

Habakkuk - Part 2

by Roy Hession

The anger of the Lord is a love-inspired expression of God's displeasure with us, driven by his desire for our holiness and his love for us and others.

Duration: 1:02:27

Scripture: Joshua 7:1, Psalm 30:5, Isaiah 54:7, Habakkuk 2:14

Topics: "Habakkuk"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the book of Habakkuk and specifically looks at the phrase 'revive thy work in the midst of the years.' The speaker explains that this phrase refers to God's grace restoring and renewing what has become cold and lifeless. They emphasize that this can be the experience of believers and that Jesus is at his best in areas of confusion and lack. The speaker also references the story of Joshua and the Israelites' defeat at Jericho, highlighting the importance of being obedient to God's instructions and not allowing sin to hinder our relationship with Him.

Transcript

I want you to turn once again to the text, which is the anchor text of our Bible studies. The book of Habakkuk, get to the end of the Old Testament and count five books back, and you've got to Habakkuk. Habakkuk.

Verse two, O Lord, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years, make it known in wrought, remember mercy. And yesterday we considered that first phrase, revive thy work in the midst of the years. We saw it was grace doing something all over again.

Which had got messed up and spoiled, whatever it might be. Restoring that which had grown cold and lifeless. And that can be the experience of the believer.

And we saw that this was the area of confusion and lack where Jesus is at his best. He specialises in the sort of situations which are all that we can present to him. All I had to offer him was emptiness and strife.

And he made something beautiful of my life. Revival in that sense. We saw it was indeed linked with the wider awakenings, but this is that which concerns us.

God wants to begin a new thing in us. And I'm sure if he does, it won't end with us. As another relative passage, will you turn to the New Testament? Hebrews 12, Hebrews 12.

Verse five. Halfway through verse five. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou rebuke of him.

For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. And scourges every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now, no chastening for the present. Seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterward, and there's always an afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Well, that's background to other thoughts that we shall be sharing with you this morning. The next phrase in our verse is, in wrath, remember mercy. And I think by the end of our study, you will agree with me, it's one of the deepest and most humbling prayers a man can pray.

And somehow I know it's a prayer that will and does always reach the heart of God when a man is willing to say, in wrath, remember mercy. But we must first of all look at that first, those first two words, in wrath. And our study this morning is going to be with regard to the anger of the Lord.

Tomorrow, the mercy of the Lord. And the next day, the prayer where they're put together, in wrath, remember mercy. I have often promised myself to make a study of the anger of the Lord, because it's so often referred to in the scripture.

The Old Testament abounds with the phrase, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and such, such phrases. And if it isn't anger that's referred to, it's wrath. And the great majority of the cases, I've been looking at my concordance this morning, I tell you, it's an array too much, more than I could take in, this great array of references.

You cannot read your Bible without coming across it. And surely if you're in the habit of applying the scriptures to yourself, you've got to make something of this reference to the anger of the Lord. And the interesting thing is, it's normally referring to God's own people.

Sometimes, of course, to the nations that know not God, and the day of wrath that's coming upon this world. But far more often, there is reference to the anger of the Lord being experienced by God's own redeemed people whom he brought out of Egypt. Now, if it is right to look upon Israel of old as a picture of what Paul calls the Israel of God today, the people of God today, there must surely be in the experience of the people of God today, a parallel of that which sometimes God's people of old experienced.

The anger of the Lord has come again. I'm talking about those who are in the family, redeemed with precious blood, whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, who are on their way to heaven. But if God's earthly people were sometimes subject to the anger of the Lord, and very often it's called the fierce anger of the Lord.

Do the saints of God not sometimes experience that? Has it never been true of Roy Hester that the anger of the Lord's been kindled against him? Oh yes, a Christian, and a worker in the vineyard. I want to tell you it has been true. And though you may not always have known it, because you haven't perhaps been exercised thereby, it may well have been true of you.

It might be true of you even today. You may not realise that to this very hour you're suffering because the fierce anger of the Lord has been kindled against you. It must mean something.

There must be a parallel in our experience, the spiritual people of God, to that which sometimes was experienced by the earthly people of God. Now, to speak about the anger of the Lord is quite frankly a difficult subject, simply because when we talk about anger, we think about human anger. We say, now that's anger.

And frankly, it is a little difficult to talk about the anger of the Lord. In humans, anger is nearly always an object an ugly thing. I suppose there are occasions when it's righteous indignation.

And we're very often quick to claim that our anger is righteous anger, but only occasionally. Very often our anger, though it may be on behalf of some big moral issue, isn't really righteous. With regard to other people, it's so often an ugly thing.

Normally there's a selfish reaction in it. We're angry because another has crossed us, interfered with us, wronged us, and it's the expression of the fallen self-love. And then another thing which makes human anger so ugly is that there's no love in it.

I mean, even if a mother is really angry and loses her temper with her child, at that moment she's not loving that child if there's selfish reaction in it. And there's no love, so often in human anger. And therefore to apply that to God, it really is difficult to conceive.

And yet we have the phrase. And I've come to see it as a very important and tender subject, as I trust we shall see. He's not going to let us down, but thank God he's not going to let us off.

And deep down in your deepest being, you don't want to be let off. If you've got any desires for holiness at all, as a result of new birth, you wouldn't like a God who let you off and didn't deal with that in you with which he was displeased. And the thing that David did displeased the Lord.

Oh, thank God. When you read the story, what David did, is God going to just let that go? He's the counterpart of a child of God, I suppose, surely. David of all people.

And yet he did something that deeply displeased the Lord and how right and proper it was that the anger of the Lord was kindled against even David. And how glad he was afterwards. He wouldn't have had it any other way.

And the beautiful restoration to fellowship with God, the making good of all that went wrong, he never would have experienced. But, well, as I say, the anger of man is due to personal reaction and is without love. Not so the anger of the Lord.

There is no personal reaction in God with regard to himself and his rights. He doesn't take issue with men because they've wronged him. Utterly objective are these attributes of God.

And above all, I want to tell you, his anger is always love-inspired. It's love-inspired in the first place because of his love for the other person whom perhaps you've wronged. And it's because he loves that person, the poor and the needy, his anger is kindled against those that oppress the poor and the needy.

It says in 1 John chapter four, the epistle of John, first epistle of John chapter four, God is love. Read twice it says it. And he that loveth not knoweth not God because God is love.

And we always think that means God is love for me. The context gives another meaning to it. I know it is true, God is love for me, but in the context in that fourth chapter, it quite obviously, God is love for the other fellow.

And if you aren't loving the other fellow, if you're criticising, wounding him, hurting him or her, you're hurting that one whom God loves. And it's his love for that person that arouses his displeasure with you. And therefore the anger of the Lord is very often love-inspired from that point of view because of his love for the other person.

In one of the early chapters of Revelation, you get the expression, the wrath of the Lamb, quite extraordinary. The Lamb is the gentlest of creatures and Jesus worthily bears that name, the Lamb, because it describes his disposition, his utter beneficence, his willingness to humble himself for men. And yet you've got this expression, the wrath of the Lamb.

It's because he is the Lamb that there is this wrath. It's because he's the one always on the side of the poor and needy. He takes issue with those that oppress them.

Israel, that was her hope. She was the oppressed. And oh, the prophecies of Israel's restoration all arise from the fact that God is going to deal with the nations who've oppressed that despised people.

Oh yes, they were being disciplined. But every time in the prophets, they then turn to the Gentiles who are oppressing them. That's declared they're going to be subject to the wrath of the Lamb.

Yes, it's love-inspired, but also inspired not only by love for the other person, but by love for you and me. It's because he loves you that he takes issue with you. And you become subject to his anger, and we'll see more of what that means in a moment, in order that thereby he might wean you from wrong courses, from wrong attitudes, and provoke you to repent.

He makes the far country a less pleasant place for us in order to provoke us to repent and come back to the Father's house. And behind a frowning providence, there's always a shining face. The anger of the Lord is a very real thing.

We do well to learn to recognize it, but always understand however it expresses it, it's love-inspired to you. He designs your best, and he's set on our holiness more than on our success. Now, when we're thus subject to his anger, that doesn't mean that the child of God is in any sense deprived of his salvation, nor of his place in the family of God.

It's because he is in the family that the anger of the Lord is sometimes kindled against him. It's not right of you to be angry and give spanking to another person's child, but parents must do it. And what determines that is because they are in their family and their administering of right and proper chastening, because we do make mistakes, we can get the wrong anger, but the administering of right and proper chastening is because we love them.

We don't want those ways to develop until they are a nuisance to society as they grow up. And so the anger of the Lord, let's settle it, is love-inspired. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

This is the New Testament counterpart of what we're thinking about with regard to God's earthly people. The anger of the Lord is kindled. It's because he loves.

Sometimes I've seen some of my friends really having a hard time, and my heart bleeds for them. I sometimes say, brother, God must love you an awful lot. The cost is that their suffering is a mark of love.

His intent on their holiness, his deeper purposes in view, and he's going to take infinite pains to achieve those purposes. Now, how does this anger of the Lord express itself? It's not merely an emotion in his heart. It expresses itself in our experience.

And I'm going to say it expresses itself in three ways, or one of three ways, if not all three. First of all, when the anger of the Lord is kindled against a child of God, he hides his face from them. In overflowing wrath, I hid my face from thee.

That's in Isaiah 54. By the way, don't feel you must turn up every reference because you've got another version and it won't read quite the same. Just listen, but I'm giving you the references so you can jot them down.

The authorizes, in a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment. The revised standard version says, in overflowing wrath. And I believe that's more accurate.

I'm not happy with the NIV when it says, in a surge of anger. Now that's not consistent, as I understand it, with that other thing about him being slow to anger. A surge of anger means a sudden uprising.

No, in overflowing anger. What did I do? I hid my face from thee. And that, for a man who's been walking with God, is a trial indeed.

It's a loss indeed. God's hiding his face from me. And he did it to Israel.

Surely the saints of God sometimes know that. Unhappy experience. The Lord's arm, it says in Isaiah 59, verse one, is not shortened that it cannot save, nor is it heavy that it cannot save.

Here, if anything's lacking in our experience, we're dull and defeated, it's not because the great arm of grace isn't long enough, or God is inattentive, but our iniquities have separated between us and him, and our sins have hid his face from me. Now, very often, in experience, you get the effect before knowing the cause. You don't know why, but quite frankly, you have an experience which really does seem as if God's hiding his face from you.

Prayers unreal, and unanswered, very often. You get nothing out of the Bible, you seem to be facing life alone. Not always has that been your experience, but it may be latterly.

You might have come to Southlaw, and he's been hiding his face. When that's the case, we do well to inquire why. There was one of the most beautiful things of David, when he was in that sort of situation, he inquired of the Lord.

There was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year, and bless his heart, he did the one thing he ought to do, he inquired of the Lord, and he got the reason. 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 32, is it? That's another whole complete story, to illustrate this thing. And when the anger of the Lord is kindled against you, he may well choose to express it by hiding his face from you, that attitude, that course of action.

You think it's right, you've justified it. How come that he seems to have hid his face from you, is because his anger has been enlarged, kindled toward his erring child. Then another way in which the anger of the Lord expresses itself in our lives is by inexplicable defeats and failures, in areas perhaps where we were quite successful before.

Perhaps those of us in some form of Christian service had been humbled by failure in that service, perhaps lack of fruit, where before there had been some. This is how it was in the inexplicable defeat at Ai, that had that wonderful victory at Jericho, where they had to do so little, where God did it all, they just cooperated with him, and they thought that Ai was going to be a pushover, it was only a little place. And they only said 3,000 men, that should have been more than ample, they felt.

36 of them got killed, and the rest took flight and went back. And it was so important, it was at the beginning of their enterprise, and their morale was receiving a terrible blow. Was this the prelude of a whole succession of further defeats? What would then God do for his great name, said Joshua, and Joshua fell upon his face.

But Joshua didn't know something. We're let into the secret straightaway in the very first verse, in chapter 7. But the children of Israel committed to trespass in the accursed thing, the devoted thing. It was told them before they went into Jericho, that everything was to be devoted.

Devoted, much of it, possessions, everything to the sword and to the fire, gold and silver to the Lord's treasury. But the children of Israel committed to trespass in the devoted thing, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing. With what result? And the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

But Joshua didn't know. He didn't know the anger of the Lord had been kindled. And had he known it, he wouldn't have known for what reason.

Actually, it was quite good news for him, because he thought that God had forgotten them, or had given up, or taken him, got off his own throne. And it was a great relief, when God said, get up, Israel has sinned. Oh, is that it? Oh, I thought it was worse than that.

Well, it was, would be worse, if what you've been believing is all a hoax. And sometimes we're so defeated, you say, have I been being led up the garden path all my life? Perhaps there isn't a God. It's amazing the terrible doubts we can sometimes entertain.

It's a wonderful thing, isn't it at all? I'm the same as I've always been. My arm is as long, my ear is attentive. It's simply sin.

He didn't know what the sin was. And it took him quite a time to find out what it was and who it was. Took him a whole day, casting lots, before they found a cat.

And so it is. We have these inexplicable defeats, that's all we know. And not only in ministry, all sorts of areas.

Home, business, work, relationships, enterprises. Let's take it seriously, say, Lord, why has Israel turned her backs before her enemies? And then he will show us. And so that's another way in which the anger of the Lord is sometimes kindled against us.

It's good news. I'm so glad the problem's sin. I mean, I know I can do something about it on my side.

Not much. I can confess it. The grace in the cross of Jesus is adequate for that sin.

But if it's the fact that I've been led up the garden path and it's not really true, that's a tragedy indeed. It isn't at all. Grace is still grace, but our sin.

So we praise the Lord for those experiences. Have you had the experience first of him hiding his face from you? One would ask why. And not tarry till you know.

In the answer, wherein you've gone astray may not be just an obvious way. It may take a little time for it to be revealed. Something you've justified.

God doesn't see it the way you perhaps see it. All these inexplicable defeats, one way or another, are Als after our wonderful Jericho experiences. And then a third way, which the anger of the Lord seems to express itself, is in what we'll call by the large term, chastenings.

And this is what the writer to the Hebrews speaks about as being an essential part of the life of the children of God. If he doesn't know the chastening of the Lord in his life, doesn't look as if he's a child of God. He's a bastard.

He's a phony convert. But the real ones, they always are the subject of great care and attention. Their upbringing is of supreme importance.

And they don't always do right. They've got to learn. We've got to learn.

And so often, it's sometimes a painful school of chastening in the realm, I suppose, of circumstances. Perhaps in the realm of our family. Perhaps in the realm of health.

Perhaps with regard to finances. Perhaps with regard to the vilification of others. One way or another, the variety is infinite.

But always remember, it's he whom he loves, he's chastening. And he's intent not on our success so much as on our holiness. I want to tell you, any young man thinking of going to the ministry, be prepared for that.

You are intent on your success. God's intent on your holiness. That explains some of the difficulties we encounter.

That it's not only the minister who's in God's school, everybody else is. Everybody else comes under his chastening, and it's his love for us, concern for our holiness, and remember afterwards. Though it's not pleasant, but grievous at the time.

Nevertheless, afterwards, it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. You've got to be exercised about it. You can have sorrows, you can have chastenings, but if you're not exercised, say, Lord, what are you teaching? You won't get much out of it.

Paul Bilheimer, who's written the book that's been a great blessing to people called *Destined for the Throne*, has written another one. He says, don't waste your sorrows. Be exercised thereby.

Find out for what purpose, and don't scruple to call this the loving anger of the Lord. It's all right. When a parent is crossed with a child in a ripe and proper way, he doesn't love that child less, not a bit.

The moment that child is sent up to his bedroom until he says he's sorry, when at last he does, he's met with such a loving welcome that was in the mother's heart all the time, even when she was dispatching him up to bed, and so with us. Now, to go a little further, I want to speak, trying to enumerate a few things for our help, on the character of the anger of God, or rather the character of the one whose anger is sometimes kindled against it. And there's some sweet things said about this God of ours.

Really, you know, you end up loving him more than ever. The first thing is, he's slow to act. Isn't that often come? I'm going to give you some text.

Nahum 1.3 says he's slow to anger. Joel 2.13 says he's slow to anger. Jonah had to confess God was slow to anger.

Nehemiah in his prayer said, that's slow to anger. And the Psalms again and again say he's slow to anger. In other words, he's not quick-tempered.

That's why I do not like that any of you, I can't say, I don't want to criticize NIV more than anybody, there's a difference between persons. It's interesting, helpful to wear them out. In a surge of anger, that doesn't quite fit with this great thing that's said of him.

He's slow to anger. How slow to anger he was with Samson. He began to break his Nazarite vow very early on, but God went on with him and he still retained his strength.

When at last God withdrew that strength, it was the end of a long, patient road. Oh, how patient it is, my friend, he's slow to anger. You don't necessarily immediately experience some of the things I've mentioned.

For a bit, all seems to go well. As for Samson, I will shake myself at another time. But this time, there is God, he's slow to anger.

This is the meaning of a God being long-suffering, patient. And he's waiting for you to respond to other overtures, the gentle convictions of his spirit. But because a judgment against an evil work, it says in Ecclesiastes somewhere, is not executed immediately, the heart of the sons of men are fully set on them to do evil.

Romans 2 says that we misinterpret this patience of God. We despise, it says, the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, not knowing. The fact that nothing happened, no calamity happened, is a sign of his goodness and forbearance, not knowing that the goodness of God is intended to lead us to repentance.

There's another passage that speaks of how men misinterpret God's silence, Psalm 50. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such as one as myself. You felt like chopping another fellow's head off and said so because he wasn't quite orthodox.

Now God is surely in it, and that's what we do. We come to the place where we feel God is such and one as ourselves. It's quite all right to behave in this way and that way.

When certain things come up, we think that we can take a holiday from love. And because it may be something to do with the Lord and his work, we think it justifies it, it does nothing of the sort. Jesus is still the Lamb, but we misinterpret his silence.

But he is, oh thank God, he is slow to anger. And he sends us many a messenger before his anger is really kindled against him. There's a lovely phrase, probably in Jeremiah or others, he told her, I sent unto you my prophet, rising up early and sending them.

Oh, I think it's charming, isn't it? How many times I chuckle whenever I see God rising up early and sending his prophets to us, and God's done that to you. But you didn't think you had to take it into notice, you didn't take it too seriously, that challenge about that wrong course or that wrong attitude and ultimately, as with Samson, you may find the Lord has departed from you as regards giving you the strength you once had. And then another thing, the second thing we're told is, he retained it, not his anger forever.

David said in one of his songs, won't thou draw out thine anger unto all generations? And the answer's no, I don't retain my anger. I'm slow to anger, and when it's aroused, some wonderful verses in Micah 7, 18, the beautiful verse, I'll read it to you. He retained it, 7, 18, not his anger forever, because he delighted in mercy.

And then another famous verse that speaks to this beautiful characteristic in our God, Isaiah 57. It's a great revival text, you know, about the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity. I dwell also with him as a contrite, humble spirit.

And in 57, verse 16, it then goes on to say, I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wrong, for the spirit would fail before me and the heart that I have made. He's not going to be forever, hammering away, hammering away, hammering away at him. He will not contend forever.

The moment I acknowledge I'm wrong, he lifts his hand. There are other times when he gives up contending forever, and that's worse, he says, no good. We'll have to leave him in his self-chosen way.

So either way, he doesn't contend forever, but how good for the saint to know this is the God he's dealing with. And then the famous verse in the famous Charles Psalm 103, you know, the one that tells us to bless the Lord and all that's within us. And verse nine, he will not always chide.

Neither, dear one, will he keep his anger forever. He's not going to be forever, right on for years to come. With his anger towards you because of something's gone by.

Oh, you tried to put it right. I know I'm suffering. No, no, that's not God.

He will not keep his anger forever. Amen. Praise the Lord.

And then, and this is perhaps the most important thing I can say is, God's anger expressed in this, that, or the other way as we've suggested is not punitive in its intention, but restorative. Get that. I don't care how much a certain suffering is linked with a certain sin.

It is never to be regarded as a punishment for that sin. For the simple reason it isn't an adequate punishment. What? This or that trouble that's come your way, a punishment for your sin? Man, it's not big enough a suffering to be regarded as a punishment.

The only adequate punishment for sin is that which Jesus bore in his body on the tree. There was the punishment of sin. There was the anger of God supremely revealed and it fell on him.

Oh no, not punitive. He took that side of things, but it is restorative in its intention to restore you. In areas and issues wherein you've got away from him.

Not punitive, restorative. That's all he's concerned about. And oh, how good it is to take all this trouble to get me back, to get me to repent, to get me back to a fellowship with himself.

And it's very interesting to notice that all the tremendous messages of judgment that the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah pronounced upon Israel, they're wearisome almost, about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom from the north and themselves being taken captive. Jeremiah had nothing to say but this, this, this. He didn't want to say it, but God kept on.

And in one or two places, God says, I'll tell you why. I'm telling you, look, write it down. Put it on the scroll and you go and read every word.

And if they put you in prison, get Baruch, your secretary to do it for you. Why? And I'm reading from Jeremiah 36. Jeremiah, there you are.

My lack of a Sunday school education is still coming out. Jeremiah 36, I'm longing, when I go to America and I make an inquiry, is there some computer thing on the market whereby I can press a button, I can get any verse I want shown up on the screen in three versions. The time I spend in my studies, turning pages.

I don't know, we might even have to use it on the platform. But in 36, three, verse two, take the Aurora of a book and write therein all the words that I've spoken unto thee against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations from the day I've spoken to thee from the days of Josiah even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sins.

And it goes on in another place and repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto. Talk about the evil I think to do this, in order that they will repent and then I won't do it. And thus it was even the severest messages of judgment were really offers of mercy.

Why in the world did God say to Jonah, go to Linnethe and say, in 40 days God's going to destroy the city. If they deserve to be destroyed, why didn't God just do it? Why did he send Jonah first and said in six weeks time it's going to happen, to give them a chance to repent. And Jonah's message of judgment, he didn't realize it was really an offer of mercy.

And if Jonah didn't see it that way, thank God the King of Nineveh now says, I believe that the chance boy, I believe that it could be that the God of the Hebrews, did we hear anything about him being merciful? He called the people to repent. And that was why God gave the message of judgment, that said he's coming in six weeks. It was really an offer of mercy.

And the anger of the Lord expressed in whatever way it may be is really designed to restore. It's restorative, not punitive. There's another passage in Hosea 5, it says I will go and return unto my place until they acknowledge their iniquity.

And then the prophets come and return to the Lord. He was torn and he was healed. I will go, Hosea 5, verse 16, and return to my place until they acknowledge their iniquity.

The purpose of me going and returning to my place is to encourage them. And it's all that. Painful though it may be, it's restorative.

And you know it really went, oh, God's dealings with us really bring us back so often. And we begin to interpret it. This is God, this isn't just chance.

And as you're opening, he shows you what you never saw before. Hallelujah, you're restored. It's achieved its purpose, you've been restored.

Now here we come across quite an obvious difficulty. It's all inferring this, that there's quite an ostensible matter in which we're wrong, in which we've gone astray. That's why God wants to restore us.

But what about a child of God who in all honesty is walking as obediently as they know how? Some of the chastenings that we're thinking about, they've experienced. Well, what does that mean? Well, I believe it's the same principle even for us, because God is on a recovery operation. We've underestimated the extent of the damage done by the fall of Adam, and it's been transmitted to us, and God is on a recovery operation.

It was begun the day you were converted to God initially. But this recovery isn't the work of a day, it's the work of a lifetime. And I would say in the most obedient child of God, there may, there is, I'm sure, areas we've never seen where self may be ready.

Lessons of submission to the will of God even when it's hard. Naturally, we all want things to go our way. We've got to learn that an experience of the cross is when God's will crosses our will, and we choose God.

And therefore, it's once again that love of God, chastening even the most obedient, because afterward, it yields the fruit of righteousness. And so, dear one, you say, well, I don't know wherein I've gone astray. You don't have to have an ostensible place where you've gone astray in subject to divine chastening.

He knows areas that yet need to be touched. He knows lessons that we all need to learn, lessons of submission. We've got to learn to take our creaturely position before the Lord without right to his property.

And some of these lessons can only be learned in hard ways. And so, it's still the same on the same sort of thing. You hesitate to say of a person, it's the anger of the Lord, but, well, all right, call it the love of the Lord, or rather, call it chastening.

It's all the same. You say, I don't deserve what I'm suffering. You may not, but you need it.

Who could say, I don't need it? Maybe there's nothing you can see to merit it, but he knows we need it. Just too strong, too, we haven't learned the sweet lessons of brokenness enough yet, and submission to his dear will, which always ends good, although sometimes the taste is a bit bitter. You need it, perhaps.

And then I've got a last thing to say. The anger of the Lord and the experience of this, that, or the other way is of limited duration. And I love this so much.

There are verses that tell us that, that this experience of God doing this, that, and the other such a report is only for a moment. Look, well, you didn't look if it's the wrong version, but Psalm 30, probably come out in yours much the same as in mine. Psalm 30, verse five, this is a beautiful verse.

Psalm 30, verse five. For his anger, endurance, but a moment, his favor for a lifetime. Weeping may endure for a night, but man, joy cometh in the morning.

And there's another similar scripture in Isaiah 54, verse seven, when it says, it says, for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with everlasting kindly will I gather thee. It's only a moment, a small moment. At the time, we're in the middle of it.

It seems endless. It's going to go on, you can't see any end to it. But when you've been through it, God says it's only a moment.

And he's not going to retain his anger forever. Only for a moment. Amy Carmichael has a poem about Jesus being in the boat and lifting himself up to calm the waves when they went back to him.

But there was a bit of time lag between their request and his arising and doing it. And she talks about, in this poem, that age-long minute, when thou art silent and the winds are high. It's only a minute.

To you, it's an age at the time. Only a minute. Joy is coming in the morning.

And not only do you have to wait for heaven many times, this thing, we have an experience of it here and now, but certainly it's going to be in heaven. But so often, in ordinary daily experience, it's only for a moment. Joy coming.

Behind that frowning providence, he hides a smiling face. He's slow to anger and ragged about. So quick.

You know, a cricketer must hate to face Willie's bowling, the fast bowler. But when he's taken off or the match is over, he can't score any more runs. He can only score runs when the fast bowling's on.

And it's in that age-long minute that everything matters. Can you yet believe he loves you? Can you yet believe he's got his things under control? Can you yet believe it's only for a moment, though it seems a long time? So don't pine too much for the fast bowling to stop. This is your moment for scoring runs.

Scoring the rounds of confidence in the love of God for you, nonetheless, and submitting with patience to that which he's given you to endure. And so we have it. To be, to keep trust with you about time, I'm just going to read a hymn we might have sung.

God knows a mysterious way, his wonders to perform. You know it. Ye fearful saints.

Fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and will break with blessing. On your head blind unbelief is bound to err and scannies works in vain.

God is his own interpreter and he will make it rain. And so dear one, shall we not rather be in subjection to the father and spirit? And we gave our parents that sort of suspicion in measure, how much more this one? And I want to tell you, at the end of the day, when it's over, that test for a moment, the normal is fatal

for a lifetime. But now and then, it may well be this loving anger of the Lord is kindled, but only for a moment.

Until you've learned that lesson, until you've said, oh God, you're right, no I'm wrong, I'm coming back. God grant us to respond to such a gracious God as this. Amen.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you. Lord, we could have spoken the whole morning how you endured the anger of thy father in our heart and exhausted it.

So there's no penal aspect left, save for those who refuse thy offer right to the end. Till then, the very message of judgment, even the message of hell, is really an offer of mercy, that we might repent now and enter into peace. And so it is for everything else.

Or we can ask thee dear Lord, these things are so close to us, would you please make a personal interpretation to each one of us of these things, so that we feel so blessed and comforted and strengthened to endure whatever may be upon us. And Lord, where there's need for us to see we're in, we've gone astray. We're in, we're taking a wrong course, and you want us to break.

Oh, help us to do it. Under thy loving hand, help us to humble ourselves. Under thy mighty hand, every one of us apart, as may be necessary.

And now shall we say the grace. And now the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Be with us all every morning. Amen.

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