

Sermons on Job #1 (Introduction)

by John Calvin

John Calvin's sermon on Job emphasizes God's sovereignty, the necessity of patience in suffering, and the importance of understanding spiritual temptations.

Duration: 1:01:02

Scripture: Genesis 14:18, Job 1:1, Jeremiah 5:1, Matthew 6:33, Luke 16:15, John 4:24

Topics: "Serving God", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of serving God in spirit and truth, as stated in John 4:24. He refers to Jeremiah 5:1, where God calls for people who seek truth and execute judgment. The preacher highlights the need for our actions to reflect the reign of the Spirit of God in our lives, rather than being stained with wrongdoing. He emphasizes that it is our duty to submit to God, glorify Him in all circumstances, and recognize His sovereignty over our lives. The sermon also mentions the importance of walking after the Spirit, as urged by Paul in Galatians 5:25, and being renewed by the grace of God.

Transcript

The sermon we will hear today is the first sermon from the first chapter of the Book of Job, from a series of sermons on Job preached in the 1500s by the Reverend John Calvin. The sermons were translated from the original French into English by Mr. Arthur Golding and published in 1574. The 1574 publication is the basis for the sermon as we will hear it today.

And so let us begin. The Book of Job, chapter 1, verse 1. There was in the land of Hus a man named Job, sound and upright, fearing God and withdrawing himself from evil. The better to profit ourselves by that which is contained in this present book, first and foremost it is advantageous for us to understand the sum of it, for the story written here shows us how we be in God's hand, and that it lies in him to determine of our life and to dispose of the same according to his good pleasure.

That it is our duty to submit ourselves unto him with all humbleness and obedience, that it is good reason that we should be wholly his, both to live and die, and especially that when it pleases him to lay his hand upon us, although we perceive not for what cause he does it, yet we should glorify him continually, acknowledging him to be just and upright, and not to grudge against him, nor fall to striving with him, assuring ourselves that we shall always be vanquished in pleading against him. So then, the thing that we have briefly to bear in mind in this story is, that God has such a sovereignty over his creatures as he may dispose of them at his pleasure, and that when he shows any strictness or hardness, which we think

strange at the first blush, yet notwithstanding, we must hold our peace and not grudge, grumble or complain, but rather confess that he is righteous, and wait till he show us for what reason or purpose he chastises us. And here with this we have to behold the patience of the man that is set here before our eyes.

According as St. James exhorts us in James chapter 5 verse 11, turn with me there if you will, James chapter 5 verse 11, 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. For when God shows us that we ought to bear all the miseries that he shall send upon us, we can well afford to confess that it is our duty so to do.

But yet there as well we allege our own frailty, and we bear ourselves in hand that that ought to serve for our reason. Wherefore it is good for us to have such examples, as show unto us how there have been other men as frail as we, who nevertheless have resisted temptations, and continued steadfastly in obedience unto God, although he have scourged them even with extremity. Thus we have an excellent mirror.

Moreover, we have to consider not only the patience of Job, but also the outcome of it, as St. James says. For had Job continued in misery, even though he had had more than an angelical strength in himself, yet that would have been no happy outcome. But when we see he was not disappointed of his hope, and that he found grace because he humbled himself before God, upon the sight of such an outcome, we may conclude that there is nothing better than to submit ourselves unto God, and to suffer peaceably whatever he sends us, until he deliver us of his own mere goodness.

And here as well, besides the story, we have to consider the doctrine comprised in this book, that is namely, concerning those that came unto Job under pretense to comfort him, and yet tormented him much more than did his own miseries, and concerning the answers that he used to repulse their checks, by which it seemed they would have daunted him. But first of all, as in respect of our afflictions, we have to note that although God send them, and that they proceed from him, yet despite this, the devil also stirs them up in us, according as St. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6, verse 12, that we have war against the spiritual powers. For when the devil has once kindled the fire, he also has his roar.

That is to say, he finds men that are fit to prick us always forward, both to feed the evil and to increase it. So then we shall see how Job, besides the miseries that he endured, was also tormented, both by his friends and by his wife, and above all, by such as came to tempt him spiritually. For I call a spiritual temptation, not only when we be smitten and afflicted in our bodies, but also when the devil comes to put a foolish thought in our head that God is our deadly enemy, and that it is not for us to resort any more unto him, but rather to assure ourselves that henceforth he will not show us any mercy.

See whereunto all the discourse tended, which Job's friends laid before him. It was to make him believe that he was a man forsaken of God, and that he deceived himself in imagining that God would be merciful unto him. Surely these spiritual battles are far more harder to be borne than all the miseries and adversities that we can suffer by any persecution.

And yet, as God let Satan run so far upon the bridle, that he also brings his servants with him, who give us such assaults as we see Job has endured. Mark this well for a special point. But here as well we have further to mark, that in all this disputation Job maintains a good case.

And yet it is more that Job maintains a good quarrel did handle it ill, and that the other setting forth an unjust matter did convey it well. The understanding of this will be as a key to open unto us all this whole book. How is it that Job maintains the good case? It is in that he knows that God does not ever punish men according to the measure of their sins, but has his secret judgments, whereof he does not make us privy, and therefore that it is necessary for us to wait till he reveal unto us for what cause he does this or that.

Thus is he in this whole discourse persuaded that God does not always punish men according to the measure of their sins, and thereupon assures himself that he is not a man rejected of God, as they would make him to believe. Behold here a good and true case, notwithstanding that it be ill handled. For Job ranges here out of his bounds, and with such excessive and outrageous talk, that in many points he seems a desperate person, and specially he so chafes as it seems that he would even resist God.

Thus may you see a good case mishandled. But on the contrary part, they that undertake the evil case, that is to say that God does always punish men according to the measure of their sins, they that undertake the evil case have goodly and holy sentences, and there is nothing in their whole talk which would not entice us to receive it, as if the Holy Ghost himself had uttered it. For it is plain truth.

They be the grounds of religion. They treat of God's providence. They treat of his justice.

They treat of men's sins. Thus we see a doctrine which we must receive without opposing. And yet the drift of it is evil, namely for that these men labor by that means to cast Job into despair, and to drown him altogether.

But by this means we see that when we have a sure ground, it is necessary for us to look that we build upon it in such way, as all things be answerable to that according as St. Paul says of himself, that he built well, for as much as he founded the church upon the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ. And therefore that it has such a conformity in it, as those that come after him shall not make any other foundation, either of chaff or of stubble, or of any other brittle stuff, but have a good foundation, steadfast and substantial, ready laid to their hand. Likewise in our whole life.

We have to look unto this point. Namely that if we be grounded upon good and right reason, it is necessary for each one of us to stand upon his guard, that he reel not, nor wander, not one way or the other. For there is nothing easier than to mar a good and rightful matter, so sinful as our nature, as we find by experience at all times.

God of his grace may give us a good case, and yet we may be so stung by our enemies that we cannot hold ourselves within our bounds, nor simply follow that which God has enjoined us, without adding some trick of our own, seeing then that we be so easily carried away. We ought the rather to pray unto God, that when we have a good case, he himself will grant to guide in all singleness by his Holy Spirit, so as we may not pass the bounds which he has set us by his word. Together with this, we also be put in mind not to apply God's truth to any evil use, for in so doing we dishonor it, like as these men do here, who, although they speak holily, as we have showed already, and as we shall see more fully hereafter, although they speak holily, are notwithstanding but traitors to God, for they corrupt God's truth and abuse it falsely, applying that thing to an evil end, which of itself is good and righteous.

So then, whenever God gives us the knowledge of his word, let us learn to receive it with such reverence, as our receiving of it may not be to deface good things, nor to set a color upon evil things, as oftentimes

those that be most sharp-witted and cunning do overshoot themselves, and abuse the knowledge that God has given them, unto deceit and naughtiness, turning all things topsy-turvy in such a way as they do nothing but snare themselves. Considering, therefore, how all men are given to such infirmity, it stands us so much the more on hand to pray God, to give us the grace to apply his word to such use as he has ordained it, that is to say, to pureness and simplicity. And thus you see what we ought to consider in essence.

But now that we understand what is in this book, we must lay forth these matters more at length, in such way as the things that we have but lightly touched may be expanded upon according to the process of the history. It is said that there was a man in the land of Hus named Job, a sound and upright man, and fearing God, and withdrawing himself from evil. We do not know, neither can we guess, in what time Job lived, saving that a man may perceive he was of great antiquity.

Nevertheless, some of the Jews have been of the opinion that Moses was the author of this book, that he did set it as a looking-glass before the people to the intent that the children of Abraham, of whose race he himself came, that the children of Abraham might know that God had showed favor to others that were not of the same line, and therefore be ashamed if they themselves did not walk purely in the fear of God, seeing that this man, who had not the mark of God's covenant, nor was circumcised, but was a pagan and a heathen, seeing that this man had behaved himself so well. But, for as much as this is not certain, we must leave it in suspense and uncertainty. Nevertheless, let us take that which is of no doubt.

That is to say that the Holy Ghost has authored this book to the end that the Jews should know how God has had people to serve him, even though they have not been separated out from the rest of the world, and that although they had not the sign of circumcision, yet notwithstanding, they walked in all pureness of conversation, by the knowledge of which the Jews have had occasion to be so much the more diligent to keep the law of God, and as he had granted them such favor and prerogative as to gather them out from among all other strange nations, they ought to dedicate themselves wholly unto him. Also a man may perceive by the book of Ezekiel that the name of Job was renowned among the people of Israel. For in Ezekiel 14, we see it is said in verses 14 and 20 that if Noah, Job, and Daniel were among the people that should perish, they should save no more men's lives but their own, and all the rest of the people should be destroyed.

See how the prophet speaks of these three men as of such as were known and renowned among the Jews, as I have touched already, and by that we see what the intent of the Holy Ghost is, namely that the Jews should have a mirror and pattern whereby to know how they ought to keep the doctrine of salvation that was given unto them, seeing that this man which was of a strange nation had so kept himself in such purity, and that is the chief thing that we have to remember concerning the name that is set down here when he says that Job was of the land of Hus. True it is that some men do place this land far eastward. Nevertheless, in the fourth chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the same word, Hus, is stated as a part of Edom.

We know that the Edomites are descended of Esau, and true it is that they also had circumcision. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that they were strayed away from God's church, they had it no more as the sign of his covenant. Therefore, if we take Job to have been of this land of Hus, then he was an Edomite, that is to say, of the line of Esau.

And we know how the prophet Malachi in the first chapter of that book, in verses two and three, we know how the prophet says that although Esau and Jacob were natural brethren, born both at one birthing, yet God of his mere goodness chose Jacob, rejecting Esau and cursing him with all his whole lineage. Behold how the prophet, in speaking to magnify God's mercy towards the Jews, tells them that he chose them not for any worthiness that was in their own persons, considering that he had rejected Jacob's eldest brother, to whom the birthright belonged, and had chosen him that was the younger and inferior. So then, although this man Job was born of Esau's line, yet despite this we see how soundly he lived, and how he served God not only by upright conversation and equitableness among men, but also in pure religion, which he did not defile with the idolatries and superstitions of the infidels, as touching the name of Job.

Some interpret it to signify weeping or wailing, others take it for an utter enemy, not such a one as he hates, but such a one that is as it were a white target for men to shoot at. There is no cause why we should doubt whether this man, whose country is so marked out, and whose name is expressed, there is no cause why we should doubt whether this man existed or not, or lied or not, or whether the things that are written here did come to pass or not. So as we should think it to be but a tale contrived, as if a man should under a counterfeit name set out something unto us that was never done, for I have already alleged the records of Ezekiel and St. James, who show very well that there was a Job indeed.

And further, seeing that the story itself declares it, we cannot in any way deface the thing which the Holy Ghost meant to utter so precisely. And indeed, we see in Genesis chapter 14, verse 18, that in Abraham's time, Melchizedek had God's church and sacrifices, which were without any defilement, and so, even though that the greater part of the world was wrapped in many errors, and false and wicked imaginations, yet despite this, God had reserved some little seed to himself. And he always had some that were hid still under the pure truth, yes, and which waited continually when God should establish his church and choose out one people, that is to say, the offspring of Abraham.

To the end, they might know that they were picked out from the rest of the whole world, but very true it is that Jacob lived after this time, although the church of God was not then so well established as it was afterward. For we know that while the children of Israel lived in Egypt, it was like that all should come to nothing. And especially, we see to what an ordeal they were come to, when in the end, Pharaoh commanded that their male children should be killed.

In Exodus 1 verse 16, And in the wilderness, where it seemed that God had rejected them, when they were come into the country of Canaan, they had great battles against their enemies, and especially the service of God and his tabernacle were not yet there so well appointed as was requisite. God therefore, not having yet settled an apparent state of the church, would there should always remain some last seeds of it among the pagans and heathens, to the intent he might be worshipped. And that was also to convince those that are turned aside out of the right way like pagans and heathens, for Job alone was enough to condemn a whole country.

Noah also condemned the whole world, as the scripture says, because he hid himself always in pureness and walked as before God, as such time as every man had forgotten him and all men were gone astray in their own superstitions. Look with me at Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 7. By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Here then is Noah, judge of the whole world, to condemn the unbelievers and rebels, as much is to be said of Job, who has condemned all the people of that country, in that he has served God purely and the remainder were full of

idolatry, shameful deeds and many errors.

And this came to pass because they hold scorn to know the true and living God, and how and after what manner it was his will to be honored. So great regard has God always had, as I have said, to make the wicked and the unbelievers always inexcusable, and for this cause it was his will that there should always be some men that should follow the things that he had showed to the ancient fathers. Such a one was Job, as the scripture tells us, and as this present story shows very well, he served God purely and lived uprightly among men.

It is said that he was a sound man. This word sound in the scripture is taken for a plainness, where there is no point of faking, counterfeiting or hypocrisy in a man, but that he shows himself the same outwardly that he is inwardly, and especially when he had no hiding places to shift himself from God, but lays open his heart and all his thoughts and affections. So as he desires nothing but to consecrate and dedicate himself wholly unto God.

The word said has also been translated perfect by the Greeks as well by the Latins, but for as much as the word perfect has afterwards been misconstrued, it is much better for us to use the word sound. For many ignorant persons, not knowing how the said perfection is to be taken, have thought thus, Behold, here a man that is called perfect, and therefore it follows that it is possible for us to have perfection in ourselves, even during the time that we walk in this present life. But they deface the grace of God, whereof we continually have need.

For even they that have lived most uprightly, must have recourse to God's mercy, and accept their sins, be forgiven them, and that God uphold them. They must necessarily all perish. So then, although that they which have used the word perfect, have meant well, yet despite this, in view of the fact that there have been some that have bent it to a contrary sense, as I have said, let us keep still the word sound.

Then look upon Job, who is called sound. And how, for it is because there was no hypocrite, nor hiding in falseness of appearance, nor any doubleness of heart in him. For when the scripture means to set down the vice that is contrary to this virtue of soundness, it says heart and heart.

Meaning by that, a double heart. Let us mark then, that first of all, this title is attributed unto Job, to show that he had a pure and simple mind. That he did not uncover two faces in madness, nor served God by halves, but labored to give himself wholly unto him.

True it is that as now we cannot be so sound, as to attain to the mark as were to be wished. For as touching these, those that follow the right way, although they go on limping forward, yet are they so lame, that they drag their legs and their wings after them. The case then stands so with us, so long as we be wrapped in this mortal body.

That until such time as God have quite discharged us, of all the miseries to which we be subject, as I have said before, there shall never be any perfect soundness in us. But yet for all that, it profits us nevertheless, to come to the said plainness, and to give over all counter fitness and lying, and further let us note, that true holiness begins within us, inasmuch that if we show all the fairest countenances in the world before men, and that our lives be so well guided, that every man shall commend us, yet if we do not have this plainness and soundness before God, all is just nothing. For it is necessary, that the fountain be first pure, and afterwards, that the streams that run out of it be pure also.

Otherwise the water may well be clear, and yet nevertheless be bitter, or else have some other filthy corruption in it. Therefore it is advantageous for us, to always begin with this text, John chapter 4 verse 24, learning, that God will be served in spirit, and in truth. For he is a spirit, and he regards the truth of the spirit, as it is said in the fifth chapter of Jeremiah.

Turn with me if you will, to the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 5. And so we read in Jeremiah chapter 5, beginning in verse 1, Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that execute of judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. And though they say, The Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Then ought we to learn first and foremost, to frame our hearts to the obeying of God.

For after that Job has been reported to have been sound, it is also said of him that he was upright. This uprightness is meant of the life that he led, which is, as it were, the fruit of the said root, which the Holy Ghost had planted before. Job then had an upright and sound heart, for his life was simple.

That is to say, he walked and lived among his neighbors without hurting of any person, without doing any wrong or trouble to anybody, without setting of his mind to any guile or naughtiness, and without seeking his own profit by the hindrance of other folks. We see now what this uprightness imports, which is added in this place. And by this means we be admonished to have an agreeableness between our hearts and our outward senses.

True it is, as I have said before, that we may well withhold ourselves from ill-doing and that we may well have a fair show before men, but that shall be nothing if there be any hypocrisy or covert dissimulation and hiding in a false appearance before God when it comes to the root that is within the heart. What must we do then? As I have told you before, we must begin at the previously mentioned point and then to have perfect soundness It is necessary that our eyes, our hands, our feet, our arms, and our legs be answering to that. So as in our whole life, we may show that our will is to serve God and how that it is not in vain that we pretend a meaning to keep the same soundness within.

And here you may see why Saint Paul also exhorts the Galatians in Galatians chapter 5, verse 25 to walk after the Spirit if they live after the Spirit. As if he should say, Verily it is necessary that the Spirit of God dwell in us and govern us. For it is to no purpose to have a merry life that please men and is had in great estimation unless we be renewed by the grace of God.

But what? It is necessary for us to walk. That is to say, it is necessary for us to show in effect and by our work how the Spirit of God reigns in our minds. For if our hands be stained with robbery, with cruelty, or with other annoyances, if the eyes be carried with lewd and unchaste looks, with coveting other men's goods, with pride or with vanity, or if the feet, as the Scripture says, be swift to do evil, by that we well declare that our heart is full of naughtiness and corruption.

For it is neither the feet nor the hands nor the eyes that guide themselves. The guiding of them comes of the mind and of the heart. Wherefore, let us endeavor to have the said agreeableness which the Scripture shows us when it says that Job, having this soundness and plain meaning, did also live uprightly, that is to say, was conversant among his neighbors without any annoying of them and without seeking of his own peculiar prophet and kept an even hand with all the world.

Also, you see the reason why God proves whether we serve Him faithfully or not. It is not that He has need of our service or of anything that we can do, but because that when we deal well with our neighbors, so as we keep our faithfulness toward all men, according as nature itself teaches us, in so doing, we yield assurance that we fear God. We see many which bear the face of very zealous Christians, so long as it is but to dispute and to hold long talk and to bear men in hand that they study to serve God and to honor Him.

And yet for all that, as soon as they have to do with their neighbors, a man shall perceive what they have in their hearts, for they seek their own advantage and make no conscience to gather to themselves and to beguile folk when they have them in their danger, by whatever means it be, now then there is no doubt but that those which seek their own advantage and profit are hypocrites and that their heart is corrupted. And howsoever earnest Christians they seem outwardly, God reveals that they have nothing but gung and poison in their hearts. And why so? For look where soundness is, there must necessarily be uprightness also.

That is to say, if the affections be pure within, then it will follow that when we have to deal with men, we shall procure the welfare of every man in such manner as we shall not be given to ourselves and to our private commodity and convenience, but shall have that indifference which Jesus Christ affirms to be the rule of life and the whole sum of the law and the prophets. Namely, that we do not that thing to any other man which we would not have done to ourselves. So then we perceive that by this commendation of Job, many men are condemned for as much as the Holy Ghost declares that this man had not only a soundness before God, but also an uprightness and plain dealing among men.

This plain dealing which he speaks of shall serve to give sentence of damnation upon all such as are full of maliciousness and upon all such as do not pass over to snatch and gain to themselves the good of other men or which do not pass over to spoil other men of their livings. This sort of men are condemned by this present text. For it follows that he feared God, yea, that he was a man which feared God, and withdrew himself from evil.

Now, seeing that Job had had the prayer of keeping right and equitable among men, it necessitated him also to walk before men, rather, to walk before God, for without that, the rest is worth nothing. True it is, as I have said before, that we cannot live with our neighbors to do harm to none and to do good to all unless we have an eye unto God. For as for them that follow their own nature, albeit that they be endowed with godly virtues, for so it will seem, yet are they overtaken with self-love, and it is nothing else but being loriness or some other such respect which thrusts them forward insomuch that all the show of virtue which appeared in them is marred by that.

But although we cannot have the said uprightness without the fearing of God, yet notwithstanding, the serving of God and the regarding of our neighbors are two separate things, as God has also distinguished them in His law at such time as it pleased Him to have them written out in the two tables. Then let us bear in mind that like as up to this time under the word uprightness, the Holy Ghost meant to show after what manner Job lived among men. So also, when he says that Job feared God, he means to set out the religion that was in him.

And by that means, we be warned that if we will frame our life rightly, we must first have an eye unto God and then to our neighbors. I say we must have an eye unto God to give ourselves over unto Him and to yield Him His due honor. And we must have an eye to our neighbors to discharge ourselves of our duty

towards them.

According that, that we be commanded to help them and to live in equity and uprightness. And finally, for as much as God has knit us each to one another, that every man study to employ his whole ability to the common convenience of all. Thus you see how the case stands with us in having of an eye both to God and men for the well ordering of our life.

For he that looks on himself it is sure that he has nothing but vanity in him. For if a man were able to order his life in such a way as he might seem faultless to the world and yet notwithstanding God dislike him, what shall he gain by his excessive working of himself to walk in such manner as all men might magnify him? As to Godward, he is nothing else but uncleanness. And necessarily must this sentence which is written in St. Luke be verified, namely that the thing which is most high and excellent before men is abominable before God.

Turn with me, if you will, to the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Luke, chapter 16, verse 15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts.

For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Then let us bear in mind that we can never order our life as we ought to do except we have our eyes fastened upon God and our neighbor. Upon God.

And what for? To the end we may know that we be created to his glory, to serve him and to worship him. For although he have no need of us as our neighbors have, nor is either the better or the worse for our service, yet it is his will that to have reasonable creatures which should know him and in knowing him yield him that which belongs unto him. Furthermore, whereas he speaks of the fear of God, we have to understand that it is not a slavish fear, as men term it, but it is so termed in respect of the honor which we owe him because he is our father and master.

Do we fear God? Then it is certain that we desire nothing but to honor him and to be wholly his. Do we know him? That must be in such way as he has uttered himself. That is to say that he is our maker, our maintainer and one that has showed such fatherly goodness towards us that we of duty ought to be as children towards him if we will not be utterly unthankful.

Also, it is necessary for us to acknowledge his dominion and superiority over us to the end that every one of us yielding him his due honor may learn to please him in all respects. Thus you see how that under this fearing of God here is comprehended all religion. That is to say all the service and honor which the creatures owe unto their God.

And surely it was a right excellent virtue in Job to fear God after that manner considering how the whole world was turned aside from the right way. When we hear this when we perceive that although we live among the most wicked ones in the whole world we shall be utterly inexcusable if we be not given to the serving of God as we ought to be. And this is well to be marked because many men are of opinion that when they are among the thorns God will hold them acquitted and excused and that if afterwards they corrupt themselves or as the proverb says if they agree and hold with the hare and hunt with the hound which is all one God will pardon them.

But to the contrary look upon Job who is called that man that feared God. In what country? It was not in Jewry. It was not in the city of Jerusalem.

It was not in the temple. But it was in a defiled place in the middle of such as were utterly perverted. Albeit then that he was among such people yet he had such control of himself and lived in such way that he walked purely among his neighbors notwithstanding that at that time all was full of cruelty of outrage of robbery and of other similar enormities in that place on which we have to consider that it shall turn so much to our greater shame if we on our behalf have not a care to keep ourselves pure in the service of God and of our neighbors seeing He gives us such occasion as we have that is to say that God's word is continually preached unto us that we be exhorted unto it and that He reforms us when we have gone amiss.

It stands us on hand then to give ear to that which is showed us here and therefore in conclusion let us mark that which is added here in the text namely that he withdrew himself from evil for we see that the cause why rather why Job overcame all hindrances and encounters that might hinder him from the serving of God and from living uprightly among men was because he had control of himself for he knew right well that if he had taken liberty to do like other men he should have been given to all vices so as he should have been the enemy of God.

Job then did not watch so in the fear of God and in such plain dealing and soundness without great abundance of run-ins or without the devils heaving at him to overthrow him and to cast him into the filthiness of the whole world but he withdrew himself from evil that is to say he withheld himself what must we do then? Although we be in the church of God yet we see great abundance of evils and however it happens there shall never be such plainness and pureness but we shall be mingled with abundance of scornors and unthankfuls which are firebrands of hell and deadly plagues to infect infect all men therefore it is necessary for us to be very wary seeing there are too many stumbling blocks and so great looseness by which to train us immediately unto unthankfulness what remedy then? let us withdraw ourselves from evil that is to say let us fight against such assaults after the example of Job and when we see abundance of vices and corruptions reign in the world even though we be inclined and desirous to be mixed and intermeddled with them yet let us not be defiled with them nor say as men are commonly inclined to say namely that we must do as other men do but rather let us take counsel by Job's example to withdraw ourselves from evil and to retire in such way as Satan may not be able to make us to yield for all the temptations that he shall cast before us but that we may suffer God to cleanse us from all our filthiness and infection according as he has promised us in the name of Jesus Christ until he hath pulled us quite out of the soil and uncleanness of this world to match us with his angels and to make us partakers of that endless felicity for the which we must labor here continually therefore let us present ourselves before the face of our good God with acknowledgement of our sins praying him to give us such feeling that in acknowledging our own poorness we may always have recourse to the remedy that he gives us which is that he pardoning all our offenses will so govern us by his Holy Spirit that although Satan be named the prince of the world and have such a scope among men that the greater part of them are so perverted as we see yet despite this we may not be harried away with them but rather that our good God will hold us back under his obeisance and that we may know the thing where unto we be called so as we may follow it and maintain the brotherliness which he has ordained among us so linking ourselves one with another as we may desire nothing but to procure the welfare of our neighbors to the end we may be settled more and more in his grace which he has granted us by our Lord Jesus Christ until he make us to receive the fruit of it in his heavenly glory and that it may please him to bestow this benefit and grace not only upon us but also upon all people and nations of the earth let's stand together and bow our hearts in prayer This Reformation audio resource is a production of Stillwaters Revival Books and was read by Mr.

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