a new and different body. In the resurrection God does not create a brand new body for us, but it will be the same body that we lived in here on the earth. Job emphasizes that when he says, “my flesh” and “my reins,” and

||| *In death body and soul
are torn apart, but death
does not have the final word.* |||

And so, Bildad’s argument that Job had this coming because he did something to deserve it is wrong. We should not reason, from trouble in a person’s life, that God is angry with that person, and on the other hand, we should not reason from prosperity and health in a person’s life, that God is showing grace to that person.

That is especially important when we ourselves, like Job, go through severe trials. If sickness comes on you, or if you lose your job, or if your child is taken from you by death, you should not think that this is a sign of God’s judgment on you, and you should not reflect back on what you have done, and wonder if you could have done something differently to avoid these trials.

Yes, it is true that we should learn things through our trials, but that is not the same as saying they are a judgment or a punishment of God on us. No, for God’s children, the troubles that come in life always come out of God’s love, for their good, and are under His absolute sovereign control.

Listen to what David says in Psalm 119:75. Maybe if you

struggle with these questions, this would be a great verse for you to commit to memory. This is what David says: “I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” There are two things he confesses there. The first is this, that God is always just, and so we have no right to question what He does. And yet, at the same time, when He afflicts His people He does it in faithfulness, that is, out of His love and commitment to them. “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”

That is similar to what we read in Hebrews 12:5-6: “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

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So Job confesses the justice of God, and the impossibility of self-justification for any person, including himself, and this helps him to respond properly to his trials. Even though the troubles he goes through are not punishment from God, he nevertheless receives them in humility

truth.” Yes, Job is saying, God is a righteous God who punishes sin. But the problem is that Bildad makes a blanket application of the justice of God, and even lifts himself up in pride, by implying that the reason he himself is not suffering is that he is more righteous than Job. We know, from God’s own word at the beginning of the book that this is not true. Job is the most upright man in all the earth, and Job’s suffering does not come on him as punishment from God because of sin in his life.

Job here is answering this wrong view and application of the truth of God’s justice. And let us remember, that very often we can fall into the same kind of thinking as Bildad. Sometimes we look at the suffering that other people experience, and we quickly judge them and say, “I saw that coming,” rather than being compassionate. Or, maybe we do it sometimes with regard to our own suffering. We blame what we are going through on things/mistakes that we’ve made in the past, rather than realizing that God sovereignly and lovingly brings whatever He does into our lives. Or we can do it this way, that we view prosperity and health as the signs of God’s blessing, and we are thankful for that, but prone to complain, as though God does

not love or care about us, when something difficult comes in our lives.

Job’s question here in verse 2 answers that thinking. Can a man be right with God? No. Not one man can be right with God. Job’s point is that no one deserves a thing from God, that if we would get what we really deserved, all of us would find ourselves in a situation much worse than Job’s. You see, God does not operate accord-

*God does not operate
according to
Bildad’s view of justice.*

ing to Bildad’s view of justice. No, sometimes the wicked prosper and seem to have an easy and trouble-free life, without even their conscience bothering them as they go on in their sin. Meanwhile, God’s people go through extreme trials and persecutions, and all the while they love the Lord and serve Him, and confess His name. Regardless, if any one of us would stand before God to ask, “Why?” or to say that we do not deserve the troubles that come our way, well, we would have nothing to say. We all receive less than we deserve, and God’s hand equally measures out difficulties and trouble to the righteous and the wicked. In verse 22, Job says of God, “He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.” Being upright does not spare one from trouble in this life.

when he says, “My eyes shall behold him, and not another,” or, more literally, “not the eyes of a stranger.”

Yet, at the same time, it will be a changed body. In the resurrection, Job’s body will no longer be covered in boils. No, it will be changed and glorified, and fitted to live eternally in heaven. Which means, that all the diseases and physical and mental imperfections that plague God’s people in this life will be gone too. A blind believer, who in this life could never see, will be able to see. A deaf man, who never heard a word on earth, will hear the choirs of heaven and the voice of Jesus Christ. A mentally handicapped child, who could never function on her own, and who had trouble learning the simplest things, will have a sharp and clear mind. This is Job’s hope. That is our hope too. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed.

But that is only a part of Job’s hope, and it is not the main thing that he hopes for. The resurrection has this purpose and goal, that in “my flesh shall I see God.” Job looks forward to the day when all the clouds that seem to hide God from him

will be removed, and when he will see God face to face as He is. This is the fullness of Job’s hope that sustains him in his affliction. Now we see through a glass darkly. Here on the earth we do not always enjoy the fullness of God’s fellowship. There are clouds of sin, and clouds of trouble and affliction that seem to stand between us and the enjoyment of God’s gracious face. But then, we will see him face to face.

That will be the joy of heaven: to bask in the grace and glory of God. To look up into His

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loving eyes, to be embraced in His eternal arms of love. To know Him as He is. Jesus says, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Jesus’ prayer is, “that we may be with him where he is, to behold his glory.” Glory, for man, is to see God in all His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. God is an invisible Spirit, and He dwells in a light to which no man can approach. But God has revealed Himself fully in the person of Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus could say, “If ye have seen me, ye have seen my Father also.” When we get to heaven, and see Jesus, then we will be forever satisfied.

But when will that happen? Job says, “in the latter day.” The latter day refers to the day of the coming of Jesus Christ. From his Old Testament perspective, Job could not distinguish the first and the second comings of Christ. He speaks of them in one breath. But we see things a little more clearly, now, in the New Testament. The latter day, when the Redeemer shall stand upon the earth, is the day when Jesus will visibly and bodily come again on the clouds of heaven. Then, Job says, He will stand upon the earth, or, more literally, upon the dust. He will stand on the dust, and command the dust that was our bodies to arise.

(Jesus describes this day in John 5:28-29 when He says, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Paul describes it as the day in which Christ shall descend on the clouds of heaven with a shout. He will sound a trumpet, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.)

That Christ will stand on the earth indicates also that He will come as judge. All will be raised, yes, but some will be raised unto damnation, their

bodies changed to live eternally in hell. Job is aware of this too, for later in the chapter he lovingly warns his cruel friends that their words will be judged, that they ought to be afraid of the sword, for there is a judgment.

But for himself, Job is not afraid of that judgment day. A part of his hope is that he will be vindicated on that day. Presently he is being falsely accused and persecuted, but he knows that in the resurrection, when Christ stands as judge, he will be vindicated.

Job’s hope is that in his body he will be raised, that with his eyes he will see God, and that then he will be forever cleared of the judgment of God.

(Is that your hope? This is written in Scripture so that believers in every age might make this confession and might cling to this hope. This is the secret of the patience of God’s people, the spiritual power that will enable them to endure every kind of affliction in this life. We have a confident expectation of a great good in the future, and the certainty of deliverance from all present suffering.

Is that your hope?

The alternative is the hopelessness and darkness of hell, where God’s gracious face is never seen, where His face is set against the wicked in wrath to eternity. There is no hope in

that every man stands on the same footing before God. The wicked and the righteous together, are damn-worthy before God. The wealthy and prosperous, as well as the poor and afflicted, are condemned before God. No man can justify himself before God. It is folly to try to do so.

And this is a foundational truth of the Christian gospel, the truth of the total depravity of man, and the impossibility of man to save himself, even in part, by his own good works. In Psalm 130 it is put this way: “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?” Also in Psalm 143:2: “In thy sight shall no man living be justified.” It is this truth, expressed by Job and David, that Paul reiterates in the book of Romans chapter 3, verses 19 and 20, when he writes, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”

Self-salvation is impossible. This is what Job is saying. How can I be right with God? It is impossible for me to make myself right with God.

But now, how does what Job is saying fit with his suffering? What does this truth of man’s total depravity have to do with the story of Job?

We see how it fits when we put it in context in the book of

Job. Job’s rhetorical question, “How should I be just with God?” is a part of his answer to his friends, and particularly here to Bildad, who spoke in Job chapter 8.

Bildad, and Job’s other two friends, Eliphaz and Zophar, claim that Job’s suffering is a result of his sin. Suffering, they say, is always punishment for sin, and Job’s suffering indicates that God is angry with him, and that Job needs to come clean, confess his sin, and that then God will bless him again.

This is how Bildad puts it in chapter 8:4-6:

If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression; If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

And then again in verses 20 and 21:

Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers: Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

Now, there is some truth to what Bildad says, and Job even admits that in the beginning of his response in chapter 9, when he says, “I know it is so of a

we do, and when our conscience convicts us, how much more does not God know our sins? And should we stand before God, He will not be satisfied merely with what we confess, but He will judge us according to what He sees and knows in us.

And so Job declares in verse 4 that God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. He is the omniscient and omnipotent God, and no one would dare to go to court with so powerful an opponent. Job asks, "Who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered?"

Besides this, God is the sovereign and the invisible God. This is what Job describes in verses 5-13. God can do whatever He pleases in the earth. He removes mountains, He shakes the earth, He commands the sun to rise, He seals up the stars, He spreads out the heavens. No one can stop Him or say to Him, "What doest thou?" God does things beyond our understanding, and His ways are higher than ours. "He doeth great things past finding out; yea and wonders without number.... Behold, he taketh away, and who can hinder him?"

And so Job, in verses 15 through 31, asks series of three questions that show the impossibility and folly of self-justification.

First he says, "If I would get a hearing with God, what

would I say?" In verses 14-15: "How shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?"

Second, he says, "If I could prove my innocence to God, what would that achieve?" In verse 20: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." In the very act of self-justification, I would prove by my defensiveness that I am guilty.

Third, he says, "If I would just act as though nothing had happened, if I would smile and wash myself and change my clothes, still God would declare me a guilty sinner." In verses 27-28: "If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself,...I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent." The defendant may be well dressed and mild mannered, and he may smile as if he has done nothing, but that does not keep the judge from saying, "Guilty!"

Job realizes the greatness of God. In verse 32: "He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment."

And so, back to Job's question at the beginning of the chapter, "How should a man be just with God?" The answer, It is impossible.

What Job is saying is this,

hell. The suffering of hell is not just the intense and immense burning wrath of God, but also this, that there is no relief and no way out; you want to die, but you never can; the torment goes on forever.)

How is it possible that Job could have this hope?

He gives us the answer at the beginning of verse 25, when he says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The Redeemer here refers to Christ who was to come. Of course, from his Old Testament perspective, Job did not see Christ as clearly as we do, but there was a lot that he understood. Being a contemporary of Abraham, Job knew the promise of Christ from Genesis 3:15, where God spoke of the seed of the woman who would overcome the seed of the serpent and all opposition to God. Job also knew of Enoch, who walked with God, and was not, for God took him. Enoch lived in his flesh in the presence of God. Job also knew of the judgment that God brought on the world through the flood, and the deliverance of His people in the ark. And Job knew about animal sacrifices that were offered for sin, as a picture of one who would come as the substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. All of these things, Job sums up in the name he gives to the promised Savior when he calls Him, "My Redeemer."

A redeemer in the Old Testament was a close relative who would stand up for you if you were falsely accused, who would defend you if someone committed a crime against you, who would pay a price to set you free if you were a slave, and who would purchase your land if you died, in order to keep your family name alive among the covenant people of God in Israel.

The redeemer in the Old Testament was a type or picture of Jesus Christ who was to come. Job viewed Him as a close relative, that is, the Savior who would come in flesh and blood to dwell among His people as one of them. As Redeemer, He would pay a price to set His people free from the bondage of sin and slavery to Satan. That was the price of His own blood on Calvary, where He made the real and final sacrifice for sin. And, as Redeemer, Jesus would also vindicate the cause of His people, declaring their righteousness before God, the world, and Satan—not an inherent righteousness of their own, but an imputed righteousness from Him. Job viewed the Savior to come as one who would bear his sins before the wrath of a just God, would lay down His life for him, would purchase him, body and soul, to be His own possession, and would, by virtue of that, someday raise Job's body again from the dead.

And Job not only knows his Redeemer, but he knows that his Redeemer lives. Implied in that is that his Redeemer will first die. His living, and standing on the earth, is a victorious living and a conquering of death. That is the power of Job's confession: He lives! As the sacrifice to take the place of sinners, He must die; but as Redeemer who pays the price, He lives. He is set free from death, and He will set His people free from the power of the grave.

How will the Redeemer be able to do this?

By His own divine power. The Redeemer here, in Job's mind, is God Himself, and Jesus came as God in the flesh. This is Job hoping and trusting in God Himself. God is not dead, and God cannot die. He is the God of life, the God who gives life and takes away life. Because He lives, Job is saying, I also will live with Him.

Now maybe Job could not put together all these pieces in the person and saving work of Jesus Christ, but Job did believe all the same things that we do. He had all the puzzle pieces, and believed what was on each of them, even though he maybe could not have articulated who the Redeemer would be, when

He would come, and how exactly He would redeem His people. But Job did believe the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And believing, he could have this confident hope that gave him the patience he needed under trial.

And today, we, who know the gospel of Jesus Christ, who know how He fulfilled all these things, who believe that today He is risen and alive at God's right hand, and who expect Him to come from heaven again to raise the dead, we have a stronger and more sure hope

|| *...we have a stronger and more sure hope than even Job, and this is the secret to our patience under trial.* ||

than even Job, and this is the secret to our patience under trial. Jesus lives, He rules over all, He is coming again to deliver us, and He will

take us to heaven eternally to be with Him. That is my hope as a believer, and nothing in this world can shake me from it.

Job is very confident of this.

We see that in two ways.

First, as a preface to his confession Job says, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" He wants his words written down in stone as a permanent record to last through the ages. That prayer of Job is answered, in the inclusion of

Job asks, "How should a man be just with God?"

Job asks this question in the context of his suffering. Justification is not an abstract theological idea, which has no connection to our life here on earth. No, it is a part of the answer to why the righteous suffer, and we are going to see that today.

Job's question is rhetorical. That is, the answer is implied in the question itself. How can a man be just with God? The answer: he cannot, that is, standing all by himself before God, man cannot be justified. The force of Job's question is this, that no mere man can be justified before God. It is impossible, and it is foolish to try.

Job asks this question as he contemplates a hearing with God. Job's friends have been his comforters. They have tried to evaluate his circumstances and come up with answers, but their answers are wrong. They are no help to Job. They are miserable comforters. And so Job, knowing that God will be just and merciful, wants a hearing with God, but as he contemplates it, he realizes that such a hearing would be futile. There is no way that he, a mere man, could justify himself before God, and say to God, "I don't deserve all this suffering."

Job realizes this as he thinks about God. He under-

stands how great God is. That is what we have in verses 3 through 13—the greatness of God.

It is very easy for all of us to justify ourselves, and usually we do this by comparing ourselves to others. There is always someone else whose life is worse than mine, and who does things that I would not even think about doing. We think of ourselves as "good Christians," and we think of ourselves as worthy of God's favor and love. But when we stand before God, it is impossible to have a works-based righteousness. That is what Job says here.

In verse 3 Job says, If God would contend with man, if He would take him to court, man would not be able to answer God's questions one time in a thousand. He means that there are thousands of uncovered sins that God could bring against any one of us, that we would not be able to excuse. We may be able to put on a show of piety before people, but God is not impressed by it. Even if we would acknowledge all our known sins before God, we would not have begun to express the depth of it. In Psalm 19 David says, "Who can understand his errors?" That is, who can know all of his own sins? And so David prays, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." He, like Job, knows that God sees much more clearly than

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

March 23, 2014

No. 3716

How Can I Be Right with God?

Rev. Rodney Kleyn

Dear Radio Friends,

How can a I be right with God? This is the important question we consider today from the mouth of Job, in Job 9:2: How should man be just with God?

I say, it is an important question. It is the most important question that any person could ever ask. Have you asked this question: “How can I be right with God?”

This was the important question that the Reformation of the sixteenth century asked. How can man be justified before God? This question distinguishes Reformed truth from Roman Catholic error. And this is a question that is still being asked and disputed today in Reformed circles. How are we justified? Is it by our obedience, by our good works? Or is it partly by our works and partly by the good works of others? Are we perhaps justified because of our act of faith, so that God takes faith as a substitute for works? Or is our justification entirely by grace, through faith, in the complete righteousness of Jesus Christ?

To be justified is to be accepted by God. It is for God to say to the sinner, you deserve no

punishment, you are completely forgiven for all your sins, you are received as My friend, you are My adopted child, and you will receive life in heaven to eternity with Me. To be justified is to be declared innocent, to be freed forever from any punishment for sin, and to become an heir of eternal life.

Do you see how important this question is?

The alternative to justification is condemnation. It is for God the judge to declare that a person is guilty, and that he will suffer for his sins eternally in the torments of hell. On the other hand, to be justified is to be made right with God, and to be saved from the wrath to come.

The Christian faith is not a religion of morals, of good works that we must do in order to be accepted by God. No, the gospel is the good news of deliverance from both the consequences and the power of sin, through Jesus Christ. God is righteous and He will and must punish sin. The gospel teaches that Jesus Christ has taken God’s wrath on Himself in our place so that we can be right with God.

these words in the inspired Word of God, the Bible, which is more permanent and lasting than any word engraved in stone. Psalm 119:89 says, “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” In Isaiah 40: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.” Job is confident of his hope, because this is God’s Word, more sure than anything in this world.

And then, second:

We see Job’s confidence in the personal character of his confession. Job does not make an abstract confession here. He does not say, “I know that the Redeemer liveth, and that after worms destroy the bodies of believers, they will see God with their own eyes.” No, that kind of confession would have been no help to Job. It is personal. “I know that *my* Redeemer liveth.... And though after *my* skin worms destroy *this* body, yet in *my* flesh shall I see God, whom I myself shall behold, and not a stranger.”

This is personal faith in Jesus Christ. Personal faith is not resting in something I have

done, or a decision that I have made, or a date on which I accepted Jesus into my heart. No, personal faith looks completely away from myself, to Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done, and I rest in Him. And resting in Him, I find assurance, I have hope, and I have the grace to persevere.

Is this your confession? And is this your hope?

Let us pray,

Father in heaven, we give thanks that these important words have been recorded in Scripture, written down some 4,000 years ago, so that today we can read them, and be encouraged in the same way that Job was in the midst of his trials. How thankful we are for a living Redeemer, who has bought us, and who will come again to raise us to be like Him and to be with Him. And how glad we are for the hope that we have in Him. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is coming, the glory of seeing Jesus, face to face. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR

March 16, 2014
No. 3715

Affliction Is for My Profit
Rev. Rodney Kleyen

Dear radio friends,

Have you ever asked, Where is God? and what is He doing?

At some point in life, every believer is going to ask those two questions. Where is God? And, What is He doing?

It may be from a pit of deep depression that we ask, where is God? Maybe we are suddenly stricken with grief or disease and we ask, What is God doing? Maybe we see a wave of affliction come on a friend and he is overwhelmed, and we want to comfort him, but we hardly know what to say, because we do not know where God is in this or what He is doing. Or maybe we witness immense human suffering, in war, or after a tsunami or earthquake or tornado, and we wonder, Where is God, and what is He doing?

These are the two questions that Job under the heavy burden of affliction wrestles with in Job chapter 23.

By now, if you have been following this series on the life of Job, you are familiar with Job's suffering. Perhaps no human, apart from Christ on the cross, has ever experienced such grief, pain, and rejection. In one day,

Job's ten dear children were all killed. On that same day, Job lost all his wealth. Soon after, Job was smitten with a miserable disease that disfigured his body, and caused immense physical and mental pain. Then, also, Job received no love and support from his closest friends. His wife derided him for his trust in God, and his friends accused him of hypocrisy and said God was judging him. All alone, in poverty, grief, pain, and rejection, Job has only one thing to cling to, his God. He believes and confesses that God is sovereign over his circumstances, he trusts that God brings these things on him out of love, and he has hope beyond this life in the glorious resurrection of the body and eternal life in the presence of God.

But, even though he has this faith and hope, still Job wrestles with these two questions: Where is God, and what is He doing?

We see this here in Job chapter 23. In verse 3 Job says, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"

Note that, in his affliction,

a close family member. Those are the most painful disputes. Then you should ask, what is God teaching me about myself? About my pride, about my lack of love and understanding, about my unwillingness to be wrong, about myself? And then, when you learn those things, you need to acknowledge them and repent and seek forgiveness. This is the burning off of sin, the refining process. That is what God is doing in our trials.

And when we learn to see that as believers, we

will see God's love in the trials that come our way too and we will learn as well to be thankful for the troubles that God sends our way. In Romans 5:3-4, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."

Job put it this way, "I shall come forth as gold." And he means purified, shining gold. This is God's purpose: He's making gold. He's burning and pressing on Job to turn him into a precious, beautiful, shining example of faith amidst trial. One of the greatest testimonies

that a believer can give is the testimony that he gives when he is suffering. It is a shining example of faith in the sovereign care of God.

This chapter calls us to submit to the sovereign purposes of God. I do not always know why, I cannot always see God's purposes, but I believe that God knows, and I will bow under my trials and worship him, and wait.

One of the greatest testimonies that a believer can give is the testimony that he gives when he is suffering.

As you struggle with the trials of life, say this of God: "He knoweth the way that I take, and when

he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Let us pray,

O God, Thou hast proved us; Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. And, Father, though Thy way is hidden from us, we are sure of Thy love, we know that Thou art acquainted with all our ways, and we are sure of Thy grace that will sustain, and that in love all things work for our eternal profit. Help us in this we pray. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

als to His people to see whether they have faith. Nor does God send these trials to test whether our faith is strong enough. The story of Job makes this plain. God is confident that Job's faith will remain. In the beginning of the book Satan is proud and bold, and he says to God, "If you just take everything from him, he'll curse thee to thy face." And Satan starts leaning on Job, bending Job, testing him, to see whether he'll break. But as the book progresses, Satan becomes silent, and disappears from the scene. But God remains on the foreground, and through Job's trials He proves the power of His grace. So, first, God sends trials to demonstrate in the lives of His people the power of His preserving grace. And Job is given to us in Scripture as a great example of this.

But also, God sends them for our own profit. Job says, "When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." The trials are God's way of refining us. The comparison here is to a refiner of metal. After a rock has been found in which there is gold, the refiner makes a fire and liquefies the rock in order to separate the impurities from the gold. We are like that rock. After God, through the work of regeneration, makes us new creatures in

Christ, there are still remnants of sin. And fiery trials are sent to burn away the dross. God is always teaching us something about ourselves, our own weakness, our own selfishness, our own self-sufficiency, our pride, and much more through our trials. And as those things are exposed, we improve as believers, we become stronger in our faith, we are purified through suffering.

Maybe you can think of situations in your own life like this. Everything was going well, and you thought that you were very strong as a believer, and then through sickness or poverty or grief God brought you to your knees, and you learned some things about yourself, you saw some areas in your life where you needed to grow, and realizing these things you did grow as a believer. You were sorry about your sins and you put them away.

The trials of life are opportunities for spiritual growth. That means that when we go through a trial we should ask ourselves, "What is God teaching me here about myself?" Maybe we get into a bitter dispute with someone and it gets very messy and painful. Let us say it is an argument with

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Job is not looking for happiness, peace, or relief, but rather he is looking for God Himself. Him! He is not looking for blessing, but the blesser. He is not searching for comfort, but the comforter. Job is saying, "If I knew where He is, I would go to Him."

In verses 8 and 9, he says, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."

By this he means that in prayer he searches God out in every direction, but God does not seem to answer his prayers.

So Job wrestles with the question, Where is God?

And then, too, he wrestles with the other question, What is God doing?

We see that in verses 3 through 7. Why does Job want to find God? He says, "That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge."

Job is asking for a hearing with God. He wants to lay out all the evidence and get an explanation. His so-called friends are saying that God is punishing him, but Job is not convinced. So he wants to ask God, What are you doing? He wants an explanation. Why this suffering?

So this is Job's struggle, these two questions, "Where is God, and what is God doing?"

It is important for us to see that every believer will struggle with those questions. You must not think that you are not a child of God if you wrestle with these questions.

Yes, sometimes the unbeliever will ask similar questions. For example, in Psalm 42:10 David complains, "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" There's the unbeliever asking, Where is God? But it is not asked because he is looking for God, but rather as a taunt against David in his affliction. When the unbeliever says, "Where is God?" he is attacking the truths of the sovereignty and mercy of God.

Or another example, in Psalm 73:11, where the ungodly say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?" This is Job's other question, "Does God know what He's doing?" But whenever the

unbeliever asks this, he does it as an observer of someone else's trouble. When he goes through trouble himself, he does not look to God, but he runs from God, he hides himself, because he is terrified of the wrath of God.

As Job wrestles with these questions, we see the glow of the ember of his faith. When he asks, where is God, he expresses his deepest agony as well as his greatest longing. More painful than his grief, poverty, physical pain, and rejection is this, that he cannot find God. This is his darkest hour. Where is God? He longs for God, and that desire is born out of faith.

In Psalm 13, David expresses it this way, "How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily?"

We see Job's faith also in his other question, Why is God doing this? Now, I think we have to be very careful here. It is not always right to question God's purposes. God Himself rebukes Job for this, later in the book. God is under no obligation to give a full explanation to us for what He does. His ways are always higher than ours.

But there is a right way to

ask this question, and it is this, to confess that though I do not know where God is and what He is doing, God does know these things. That is what Job comes to in verse 10, and notice the first word here, "But, he knoweth...." Job is saying, "I don't know. I don't know where God is. I don't know what God is doing. *But*, God knows." My knowledge is finite, I cannot understand, but God knows! That is the important, comforting truth here, that we need to cling to in our suffering and when we wrestle with the same questions as Job.

Where is God, and what is He doing? Here is the answer, in verse 10: "He knows the way that I take, and when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." He knows where I am, and He knows what He is doing.

The "way that I take" refers to the God-ordained path that we must walk through this life to glory. It includes both the events of our life, and the conduct of our life.

God knows every detail of our lives because in love He has planned and laid them out. In Psalm 1:6: "The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous." In Psalm 139:3: Thou "art acquainted with all my ways." For God's people, that is a very comforting thought. God has an

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intimate and personal knowledge of my way. It may seem to us sometimes that God is far off, but that is only our experience, it is not the reality. The reality is that God is always with us, guiding us and holding us by the hand. In Psalm 73: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." God has mapped out every step that we must walk, He holds us by the hand, and He guides us step by step on the path that inevitably leads to glory.

He knows the way that I take. The word "know" in the Bible includes the idea of love. In His eternal love, God planned out the unique way for every one of His children, through life, to glory.

But, also, Job means, He knows the conduct of my life. In verses 11 and 12, "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job is saying that, by God's grace, he is going to continue in the path of righteousness. He is going to hold his steps. He is not going to leave the way of obedience, even if that leads him through difficult and fiery trials.

You see two things here. In part, this is Job's answer to his so-called friends. "God knows,

you don't. My heart and my walk is right with God. He's not punishing me."

But also this, we see here in Job a resolve, despite difficulties, to persist in godliness. I am going to be faithful in my responsibilities and in obedience. I am not going to use my troubles as an excuse to become slack in my walk with the Lord. I may have difficulties, but I am going to keep going to church, I am going to keep on reading the Bible, I am going to persist in prayer, I am going to pursue fellowship with God's people. That is very important for us to hear too. Too often we use our troubles as an excuse for spiritual laziness, and then things only get worse, we spiral into despair. Job realizes that he needs, now, more than ever, to be walking close to the Lord. He knows he is vulnerable, he knows that Satan is at hand, and so he resolves to walk in the way of the Lord. He knows the way that I take.

And not only does He know my way, but He has a purpose. God knows what He is doing. Job describes that in the last part of the verse, "When he has tried me...."

The afflictions and troubles of life are God-sent trials.

What is the purpose of our trials?

Well, God does not send tri-