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Sermon Notes

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## **Blessed is the One Whom God Corrects**

**Job 5:17-18**

A hero of the faith: Sarah Edwards, the wife of Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards (lived in Massachusetts in the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century) was arguably the greatest American theologian of all time. He was also married to an amazingly patient, wise, and godly woman, Sarah. She was every bit his equal in Christian maturity. And God chose by a bitter providence to put her character on display for all time. Jonathan was away from her, preparing to become President of the College of New Jersey. He received a smallpox inoculation as many did in those days, but it went horribly wrong. His throat swelled up with the disease, his fever raged, and he soon died (March 22, 1758). She received news of his death and wrote this timeless letter to their daughter, Esther:

**What shall I say: A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands on our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left to us! We are all given to God: and there I am and love to be. Your ever affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards**

Here is a godly woman who deeply loved her husband and has now learned that she would never see him again in this world. This was her reaction. She is well aware of her sorrow; she feels deeply the pain, for she speaks of a dark cloud. She embraces the doctrine of God's sovereign disposal, for it is God who has chosen to cover her with the dark cloud; she says clearly "The

Lord has done it." But she does not charge him with wrongdoing. Instead, she calls him "holy and good." Furthermore, she is clinging to him as her living treasure, for she says "My God lives and he has my heart." Her true delight is God, not Jonathan. "We are all given to God; there I am and there I long to be." She is well-aware that she is on display, even while she writes to her daughter. She wants Esther to know that "we are all given to God." She is deeply thankful for the past goodness of God in having such an incredibly godly and fruitful husband as she did. She is mindful of the legacy Jonathan has left to future generations of Christians. Yet it was very personal to her and to Esther, for she calls him "my husband and your father."

But for me, by far the most amazing thing she writes are these words:

**"O that we may kiss the rod and lay our hands on our mouths!"** What incredible maturity this reveals. The rod is the chastening rod of reproof by a loving, heavenly Father. No matter how godly she is, she is well aware that there is still the deep-seated corruption of indwelling sin, and that God uses these bitter moments to drive the sin out of our souls. But that only happens if we "kiss the rod," if we willingly accept and submit to what God wills. We must see such painful providences as part of God's wise and fatherly plan to sanctify us through and through and thereby fit us for heaven. But she knows her own weakness, and, like Job (Job 40:4), says we need to "lay our hands on our mouths." The tongue is a "restless evil, full of deadly poison." (Jas. 3:8) It will speak the hidden corruptions of our hearts in bitter accusations against God if we do not "set a guard over the door of our mouths." (Ps. 141:3)

Friends, I want to commend Sarah Edwards's theology

And today, we're going to probe its dimensions in a statement made from the Book of Job by one of Job's friends, Eliphaz:

***Job 5:17-18 “Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. <sup>18</sup> For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.”***

I. The Challenges of Interpreting Job

A. The Doctrine of Inerrancy

***2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness***

***Psalm 12:6 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.***

B. Scripture Interprets Scripture

C. God’s Own Assessments of Job and His Friends

1. Of Job

***Job 38:2 “Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?”***

2. Of Job’s friends

***Job 42:7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.***

3. SO... where does that leave us? This is a perfect record of many imperfect statements!!!

D. YET Paul Quotes Eliphaz!!!

1. The plot thickens!

2. The Holy Spirit moved Paul to use one of Eliphaz’s statement in his inerrant letter to the Corinthians!!

***Job 5:13 He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.***

***1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"***

3. So SOME of what Job's friends said was right and true!!

4. How do we sift through this?

E. Next Week: Looking at Job's Friends... Truth in Service of Error

F. Today: Zero In On This One Statement by Eliphaz

***Job 5:17-18 "Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. <sup>18</sup> For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal."***

## II. Blessed is the One Whom God Corrects

### A. Unfolding Eliphaz's Statement

1. Blessed = happy, richly gifted by God

2. Corrects = chastens, reproves, chastises

a. Implication = having sin addressed by God

b. The discipline of the Lord

c. The idea is one is wandering from the path of holiness, righteousness... or one has inner sin issues needing to be addressed

3. It is a tremendous blessing to have God chastise you for your sins

4. Therefore... so... as a result of this assertion that you are blessed if the Lord chastises you, you should not DESPISE the Lord's discipline

a. Best translation = reject... refuse... cast behind you as a despised thing

### B. God's Final Healing (vs. 18)

1. God wounds... but then he binds up the wound

2. God shatters/strikes/injures... but HIS HANDS HEAL

- a. The healing hands of God are perfectly pictured by Jesus Christ
- b. He did many of his healing miracles by touch

***Mark 1:30-31*** *Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up.*

***Mark 1:40-42*** *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." <sup>41</sup> Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" <sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.*

***Mark 5:41*** *He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").*

"Jesus of Nazareth"... Franco Zeffirelli... Jairus's daughter... the camera zooms in on the healing hands of Jesus

- 3. So, God will wound us and hurt us deeply... then with his own hand he will heal us completely

***Hosea 6:1-3*** *"Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. <sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. <sup>3</sup> Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."*

C. What God Finally Brought About

***James 5:11*** *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

***Job 42:12-17*** *The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. <sup>13</sup> And he also had*

*seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup> The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. <sup>15</sup> Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. <sup>16</sup> After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. <sup>17</sup> And so he died, old and full of years*

#### D. Ultimate Healing: Resurrection

1. The true happy ending is the resurrection and the New Heaven and New Earth
2. The resurrection of the redeemed from the grave will perfectly answer all of these sorrows
3. Every sorrow we ever had will be overwhelmed with joy

***Revelation 7:16-17 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. <sup>17</sup> For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.***

### III. God's Children Alone Are Thus Blessed

#### A. The Reprobate Also Experience Similar Afflictions

1. Most afflictions are common to the entire human race
  - a. Cancer diagnosis... touches both the righteous and the wicked; COVID doesn't care whether a person is pious or an atheist
  - b. Natural disasters... floods or hurricanes sweep away the homes of both the righteous and the wicked; earthquakes and tornadoes don't distinguish... these tragedies befall everyone alike
  - c. Sudden tragic deaths... believers and unbelievers alike have to bury their children after a drowning or a car accident
  - d. Economic downturns happen to everyone... unemployment, poverty, struggles

- e. The reprobate experience all these just like the righteous
- 2. BUT they do not benefit from them at all
- 3. Actually they just harden them more
- 4. Human beings are naturally rebellious against God
- 5. They are like anvils that only get harder when struck
  - a. There's something in metallurgy called "work hardening"
  - b. The more you strike the hot iron, the harder it gets...
  - c. You're working carbon into the molecular structure of the iron and turning it into steel...
  - d. So it is with unregenerate hearts in afflictions... the more God pounds them, the angrier and harder they get against him
- 6. Clear example: Revelation 16

***Revelation 16:8-11 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. <sup>9</sup> They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him. <sup>10</sup> The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony <sup>11</sup> and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.***

- 7. These afflictions for the reprobate are really just foretastes of hell (much as the Spirit gives Christians foretastes of heaven)
- B. Far Worse for the Reprobate: To Experience Prosperity and Success in Sin
  - 1. The worst thing God can ever do to a human being is to give them over to their sins (Romans 1)

***Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.***

***Romans 1:26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts...***

***Romans 1:28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.***

2. For them to be successful and healthy and earthly prosperous while in a faithless unbelieving state is deadly for them

a. Psalm 73

***Psalm 73:3-6 I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. <sup>4</sup> They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. <sup>5</sup> They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence.***

b. Job will speak of this at length in chapter 21

***Job 21:7-13 Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? <sup>8</sup> They see their children established around them, their offspring before their eyes. <sup>9</sup> Their homes are safe and free from fear; the rod of God is not upon them. <sup>10</sup> Their bulls never fail to breed; their cows calve and do not miscarry. <sup>11</sup> They send forth their children as a flock; their little ones dance about. <sup>12</sup> They sing to the music of tambourine and harp; they make merry to the sound of the flute. <sup>13</sup> They spend their years in prosperity and go down to the grave in peace.***

C. But God Chastises His Children In Love (Hebrews 12)

***Hebrews 12:5-7 "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>6</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." <sup>7</sup> Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?***

D. God Combines External Afflictions with Internal Blessings



1. The reprobate and the redeemed alike get the external sorrows
2. BUT ONLY GOD'S CHILDREN get the internal consolations of the indwelling Holy Spirit

***Romans 8:15-16 you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.***

3. And God's Spirit within us tells us this:

***Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.***

E. God Ends Up Restoring Us and Binding All Our Wounds

F. All Afflictions Lead to Heaven

#### IV. The Complex Connection Between Our Sins and Our Sufferings

A. Common Wisdom: "Don't be like Job's friends!!"

1. The common logic: They are merciless Pharisees who judge Job harshly and think they're better than him
2. If your Christian friends ever goes through some earth-shattering loss, like the death of a toddler or a cancer diagnosis or a house fire in which the friend lost everything and doesn't know what to do... if anything like that ever happens, many say the WORST thing you can do is be like Job's friends
3. What does that mean? Well, don't even HINT that any of their suffering is in any way remotely connected to their sins
4. The worst thing you can do is say to a mother whose body is wracked with sobs at the loss of her child, "Honey, is there any sin you need to confess?"

B. In One Sense, that's TRUE

1. Timing and sensitivity count for a lot
2. Counseling strategy is complex... the message is one thing, how and when it's delivered is another

3. But there are deeper issues

C. First, We Are Not Job!!

***Job 1:8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."***

1. We are not at his level
2. Ironically, Job's friends weren't at his level either! Their basic theory was "Job, if you were are righteous as me, you wouldn't be going through these trials!" The reality was that, if any one of them were more righteous than Job, God would have selected THEM to replace Job in his boast to Satan! It is specifically because Job was more righteous than them that he was chosen for this role!
3. None of us on planet earth can carry Job's shoes!
4. So, when we are suffering, we should not think quickly we are suffering like Job!

D. Second, There Are Differing Layers of Sin

1. FIRST: General sinfulness... like the hairs on David's head

***Psalm 40:12 my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.***

2. SECOND: Specific significant sin... like David with Bathsheba
3. On the first, we are all struggling daily with corruptions at levels that go much worse than Job... we have bad habits, laziness, procrastination, lusts, covetousness, lovelessness, sinful anger, bitterness, gossip, slander, pride, pride, pride and more pride
  - a. These are heart sins that plague us every day
  - b. Some of the effect of suffering in our lives is to help burn these off... to help us to forsake our daily sin habits and flee to God
  - c. NOT that those sins are WHY our toddler died, but that God may be using the overwhelming tragedy of the death of a child

to cause us to do a deep housecleaning, a deep work of repentance from all known sins... because we KNOW that we need God more than ever before, and God wants us to have “clean hands and a pure heart”... to put all known sins to death so he can help us

- d. So while we cannot say “God is punishing me for all my heart sins... that’s why he took my child from me!” we CAN say that God is very wise and will use the time of overwhelming sorrow to work deep repentance in us
4. BUT THEN sometimes there ARE sins that are huge... like David with Bathsheba—committing adultery and murdering the husband to cover the pregnancy... a big ugly disgusting skeleton in the closet
- a. The sinner knows it... it has been concealed from everyone else, but not from God
  - b. Now, a child has died... is there any connection?
  - c. In David’s case, there was... Nathan said so:

***2 Samuel 12:13-14 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. <sup>14</sup> But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."***

And the child DID die... and David knew full well it was his fault

- d. Now, even in this case, there is not a clear connection between some massive sin on the part of the man or woman and the death of another person
- e. Nathan was a prophet of the Lord and overtly made that connection
- f. But human counselors now cannot be so sure

g. All we can do is know that such a connection—the sins of one person and the death of another person—is at least a biblical theme

5. NOTE: on the issue of a massive secret sin, this is exactly where Job's friends went wrong... they assumed that Job must be doing some astonishingly bad stuff in secret because of the magnitude of his trials and afflictions
6. This was extremely insensitive of them and arrogant... they didn't listen to him or believe him when he assured them that there was no massive secret sin pattern in his life, or even one single wicked act; but their theology forced them to call him a liar [MORE NEXT WEEK!]

#### E. Third, All Suffering IS IN FACT Connected with Sin

1. We will not be suffering in heaven...

***Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.***

2. Death entered the world through sin

***Romans 5:12 sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned***

3. Sin and death forever linked... so every single human being is cast into a sea of sin, suffering and death GENERALLY
4. All pain is in some way connected with sin... and God's orchestration of world history is his response to th

#### F. Fourth, Job's Blamelessness Presents Him as an Example of the General Education on Sin, Suffering in this World

1. God put Job on a pedestal not just for Satan, but for all readers of the Book of Job
2. He is a special case... proving that there is suffering that happens in this world that is NOT directly connected with specific works of

wickedness... Job didn't do any of those, and yet he suffered greatly

3. Yet, Job's is a part of God's overall strategy for dealing with sin in the world... showing the massive tapestry of sin, sorrow, pain, and death that we're all wrapped up in as descendants of Adam
4. The idea is this: "If blameless Job could suffer like this, how much more we who are not so blameless as Job? There is a pattern of innocent suffering in this world!"

#### G. Fifth, Job Eventually DID Sin...

1. So God is working deeply in Job's heart, drawing out some heart attitudes that needed to emerge
2. God waited him out... eventually the sin did come up and out
3. There is a reason why Job eventually had to repent:

***Job 40:1-5 The LORD said to Job: <sup>2</sup> "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" <sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the LORD: <sup>4</sup> "I am unworthy-- how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. <sup>5</sup> I spoke once, but I have no answer-- twice, but I will say no more."***

***Job 42:1-6 Then Job replied to the LORD: <sup>2</sup> "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. <sup>4</sup> "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' <sup>5</sup> My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. <sup>6</sup> Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."***

4. How much more do we need trials to bring sin to the front and help us to grow to full maturity in Christ?
  - a. There are deep issues of lack of trust... of questioning God
  - b. There are deep heart idols that have wrapped their tentacles around our souls which must be painfully severed

- c. There are unfounded hopes and expectations and dreams that are sucking life and resources from the direction God wants us to go and they don't die very easily
- d. All sanctification has to do with our sins at some level

## V. Counseling Yourself

### A. In Counseling Others, We Have to be Careful Not to Be Like Job's Friends

- 1. But we need to be tender hearted and compassionate with sorrowing, grieving people
- 2. More next week!!

### B. BUT Pastors can get away with more from the pulpit...

### C. When Suffering You Should Ask God "Have I Sinned?"

- 1. Two categories:
  - a. sins common to all Christians that we battle with every day
  - b. terrible sins that have ruptured our consciences... the ugly scandalous soul-destroying sins
- 2. Apply it to yourself!!

***Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting***

### D. Follow the Steps of James 4

***James 4:6-10 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***

For the lost... come to Christ!!