

Series: Questions

Title: Wherein Shall He Sleep?

Text: Exodus 22: 27

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Exodus 22: 25: If thou lend money to *any of my people that is poor* by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. 26: If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27: For that *is his covering only*, it *is his raiment for his skin*: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I *am gracious*.

The question that God asks amounts to this, “If you take a man’s only raiment, wherein shall he sleep?” The example is what some might consider unnoticed by God. A poor man comes to you and you lend to him what he needs. As a pledge that he will pay you back, he gives you his only covering of night clothes. God says, in verse 26: If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27: For that *is his covering only*, it *is his raiment for his skin*: wherein shall he sleep?

A sinner can put on a show of keeping the letter of the law outwardly. But he does not do so from a heart motivated by grace. He will judge others and accuse others of judging him. The Lord Jesus said, “Judge not that ye be not judged.” (Mt 7: 1) But the moment we accuse someone else of judging us we have set ourselves up as judges and begun to judge others. The Lord did not tell us to keep our eye on someone else to make sure they did not judge us. He told us not to judge others. The Holy Spirit said through the apostle Paul,

1 Corinthians 11: 31: For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32: But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

A sinner will go on judging others and accusing others of judging him until God makes his child to know it is God himself chastening us, to save us from being condemned with the rest of the ungodly world. If a sinner is never made to bow by God then is he a bastard and not a son. (Heb 12: 8) But what is it that brings God’s child to bow? The last phrase in verse 27, God reminds us why believers are made willing to submit to God and be gracious to those in need--“and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; FOR I AM GRACIOUS.”

Proposition: The believer’s motive in all our dealings with men arises from God being gracious to us. God reminds us in all our everyday dealings with men, to behold in needy sinners, our own case as sinners in need of grace. It is God by his grace that has saved us from what we once were.

I. BELIEVER, WE WERE ONCE STRANGERS TO GOD—Exodus 22: 21: Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

God said to his elect among Israel, do not vex a Gentile stranger, nor oppress him, for when you were slaves in the land of Egypt you were a stranger. You were vexed and oppressed when in slavery by Pharaoh and his taskmasters. Who made the difference? God alone, by his grace, made the difference--“For I am gracious.” So God told his elect among Israel, be gracious to the Gentile stranger for I was gracious to you.” We saw Sunday that Paul reminded the Gentile Ephesian believers—you and I who believe—of the same thing.

Ephesians 2: 11: Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

The natural Jews, who had not tasted of the Lord’s grace in their hearts, did not have the spirit of grace in their hearts. Therefore, they vexed and oppressed the Gentiles, calling them names of reproach and taking advantage of them in many ways. So Paul says to the Ephesians believer, and to us, “Wherefore remember, you were once held in reproach by self-righteous religious men, made to bear bitter burdens and so on, but God showed you grace. So

now do not play the self-righteous, haughty religionists. Do not hold blind, unregenerate sinners in reproach. Instead, be gracious as God has been gracious to us.” Brethren, in our flesh, we were strangers to God.

Ephesians 2: 12: That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

We were dead, lost, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

God’s grace to his people—to us who believe—was, and is, not based on any merit in you or me.

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Therefore, God says, “In all your everyday dealings with sinners, remember they are strangers to God—in the same condition we were in—so be gracious, for God is gracious to you.”

Hebrews 13: 1: Let brotherly love continue. 2: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Let us not vex, harass, oppress the stranger. They may be one of God’s elect, everlastingly loved children of grace. Let us do what we can to relieve whatever heavy temporal burden we can from off the stranger. And as you do, take it as opportunity to tell them about our great burden bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Tell them how Christ broke your Egyptian chains; tell them how he conquered Satan and his army in the Red Sea of his blood for you; tell them how he called unto you in grace, saying,

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30: For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

II. BELIEVER, WE WERE ONCE SPIRITUAL WIDOWS AND ORPHANS—Exodus 22: 22: Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23: If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry;

Brethren, we were the widow. A true widow in scripture was one without a husband, without children, without extended family to care for her. That was us, brethren, when we were dead in trespasses and in sins. Do you remember how lonesome it was to be the widow?

Our first husband, Adam, sinned in the garden and plunged us into spiritual widowhood. All the sons and daughters of Adam died when he died. Spiritually, we were without a husband, without a son or daughter or any brethren to provide for us. We were spiritual widows.

But by pure grace alone, Christ took us to be his bride from eternity past, when God the Father chose us in Christ and betrothed us to Christ our Husband. (Eph 1: 3-4) Our Husband came to us and loved us. Christ paid all the debt we owed and redeemed us from all iniquity.

Ephesians 5: 23: For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24: Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. 25: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it

should be holy and without blemish...30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.
31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Then he called us to his side and said to us as he did to Gomer, “And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” (Hos 3: 3)

Believer, likewise, while in our flesh we were the orphan. We were without father or mother, sister or brother. We were enmity against God in our flesh, hating God and hating one another. (Rom 8: 7; Tit 3: 3) But because God chose to be gracious to us BY HIS GRACE ALONE! He called us and revealed Christ our Everlasting Father and God our Father and that by his grace, we are sons of God. (Tit 3: 4-7)

1 John 3: 1: Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.

He brought us into his church—“Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all.” (Gal 4: 26) Now we are in the family and household of God—“of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” (Eph 3: 15) We have a heavenly Father who provides all for us. We have a mother through whom Christ our Head provides for us. (Eph 1: 23) We have brothers and sisters by whom Christ provides for us. So God says to you and I, saved by his grace, “Be gracious to the widow and the orphans as I am gracious to you.”

James 1:27: Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

The fatherless and widows include all needy sinners. As we visit them to help relieve their temporal affliction take it as an opportunity to tell them how you were a spiritual widow and orphan. Tell them about God our Father chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Tell them about Christ our Everlasting Father—the last Adam—who is also our Elder Brother was faithful in saving us from our sins and declaring God just and the Justifier of those who believe on Christ. (Rom 3: 26)

Hebrews 3: 5: And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6: But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

III. BELIEVER, WE WERE THE POOR MAN—Exodus 22: 25: If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. 26: If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27: For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

Brethren, we were the poor man. We “sold ourselves for nought.” (Is 52: 3) When God began his work of grace in our hearts, he first made us to see that our sin had stripped us of all our raiment of righteousness. Our fig leaves were of no use. For many he makes us to know that our “decision” was of our flesh but we had not been made willing in the day of his power. (Ps 110: 3)

Then he made us see that our creditor was God himself and his divine justice. So we had nothing with which to pay. Like the poor man in our text, “Wherein could we sleep?” We found no rest for our souls because we had no raiment to cover the shame of our nakedness before God. But God’s grace hedged us up so that as he says in verse 27, “we cried unto God.” And God says, “it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.” And it came to pass that when we cried unto God, he did indeed hear us.

He showed us Christ who willingly was made a curse for us and redeemed us from the curse of our creditor—the law. (Gal 3: 13) Christ ravished our hearts as we beheld him on that bitter cross bearing our sins, bearing what we

deserved. He brought us to cease pining for our self-righteous selves. He granted us repentance from exalting our self by feeling sorry for ourselves and finding fault with others when he brought us to see that we don't deserve the least of his mercies; when he brought us to mourn for Christ as one that mourns for his only begotten son. (Zech 12: 10) And as it says in verse 27, "before the sun went down" God said, "Bring forth the best robe—the robe of my Son's perfect righteousness"—and he clothed us. (Lu 15: 22; Rom 4: 3)

For the first time, we lay down stretched out upon God's bed, dressed in Christ's raiment of righteousness, and we found sweet rest to our souls. For then, verse 27, "Christ became our only covering." Christ is our raiment wherein we now can get a good night's sleep and rest from all our works. Our conscious is purged from our sins and from our dead works. And why? Why all this kindness to us? God says, verse 27, "for I am gracious."

Ephesians 2:7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

So brethren, God says when you behold that poor, needy sinner, remember that you were once the poor needy sinner. Lend to him whatever temporal thing he needs, like as God has given to you—expecting no interest in return. And Christ said, "While you are giving him your temporal coat, take it as an opportunity to give him your second coat." (Mt 5: 40) Tell him about Christ, the Raiment that never grows old, which no moth can corrupt. (Is 51: 8)

Brethren, is there any downcast, needy sinner in this earth in whom we cannot behold the spiritual condition we ourselves were in before God? God says, "Therefore, be gracious, for I am gracious."

Psalms 145:8: The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

The grace of God toward the child of God makes the child of God to see himself as nothing but full of fault. Therefore his grace makes us cease finding fault with our brethren. His grace makes us cease taking advantage of those in need and gives us a heart to be gracious as our God is gracious to us.

The grace of God makes us willing to cover the sin of our brethren, instead of exposing it, because by God's grace our sins are now put away and God remembers them no more. (Pro 10: 12; Ps 103: 12; Heb 10: 17)

The grace of God makes his child willing to bear the burden of our brethren, instead of giving them a heavier burden by our backbiting. His grace makes us willing to restore our brethren in the spirit of meekness, rather than emptying them with a Pharisaical eye. (Gal 6: 1) Because by grace, we now see that we are what we are—complete in Christ, as Christ is in glory so are we in this earth—by the grace of God. (1 Cor 15: 10; Col 2: 10; 1 Jn 4: 7)

Oh, if so be that we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, how can we be anything but gracious! (1 Pet 2: 1-3) This is not the letter of the law for the letter killeth. (2 Cor 3: 6) The believer is not under the law but under grace. (Rom 6: 14) This is the spirit of the law—the weightier matters of judgment, mercy and faith—given us in the new heart by God's grace. (Mt 23: 33) This is "faith which works by love" because God has been gracious to us! (Gal 5: 6)

Amen!