

ATTITUDE OF HONESTY TOWARD GOD

(ALLOWS OUR PERFECTION IN CHRIST)

The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

(S124R) S206R

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021

(Ref.188C/rdg)

The importance of our being spiritually honest with God is something that cannot be overemphasized, because an unwillingness to repent of that type of dishonesty can take a person to the Lake of Fire (as John the Baptist warned Scribes and Pharisees). To realize how spiritually illiterate and helpless we really are, however, and having a willingness to be honest and sincere in our attitude toward God, ... allows God to change our attitude and it will bring real deliverance out of our troubles.

Not being willing to see our spiritual condition for what it really is, was the attitude the Scribes and Pharisees had in Jesus' time, when John warned them, and Jesus denounced them as being hypocritical. If there is ever anything that is needed in our life, it is to be spiritually honest with God, (and to live the Truth right), ... because our eternal interests are at stake. (Jesus said, Matt. 23:13) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." (Vs.15) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one convert, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."

It was the opposite case with the Centurion who came to Jesus for the healing of his servant. Jesus said that he was an example of the kind of people who would get to Heaven (with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Jesus (who knows the hearts of all people) could see that the man had some real spiritual light, and that he would be willing to hear and accept what God had to say to him, (through Jesus Christ). God expects us to be willing to believe His message of Life sent through His Son, (that will always point us toward an enduring trusting faith on His Word and the power of Jesus' shed Blood). If God sees a willingness in our heart to believe Him, then He will give us the same opportunity to use our power of choice to choose to believe His Promises and to receive our deliverance from the troubles we face.

The Centurion came to Jesus (Matt. 8:6-8) and said, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed." (Vs. 9) "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." (He meant, I am an important

man with a lot of authority in this part of the country, have soldiers under me, and when I tell one of them to do this or that, he does it.) But Lord, ... I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

That was acknowledging his own helpless spiritual condition, humbling himself, and placing himself where he belonged in God's sight (and, even though a man of authority, humanly speaking, he was not good enough for Jesus Christ to come under his roof). He considered Jesus Christ so great and so worthy of his trust, that he would rather have Jesus' Word that his servant was healed, (than to see Jesus Christ heal him before his eyes). That is the Scriptural position for every-one to take, and Jesus marveled at that, saying to His followers, (Matt. 8:10-13) "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith (not even in Israel!) And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus was laying down the qualifications for getting to Heaven, and that is, to take God at His Word and to act in faith on it, without a particle of sight or feeling that you had been delivered. (James 2:20 admonishes) "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works (action) is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works (actions) faith was made perfect?"

(Getting back to the centurion) Jesus then said to him(vs.13) "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you. And his servant was healed that same hour."

The case of Job can be controversial in the Christian world. However, Scriptures reveal there was just one problem with that man(the late Pastor said), that is, Job was filled with spiritual darkness and self-righteousness. He had a wonderful outward religion, (he was charitable, honest, an upright citizen, and no doubt prayed to God and tried to trust and serve Him). But it was all done in his own strength (an outward religion that would have landed him in the Lake of Fire, but for God's mercy to deal with Job and to inspire repentance from his self-righteousness).

Many people think that if they are honest and sincere, and live up to the light they have, they will get to Heaven... (But that is not the case). God has only one plan in the Bible for Eternal Life, and that is, we are to confess and forsake sins and be born again, make a sincere surrender to God of the self-will in our life, be filled with the Holy Spirit and grow spiritually. That is what will enable us to obey God's Word in the New Testament in every detail of our life. The most important thing is, it is to be done in God's strength and guidance (not ours). That is what Job had to be taught by God (to save him from eternity in the Lake of Fire) instead of Heaven (the only

other place for our soul to go to), and God wants to teach that to us just the same as He (in His mercy) taught Job. It is that "growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord." (Hebr.12:14).

Job had been trying to please God by doing the best he could (as a professed believer), but without having any real true knowledge of God. There are only two classes of people in this world, that is, unbelievers or professed true believers, but God is waiting for a person to give Him an opportunity, and He wants to turn every professed believer into a true believer, by teaching them true knowledge of Himself (just as He taught Job).

The average person who reads the book of Job would read the first verse and settle it in their mind that he was a perfectly righteous man, (that he had real spiritual light, and was a sincere Christian). But a right understanding of the book, and considering it from a spiritual standpoint, would prove that Job was self-righteous (and did not understand the real character of God). In reality, he was filled with spiritual darkness and headed toward the Lake of Fire (except for God's mercy to bring him to repentance). Job did not realize his own spiritual condition, rather, he was blinded by outward religion, which makes it harder for him(or anyone) to be brought to repentance, (than if he were an outright sinner), because he thought he was righteous and on his way to Heaven.

(Job 1:1 says), "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and turned away from evil." (The late Pastor said), that it could be said in different words; there was an honest man in the land of Uz by the name of Job, who was doing his level best to serve God and live a good Christian life,.. outwardly. That was all true, yet if he was filled with spiritual darkness (ignorant of God's true character), depending on self-efforts to get things that he needed (and wanted) in his life (instead of trusting on God for those things),... and depending on his self-righteousness to take him to Heaven (instead of by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the grace of God), then he would be worse off in regard to being brought to repentance (than an open sinner would be). That is because he would not realize that he still had the self-life controlling his heart(and thinking that he was on the path to Heaven).

The first thirty-one chapters of the book of Job, reveal how he tried to justify himself and his own self-righteousness. (Job 32:1 says), "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes." (God made Job's true spiritual condition very clear in that verse.)

Job did not know his actual true spiritual condition, and God (in His great mercy) had to reveal it to him. We never know where we are in that way, until our nest (comfort zone) is shaken up. When Job had everything going his way (a clear sky with calm weather) (spiritually speaking), he seemed to be a wonderful Christian on his way to Heaven (and convinced that his family members were going there as well).

However, since he was not in a position to trust God for protection, (and not knowing the true character of God), that permitted Satan to bring more desperate (and serious things) on him

(probably more than we could have endured). First of all his children (unprepared for eternity), were killed in a cyclone sent by Satan. Secondly, his property was all swept away by a violent wind from Satan (prince of the powers of the air) (Ephes.2:2). Then he lost all his friends, and finally his health. But that is when his true inner character came to light.

Job did not really know God and was spiritually dishonest before God. We must remember, however, that God did not bring these calamities on Job, (neither did He allow them to come as punishment). The calamities came as the result of going his own way and shutting God out of his life. Satan was the one who actually put those things on Job, ... (he brought the cyclone which destroyed his property and killed his children). (Job 2:7 says), "Satan then went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

Job's three friends came to console him, and he began to tell them what an outwardly good and upright man he had been all his life, (and how terrible it was that he was allowed to be afflicted, and for no reason on his part). In reality, what he was saying to his friends, was this: I am all right and God is wrong to allow the loss of my children, my property, and my health, (since I have been trying in every way I know how to be outwardly good and upright). That is how Job summed up his life (and put the blame on God for his troubles). It may have sounded good from a human standpoint, but from a divine standpoint it was all wrong. Job's troubles were the outcome of his deceitful actions (and his devil-controlled nature) (which would have taken him to the Lake of Fire) except for God's mercy in dealing with him, and giving him opportunity to repent of unfaithfulness (and lack of surrender) to do God's will in his life.

Job's three friends had half/heartedly tried to convince him that maybe God was right, (and, that Job must be wrong somewhere). But Job soon convinced them that he (Job) was right (and that God was wrong to allow him to be afflicted). (We want to take notice of the cause of Job's troubles—dishonesty, spiritual darkness, and seeing things opposite to what they really were, due to his dependence on self-righteousness which amounted to unbelief on God). (2 Cor. 4:3-4) "If, however, the meaning of our Good News has been veiled, the veil has been on the hearts of those who are on the way to perdition, in whom the 'god of this present age' (that is Satan) has blinded their unbelieving minds, so as to shut out the sunshine of the Good News of the glory of the Christ."

Those causes of Job's troubles, had (of course), allowed Satan to rob him of everything he had, and almost cost him his life (while still unprepared for eternity).

Elihu (a man with real spiritual light) spoke up, and told Job and his friends just where he stood in relation to God, (and how he should have a changed heart attitude, so God could save him from his own self-righteousness). (Job 36:7-12) "He(God) does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But they are on the throne with kings, For He has seated them forever, And they are exalted. And if they are bound in fetters, Held in the cords of affliction, Then He tells them their

work and their transgression That they have acted defiantly. He also opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they turn from iniquity. If they obey and serve Him, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures. But if they do not obey, They shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge."

Elihu did not mince any words with Job. He told him straight out where he stood (and where he was headed), if he did not repent and surrender to obey and trust God in his life. Job had purchased a one-way ticket to the Lake of Fire, and Elihu knew that if he sympathized with Job, he was (in reality), sympathizing with the devil. We want to make the road to hell as difficult as possible (for our loved ones who are on that wrong pathway to destruction of their soul). If we sympathize with them, we are only condoning their wrong actions or lack of faith (delaying any true repentance on their part), (and we would be responsible for putting them that much closer to the Lake of Fire). All the while, God wants them to realize what the consequences will be (for their sinful actions), and for them to make a sincere repentance so that He can save their soul for Eternity.

Elihu assured Job that God does not withdraw His eyes from a repentant and righteous person, but that He uses trials to point out their transgressions (and of how they have acted defiantly), ... so that if they will obey His commands (and turn from iniquity to obey and serve Him), ... then they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures.

Elihu then solemnly warned him(Job 36:17-18) "But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked; Judgment and justice take hold of you. Because there is wrath, beware lest He take you away with one blow; For(even) a large ransom would not help you avoid it." In other words—Job, you need to be very careful, for your life on earth (and your eternity) hinges by just a thread, and if you fail to see things right (and fail to humble yourself), make changes, and get victory from God, you will go to a place where a great ransom could not deliver you. (Elihu did not sympathize about Job's mistakes, but wanted to make the road to hell as difficult as possible for Job), out of divine love for Job.

Then God spoke the real Truth to Job (as He will also do for us, to save us from our sins). God used the purest of essential sarcasm to deal with Job. "Now prepare yourself like a man;" (God said), "I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding." (Job 38:3-4). (He meant, if I am so unreasonable, and you are so wise and intelligent, how could I have ever created the universe (sun, moon, stars, earth, animals, and human beings) without you being there to tell me how to do it?

Job began to shrink before God, who then gave a long list of questions to enable Job to realize how great God is, (and by what infinite wisdom and power He created great things. Job threw his hands up, told God he was convinced he had been wrong, and that God was perfectly right. (Job 42:1-2) Then Job answered the Lord and said: "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." (Vs 5-6) "I have heard of You by the

hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore, I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

That was a far different attitude than what Job had taken at first. If he had taken that humble and repentant attitude to begin with, (and had been spiritually honest with God to start with), Job would not have had all the troubles he had to go through to bring him to repentance (and be saved from destruction).

If being spiritually honest with God would take a man from the gates of the Pit, to the gates of Paradise (as it did for the thief on the Cross), and, if it would deliver a man from an ash heap, covered with sores, and give him twice as much blessing as before (as God did for Job),... it certainly would indeed be wise for us to listen(with humility and open-mindedness) to everything God has to say in His Word. We should be willing to receive God's real Truth, (and walk in the light of it.)

People will say, I do not understand why I am oppressed (and do not get my victories). There is one reason for that "spiritual darkness", and not being willing to humble ourselves and be honest with God (rather than justify ourselves).

When we get the right combination of justifying God (and blaming ourselves for our troubles instead of blaming God), it does not matter what trouble we would be in, God will bring us out "more than conquerors", just as He did for Job.

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Some Main Points:

- 1... We must recognize the vital importance of having willingness to repent of self-righteousness, and confessing our true spiritual condition to God, for it not only brings us victory in this life (as it did for Job), it is also an eternal life issue (proven by example of the repentant thief on the Cross).
- 2... The Centurion's spiritual honesty with God, brought his victory in the present moment, as he took a healing victory by faith, and praised God in his heart before seeing his victory.
- 3... Job's case of hidden self-righteousness, however, almost cost him his life,... before God in His mercy exposed that Job was in utter spiritual darkness because of self hidden in his heart, (which had to be gotten rid of for him to get eternal Life instead of the torment in the Lake of Fire).
- 4... Most importantly, we must realize that God (in His mercy and love for us), will do the same to save us from self, Satan, and eventual eternal torment,... when we are willing to repent of the self-life in our heart as Job did. (Job 42:5-6) "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

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