

Crystallization-Study of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes

#3: Job's Experience of God's Consuming and Stripping in the Old Testament Being Far Behind That of Paul in the New Testament 2/15-21 **OL Summary**;

I. Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity: **A.** When Job cursed the day of his birth, equivalent to cursing his mother, he surely was not perfect and upright, nor did he hold his integrity; rather, he became bankrupt in integrity. **B.** God's intention was to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes in order to make Job a man of God, constituted with God according to His economy; such a man (like Paul) would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live. **C.** Job was dwelling on his excellent past and sighing over his miserable present; he held fast insistently to, and even boasted of, his uprightness, righteousness, integrity, and perfection. /Paul, however, exercised to forget the things that were behind in the past in order to gain the present "today Christ" to the fullest extent. **D.** Through his eight times of speaking to his three friends, Job exposed himself as a person with the following characteristics. /Job was self-righteous; he was darkened by the success and attainments of his natural being, contented with what he had become, yet he was unaware of his miserable situation before God. /Job acknowledged God in name but not in reality; he was not saturated by God, filled with God, and mingled with God to become on with God. **E.** Neither Job nor his friends knew the purpose of God's dealing with him, as the apostle Paul did in declaring to the New Testament believers that the affliction the believers are suffering works out for them an eternal weight of glory, which is the God of glory to be their glorious portion for them to gain and enjoy unto eternity. **F.** If Job and his friends had taken the time to seek God in a spirit of humility and by exercising their spirit in prayer, God could have shown them that a regenerated, transformed, and glorified saint in Christ has nothing to do with the natural man and does not need to build up himself with the natural virtues. **G.** This heavenly vision would have saved them from the time-wasting, pain-increasing, and vain debates in thirty-five chapters as a record of a group of blind persons groping in darkness; they talked about God and also referred to their spirit, but they exercised their mind in three rounds of long debates instead of exercising their spirit to pray for Job and to fellowship with one another so that all of them could touch God and receive God as their life, light, and spiritual supply. /If we are going to have vital groups, we must be warned by these talks in the book of Job; the group we see in the book of Job affords us a negative

example; it is the kind of group meeting we should not have in the church life today.

II. Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament: **A.** God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to tear down and take away the totality of our natural integrity—our natural perfection and uprightness in our character—that replaces our living out Christ to express Christ. **B.** Day by day and hour by hour, Job was unhappily being consumed, but in the New Testament, God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things; since the day he was converted, Paul was a person under God's consuming and stripping as a prisoner in the Lord, but he was filled with joy and rejoicing. **C.** Paul was crucified with Christ; to be reborn through termination and germination is to be regenerated crucified; we, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. **D.** Now in our Christian life we are dying to live; dying to live is the proper meaning of bearing the cross. **E.** In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down; Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live; on the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live for the saints' progress (their growth in life) and for their joy of the faith (their enjoyment of Christ). **F.** When Paul was suffering distresses for the sake of Christ, he was well pleased, he was happy, and he was even rejoicing in the Lord for his experiences. **G.** Paul wanted to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings in order to be conformed to Christ's death; he took Christ's death as a mold for his life, and it was his great pleasure to be molded in the death of Christ. **H.** Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; when God created man, this was the kind of life He wanted man to live. **I.** Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body the putting to death, the killing, of Jesus and being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh; when we are under the killing of the Lord's death, His resurrection life is imparted through us into others. **J.** In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul said that our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory; eternal is in contrast to momentary, weight is in contrast to lightness, and glory is in contrast to affliction. **K.** Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction to be momentary and light; instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of God as the weight of glory within us by our being transformed from one degree of glory to another; as long as we have more of God in us, this is what really matters.

CP1: The suffering of the believers is the discipline of the Holy Spirit outwardly and the same Holy Spirit is working to transform inwardly

OL1: Job was disturbed, perplexed, and entangled to the uttermost by his suffering of the disasters that befell his possessions and his children and the plague on his body, in spite of his perfection, uprightness, and integrity. **OL2:** God's intention was to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes in order to make Job a man of God, constituted with God according to His economy; such a man (like Paul) would never be entangled by any troubles and problems so that he would curse his birth and prefer to die rather than to live. Phil. 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith. 1:19-21 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is the Christian life. When God created man, this is the kind of life He wanted man to live. God's intention with Job was to consume this "perfect and upright" person and to strip his attainments, his achievements, in the highest standard of ethics in perfection and uprightness. God's intention was also to tear down the natural Job in his perfection and uprightness that He might build up a renewed Job in God's nature and attributes. Eventually, God's intention was to make Job a man of God, filled with Christ, the embodiment of God, to be the fullness of God for the expression of God in Christ, not a man of the high standard of ethics in Job's natural perfection, natural uprightness, and natural integrity. **OL3:** Neither Job nor his friends knew the purpose of God's dealing with him, as the apostle Paul did in declaring to the New Testament believers that the affliction the believers are suffering works out for them an eternal weight of glory, which is the God of glory to be their glorious portion for them to gain and enjoy unto eternity.

Application: New ones and Youth/College students

New ones and youth, please understand that God does not want you to be a good man, but a God man. People understand that evil is hostile to God, but they mistakenly believe that God is pleased with them if they are good. Satan uses this to try to turn people away from God's economy. Satan is the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and God is the tree of life. Good and evil are not of separate trees, but of one tree, and it is the tree of knowledge that makes one independent from God. But life is constantly dependent on God. Eating is dependence, breathing is also dependence. You should eat and drink God every day, and breathe God every moment. This is the principle of the tree of life, dependence. Then the life of God will flow from you to those around you, and at the same time you will be able to express the highest

moral virtues, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Gal.5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law. The highest virtue here is not superficial goodness, but the highest virtue as a result of being filled with the Holy Spirit, which expresses God.

A Brother's Testimony: Ever since I got saved and started actively preaching the gospel, I have had constantly environmental sufferings. While I was always filled with joy when people were saved, I was also bewildered, thinking "Why do loving the Lord and preaching the gospel bring so many difficulties?". For example, I was ill spoken often in the campus because of my preaching of the gospel. And also I was expected by all the club members to be the head of Aikido club. But I rejected to be the head of the club because it caused me to be involved in the idol worship. (The gym of the campus does not have any idol altar, but the real hall used for the martial arts training has one.) And because of my rejection, the older and younger club mates condemned me saying I was miserable, undependable. Looking back they are not such big deal now, but at that time they were. At the same time, I just couldn't get interested in studying pharmacy, and I was always complaining in my mind. Since I was reluctantly accepting environmental arrangements under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, I often grieved the Holy Spirit within. But at the same time, I began to experience the renewing of the Holy Spirit little by little.

In June 1986, a number of meetings were held in and around Taipei to encourage brothers and sisters to participate in the Taipei full-time Training that would begin in August of that year. At one of these meetings, an unknown young brother was filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly spoke out the Lord's calling of participating in the training. Brother Andrew let this unknown brother speak even though there were many famous workers from America and Taiwan there. Brother Andrew paid attention to the move of the Holy Spirit and not to the formality. I was very surprised to see him do this. His actions knocked out and destroyed my cultural concepts. I began to think that what I thought I was doing according to the Spirit, I was actually doing mostly according to my cultural concepts, and my past convictions began to be destroyed.

The purpose of the suffering of God's people is clearly revealed in the crystal study of Job in the December 2020 training. With this training and morning revival, my vision has been renewed. My suffering is not a punishment of God. The Holy Spirit controls the environment outwardly, and at the same time the Spirit is working inwardly, to strip away and demolish my life habits according to my natural concepts and rebuild my life according to Christ. Amen! **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, the purpose of the sufferings I encounter is so that God can strip away my natural perfection, righteousness, and integrity and make me a God-man with the nature and attributes of God. The sufferings I encounter are the discipline of the Holy Spirit outwardly, and at the same time the Holy Spirit does the work of transformation inwardly. Lord, let me understand God's will, eat and drink You daily, breathe You moment by moment, rely on the Lord, and may my mind be renewed and transformed!

CP2: We were regenerated crucified. It is for Christ to live in me and to make us new creation

OL1: Job's experience of God's consuming and stripping in the Old Testament was far behind that of Paul in the New Testament. **OL2:** If Job and his friends had taken the time to seek God in a spirit of humility and by exercising their spirit in prayer, God could have shown them that a regenerated, transformed, and glorified saint in Christ has nothing to do with the natural man and does not need to build up himself with the natural virtues.

OL3: God's consuming is to exhaust us, and God's stripping is to tear down and take away the totality of our natural integrity—our natural perfection and uprightness in our character—that replaces our living out Christ to express Christ. [Isa. 57:15](#) ...I will dwell in the high and holy place, and with the contrite and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

OL4: Day by day and hour by hour, Job was unhappily being consumed, but in the New Testament, God's consuming and stripping become pleasant things.

OL5: Paul was crucified with Christ; to be reborn through termination and germination is to be regenerated crucified; We, like Paul, were reborn crucified for the purpose that from that time it would be no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us. [Gal. 2:20](#) I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Job was suffering, and his three friends came to comfort him. Elihu was also there to help the situation. However, these godly people did not pray for Job nor did they fellowship with one another by exercising their spirit that all of them might receive a certain amount of spiritual supply. ...They talked about God, and they also referred to their spirit, but in all their debates there is no hint that they were exercising their spirit.

When we were regenerated, we were crucified....No one was born crucified in a physical sense, but every believer is regenerated crucified. This corresponds with the Lord's word in [John 3:5](#): "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

When we are buried in the water of John's ministry, this indicates that we realize that we are good for nothing but death. When people came to John to repent, John threw them into the water to bury them, to end them, to terminate them. When a sinner repents to God, he should repent to such an extent that he realizes he is good for nothing but death.

Application to business person/graduate students

When we had full-time trainees from Taiwan, we would often declare, "Apart from Christ, I am nothing but sin. But, in Christ, I can do all things". They went out and faced the challenge of preaching the gospel in Japan and they could baptize many people. Praise the Lord!

Even after you are saved, under the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, when you realize that apart from the Lord you are worthless and can only be buried, immediately repent and pray, "I am nothing but sin, and I deserve nothing but to die and be buried".

What is important in God's economy is the new creation, that is Christ living in you. If it is your integrity or your perfection, that lives in you, it is of no value at all. However, Job failed to gain God by pursuing these superficially good things. God had to strip away and destroy Job's wrong pursuits in this wrong realm.

[Gal. 6:15](#) For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

The New Creation is Christ living in man. Does Christ live in you as you love your wife, love your children, love those around you? Of course you should love people, but the question is, do you love them in the old creation, in your natural life, or do you love them in Christ, in the way you live Christ? Natural love does not have God's love as content and does not express God, so it cannot threaten Satan by representing God. The Lord's recovery is to produce a group of overcomers. An overcomer is a person who crucifies his or her natural man, and Christ lives as a parson in that person, and that person and Christ become one.

Businesspersons should apply "the vision of mingling is the capital and boldness in our work" to our business, our service in the church, and family life. See an excerpt from brother Lee's message. "In the past we had many problems with our coordination. We thought that the young people were the problem, or that the old people were the problem. Actually, neither the youth nor the elders are the problem. The root of the problem lies in your compatibility with the Lord, your relationship with the Lord, your being one with the Lord. If this relationship is properly developed, the work will prosper. If it is not, the work will be difficult. Our laboring together with the Lord does not mean that we work side by side, nor does it mean that one of us works on the outside and the other on the inside. Rather, it is a work that is a mingling of both!"

Prayer: Oh Lord Jesus, the new creation is Christ living in man. When I love people, I need to love them in Christ, in the way that lives Christ and not in the old creation. I exercise my spirit, put my natural man on the cross, become one with Christ and deal with all things in business and daily life. Apart from you, I am nothing but sin. But I can do all things in You. Amen!

CP3: The suffering of being stripped is "light and momentary" but what you gain through transformation is "heavy and eternal"

OL1: In his experience of God's consuming and stripping, Paul was not constricted under the pressures on every side and did not perish despite his being cast down; Paul did not curse the day of his birth, and he did not say that he preferred to die rather than to live; on the contrary, after much consideration Paul said that he still preferred to live for the saints' progress (their growth in life) and for their joy of the faith (their enjoyment of Christ). **OL2:** Paul magnified Christ by living Him, whether through life or through death, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. **OL3:** Paul said that he was always bearing about in the body the putting to death, the killing, of Jesus and being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh. 2 Cor. 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. **OL4:** Job considered his suffering of affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction to be momentary and light; instead of caring about our affliction, we need to care for the increase of God as the weight of glory within us by our being transformed from one degree of glory to another. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory. We all like to have a nice environment, with everything smooth, peaceful, sweet, and nice... [Instead], we are under an environment of sufferings and pressures that works with the Spirit to kill our natural man. Brother Nee referred to this kind of environment as the discipline of the Holy Spirit... In speaking about the application of Christ's death, Romans 8 refers to the indwelling Spirit, and 2 Corinthians 4 refers to the outward environment. The outward environment cooperates with the inward Spirit to carry out the killing of our natural man. Daily Paul risked death, faced death, and died to self. He was bearing about in his body the killing of Jesus so that the life of Jesus could be manifested in him. Christ's death and its effectiveness, with which the Spirit has been compounded, become prevailing in the Spirit. The compounded Spirit dwells in our spirit to dispense Christ's death and its effectiveness from our spirit to our soul and even to our mortal body. This dispensing is the anointing, and the anointing is the moving of the indwelling Spirit. Those Christians who love the Lord and maintain fellowship with the Lord, always have the feeling and sensation that something is moving within them. That moving is the anointing, and that anointing is the dispensing of the Triune God, of the death of Christ, and of the resurrection of Christ. That dispensing comprises all these elements: divinity, Christ's humanity, Christ's death, the effectiveness of His death, Christ's resurrection, and the power of His resurrection.

Application to the serving ones

There are three kinds of human suffering. The suffering that 2 Corinthians 4 talks about in the New Testament is the third kind of suffering. **① Suffering that comes from the fall of man:** The first suffering is common to all humankind. Since people are fallen, there are negative things among people such as illness. **② Suffering that comes from failure:** Some people don't follow the rules of company and are always late. As a result, he was fired from the company. Such suffering is caused by sin and failure. **③ Suffering of stripped away for Jesus' sake:** This suffering is for the testimony of Jesus, for the purpose of stripping away of man's natural attainments and transforming him from glory to glory. 2 Cor. 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Job was a noble man and did not fail, but God had to use Satan as a ugly tool to strip him off and exhaust him. It was for Job to gain God, to be filled with God, and to magnify God. Job was discouraged because he did not understand the purpose of God's stripping, but finally he saw God. Paul was not discouraged by the stripping environment.

According to 2 Corinthians 4:17, for Paul, the hardship of being consumed and stripped away is "light and momentary," but what is gained by being stripped away is "heavy and eternal." Hymn 473 explains this extremely bargaining deal. This hymn was also chosen by Brother Andrew Yu as his favorite hymn.

Consecration — Possessing All in the Lord (En473)

1. No mortal tongue can e'er describe The freedom of the soul,
When passed beyond all earthly bribe To God's complete control. All things are his, yes, life, and death,
Things present or to come; In Christ he draws in peace each breath,
In Christ he finds his home.
2. When such as we the King can choose, To share with Him His throne,
'Tis passing strange that we refuse To be our Lord's alone. O never speak of sacrifice!
A privilege untold Is to be His at any price, In Calv'ry's hosts enrolled.
3. Arise! the holy bargain strike —The fragment for the whole—
All men and all events alike Must serve the ransomed soul. All things are yours when you are His,
And He and you are one; A boundless life in Him there is,
And kingdom yet to come.

4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you. Ministers of the New Testament can only dispense life to others when they have experienced the killing of the cross.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, Job considered his affliction something very heavy, but Paul considered his affliction to be momentary and light. We are being transformed from glory to glory and into the same image as the Lord through a light and momentary affliction. I thank God that His glory, which is of heavy and eternal value, will be added within me. Let me experience the killing of the cross under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, and let me supply life to others for the sake of Christ and the church."