

Knowing God's Ways - Part 6

by Walter Beuttler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's ways, especially during afflictions and wilderness experiences, encouraging believers to trust in His presence and faithfulness.

Duration: 40:40

Scripture: Exodus 16:2-3, Numbers 14:2, Deuteronomy 8:2, Deuteronomy 8:15-16, Psalm 23:4, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Knowing God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Job and the challenges he faced. He emphasizes the importance of understanding God's ways and not losing faith in difficult times. The preacher mentions the perils of unbelief and rebellion against God's sovereignty. He also highlights the need for insight into God's ways to withstand criticism and confusion from others. The sermon encourages listeners to seek God's guidance and trust in His plan, even in the midst of trials and tribulations.

Transcript

Well, here we are again, huh? Well, what would you like to do tonight? Get out of the wilderness? We're going to. Or we'll stay in a bit, first of all. And we'll come out.

Now, our topic, menu, as you know, has been the ways of the Lord. I do not know how many folk are here who haven't been with us yet this weekend, but I'll briefly recapitulate a few things so that any that may not have been with us at least get a fair idea. We were basing our study in the Word on Moses' remarkable prayer, show me now thy way that I may know thee.

Or in fact it says that I might know thee. Now, two years ago, I think, when I was with you, we were talking about that I might know thee. This time we are taking the other part, show me now thy way.

So very, very many Christians do not know or know very little about the ways of the Lord in our daily experience. The reason is that there is simply not enough teaching in the area. And so we were talking about the way of the Lord, the first night, the way of the Lord in affliction.

Now you can take that physical if you wish, you can take it in the realm of the soul if you prefer, or the need necessitates it. Whichever way or in whatever manner we are being afflicted, there is a way of the Lord in affliction. An outstanding example, of course, is Job.

Now we are not talking about him, but Job was righteous, very godly man, very careful in his religious observances. God himself bore testimony of him to Satan, that there was none like Job, who was righteous and just and godly in all the world. And yet God allowed this man at the instigation of Satan to be thrown into severe affliction because of Satan's challenge.

You know the story, most of you. God had the angels assembled before him, that's in Job 1 and 2. We are told that Satan also came among them. Now I do not know whether Satan was there, whether he snuck in surreptitiously, or whether he had a standing order from God to appear with the angel to give account of his activities as the angel did.

Now which way it was is a matter of theological dispute. We are not going to dispute. Either one could be true.

For either of you, you could have good arguments. But irrespective, the fact remains that God said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job? Apparently, God observed Satan going about upon the earth, and I think God observed that Satan took note, special note, of Job's piety. And any man or any woman with outstanding piety, godliness, what have you, becomes a conspicuous object for the attention of Satan, who does not like such people around.

And God apparently took notice that Satan took notice of Job. So God said, Now Satan, where have you been? Well, where do you come from? From walking up and down in the earth? Yes, I was over in Vietnam. Gave a push to the drug traffic.

Came over to Tokyo and had started some riots in the Tokyo University. I have been there too once in a while. Then I went up to the illusions there.

It was quite cold. I didn't like it, so I crossed over, came down Canada. Well, I'll go to California and stir up some trouble in some of the universities there, like we had just.

Then I came east, and I decided I'll go down to Virginia Beach and over to Oakley. And you see what's going on and what I could do to mess things up for Brother Mancino, or the Rock Church, or whatever. Well, that is not far-fetched, folks.

That is simply applying the lesson, or part of the lesson, of Job, to what has been repeated more often than we know. There are attacks against God's people that are Satan-originated. He is known, or he's described in the Bible, for instance, in Zechariah, he's described as the adversary.

In Revelation, he's described as the accuser of the brethren, and that means the sisters too, of God's people. And in the case of Job, Satan said, There is a reason why Job serves you. He knows on which side his bread is buttered.

You have blessed him. He's the richest man in the east. His fame is known all over.

He has cattle and mules and camels more than any other man in the east. Why wouldn't he serve you? No wonder, God. You just touch what he's got and I'll tell you something.

I'll predict he'll curse you to your face. Now, God, now what do you say? He won't curse me. Yes, he will.

All right. Let's find out. He's in your hands.

And, whew, lightning struck this wind. Tornado came. The roving bands of the Sabaeans attacked.

And while one was yet speaking, another one came and told Job of more trouble. When it rains, it pours. Have you ever gone through a situation where you got one trouble today and you hardly, hardly got over that if you did something else, could you? And you wonder, what on earth is happening? One misfortune after another.

Will this thing ever stop? What is it? I do not know what it is, but I do know what it could be. It could be a repetition of the situation of Job where God, under Satan's accusation, feels obliged to vindicate his name and his servants to put the devil to shame. Now, if you say, why should God have to do that? That is something I cannot answer.

I can only state what I've stated on the basis of the story of Job, which in that respect is very clear. And we as God's people, when we go through situations for which we can give no adequate accounting, attribute no valid cause, give our inquiring friends no satisfactory explanation, we need to know what God is doing and insight into his ways so we are not so easily overthrown by what others say or think about us. Now then, I had mentioned that in this place called wilderness, which here I would simply describe in a somewhat unsatisfactory way, because I have nothing better, a situation in which we find ourselves where we cannot understand why it has happened, can give no explanation, are possibly confused, and don't know what to do.

And God permits at least some situations for which we'll never get an answer, and in which all that we can do is cling to what I said this morning, letting trust in the name of the Lord. In one place where I ministered, I saw a lady sitting to my left in a wheelchair. I didn't look closely because you don't want to appear curious, but I thought that I took notice in just a quick glance that she appeared to be crippled.

I also noticed that she was very well dressed, not gaudy, gaudy dress is not well dressed, no more than sloppy dress. I don't think we can please the Heavenly Father either with gaudy, unbecoming attire or sloppy attire. You know what you have in Matthew 6, where the Lord speaks to his disciples and calls their attention to how beautifully God clothes the grass of the field, and calls attention to the lilies of the field.

And their lilies are not the lilies that we have on Easter. That's another lily. The lily of the Bible is a very pretty, but very common flower in the ordinary meadows.

And the Lord said, Look how beautiful! God has clothed the lily. Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. How much more of them will your Heavenly Father clothe you? Sloppy, dirty dress is a reproach to the Heavenly Father.

The coat of sloppy dress is not the coat which the Heavenly Father appreciates. If God so clothed the grass, consider the lilies of the field, how much more will he clothe you? Our manner of dress can either be a credit or a discredit, an honor or a dishonor to the Heavenly Father, who so cares for his children that he loves to dress them well like the flower of the field. God has to be ashamed of some of his children the way some parents are ashamed of their children.

But there is nothing they can do about it because if they put a little pressure on, they'll run away. So the earthly parent, like the Heavenly Father, has to put up with the sloppy dress of his children, yet when it is in his power to clothe them decently and respectfully as an honor to him instead of a disgrace. That's true.

Now this lady of whom I spoke, and I didn't look at her, I just happened to see her in quick glance several times, you know, as she would speak, you know. I noticed she was well-dressed, she was pretty, although I didn't take it in, but I just noticed she appeared to be a good-looking woman, and I noticed in a quick glance that her hands appeared to be bent under and apparently her lips. And later on I made inquiry.

I said to somebody, the pastor there, I said, Would you tell me who was that good-looking, well-dressed lady in a wheelchair? Oh, he said, Brother Buechler, she was the beauty queen of our state. What state that was. And if I err not, he said, when she was 18 years old, she was stricken with polio.

And now I do not know how old she was, but I'd say she would be middle-aged. I cannot be sure. I had so wished to talk to her, very much, but I'm by nature timid and retiring, and I didn't have the gumption, I didn't want to appear curious.

Although she said a few words to me, I didn't linger. Now this is what I'm getting at. Can you imagine a girl being the beauty queen of a state with a future of one kind or another? Being struck by polio, that's apparently before we had the vaccine, confined to a wheelchair, apparently for life.

Can you imagine? Oh, I wish I could talk with her alone. Can you imagine how she could, I do not know whether she does, could ask, What is this? Why did God permit this? Where am I going from here? I don't know. Can you put yourself in her wilderness, wondering how can it be? Why did it have to be me? Me, of all people, beauty queen of the state, crippled by this virus.

Oh, I wish I could hear from her words, her thinking. What can a person like that do but keep her faith in the integrity of Almighty God? Now that's easy enough to say, but what else can you say? And that lady must be in the wilderness, perhaps she has life, perhaps she's well oriented, I do not know. But can you imagine how she felt when this thing first took her? Well, as I had mentioned, there are perils.

When we go through these experiences, we can call it quits, cast away our confidence, say what's the use of believing in God? Look what God did to me, which of course is a wrong way to say it, but how easy it is. I was teaching in a camp meeting, stayed at a farmhouse, they had a boy that wasn't right, born, well, mentally deranged. The mother was saved or became saved, either way I do not know.

The father was bitter, he told his wife, no, I don't want a preacher in my house. And he was very hostile, but his wife overruled and I was in their house. But he let me know how he felt about our God.

Why did God do this to me, reverend? Explain that to me. If there is a God of the kind that you talk about, why did He give us a boy like this? Now answer me, reverend. How are you going to answer that? That's what God did to me, and now I should believe in Him, serve Him? Oh, look at my boy.

You can understand it, even though of course it's wrong. When I was a student in Bible school in 1920, I had a waitress there in school, one of the students. She knew my weakness was apple pie.

I mean good apple pie. Some of what I get I just as soon not eat. And she was a nice chipper gal, the kind of waitress that you feel like eating with her around.

You know some are. But this gal, always so accommodating. And she'd say once in a while, Brother Butler, there's a piece of apple pie under the table where you sit that's left over.

I'll put it there for you. Wouldn't you like a gal like that? Well, she was engaged to a student, were married on graduation day. He died four weeks later.

They were a swell couple. They were made for each other. Her man died after four weeks.

What an awesome... Young people tend to think, well, that's not for me. I have my life yet to live. Maybe so, and perhaps usually so, but it's surprising, and many of you know this, how suddenly lightning can strike and a thunder roll, and our hopes come down with a crash.

How quickly. Then is where we should have some rest of the ways of God. Now I have mentioned to you some of the perils of unbelief.

We quit our faith. What's the use serving God? Look how He treated me. Can't do that.

We can, but we shouldn't. I had mentioned rebellion, when we rise up against the sovereignty of good. I told you how I've done it.

And rebel against Him. If God's a love, then why does He permit this? We prayed for a little girl for years, and when the thing came, after a few months, it got sick and died. Now then, why did God... Because you learn, or you ought to learn.

We ought to learn not to ask such questions. But there is the potential to rebelling against God. I've also mentioned the risk of murmuring.

Murmuring the way the Lord leads us, or the way He takes us. Murmuring about the way in which we are apparently obliged to go. Now, the last point that I had touched on, oh no, two of them, was in Deuteronomy 8.16. We're going to continue now.

We'll connect with the other at this point. Deuteronomy 8. You have here very, very remarkable verses. Now, I start with, not with 16, but with 15.

Notice again. So, Lifty, through that great and terrible wilderness, even when we go through the wilderness, God is leading, consciously or unconsciously. When I lived alone in New York City in 1925, I was not saved, far from it.

Although I didn't get into any kind of trouble while I was there, still I was dreadfully alone. And as I look back, I can so clearly see the leading hand of God in my circumstances before I even knew Him. He leads us, consciously or unconsciously.

Notice again. A great and terrible wilderness, wherein war-fiery serpents, scorpions, drought, ever go through a length of time, a period in which you can't seem to sense any presence, get no blessing, get nothing out of the world, everything is dry and dead, and you wither, at least you feel like it, as part of the wilderness. Can't we simply go by naked faith and say, well, it is written, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

We'll take it by naked faith as it is written. You know, you can practice this and these things work. I remember once, I wanted to have a little time with the Lord.

And as I often do, when I start out, I will face my approach very frequently on Matthew 6, 6. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door. Now that means, can mean many things.

When thou hast shut off the radio, when thou hast shut off the television set, because there's a danger that we like to watch and pray, and it doesn't usually work too well when you are completely cut off from observation, being observed, being distracted, being disturbed, then pray to thy Father.

You remember, I took with you for a whole weekend the Lord's Prayer one day. Pray to thy Father, which is in secret. Now that is one of my main pillars.

Thy Father, which is in secret. Shut the door. Approach Him.

Not bringing my shopping list. That has to wait. But a conscious approach to a present Father.

Whether I feel Him or not doesn't change anything. Thy Father, which is in secret. No matter how dead you feel, how dry you feel, how far away God seems to be, here is a strong pillar.

Thy Father, which is in secret. And I'll say, Father, I thank you for your presence, whether I feel it or not. You know what I did one day? More than once, but I'm thinking about that.

I was so eager to have a little sense of His presence, and I didn't have it. So I said, Father, I acknowledge your presence because it says, And Thy Father, which is in secret. And I felt just as dead as the driest desert.

Dry? Oh, no spirit. I said, Father, I thank you for your presence. I know you're here because you said so.

And I got nothing. I said, Father, I'm going to tell you something. You, my justice, will give me your presence because I know you're here whether you do or whether you don't.

And He came. I just would not let Him keep me. If that's the way we can express this.

Here is your pillar. So in the wilderness, He is there. Where? There.

Well, where is there? There. Where you are in those circumstances, God is. How do you know? It says so.

Well, I know it says so, but failing to believe good just because we cannot sense His presence. Let the fiery serpent scorpion sprout where there was no water to feed thee in the wilderness where manna spread from heaven. And this manna, this bread was different things to different people.

The word manna in the Hebrew means, what is it? They have mysterious bread. Every morning they picked up the, what is it? And it says, some said that it tasted like wafers of honey. Others said it tasted like oil.

And others said it tastes like this. They had a different perception. How come? This, what is it? Meets everybody's type was neat.

Have you ever heard people say, say, you know, when he said that, that was just for me. What was that? Well, he said, well, that was just for me. It's not something, I didn't get a thing out of that.

But when he said, such and such a thing, that was for me. That's the, what is it? Bread from heaven. What is it? That is one thing to one person, another to another.

One likes this flavor, another likes that flavor, but they all were fed and kept alive with God's, what is it? And if any of you are in the wilderness tonight or this weekend, I think the Lord is sending you some, what

is it? Now some said, so tired of this, what is it? And Friday night it was. Sunday morning we got more, what is it? Saturday morning. Saturday night again it goes back to the, what is it? Sunday morning more, what is it? They complained against a very bread.

God's, what is it? That sustained them in their wilderness during every kind of hospity in the wilderness. With, what is it? With thy father's noona, that he might humble thee, we talked about that, that he might prove thee, we talked about that, that he might do thee good at thy latter end. Now in the same book, and, oh wait a minute, wait a minute, we have in Deuteronomy 8, 8.16, 8.2, well I'll read it, Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.

You know there is such a thing as reflecting upon the past. When I think how God led me before I was saved, I marvel how I ever came through to the Lord. We have no time for that.

But there is such a thing, when we go through the wilderness today, or the dark places especially, is such a thing as reflecting on the past and remembering how God brought us through. When we thought that all hope had gone and yet we came through. There was a time when I was sick in the hospital, surgery, and it looked like I wouldn't fly anymore.

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