

The Exodus - From Egypt to Canaan - Sermon 5 of 5

by Roy Hession

This sermon explores the journey from Egypt to Canaan as a metaphor for the Christian life, emphasizing the role of Christ in our sanctification and victory over sin.

Duration: 55:07

Scripture: John 10:9, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Exodus"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Israel crossing the Jordan River into the promised land. The speaker emphasizes the human impossibility of this task, as the river was overflowing and the Israelites had no engineering experience. The speaker relates this to our own struggles and challenges in life, stating that we often face seemingly impossible situations. However, the speaker encourages listeners to find hope and grace in Jesus, who provides a way for us to enter into the promised land through the cross.

Transcript

We turn to the book of Joshua. We started in Exodus, we've been going through Numbers, and now we're in Joshua. And the chapter we shall look at together is chapter three and part of chapter four.

And Joshua rose early in the morning, and they were removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass, after three days, that the officers went through the host, and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure.

Come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go, for ye have not passed this way heretofore. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people.

And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Gergesites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

Now therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon an heap. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people.

And as they that bear the ark were coming unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bear the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest, that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zareton. And those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea failed and were cut off, and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

And it came to pass when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, and command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place wherein ye shall lodge this night. Verse 9, And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bear the ark of the covenant stood, and they are there unto this day. Yes, I suppose they still are.

Twelve stones that used to be in the wilderness are under the waters, but twelve stones that used to be under the waters are on the other side as a memorial. And so that is the story of how Israel, who'd spent those long years in the wilderness, passed out of the wilderness into that fair land of promise which God had always had in mind for them when he brought them out of Egypt. Now the land of promise, let's make it quite clear, is not merely just an experience.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the victorious life. He is that life of satisfaction.

Someone has said there's only one victorious life in the world, and that's the life of the victorious Christ, lived again in his people. Perhaps if you want a verse to really put down as picturing the promised land, you've got it in Hebrews 3, 14. Now in Hebrews 3, the whole subject is this matter of failing to enter the land.

They entered not in through unbelief, and in that chapter we've got a verse which surely tells us what the land typifies. Hebrews 3, 14. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our

confidence steadfast unto the end.

It's being made a partaker of Christ. It's not an imitation of Christ, it's a partaking of him. There's a chorus we used to sing, sometimes still do, let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me, all his wondrous compassion and love and purity.

And he goes on to say, O thou spirit divine, all my nature refined. And though that's, one hesitates ever to correct a hymn or chorus, I don't think that's quite adequate. I can't say that my nature has been refined.

The Bible says the old man, the man of old, is corrupt according to deceitful lusts. And it doesn't give me any hope of seeing that man improved or refined. But what it does tell me is that I may partake of Christ.

And sometimes when we've sung that chorus we've changed the words, O thou spirit divine, make all his nature mine. And that's the only life of holiness. It's not the improvement of you, but rather the displacing of you by Jesus.

So it's not us trying and struggling and trying to be victorious, but Christ who is always such, always compassionate, always all that we need, living again his life in us. Make all thy nature mine. And that's God's purpose.

And it's entering into that, the life where it's no longer self-effort, no more let it be my working, nor my wisdom, love or power, but the life of Jesus only flowing through me hour by hour. It's a land where all is Christ, where we learn to step down in favour of him, where we begin to have confidence in him, where the fact that we're helpless and weak and all the rest is no difficulty to us. We've accepted that that is our natural condition.

We're prepared to live like that and be reconciled to that to the end of our days. If we were strong it wouldn't help. The fact that we feel weak isn't going to hinder.

It's either going to be our strength or our weakness. It's going to be another. That is the land of Canaan.

It's Christ in his risen life, reproducing that life in us and undertaking for us the overcoming of our Jericho's and much else. There's cooperation on our part by all means. But you've got to be careful.

Only the Spirit can show you. The line that distinguishes between a right and proper cooperation on your part and that which becomes strifing and bearing a responsibility that only kills you. The Spirit will show you where a right and proper cooperation has gone a bit too far and you're only being crushed by responsibilities that are really his.

He lives in you. So let's settle it. We're not going to say this is a experience of sanctification.

It's Christ. Everything is Christ. Christ in me.

He is the majesty divine, the well-beloved son. Christ. We are made partakers of Christ.

If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end there's an entrance as we shall see in a moment. But it's got to be something all in the present tense. Christ made to me now what I need as I hold fast my happy confidence.

It is going to be that to me. Well now, that then is the land as I see it. Now the interesting thing about this whole lovely picture that God's given us of our Christian experience is this.

That their bringing into the land, the manner of their being brought into the land bore a marked resemblance to the manner in which they were brought out of Egypt. How were they brought out of Egypt? By the waters of the Red Sea parting before them. How were they brought into Canaan? By the waters of another river, Jordan, parting before them.

Have you ever thought of that? The marked resemblance between the two. Well now what does that mean? Well what did that Red Sea typify for us? We saw it typify for us the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we saw that at Calvary all our foes, sin, death and woe, Satan were overthrown.

That great victory of sin and death and woe that needs no second fight and leads no second foe. One by another on our behalf. Those things that accused us, those things that nagged us, those things from the past, that lag from old days and the current temptations that seem to always go with them, they were laid low.

When Jesus said at the cross, it is finished. And we saw how Israel saw their enemies dead upon the seashore and the soul that's been in bondage to guilt and accusation and feeling not good enough and never feeling free, comes into glorious freedom as he sees those things finished at the cross. Well that was the Red Sea.

And quite obviously inasmuch as Jordan bears such a marked resemblance to the Red Sea, Jordan is intended to typify the same cross of our Lord Jesus. The cross of Christ by which I came out is the way by which I am brought in. It isn't another thing or even another truth.

It's the same Jesus that brings me out who brings me in, and he does so by the same cross of which he died. However, there is a difference between the Red Sea crossing and the Jordan crossing. And the difference is this, what lies under the waters now? In the case of the Red Sea, it was Pharaoh and his hosts who were under the waters.

But in the case of Jordan, it was Israel who in figure were left under the waters. Because they were bidden, you remember, to take up twelve stones from the wilderness side, quite obviously symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel, and they put them where the priest's feet had stood. And when the waters came back they were buried.

That's something very significant. It means this, that I can be brought out of Egypt and know real glorious emancipation, have a precious testimony of how grace reached me and Jesus brought me out and saved me and set me free from all my fears. But that old ego can still be very dominant.

It can still be the one that's running its own life, that displays its own excellences, that perhaps gets a little kudos from the very testimony it gives. That old ego is the thing that makes it so difficult for other people to live with us. And it's our ego that makes it appear that they are difficult to us.

It's us that's the trouble. It's this old ego that causes our murmurings and our complainings in the wilderness when we aren't treated as we think we ought to, if God doesn't do the right thing by us. Oh yes, we've come out of Egypt, and Egypt's under the waters.

But this old ego still can be still very much alive. It's very often this ego that tries to be a good Christian, that tries to do God's service. It's me.

If he succeeds he's awfully proud. If he fails he's full of despair. It's still the ego.

And if we're going to be brought into Canaan, Christ really living, sweetly again, his life in us, that ego's got to be brought to the cross. Israel have got to be put under the waters. Now it's interesting, there's a verse which to me typifies these two aspects of the one cross.

It's Galatians 6.14. And it seems to me in Galatians 6.14 you have got Jordan, you've got Red Sea on the one side, and Jordan on the other. Galatians 6.14. God forbid that I should glory or boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus by whom the world is crucified unto me. That's the Red Sea.

And I unto the world, that's Jordan. You see what the verse says? That cross by whom the world is crucified unto me. What's on the cross along with Jesus? The world.

It's dead to me. And can I indicate how I take it that the world is crucified to me by the cross of our Lord Jesus? A man once went into a picture gallery and he stood before a famous, world famous masterpiece. He said I can't see anything in it.

I must confess, I sometimes feel that about these world's masterpieces. They look so dingy. They need a good clean up to my mind, but still I'm no connoisseur.

And the connoisseur was in that art gallery. He quietly came up to him. He said, you know, you think you're judging that picture.

That picture is judging you. And when man saw no beauty in Jesus, when they thought the only place fit for him was the cross, when the world did that, they thought they were judging Jesus. It wasn't.

It was Jesus judging them and the world shone up to be the empty, worthless thing it is. And the one who's seen beauty in the Lord Jesus, it's spoilt him for the world. It's spoilt him for Egypt.

And we see the enemy, that old world that has fascinated us, dead upon the seashore. There's empty things. There's empty associations.

My friend, if they aren't empty to you, you may still be in Egypt, or partly so. But this is a relaxing deliverance. Satan, sin, and the world, dead to us.

The world no longer fascinating us. And Satan and sin no longer accusing us. Now that's the Red Sea.

But then it goes on to say, and I unto the world. Who's on the cross now? I am. Not only is the world dead to me, but I'm dead to the world.

It's rather interesting, we often don't mind regarding the world as a dead thing to us. We make the choice. We turn down the invitation, maybe.

No thanks. It's part of the old life. You've got something better in life, and you perhaps turn down the invitation.

But how do you like it when they don't send you the invitation? When they treat you as dead! And it isn't only the world that sometimes treats you like that. Other Christians may. And then you're not given

recognition.

It's not so easy. We yet need to have the ego brought to the cross. And that has to happen, if we are to enter in to this fair land of promise.

We're now going back to our story in Joshua. The first thing that Israel had to do was to camp three days in front of the Jordan. They were given three days in which to compensate the utter human impossibility of them ever getting over into that fair land that was meant for them.

Right between them stood this river, and we're told that Jordan was overflowing all its banks at that particular time. It had never been quite so wide as that. And here was this host of two million people, with no engineering experience in order to build bridges, faced with what was a complete impossibility, just like that previous impossibility when they were coming out of Egypt.

And that really is our situation. We've faced it, some of us. We're told there's a victorious life.

We're told there's a life of real satisfaction, real knowing Jesus and having his peace and having something so much of him that we're going to pass on to others. But you just know that you're not there. How often I've known that, that I'm in bad shape, I'm not in that land of promise.

What is impeding me getting in? A river. Jordan. And it's simply the Jordan of my sins, my inabilities.

In many cases it's perhaps one outstanding thing that's not been put right. You know there's a whole relationship with somebody else, with a mother-in-law that's wrong. Or someone like that, or a relative.

Or a young person has a bitter, rebellious attitude to parents. And they know that they can never really enjoy that land because of this river. They somehow can't get the victory.

Things over from the past. They've got a condemning heart about certain things. When they try to serve the Lord, a little demon from hell sits on their shoulder and says in their ear, hypocrite, hypocrite, hypocrite.

How can you be in the land of promise when you have that sort of thing going on? When a man would much rather that, if he's a preacher, would much rather that his wife wasn't there when he preached. Because if the deep devil isn't saying hypocrite, she may be saying so in her heart as she hears her husband say these sweet things which she knows aren't working out as hell. And there's this great river between us and that fair land of promise.

Maybe there's certain chains in our disposition that keep cropping up and depriving us of our peace. And we don't know what to do about it. We don't know what to do with sin.

We don't know what to do with these things. And really, to be told about this fair land of promise is only to add salt to our wounds. And maybe you say, well I can't get in.

I'm not there yet, in spite of the fact we've had a whole week together. Well, grace wants to bring even us in. Even people that are in despair in.

Even people who don't know how to get in. Grace has got a wonderful way provided for us. And Joshua said, prepare yourselves for the tomorrow.

The Lord is going to do wonders for you. Your wilderness wanderings at last are going to be over. And you're going to enter for the first time into the land that God always had for you.

Although it seemed so impossible. And I know there's some, I'm sure there's some who feel it's impossible to bring a change inside. They feel, well I've had a whole week, I'm going back just as I came.

God is the God of miracles. And they're miracles of grace, which do not need wonderful strength or worthiness on our part. I wouldn't say tomorrow the Lord's going to do wonders among us.

Can't we have faith to believe that even me, today, He'll do a wonder. And the end of the day will find me at last rejoicing and at rest in Jesus Christ. Well, everything has been provided that it might be so.

See then the way by which these people passed over Jordan. The first thing was that the ark, borne on the shoulders of the priests, had to go ahead of the host. And they went right into that swollen river.

And as the priests' feet touched those waters, the waters parted. And they went right down to the deepest part of Jordan. And there the ark stood still at the deepest point in the midst of Jordan.

And the waters were held back. Now that's the first thing. That ark, of course, is quite obviously designed by the Spirit to be a type and picture of the Lord Jesus.

We haven't time now to go to mention how wonderfully it does typify the Lord Jesus. That mercy seat, the blood sprinkled upon it. It's all Him.

The Christ of Calvary in the empty tomb. It's Jesus. And the first great thing that's being done for us is that our Jesus has gone right down into our Jordan.

Into the judgment that was so righteously due to people like ourselves. That's what happened at Calvary. He was standing still in the midst of Jordan at the deepest point.

We shall see in a moment how deep Jordan is. And how low Jesus had to go in order to part its waters for us. In order to exhaust the judgment due to our sins.

In order to make a way from the wilderness into Canaan. He bore our sins. Who can tell how deep that meant He had to go? In His own body, on the tree.

The very things that had been stopping me. Those very things I've mentioned and much else. They were the things that He bore in His body.

The judgment of which He exhausted so completely on our behalf. But will you notice they were told that there had to be two thousand cubits between the ark and themselves. That ark had to go first of all alone into Jordan.

And that seems to point out to me that that which Jesus has done for us, He's done for me without any cooperation on my part. It's something He's done alone. It's something that's been done for me quite apart from my feelings or my worthiness.

There's a solemn verse in Isaiah 63 which says, I've trodden the winepress alone. And of the people there was none with me. He did something for us that no man could do for himself.

It was something that only the Son of God from Heaven could do for us. And He went there alone. Peter, James and John couldn't get beyond the gate of the Garden of Gethsemane.

He had to go there alone. And none could share those dread agonies on the cross. And that dreadful judgment bearing.

But Jesus alone. It was alone. The one thing that's been done for us, objectively, quite apart from whether you feel it or whether you deserve it.

Jordan has been parted for every one of us. The only thing that stops us enjoying peace and rest and victory, He's already done alone on our behalf. You can't contribute to it.

You can't add to it. And then as that ark went in, thirdly, the waters parted. And a way was made for Israel to go on dry ground.

There was the ark in the midst. They had to go past it. They had to remember that it was only because that ark was there that the waters were parted.

And they went through on dry ground. And the simple meaning is this, that no matter what our Jordan may be, no matter what that problem is, no matter what that awful thing where you've been so wrong with other people and much else, in Jesus, there's a way through every Jordan into Canaan. When He said it's finished, the waters parted, and there's a way opened for you and for me.

It's the same old way that we first took when we were saved. The same Jesus, the same cross. And sometimes the same choruses and hymns we sang when we first came to know the Lord, we find they're exactly applicable to us.

There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. There's a door that is open, and you may go in at Calvary's cross is where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. There's a door that is open, and you may go in at Calvary's cross is where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus.

You know, I didn't see this. I used to preach this way to the unbelievers as an evangelist, but I didn't see it clearly for myself as a believer. There were times when I was out of touch, when I was empty, when I was dry, and yet I had big responsibilities, campaigns to take.

And you know, my way was to build bridges, to do engineering jobs to try and get over. And my study would see me pleading and agonizing for hours to get the power to be made fit to preach the gospel. It was really bridge-building, and none of my bridges were ever really successful.

We knew all the time. The waters had already been parted, without agonizing on my part. Just as before we were saying, however can I get right with God, and you tried this and the other, to hear Jesus said, it's been done already, what you're trying for.

The same is true for the believer. It's been done already. It is finished, was his pride.

Finished, every jot. Sinner, this is all you need. Tell me, is it not? And God hasn't made the way out of Egypt easy to make the way into Canaan difficult.

It's as easy to get into Canaan as it was to get out of Egypt. Because both ways are of grace. And both ways are by the cross, by that work that is done on our behalf.

But before they actually entered, I want you to notice another thing. It was a matter of the stones. I know in actual fact they put the stones in position after they passed over, but I want you to see them before, because they portray something very important.

They took twelve stones from the wilderness side and put them in the riverbed, and then they took twelve stones from the riverbed and put them on the Canaan side. And it does seem, does it not, that those twelve stones in the riverbed portray Israel. Not only has the ark gone down, but Israel has.

Quite apart from the actual treading it. In God's mind, in God's purpose, Israel is as much, and here I am confusing type with reality, never mind, Israel is as much on the cross as Jesus is. The ark is in Jordan, so the twelve stones.

Now this is a picture of something that Paul moves into on a number of places. He not only tells us that Jesus died for us, but he tells us that we died with him. You've got that in Romans 6, just look at it for a moment.

Romans 6, 3, Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, joined to Christ, were baptized or joined to his death. He goes on to say if we are planted together, verse 5, in the likeness of his death. And in verse 8, if we be dead with Christ.

And that many other places, Galatians 2, 20, says I have been crucified with Christ. We touched upon that the other day, and I want to just mention it again. What does he mean? Not only Jesus died for me, but I died with him.

Well, as I've said, if you owe a debt and somebody else pays it, the receipt is sent to you, and it's tantamount to you having paid the debt. And in 2 Corinthians 5 we read, if one died for all, then all died. And God regards you as having died for your own sin, and it's finished in the person of your substitute.

But there's another way in which we may understand we've died, as this. We're told that Jesus not only bore our sins, but he bore our likeness. On that cross, he was made an effigy of you and of me.

Romans 8, 3, he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. And that derelict figure up there on Calvary, wailing out, why have you forsaken me, under the judgment of God, is me apparently. He didn't only die for me, he died as me.

If you've got that, he died as me. Everybody thought that he was a sinner, and he was content to let them think so. He died as me.

That's me. In other words, God has committed me to judgment, along with his Son, which is really rather encouraging. It means that he doesn't expect any good from me.

He's finished with me as the source of a new life. It's going to come from Christ, who's going to live in me. If I want to see what God's estimate of me apart from Christ is, I've got to see Jesus.

He's dying as me. That's me at my best, as well as at my worst. He's really not impressed with my excellences and the things I can do so well.

He wants all that to be supplanted by another. And I think that perhaps is what is meant by these stones, but the fact is, these are facts apart from those stones. Don't worry.

If you think they typify something else, okay. But Roman 6 still stands, and that's the thing we want to see. And this, listen, is something done apart from us.

It isn't something you feel. It's been. It happened way out there.

It's God's testament of us, finished. And it's so helpful to see it. A woman once came to a preacher and she said, will you pray that I shall be nothing? He said, madam, you're that already.

Take it by faith. Oh, that I should be dead. Take it by faith.

God says, you are. Don't go forever trying to make the old man better. God says, I'm not trying.

I've judged him. I don't expect anything good from him. Just take it by faith and rest from all that.

There's another life available. Now these are completed potential facts for all. He died for me, and I have died with him.

I'm regarded as judged. As someone said, ended, not mended. Well, these are things in the word.

You can read them and understand them. They're blessed by them. But it's the actual entering in and passing over that matters.

And that is what Israel had to do. It wasn't enough for the ark to go down into Jordan. It wasn't enough for those twelve stones typifying themselves to be in Jordan too.

They themselves had to go down into Jordan on their own feet and over to the other side. They had to go where the ark had gone and where the stones had been placed by their own deliberate choice. And this does typify our coming of our own deliberate choice to the cross of our Lord Jesus with ourselves and our sin if we're to pass over into Canaan.

I've got to go where he went. And I think it means I've got to be willing to lose my reputation as he lost his to me. He went down.

He was made as the filth and the off-scouring of the world. No one thought anything of him. Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? Lord, I'm so glad you were willing to lose your reputation, but don't let me lose mine.

No, no, you've got to be willing. That's going through Jordan. Before we amplify that as to what it really means, let's think of this matter of reputation, or I would say love of our righteousness, which in turn means love of being right.

Righteousness is being right. And if a man loves his righteousness, he loves to be right, he hates to be wrong. And I'm going to say to you that the thing that every man loves more naturally, apart from grace, than anything in the world is to be right.

You love your righteousness, I'm going to suggest, more than anything else. And if there's one thing you hate more than another, which you will avoid, I'm judging you by myself, I'm afraid, is you hate to admit you're wrong. That is a death indeed.

Now this is seen very clearly in the life of Job. We're told that Job was an upright man. That was even God's estimate.

Of course, it was only comparative, it wasn't absolute. He was an upright man. And Satan wanted to test him, and to get him to curse God, and deny God, and God allowed Satan to test him.

And there were a number of tests that he was subjected to. There were terrible tests. He was the wealthiest man in the East, but in one day calamity fell upon all his enterprises, and that wealthy man was reduced to the status of a pauper, and he lost his wealth in a day.

But all this dear man didn't rebel, he didn't question, he bowed the head. The Lord gave, the Lord took his taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. You might say this man is a broken man.

There was another test, and this time a more severe test. In a day calamity fell, and he lost all his children. What a terrible test.

And his wife would have him curse God, but he wouldn't do it. She said, shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job sinned not. What a wonderful man.

Here's a broken man it would seem. There was yet a third test to fall upon him, and in a day he lost something which is more precious than wealth, and really I think more precious than loved ones, your health. What can you do if you haven't got health? It's a man's most precious possession it would seem, health.

And this man was struck down with secret sickness, it is thought to be leprosy. And he's a pauper without children, and the only place he goes to is the refuse heap to find some potsherd to scrape these wretched souls in an attempt to get relief. And yet, in all this Job sinned not.

This was accepted as the will of God, even though he slay me, yet will I trust him. Doesn't that sound like brokenness? But he's not a broken man, he's an absolutely, at this point, unbroken man, as is seen by the fourth test. Did you know he had a fourth test? He did.

They were those three friends of his. And they came along and they sat and commiserated a little with him, and then they began to discuss his case between themselves. One said to the other, you know, I've never seen a good man suffer like this of you.

No. My experience of life, said the other, I've seen it again and again, it's the wicked who suffer like this. And so they went on, all in the hearing of Job.

And Job in effect said, do I understand you rightly that you're implying that this that's come upon me is due to the fact I'm a wicked man and done wrong things? Because I would have you know I'm not a wicked man and I haven't done anything that would incur these disasters upon me. And of course we happen to know that relatively at least God regarded him as an upright man. And therefore we know that what he's saying is in measure, is in a real sense, true.

And then they say Ah, but you know this that, and so he answers. And you have chapter after chapter of Job justifying himself, arguing in his own defense. And then he turns to God, he says, well God if I've done something wrong, show me.

And you know that great text, O that I knew where I might find him? That's not the text of a sinner looking for a saviour. We sometimes use it as such, but it isn't in its context. Job says, if I only knew where I could find him, he hides from insults me, I can't find him.

But if I could find him, I'd appear before him, I'd bring my case, I'd show him how right I am. I will hold fast my integrity, I will not let it go, I will not have you say these things, I will not be accused of these things, but I know they're not true. Look, he was willing, if God willed it, to lose his wealth.

He was willing, if God willed it, to lose his children, willing to lose his health, but he wasn't willing to lose his righteousness. He wasn't willing to be accused. He wasn't willing to be accused wrongly.

This man is not a broken man, and I've come to realize that the heart of brokenness is not merely bowing to circumstances that God allows, that's involved. It's being willing to lose our righteousness. Willing to lose our reputation.

You say, did Job have anything to repent of? He did. He didn't repent of the things his friends said because they weren't true. He couldn't repent if it wasn't true.

But do you know what he did repent? Of all this self-justification, in dust and ashes. I've heard of thee at last, he said, when he had a new revelation of God by the hearing of the ears. But now mine eyes see it thee, whereby I repent in dust and ashes, and I abhor.

The authorized version says myself, but the revised says, I abhor my words. Oh God, what have I said? What have I said? Talking to them, talking to you, like that. And he repented of self-justification as his crowning sin.

He was willing to be thought, if need be, a sinner, whether or not he was. That's brokenness. I'm thinking of a very dear close friend of mine, and I remember years ago, he was being greatly tested.

One of his children was in and out of hospital, and they didn't know whether she would live or die. And he said, Roy, I've been learning what brokenness is. We've had to take this from the Lord, and so on and so on.

And it seemed it was true brokenness. But he came to this conference. He came to put us right.

He couldn't stick with what was said. And one day he got hold of me and said, look here, Roy, this conference is only on one thing. Sin and the blood, sin and the blood.

What about the resurrection? Sin and the blood. So I said, well, let's sit down and talk. And we looked at, by the way, he didn't say it as strongly as I said it, forgive me.

He was a gentleman, he was polite, but he felt it. So we talked together, and suddenly he said, Roy, stop. I need this message.

And he told me of a dark skeleton in the cupboard about which he'd never got peace. He was stripped of his righteousness. He wasn't the great preacher and the great Bible teacher.

He was a sinner, and willing for at least one other to know him as he really was, above all to admit it to God. You know, I'm sure you say you love your wife, you love your righteousness. I do more than her.

You say you love Christian service, you love this. I tell you, we'd do anything more rather than do it. Anything rather than be wrongly accused.

We'd do anything for that reason sometimes rather than repent, because when you have to repent invariably, you're involved in losing your righteousness. And that's what God's after. Why does God sometimes lead people to give costly testimonies? It's not owing to us.

That which they're telling Jesus has forgiven them and put right in their lives. It hasn't been against us. They don't owe it to us.

And I said, now tell me, was that person right in giving that testimony, that costly testimony? Was it just the nagging of the devil that made them do it, or was it the Holy Spirit? And again and again I said that was the Holy Spirit. Why? Jesus has wanted to lay violent hands on the righteousness in which that person has stood for years. Such a nice person.

Such a sweet Christian. Such an able Christian worker. Take it from him.

That God might know him and he might know him and where necessary, if God willed it, his dear brethren might know him for what he really was. Now listen. The first person to lose his righteousness was Jesus.

Jesus is the true joke of the New Testament. We're told that he became obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross.

It wasn't death that he died. That wasn't the real rub. It was a particular sort of death.

It was a death on the cross. It could have been death on the bed, or death on the field of battle, but it wasn't. It was death on a cross.

And a cross was a punishment. And that reserved only for the worst of criminals. And everybody thought that he must be one.

It's quite obvious they said there's a criminal one side and a criminal the other. He must be a criminal too. We don't quite know what he's done, but our rulers would never have put him there had he not done something.

And we did esteem him strictly. Smitten of God and afflicted as if on his own account. That's what they thought.

And the Lord Jesus never disabused them. He never told them you've got it wrong. He never justified it.

He never said what I would have said. Ah, but I'm here for other people's sins. He never said that.

He let them think it. In the deepest way possible he was numbered with transgressors and died not only for them but as one himself. That was the bottom rung of his humiliation.

He was stripped of his righteousness. That's what going down into Jordan meant for him. And Jesus is never going to ask you to go a step lower than what he's already gone for you and me.

And sometimes I know the only way to get right with God and get into blessing is to go into Jordan with Jesus. I've got to own up. I've got to confess that thing.

I think we hate to have to tell God that was what's wrong. And so often things are involved with others. It isn't always possible that you get at peace with God when somebody else is involved without having to admit the wrong you've done to them.

But I couldn't do that. What would they think of me? Aren't you willing for them to think the truth? And oh, we don't want to go down into Jordan but he went there. Does he bear the cross alone? Does he bear the shame? Which was my shame.

And I'm not willing to share one tiny bit of it with him. The judgment bearing was all his, it's not mine. But the going to the cross must be mine.

And it does involve losing our righteousness. Sometimes that's the reason why not only we find it difficult to repent, but why we find it difficult to give an honest testimony. I'm not saying a public confession.

If yours is only a confession, please don't give it. We don't want to hear it. Save if you were talking to somebody who needed help.

But when you've been to Jesus and got it covered with blood, the Spirit very often does lead us to give a testimony. Maybe to one other, to two others. Could be in a meeting, I don't know, just depends.

But oh, we don't like frank and honest testimony because we seem to be what we really are. We don't want to lose our reputation. We still want to be on a pedestal.

We still want to be thought nice Christians. But what Jesus has had to deal with isn't the work of a nice Christian, is it? But if you've got peace about it, if grace has reached you there, how glorifying to the one who's done it to be able to testify that, oh, but it means going into joy. It means, as I've said, being willing to lose our reputation as he lost his thrust.

That was the true death that he died. And all I know, that's a death to me. On the practical side, that is tying with Christ, identifying myself.

It's a death. The extraordinary thing is, before you're going to do that thing and put it right or speak or whatever God says to you, you say, it's going to be terrible, what will people think? But the extraordinary thing is this, by the time it comes out, it's been sprinkled with the antiseptic of the blood of Jesus. All I can tell, those to whom you give that testimony, they're not seeing the shame, they're just seeing the grace.

And they want to praise. And so often, a person gives a testimony, it's such a cost to testimony, and they feel, oh dear me, this is the biggest death I've ever had to die. And the whole meeting goes up in praise.

Everybody wants to sing. They've not seen any shame, they've seen the grace has covered it. And oh, how encouraged they are that Jesus can do the same for them.

Don't you think this is what is meant by going through Jordan? But oh, what helps me is to see Jesus went there, where he gave everything up. And I've been often helped, perhaps battling with some silly thing that I've got to call sin and bring to Jesus. Something has deprived me of my promised land, and I'm so proud.

And I can remember occasions when somebody's struck up on the piano somewhere, and they're drawing in that chorus and begun to sing it. Lord, bend this proud and stiff-necked eye, help me to bow the head and die. Beholding him on Calvary, who bowed his head for me.

And you know, in that context, the old hymn, When I survey, has a new meaning. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my riches gained, my count but lost, and poor contempt and all my pride, whatever it cost to obey, how could I withhold, when the Prince of Glory went so low for me. Yes, he went into Jordan and said, come on in.

This is the way into freedom. And it was indeed to them. They not only went down, but they went up.

Way up they went, on to the other side. People say, you know, this life you talk about seems to be an up and down life, sinning and repenting. It's not.

It's not the up and down life, it's the down and up life. Are you living the down and up life? Every time you go down to the cross, up you come, lower and lower, yet higher we rise, lifted in Jesus, led on to the skies. And you find you're free.

Free from that condemning heart, free from those things that were stopping you enjoying Jesus, free to give your testimony, free from your own fears, free from love of righteousness, you're free. I tell you, that really is free, you don't care. And I do praise the Lord when people, I don't know if I'm always free enough myself, but it's so lovely to hear.

They're so willing to give praise to Jesus, they don't care to destroy what you think about them. And they tell you and they give their praise and they're free. Free from worrying about themselves and their reputations, free from accusation, free from guilt, cleansed with Jesus living in them, and filled, is the way to get filled with the Spirit.

It's the down and up life. Not only once, but just as often as may be necessary. Because maybe you may have come into Canaan and then something goes wrong and there's old Jordan in front of you.

Alright, so what? The same cross that opened it before has opened this one too. This blood never loses its power. The cross has opened the way to every subsequent Jordan.

Go down now. Of course the first time it is quite an event isn't it? My goodness. But afterwards, you get used to it, or do you? I don't know whether I do.

C.S. Lewis says, humility, I suppose he means brokenness, after the first shock is a cheerful virtue. You're very cheerful, you really don't mind what people think. You do mind about sin, you do mind what it costs him, you do go down to the cross, deep moments, but when you're free, there's your testimony, you're praising, you've got the Holy Spirit welling up and filling that heart.

And you know, if you've been down to the cross, you've got to believe that you are free. He that is dead is free from sin, free from his guilt, you've seen yourself judged with Christ, and you're not to go on with a nagging heart. Believe it.

I'm thinking of a dear sister, friend of mine, she's a Swiss girl, Swiss woman, she used to be in Rwanda, and she told me once how, you see a Canuka, some of you know him, came up to her in Rwanda and said, well sister, are you praising the Lord? Well she said, if you want to know the truth, I'm not, not this

morning. And he said, why aren't you? Well she said, I lost my temper this morning. And all he said was this, has the power.

That's all walked off. Has it lost its power? It hasn't. It prevails for me, it's for this thing.

And she went down to Jordan, and she believed in the power of the blood, and she was praising. And praising, not because she'd lived an impeccable life, but because the blood had cleansed, and what a lovely little testimony. She had to contribute to the fellowship meeting that night.

She made someone else so happy, they were encouraged to go down to Jordan too, and over into Kenya. Judgment's been borne, the waters have been held back. And if you find even going down difficult, just tell him so.

Lord, I am not willing, but I take your willingness. Well of course, you see, we'll then go on to another series of Bible readings, perhaps you'll get your minister to take it, Light in the Land, there's Jericho, and AI. My dear friends, God's given us a wonderful picture book, but that's where we've got to stop this morning.

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