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THE POSTURE OF JOB

In this and subsequent messages, we shall reflect further on Job's failures and what we can learn from them. We shall seek to answer a few questions: Why did God rebuke Job? How and where did Job falter? Why did he fail and what is the significance of his failure? We will also be considering the important issue of the proper posture that we should adopt before God under all circumstances.

As we consider the subject of Job's failure, we need to bear in mind that on the whole he fared rather well relative to how many others would have under similar circumstances.

Let us look at what the Lord said to Job at the end of the book of Job and also Job's response.

Job 40:1-8

1 Then the Lord said to Job,
2 "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty?
Let him who reproves God answer it."
3 Then Job answered the Lord and said,
4 "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
5 "Once I have spoken, and I will not answer;
Even twice, and I will add nothing more."
6 Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm and said,
7 "Now gird up your loins like a man;
I will ask you, and you instruct Me.
8 "Will you really annul My judgment?
Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?"

In this passage, we see the Lord rebuking Job for contending with the Almighty and reproving God (v. 2), and for annulling His judgement and condemning Him (v. 8). It was improper for Job to have done so. Job recognised that he had spoken carelessly (vs. 4-5).

We look further at chapter 42:

Job 42:1-6

1 Then Job answered the Lord and said,
2 "I know that You can do all things,

And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.
3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'
"Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."
4 'Hear, now, and I will speak;
I will ask You, and You instruct me.'
5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;
But now my eye sees You;
6 Therefore I retract,
And I repent in dust and ashes."

Job, realising that his words and conduct were improper, said, "I have declared that which I did not understand" (v. 3). He recognised that God was the One who was in a position to instruct him (v. 4) and not the other way round (Job 40:7). He then retracted the statements that he had made and repented (v. 6).

As we reflect on Job's failures and the Lord's correction, one key area we need to pay attention to in the outworking of our faith is our relationship with God and our response, attitude and posture towards Him under all circumstances. I wish to highlight the phrase "under all circumstances" because we may express to the Lord from our hearts and with our lips what may seem to be correct and proper, but will we continue to maintain that posture under all circumstances?

The proper posture towards God

What, then, is the proper posture we should have towards God, the One who is almighty, perfect, loving and all-wise? Briefly, it should be *one of worship and submission to God in a spirit of humility, even during severe testing and perplexing situations*. This ought to be the posture taken by Job during the testing that he went through, and this is what God would have appreciated if Job had been able to maintain it.

This is a crucial issue for us to grasp and to settle definitely in our own lives, especially in the context of the last days and as we prepare for difficult times ahead.

We should also see that adopting such a posture is vital to the kind of relationship and faith that God looks for in His children. Friendship with God must take place in the context of faith and humble, joyful submission to God at all times, whatever the circumstances. The Book of Job can teach us much on this subject.

Job's posture during the initial period of testing

In the last message, we saw how Job sought to hold fast his integrity and to continue in the path of righteousness in the midst of severe trials and attacks by the evil one.

We saw how the Scriptures holds him up as an example of a righteous man and as one who endured. However, we also noted that he did falter. It is very helpful for us, then, to reflect further on his failures and the reasons why God rebuked him.

Before we look at his failures, let us look at Job's posture during the initial period when the trials came upon him.

Job 1:20-22

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

21 He said,

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked I shall return there.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the Lord."

22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

The context of the above passage shows that it was a very trying time for Job. Yet his response was rather commendable and was in line with what was mentioned earlier about the proper posture towards God, that is, one of worship and submission to God in a spirit of humility.

In spite of all that had happened, Job arose, tore his robe, fell to the ground and worshipped. He worshipped God in the midst of what many would consider as disasters or tragedies.

Although Job thought that God had caused him the misery, he still blessed the name of the Lord and did not blame Him. The word "blame" literally means "ascribe unseemliness to" (see margin of NASB). Job did not "ascribe unseemliness to" God, that is, he did not think God had done anything that was improper. He did not grumble or blame God because he recognised that whatever might happen, God is still God, and that the proper posture on his part was one of worship.

Later on, when Satan again appeared before the Lord, the Lord showed appreciation for Job's steadfast faith, praising him yet again as a blameless and upright man.

Job 2:3

The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause."

Next, we see Satan, with the permission of God, increasing the misery of Job by causing his body to be covered with sore boils. When his wife told him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (v. 9), we see Job responding admirably.

Job 2:10

But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job recognised that it was wrong and foolish to be angry with God or to blame Him. He willingly submitted to whatever God saw fit for him to go through, whether they were pleasant or adverse times.

Up to this point in time, there was no indication of any improper response or posture on the part of Job. His attitude and posture were basically healthy. However, as time passed and as the story unfolded, we see Job beginning to falter.

Job's failures

The first evidence in the Scriptures of Job faltering is found in Job 3. We do not know how long the interval was before Job began to falter after his positive response in Job 1 and 2. We read in Job 2:11-13 that Job's three friends came to comfort him after they heard of all the adversity that had befallen him. It must have taken some time before they arrived. They sat with him seven days and seven nights not speaking a word, for they saw that his pain was very great. Then Job poured out his woes.

Wrong words, wrong spirit

Job 3:1-3

1 Afterward Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.
2 And Job said,
3 "Let the day perish on which I was to be born,
And the night which said, 'A boy is conceived.'

We can see that both the content of the words uttered by Job and the spirit in which they were spoken were not right. The whole of Job 3 is basically in that direction. Let us examine a few other verses from that chapter.

Job 3:11, 13, 20

11 "Why did I not die at birth,
Come forth from the womb and expire?
13 "For now I would have lain down and been quiet;
I would have slept then, I would have been at rest,
20 "Why is light given to him who suffers,
And life to the bitter of soul,

Job not only felt that the days were very difficult to go through, he wished that he had never been born, and worse, he cursed the day of his birth. Such a response was not right.

You may ask, "Can't a person in circumstances as difficult and painful as these feel that it is better not to have been born? How, then, should he go through times such as these? Should the person simply grit his teeth and say, 'It's all right, the pain isn't that great'?"

What we can do in difficult times

In going through times like these, there are a few things that we can do. We can tell the Lord how we feel. We can tell Him that it is very difficult, and that we do not understand why we have to go through such times. We can ask Him to help us to understand. We can express to Him that we find it almost unbearable, and are concerned that we will not be able to take it. We can cry out to God for grace to strengthen us to go through such times well.

In the midst of the difficulties, we must maintain the proper posture of worship of God, submission to Him and faith in Him and in His undertaking, recognising that He is the perfect Almighty God.

We should check ourselves to see that we are faithful to God. We should sort out our lives and put right whatever is wrong. Having done all these, we can then exercise faith in God and have legitimate confidence in Him undertaking for us.

We can also express to God that though we may be perplexed with the circumstances, we know that He understands what is going on and that He is sovereign, perfectly wise and loving. Because of who He is, we are willing to go through whatever He sees fitting for us to go through, and we desire to learn whatever He desires to teach us in those situations and, by His grace, we will honour and glorify His name.

However, if we perceive that the powers of darkness are involved, we should take a stand to reject and resist what comes from them. Having done that, we must be prepared to go through with the right spirit whatever the Lord allows us to go through.

Sometimes, especially when situations become almost unbearable, we may entertain thoughts such as what Job did, wishing we had never been born. But one who loves God and trusts in Him should not entertain such thoughts. The apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

If we love God, trust Him and are faithful to Him, then, however difficult and perplexing situations may be, we know that all things will work out for our good because God will cause it to be so. We should not wish we had never been born. To

do so would reflect lack of faith in God and what He has assured us through the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 8:28.

We shall now look at other passages indicating how Job had faltered and why God rebuked him. We will concentrate on how he faltered in his posture and response towards God, in particular, in the areas of the spirit of worship, submission and humility.

Improper allegations against God

Job 10:1-3

1 "I loathe my own life;
I will give full vent to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 "I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Let me know why You contend with me.
3 'Is it right for You indeed to oppress,
To reject the labor of Your hands,
And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?"

We see here that Job again expressed how he loathed his own life (v. 1). He felt that God was treating him as a target, inflicting all these pains on him (v. 2). He further alleged that God was the One oppressing him, and at the same time looking favourably on the schemes of the wicked (v. 3). These things ought not to be attributed to the perfect God; they were improper allegations against God's character. Let's look at another verse:

Job 19:6

Know then that God has wronged me
And has closed His net around me.

Job claimed that God had wronged him and that is tantamount to saying that God is unjust. We know that this accusation must be wrong. God is the perfect One; He is just and loving and will not do any wrong. The irony is that while Job claimed that God had wronged him, it was actually Job who had wronged God.

In Job 40:8, we see God rebuking Job, saying, "Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?" Why did God rebuke Job in this manner? This was because Job attributed wrongdoing to God to maintain his point that he was in the right. As far as he could understand, he did not deserve the afflictions, which he thought were from God. He therefore concluded that God had wronged him. To maintain his innocence, Job made accusatory statements against God. In that sense he condemned God that he might be justified.

These allegations against God flowed forth from Job's misunderstanding of the situation. However, it is not the misunderstanding of the situation we are concerned about primarily, but how it affected his posture towards God.

In Job 19:10-11, Job attributed various things to God that were wrong and inaccurate.

Job 19:10-11

10 He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone;
And He has uprooted my hope like a tree.
11 He has also kindled His anger against me
And considered me as His enemy.

It was wrong for Job to say that God broke him down and uprooted his hope. It was also wrong for him to say that God regarded him as an enemy. If there is any true hope within us, God will never uproot it. Rather, He is the One who gives us hope. To put it in a better way, God Himself is our hope. Thus, we see that Job's wrong understanding and improper response resulted in him saying what he did.

We move on to Job 21.

Job 21:4

"As for me, is my complaint to man? And why should I not be impatient?"

When Job asked, "Is my complaint to man?" he was in effect saying that his complaint was to God or against God (NASB margin: "to" or "against"). Job added another rhetorical question, "Why should I not be impatient?" The "I" in the phrase "why should I" literally means "my spirit" (margin of NASB). Within his spirit, he felt rather impatient and he was here complaining. He felt that he was justified to respond in that way. But there is no justification for a man to become impatient and to complain to or against God about what God allows him to go through. To have such a spirit is wrong and is inconsistent with healthy faith and a proper posture towards God.

We will look at another related passage.

Job 9:20-24

20 "Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me;
Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.
21 I am guiltless;
I do not take notice of myself;
I despise my life.
22 "It is all one; therefore I say,
'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'
23 "If the scourge kills suddenly,
He mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
He covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not He, then who is it?"

Job made a very serious false allegation against God in verse 20 when he said that though he was guiltless, God would declare him guilty. The righteous God would never do such a thing. In reality, our gracious God provides the way for the guilty to be forgiven by sending His only begotten Son to bear the punishment due to all of us.

It was equally serious for Job to allege that our loving, compassionate God “mocks the despair of the innocent” (v. 23).

Then comes this crucial rhetorical question at the end of verse 24, “If it is not He, then who is it?” As far as Job could reason out, it must be God, and not anyone else, who had caused him such suffering. In saying that, it showed that he did not bear in mind that there could be things beyond his understanding.

Although we have a fuller revelation than what Job had, our understanding is still imperfect. There are things that we do not understand, and there will be times when God in His perfect wisdom chooses not to reveal these things to us. But there could also be things that we do not understand because of our own failure and lack of diligence in seeking to understand them.

Whatever it is, it is important that we should not simply reason out according to our finite minds and draw conclusions on that basis, especially when they contradict fundamental truths like God’s justice, love and perfection.

The proper posture to adopt

The main issue that we wish to concentrate on in this message is the quality of commitment, faith, posture and attitude that God desires to establish in us. It can be stated in this form:

An unwavering faith and confidence in God and His ways accompanied by unceasing worship, praise, thanksgiving, appreciation and humble, joyful submission to God and His perfect wisdom, together with steadfast love and commitment to Him and to the truth whatever the circumstances.

This is the posture that we should adopt and it is the basis for true, stable and deep fellowship with God. But you may ask, “How do we attain to such a quality of faith and relationship with God?” To answer this question, I would like to consider with you three important related areas.

1. Knowledge of God

The first area concerns our knowledge of God. Many of us have a reasonable knowledge of God that is sufficient for us to commit our lives to Him wholeheartedly.

We should be able to recognise that committing our lives wholeheartedly to God is a logical, reasonable and meaningful step to take and one that will lead to a life that is fully satisfying and fulfilling.

2. Unquestioning commitment to God

The second area is unquestioning commitment to God and submission to Him and His ways. By "unquestioning", I do not mean that we cannot ask God questions, but that we do not doubt God whatever the circumstances we may be in.

If we do not have sufficient knowledge of God and confidence in Him as the perfect Almighty God, then it is difficult to wholeheartedly commit ourselves to Him. If this is the case, it is important for us to first seek to know God and learn to trust Him.

But even if we have sufficient knowledge of God and recognise that He is the perfect Almighty God, it does not necessarily mean that we will automatically love Him and be committed to Him wholeheartedly. We still have to choose to adopt such a stand. It is a commitment that we have to deliberately make. This is a very crucial point. It is also in this area that Christians often falter or are significantly lacking, even though they know that it is a very logical, reasonable, meaningful and fulfilling posture to adopt.

3. Love for truth, goodness and righteousness

The third area concerns our love for truth, goodness and righteousness. How much we love truth and are committed to it is closely related to the quality of our character, the longings of our heart and the direction of our lives in moral issues. This is very important to God as He is the perfect moral Being. Though God can and wants to help us in this area, it is still very much related to man's choice and the direction of life he is committed to.

Just as in the second area of unquestioning commitment to God, having a deep love for and commitment to truth is an area often lacking in man. This has resulted in many problems, including that of giving greater freedom to the powers of darkness to work in our lives.

Relationship among the three areas

If we reflect on these three areas, we will find that they are all closely related and impact on one another. Let us examine them in greater detail, starting with how the first and the third areas are related.

How knowledge of God and love for truth, goodness and righteousness affect each other

If we want to deepen our knowledge of God and develop greater confidence in Him, we need to deepen our love for truth, goodness and righteousness. Because God is true, good and righteous, He will reveal Himself and relate deeply with those whose hearts are set in that direction. I do not mean that we must be perfect or extremely good, but that our hearts should be set in that direction, longing for what is true, good and righteous.

Let us reflect on the words of the Lord Jesus that emphasise this relationship.

Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

What does it mean to “see God”? It has to do with the revelation of God, appreciation of who He is, and coming to know and experience Him. And who are given this privilege? Those whose hearts are pure. Being “pure in heart” is both a state and a direction. The state of our hearts must be clean and pure, and must not be harbouring evil. The heart also has a direction, which is the longing for and commitment to what is good, righteous and morally pure. This kind of longing and direction is important if we want to know God deeply and experience Him, and to know His revelation and blessing in our lives.

In the Beatitudes, the Lord Jesus also mentions:

Matthew 5:6

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

To “hunger and thirst for righteousness” refers to the deep longing and hunger rising from within for what is good, righteous and noble in the sight of God. When we truly hunger and thirst for righteousness, we will experience a deep satisfaction that comes from God. He will be pleased to relate deeply with us and we will come to know His blessings. God is the only One who can truly satisfy us, not with things, but with Himself.

In the same way, as we get to know God better and as our fellowship with Him deepens, He will intensify and purify our love for truth and righteousness. The Spirit of God, who is also the Spirit of Truth, will help us to appreciate and love goodness, purity, righteousness and truth. He will teach us, mould us and nurture us, and will seek to draw forth from and deepen in our hearts these moral qualities.

As our knowledge of God and fellowship with Him deepens, He will have greater freedom to work in our hearts and the character of God will become more and more formed in us. This in turn will cause our love for truth, goodness and righteousness

to become increasingly wholesome, purified and deepened as they are very much part of God's character.

How knowledge of God and love for truth, goodness and righteousness help us commit our lives to God

We shall now examine how knowledge of God and love for the truth will tend to move us in the direction of a wholehearted commitment and submission to God.

If we love truth, goodness and righteousness and are committed to it, when we come to know who God is, that He is perfect, unchangingly righteous and good, sovereign and almighty, a God of perfect wisdom whose plans and purposes are good and righteous, we would then be led in the direction of placing full confidence in Him, and we will be more prepared to be fully committed and submitted to Him. We would not feel shaken, uneasy or doubtful and we can humbly and joyfully submit to Him whatever the circumstances.

We should come to see that it is meaningful and logical to commit ourselves fully to such a God. More importantly, we should come to see that having a deep relationship with such a Being, the perfect Almighty God, should be our deepest longing because it is the greatest privilege and one that will fully satisfy.

As we dwell on this subject, remember that the main issue we are trying to address is, "How can a person attain to the correct posture of unwavering love for God and submission to Him?"

Proper posture attainable but not many attain and maintain it

I would like you to meditate on this rhetorical question:

What more can such a man ask for in life than to have quality relationship with such a God and to walk with Him, submitting fully, joyfully and willingly to whatever He sees fitting for him to go through?

Note that I use the phrase "what more can such a man". I am not referring to any man, but one whose heart and longing is for the truth and for what is good and righteous. If we have such longings in our hearts, what more would we ask for in life than to have this kind of quality relationship with the perfect Almighty God who is true, righteous and good and to live a life of joyful submission to Him. Our primary concern would no longer be whether a situation is pleasant or difficult. Instead, it would be to go through well whatever situation the Lord sees fit for us to go through, in fellowship with Him and in joyful submission to Him.

What other kind of life can we properly and meaningfully choose? There is none. Any deviation from this will be a deviation into darkness and destruction because we will

be deviating from the light, truth and goodness. To whatever degree we deviate from it, to that degree we will be moving in the direction of darkness and destruction. Though there may be pleasures of a temporary nature, they will not truly satisfy.

From what we have considered, we can paint this scenario: When there is love for truth and a sufficient knowledge of God, they will affect each other positively, leading to deepening love for God and for the truth. With passing time, as we properly commit ourselves to God and submit to Him, we will more and more be walking in the ways of God. There will be increasing knowledge of God and greater appreciation of the truth. All the three areas of knowledge of God, love for the truth and commitment to Him will become progressively better and our life will continually spiral upwards.

Is such a life attainable? Yes, it is. But although such a scenario seems very logical and reasonable, it often does not turn out this way. Where then does the problem lie?

Difficulties in attaining and maintaining the proper posture

The root issue is the direction of the heart, the longing and willingness to commit oneself to this kind of life. While such a life is attainable and is one that we can choose and set our heart upon, and while God is always willing to help us move in this direction, there is a price to pay, and the unwillingness to pay the price is the main reason why many are not able to attain it. The price that one has to pay can come in two forms:

1. Testing, trials, pain and hardship

Such difficulties will be part and parcel of the lives of those who seek to live in total commitment and submission to God. In the face of various difficulties and suffering, we must be willing to remain committed to this kind of life and pay the price for it.

2. The need to exercise self-control, to be disciplined, diligent and consistent

The three areas that we have been talking about do not happen automatically. Our moral input is crucial to the meaning and quality that we can attain. We have to make a commitment and continually choose to work out our lives accordingly with all diligence and discipline. In the midst of the trials and pains that will accompany such a life, we must remain steadfast, submitting ourselves to the perfect will of God, rejoicing in Him, seeking to learn from Him, drawing near to Him and continually affirming our love for and commitment to the truth. We must continue in this path however difficult and painful it may be, recognising that such a life will not be lived in vain, and that it is not only the most meaningful life, but also the only life that is worth living.

We need to bear in mind the presence of the weakness of the flesh, the temptations of the world and the powers of darkness at work. This helps to explain why we often fail. There may be a positive desire within us, but the flesh is weak. We need to look to the Lord to help us overcome the weaknesses of the flesh, the world with all its temptations and distractions, and the powers of darkness who seek to discourage us, deceive us, lead us astray and deter us from choosing the right direction.

In the presence of these difficulties and temptations, such a life would not be attained with ease. It does not keep spiralling upward, getting better and better on its own. But it can and should be attainable if we steadfastly choose and adopt the correct posture and commit ourselves to the Lord because the great Almighty God desires to strengthen and enable us to attain to such a life. And if God is for us, who then can be against us? (Rom. 8:31). We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us (Rom. 8:37). In Christ we can overcome the weaknesses of the flesh, the world and the powers of darkness. Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ Jesus our Lord (2 Cor. 2:14).

The Lord is calling us to this kind of life

Let us pay attention to the words of the Lord Jesus.

John 8:12

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

The Lord Jesus says that He is the Light of the world. The "Light" encompasses and embodies what is true, good and righteous. So if we love what is true, good and righteous, we will know whom we should love and whom we should turn to.

He also says, "He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life." The Light of life is closely related to what the Lord Jesus means when He says in John 10:10, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." The Lord is referring to the abundant life, the life of God, the life of positive moral values and goodness, the life that God intends us to live out. This is the kind of life that we have been talking about, a life that continues to spiral upwards positively. But such a life is possible only for those who follow Him.

The Lord Jesus also mentions the need to count the cost of following Him.

Luke 9:23

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

The Lord is calling us to this kind of life, but we have to make the choice. God will not decide for us. He will not impose His will upon us. Anyone can have this kind of life; anyone can choose to follow the Lord Jesus. But we have to deny ourselves and take

up our cross daily. The cross communicates to us, among other things, the pains, the hardships, and the trials that will come upon us when we are faithful to God. This is supremely exemplified in the life of the Lord Jesus when He had to endure the Cross in obedience to the Father. The word "daily" emphasises the need for consistency, day by day carrying our cross.

Let us continue to look at the two verses that follow:

Luke 9:24-25

24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

25 "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?

We may have many things of this world, but of what use are they if we forfeit our eternal well-being? If we cling on to our life, we will not be able to find the true life that God intends for us. But if we are willing to fully give up our lives to God, to submit to Him, to deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Him, we will enter fully into the abundant life that God intends for us.

We have to choose this direction of life continually, doing so diligently and faithfully in a disciplined way, exercising self-control, and be willing to pay the price of hardships, pains and trials along the way without wavering or deviating. In the midst of it all, God will strengthen us and see us through. His grace will be sufficient for us. We will experience the fellowship of God, and the joy and peace of God. And we will have the assurance that our life will not be lived in vain, but will instead bear abiding fruit.

Concluding remarks

The key issue we have been considering is the quality and steadfastness of a healthy posture towards God, which relates to submission to God and commitment to Him. This in turn is related to the quality of our love for and commitment to the truth, and our knowledge of God and confidence in Him as the perfect Almighty God.

Submission to God and commitment to Him is a definite choice, a definite stand that is adopted. It is not something that we move into haphazardly, but one taken with understanding and conviction. It is not something done blindly or emotionally. It is a choice we make because we recognise that we should love what is good and true and that we should commit ourselves to that path. In addition, as we recognise that God is true and good, we therefore love Him and commit our lives fully to Him.

It is possible to have a healthy quality of submission and commitment to God without waiting for our knowledge of God to be very deep. There may be varying degrees of knowledge of God when we make such a commitment, but with passing time, it can become deeper and deeper. We should not wait until our knowledge of God is very

deep before we are willing to commit ourselves fully to God. A reasonable degree of knowledge of God is all we need, and that is not difficult for each one of us to attain to, especially with the availability of the Scriptures and in the light of the Cross and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

When we submit to God without qualification, the quality of our life and faith will increase rapidly and our knowledge of God will then have a proper basis for development. When this is coupled with a love for the truth, God will be very pleased to reveal many things to us, help us understand them and teach us how we ought to live. He will also enable us to know Him and experience deep fellowship with Him. It is therefore very crucial for us to adopt the posture of wholehearted, unwavering love for God and commitment to Him and His ways.

But if we do not adopt this posture and do not have love for the truth, we may keep on telling the Lord how much we want to know Him, but will find that our wish will remain a wish. This is because it is inconsistent for the perfect, moral God to relate deeply with those whose hearts are not set in the direction of righteousness and truth, and who are unwilling to commit themselves to the truth and to the God of truth.

Compared with Job, we are in a better position to respond well. We have a much fuller revelation and understanding of who God is, the realities in the spiritual realm and how we should live our lives. Job did not have the Scriptures as we do, in which God reveals much of Himself in many different ways. The Scriptures clearly reveals to us the issues of eternity, the kingdom of God, the work of the powers of darkness, what God has done for us and provided for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, His love for us, and the kind of life we can have in Him. Many of these issues are extremely relevant and meaningful in helping us adopt the posture that we have been talking about. In many of these areas, Job's knowledge and understanding would be rather deficient. Furthermore, what most of us have to face in life is generally far less severe compared to what Job went through.

Given the advantages that we have over Job, and our relatively easier circumstances, if we still grumble, disobey the Lord, go our own way, or lack joyful submission to God, what then will be God's verdict on us?

Let us look at a passage in the letter to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 10:37-38

37 For yet in a very little while,
He who is coming will come, and will not delay.
38 But My righteous one shall live by faith;
And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

The letter to the Hebrews was written during a time when Christians suffered difficulties and persecution. This is revealed in the preceding verses 32-36. In verse

37, the writer, referring to the coming again of the Lord Jesus, tells us that "... in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay". Our time on earth is short. Whatever the difficulties we face, they are only for a short while. Can we not then be faithful to the Lord just for this short while? If, instead of committing ourselves to Him and submitting to Him, we waver and shrink back, the Lord will not be pleased with us.

Finally, the writer to the Hebrews adds this word of encouragement,

Hebrews 10:39

But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

May this be true of us, that we do not shrink back to destruction. If we do, we would be walking in the path of darkness and destruction. Let us then persevere in faith. This is the life that God is calling us towards. The righteous one must live by faith. Let us affirm to the Lord that this is the kind of life we have chosen, and by His grace, we will seek to live it.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What is the posture a believer ought to adopt in his relationship with God? Why is this posture important?
2. Did Job maintain this posture during the trials? Elaborate.
3. What important factors can enable us to attain to and maintain this posture? Why is it difficult to attain to and maintain this posture?

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