

The Puzzles of Job

by

Ord L. Morrow
Associate Radio Minister
Back to the Bible Broadcast

Nebraska Lincoln

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Chapter Five

SOME IMMEDIATE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION?

A great evangelist of the past generation by the name of Gypsy Smith, thinking of the mercy and grace of GOD in making justification possible, wrote, "If I am dreaming, let me dream on." But he was not dreaming and he knew it! Justification is a glad and glorious possibility for us all.

How pitiful it is in the light of GOD's provisions for men that some will say, when questioned concerning their eternal destiny, "Well, I am doing my best. I hope it is good enough; but if it isn't, I will just have to take that chance."

What a dreadful way to live, never knowing, never sure, merely hoping that all will turn out right in the end. The fact is, if good works, right resolves and earnest efforts could have given us justification before GOD, CHRIST would not have had to die in order to provide it. The sentence of death is upon all of us, and our best is not enough to annul that sentence.

We live in an age that that boasts of being practical. Heaven is something future, but like Peter, many of us want to know what there is for us in the Christian life here and now. When Peter raised this question, however, he had gone farther than many of us, for he said: "**Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?**" (Matthew 19:27). The LORD JESUS did not deal sharply with Peter for his question, but answered in these words: "**Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life**" (Matthew 19:28, 29).

The above has to do with some of the future results that flow from salvation, but what are some of the immediate results? In other words, does it pay to be a Christian now?

Let me assure you that a life lived in right relationship with GOD through JESUS CHRIST is a life that grows better and brighter as we travel along life's path. The writer of Proverbs said, "**The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect**

day" (Proverbs 4:18).

The way of the LORD does not lead to disappointment and despair. It is the way of deep joy and inner-satisfaction. *Do not judge the LORD by some sour saint that you know.* There can be a bad banana in any bunch.

Judge the LORD by the promises and provisions He has made. Rest in His care, and live by faith. Lift up your eyes above the hills and you will find your help in GOD, and you will be able to go on your way rejoicing.

When we know we have been declared righteous with GOD, we have a new assurance in life. We need no longer go along in darkness fearful of what a day might bring forth. GOD does not forsake His own at any time. One of the most remarkable promises in the Bible is Hebrews 13:5, **"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** "I will not leave you, I will not forsake you!" He is with us all through life to deliver us and keep us in His perfect will. Then, after this life is over, we have the assurance of His "welcome home."

When we have been declared righteous by GOD through faith in JESUS CHRIST, life is full of rich meaning. We can enjoy it knowing that it is not going to be filled with regrets. **"The memory of the just is blessed"** (Proverbs 10:7). That is why Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:1, **"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."**

I remember working with a man one day during my first pastorate. We visited as we worked and after a while he became silent. I turned from what I was doing to speak to him and saw that he was crying. Thinking that he might possibly have injured himself severely by one of the tools that we were using I asked him if he had hurt himself.

"No," he replied, "I did not hurt myself, I have been thinking over my past life. You know, Pastor Morrow, I lived 50 years before I found CHRIST as my SAVIOUR, and I was just crying over my wasted life."

I recall very vividly the first time I saw my father after he came to CHRIST. He was 70 years of age before he came to know the LORD JESUS CHRIST as his SAVIOUR. We talked nearly the whole night through and the burden of his heart was, "Oh, son, why did I wait so long to be saved?"

I came to CHRIST at the age of 17. My only regret is that I did not come sooner. It is the life of justification with GOD that has no regrets and is filled with peace. This is what the Bible says: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Romans 5:1).

"Tonight I look upon the sky and think of Thee
Oh GOD, CREATOR of those myriad stars and of vast space between;
And yet inside the hollow of the hand which made all these
My soul finds repose and rest and peace.

I see Thy mercy, limitless as space,
I see Thy love and feel Thy close embrace;
And though Thy presence fills the universe,
Yet as close as hands and heart Thou art to me."

- Olga J. Weiss

The justified life is a life of joy here and now. Yet, there are many people who suppose that the only place of joy and happiness and good times is Heaven, and they want to go there when they die. They think that GOD interferes too much with their personal lives and takes the joy out of living and spoils their fun. So they want to wait until the last moment to prepare to go to Heaven. They do not want what they call "religion" to interfere with what they are doing now.

If by religion they mean that which has no life, no meaning and no joy, I could agree with them. There is nothing so boring as religion without CHRIST. But to have this attitude toward justification and JESUS CHRIST is to miss the point altogether. JESUS did not say that He had come to stifle our lives, or to bore us, or to make us miserable, or to take the zest from living. What He did say was, "**I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.**" The more joy we have in life the more it pleases GOD.

At one time when the LORD was teaching His disciples, He said to them, "**These things have I spoken unto you, that... your joy might be full**" (John 15:11). He was telling them of His love for them and how they might have answered prayer and fruitful lives.

To have joy does not mean that we will feel like singing all the time - not unless we sing through tears. Life is not all song. It is mingled with toil, tears, testings and trials. However, we are reminded that no testing has come to us but such as is common to man, and GOD will not leave us without a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

Neither does joy mean that we will feel like breaking out into jubilant praise when we receive light on a subject we perhaps did not understand before. Our LORD was a man of joy, but He was not a man of frolic and light laughter, for these are not necessarily expressions of joy.

Joy is a deep settled peace based upon the person and promises of GOD.

Joy is knowing that all is well simply because GOD says so. The earth may be breaking up beneath us, but we trust in the everlasting arms under us.

Joy is a foundation upon which we rest our hearts even when these hearts are broken.

Joy is the assurance that GOD cares for us, that GOD loves us though men and the Devil may try to tell us it is not so. There will be times when they will say these very things to us.

Joy is born out of the confidence we have in GOD who has promised that one day He will wipe away all tears from our eyes. Joyfully we wait and watch for that day even though we watch

through tears, remembering that though weeping may endure for a night, joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

Joy is the settled fact that we are the children of GOD now, and that we have an inheritance with the saints of all ages.

Joy is knowing that GOD commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us. *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement"* (Romans 5:8-11).

"O child of GOD, wait patiently,
When dark thy path may be,
And let thy faith lean trustingly,
On Him who cares for Thee;
And though the clouds hang drearily,
Upon the brow of night,
Yet in the morning joy will come,
And fill thy soul with light.

"O child of GOD, He loveth thee,
and thou art all His own;
With gentle hand He leadeth thee,
Thou dost not walk alone;
And though thou watchest wearily,
The long and stormy night;
Yet in the morning joy will come,
and fill thy soul with light.

O child of GOD, how peacefully
He calms thy fears to rest,
And draws thee upward tenderly,
Where dwell the pure and blest;
And He who bendeth silently,
Above the gloom of night
Will take thee home where endless joy,
Shall fill thy soul with light."

Another of the immediate results of justification is that we have a clean start and a clean life.

In writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul said, "**Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.**

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

I have heard people say that they would give anything if only they could start life afresh. This, of course, none of us can do, for what is done is done, and we cannot undo it. GOD, however, in His infinite grace and unlimited mercy has so arranged it so that we can come to Him just as we are, and by repenting of our sins, be justified through faith in the shed blood of His Son. He will wash us and make us clean and give us a new start in life. Through Isaiah the LORD said centuries ago: **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"** (Isaiah 1:18).

This life is filled with difficult problems. There are unseen pitfalls all along the way. There are subtle temptations that could bring our Christian testimony to ruin were we to give in to them. There is not one of us but who has tasted the bitterness of failure at one time or another. GOD, however, does not forsake His own. Another of the immediate results of justification is that we have an Advocate with the FATHER, a go-between, One to plead our cause.

Our Advocate stands before GOD on our behalf. He lived here on earth for a while as we have lived, except for sin. He faced the same temptations we meet every day. He lived among men and walked the common paths of life and met the tests that all men face. He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief. He knows the way we take and cares for us. The SPIRIT of GOD wrote about it in I John 2:1-2: **"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."**

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glowing sun,
When we stand with CHRIST in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, LORD, shall I fully know -
Not till then - how much I owe.

When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, LORD, shall I fully know -
Not till then - how much I owe.

When the praise of Heaven I hear,
Loud as thunder to the ear,
Loud as many water's noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, LORD, shall I fully know -
Not till then - how much I owe.

Even on earth, as through a glass
Darkly, let Thy glory pass,
Make forgiveness feel so sweet,
Make Thy SPIRIT's help to meet.
Even on earth, LORD, shall I fully know -
Something of how much I owe."

- Robert Murray McCheyne

Still another of the present and blessed benefits of being justified by faith with GOD is that now we may live in the will of GOD. It is only as we live in the will of GOD that we can be assured of enjoying the life of fullest joy. We are exhorted to live in GOD's will, according to Romans 12:2, "**And be not conformed to this world,**" the apostle continues, "**but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**"

There are so many gracious by-products of living the justified life that one hardly knows where to start or stop. In Romans 12:3 we are admonished not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. What a blessed relief this would be for thousands! Do we become disgusted and dissatisfied with our striving for status? Do we grow weary of trying to make people think we are something we are not? Sometimes our lives are consumed with trying to make people think that we are something better than we are.

Now to live the justified life does not mean we live foolishly, or slovenly. It does mean, however, that we can settle down to live simply, sensibly and soberly. It will not excite us whether people think one thing of us or another, for we will have the God-given ability to think of ourselves as we ought to think.

This in itself leads to a life that loves without any hypocrisy in it: "**Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another**" (Romans 12:9-10), it is a life that can have kindly action toward a brother in CHRIST no matter who he is or where he comes from, or what his station in life might be. When the justified life is being expressed we are "**not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality**" (Romans 12:11-13).

It is the justified life that allows us to bless "**Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.**"

The justified life means that we need not be wise in our own conceits, trying to impress others with our cleverness. It means that we do not seek to recompense to any man evil for evil. It means that we provide things honest in the sight of men. It means that we live peaceably as much as lieth in us with those around us. It means that we do not seek to avenge ourselves but rather give place unto wrath, because it is written, "**Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord**" (Romans 12:19). What a relief for a Christian to get rid of the "I will get even" spirit. I have

known of family feuds that lasted so long that those who are carrying on the fight did not know what the original problem was all about.

The justified life also gives us something to work for. We seem to be natural builders, loving to show one another the things we have made. My father was a carpenter, and when I would visit him, he enjoyed taking me in an automobile through the town showing me the houses and buildings he had constructed. But we are building more than houses in this life. Paul tells us: **"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire"** (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Justification through faith in CHRIST who shed His blood for us gives us a solid foundation on which to build the best life possible. The building materials are gold, silver, and precious stones which, in the symbolism of the passage before us, would indicate a life lived in obedience to the will of GOD and in the power of GOD.

Part of the responsibility laid upon all believers by the LORD JESUS CHRIST is found in Matthew 28:19-20: **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."**

It is by our obedient walk with GOD that we build with these precious things, and it is also in this way that we preserve the service of our Christian lives for all eternity. One day our LORD said to the disciples: **"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it"** (Luke 9:23-24). Surely it would be a terrible experience to come to the end of life and on looking back over it have to say, "All is wasted!"

On the other hand, it will be an experience of deep joy to come to the end of life and in the presence of GOD say to Him, "FATHER, we have lived this life for your sake and for your glory."

This kind of life is not confined only to those whom we often describe as being in full-time Christian service. This possibility and this responsibility is held out to all of GOD's people. Whether a man is a banker, lawyer, farmer, mechanic, doctor, preacher - if GOD is put first, then that life is saved in the sense spoken of by our LORD in Luke 9.

We are not creatures of the day. We are made for eternity. Out in those endless ages we will be individual personalities forever. The benefits of justification are not for the present only but for the eternal future. The Apostle John looking out into the future said, **"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"** (I John 3:2).

Justification through faith in CHRIST's blood is the beginning, and being like Him when He appears is the consummation.

If our trials seem to be too great to bear, if what we are passing through seems to be greater than human flesh can stand, let us rest our hearts on this word from GOD: **"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us . . . He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"** (Romans 8:18, 32).

Peter was also used of GOD to give us comfort with regard to the future: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations"** (I Peter 1:3-6).

Let us rest our minds on what the LORD JESUS said in Matthew 13: **"The Son of man shall send forth his angels . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"** (verses 41, 43).

Or think if you will with that grand old soldier of the Cross, the Apostle Paul, as he neared the end of his earthly journey. Did he say in a discouraged or resigned manner: "This is the end"? Not at all! He triumphantly declared: **"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"** (II Timothy 4:7, 8).

"Hark! a voice from Eden stealing,
Such as but to angels known,
Hope its song of cheer is singing
'It is better farther on.'

"Hope is singing, still is singing,
Softly in an undertone,
Singing as if GOD had taught it,
'It is better farther on.'

"Night and day it sings the same song,
Sings it when I sit alone;
Sings it so the heart may hear it,
'It is better farther on.'

"On the grave it sits and sings it,
Sings it when the heart would groan,
Sings it when the shadows darken,

'It is better farther on.'

"Farther on! O how much farther?
Count the milestones one by one;
No! not counting, only trusting,
'It is better farther on.'"

One of the most meaningful Scriptures to me is this area of the worthwhileness of serving the LORD is Malachi 3:16-18: **"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not."**

Let us not hold back from seeking to do the will of GOD. Let us not pretend to be right with GOD if we are not. Justification is obtained through faith, and the life that results from it is a life of faith expressed in willing obedience to the will of GOD. It is a life lived under the control of the SPIRIT of GOD.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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