

Job 1:21

**“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
may the name of the Lord be praised.”**

The Lord has laid a heavy hand upon us when a young man's life has been cut short by death, by a terrible casualty. Bewildered thoughts and aching hearts have these days again and again sighed: *“Why did this calamity befall him?”* But, hush! - There, in his Word, comes the voice of God and says: **“Be still, and know that I am God.”** Psalm 46:10 **“I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God ... I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.”** Isaiah 45:5-7

It is the Lord who rules and overrules all things – he even has evil in his hand and it must do his bidding. It is he who suffered things to occur as they did and permitted the accident to happen which cut short the earthy way of its victim. It was the Lord who thereby led the departed lad so suddenly and so tragically into the valley of death. Over against all harrowing thoughts and perplexing questions let us therefore place the words of Scripture: **“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”** Psalm 62:1-2

It is not without good reason that the Lord has taught us to pray the Third Petition: *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in*

heaven.” It is not always easy for us to submit ourselves to God’s will. Aren’t we tempted at times to do what Job’s wife advised him to do in his great distress: **“Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” Job 2:9** Especially when trials and afflictions come upon us, when we are plunged into such a situation as we presently find ourselves – that we often become impatient or disconsolate.

But it must not be so. We must not despond and despair, we must not become impatient under the chastening rod of God, we must learn to bow meekly under his will, to pray with the Savior in the midst of all trials and affliction: **“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” Luke 22:42** Even when death comes in its various forms and takes away one of our loved ones, we must learn to say with Job in the words of our text:

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed is the name of the Lord

I – The Lord gave

II – The Lord hath taken away

III – Blessed be the Name of the Lord

I

It was in an hour of severe trial, a trial the like of which none of us have experienced, that Job spoke the words of our text. By

a divine dispensation he had lost all his temporal possessions in one single day. One messenger after another had come in, each one bringing him fresh news of disaster. And finally, when he had already received information that all his cattle, his oxen and mules and sheep and camels, had been either killed or robbed, there came a fourth messenger and announced to him the greatest of all losses, the death of his ten children in a hurricane. Surely that was a severe trial of faith, one which would have driven many an individual to either despair or to turn away from God. But this was not the case with Job: **“... Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” Job 1:20**

In the middle of the outward demonstrations of grief and anguish, Job preserved a calm submissive heart. He acknowledged the hand of God in his terrible affliction and patiently submitted to his will.

The Bible story of Job is meant for our comfort and as an example for us to follow. Let us try to find comfort in this story during this present hour of bereavement. When Job first heard of the death of his children he says: **“The Lord gave.” Job 1:21** That is a truth which all Christians know – they believe that their children are a gift of God. **“Sons are a heritage from the Lord,**

children a reward from him.” Psalm 127:3 - says the psalmist. Knowing this, Christians receive their children as gifts out of the hand of God with joy and thanksgiving. Knowing this they love their children also more tenderly as gifts of God; they love them for the sake of him who gave them. But they love them also in the right manner, always placing the love of the Giver above the love of the gift.

Christian parents know that they are but stewards over these gifts and they endeavor to bring them up *“in the care and training of the Lord.”* They prayerfully seek to train their children to become good Christians, leading them to Christ their Savior. Now you, dear parents – I am glad to be able to say – have thus viewed your relation towards your children, also to the son whom the Lord has taken from you. You have brought Alan and his sister and his brother up in the care and training of the Lord. Having early brought him to Christ in Holy Baptism, you later had him instructed in the blessed truths of God’s Word and he was confirmed as a member of the Lutheran Church. Alan was sitting in on our present confirmation class, as he said, in order to fill in the lapses that he may have had in his training. You on your part urged him to study his catechism and Bible. You did all in your power to make him a good Christian and a faithful member of the Church. This we believe he was. On his last days here in this vale of tears, he was present and active in our class discussion and he was attentive to the Word of God as it was preached. And

don't forget, that Word is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. And it was right at this stage that the Lord wanted to call him home. What a sweet comfort it is to you to know now that you have earnestly tried to do your duty towards this child, which God has given to you. You have the assurance that now the Lord has taken him to himself and into a better life. While what has happened we call an accident, a tragic accident - yet the path that the Lord guided him on was not an accident, and on God's part his calling him home was not an accident.

II

The second lesson of our text is not so easy for us to take - **"The Lord hath taken away." Job 1:21** Nevertheless it also benefits you to learn the second lesson. This lesson is to bow submissively to the will of God, now that he has taken this gift away from you. We firmly believe that in the loss of your son, it was the will of God.

God alone has the power over life and death - as the Psalmist says: **You turn men back to dust, saying, "Return to dust, O sons of men." Psalm 90:3** Job's story is itself a good proof for this. We are told in the first chapter that it was Satan who robbed Job of his children. Yet Satan did this by direct permission of God. And later, when Job was himself afflicted in his body, Satan by God's permission could only touch his body, but must spare his

life. Plainly, the Lord here shows that he alone has power over life and death. The Lord has taken. Yes, dear mourning parents and family, it is God who has also taken your child and brother. Because it was decreed in his will and gracious counsel that your son has been taken, therefore death has now come and taken him from you.

Now we know that whenever God does something, he does it with some wise purpose in view. His acts are always prompted by wisdom and by love. And you may be sure that he has also done this thing to you with your own and your child's eternal welfare in view. You may not be able to see his reason and understand his motive. Indeed, it is but natural that you would question the loss of your son. At times like this we must say – **“We live by faith, not by sight.” II Corinthians 5:7** God has told us that his ways are past finding out, and that his ways are not our ways.

God's ways are often beyond our comprehension. Remember what Jesus told his disciples: **Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” John 13:7** You and I do not know why he took your son away, but you will certainly find out *“hereafter”* why he has done it. Already here below we can conceive of many reasons why he may have done it. If he had lived, he might have gone astray, or he might have been entangled in the snares of this world's temptations and thus

finally been lost eternally. Or it may be that his future life would have been darkened by great trials and suffering, and to spare him these, the Lord gave him his crown of life early. Or it may be that it was necessary in order to try your faith and the faith of all of us who are touched by this seeming tragedy.

The Lord would have us all draw our affections away from this miserable world and set them on heavenly things. For this reason we draw our desires and longings toward such heavenly things. These may have been some of the reasons that prompted God to do this thing, perhaps he may have had others, we cannot tell. But whatever his reason and purpose may have been, it is certain that it was a good and wise one. And as time unfolds itself and when eternity comes, we will have to say: **“He (Jesus) has done everything well...” Mark 7:37** In heaven the veil will be drawn away, there all the hidden counsels of God will be revealed and laid bare before our wondering eyes. There our mouth will overflow with thanks and praises to him who has done all things well.



But do not put off your praises of God’s grace and wisdom until that time. Learn to say with Job: **“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” Job 1:21** Know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to his purpose and

grace. We know that everything is meant for our good. What else could we do than praise God for it? Even if our flesh is hurt under his discipline and while we are still in the middle of suffering and affliction - we can still lift up our eyes and hearts (*even in the middle of our tears*) and thank God for the very trials that are causing our tears to flow. David says: **“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.” Psalm 119:71** We know that the hand that smites us is the hand of love, and not the hand of wrath - knowing this, we can gratefully kiss it while it smites us.

When Christ was most shamefully scourged, beaten and finally crucified, people could not understand why this should have happened to the holy Jesus. But it was all according to God’s purpose - that by the shedding of his blood we might be cleansed from all our sins. We know that his resurrection was done for us and that because he lives, we will live also. Thus we learn to accept the ways of the Lord, although we cannot understand them. We may not understand his love for us, for it is beyond all human understanding.

No more wicked world for our departed friend, he is now safe where you are sure that he cannot be lost to you. He is waiting for your coming and to be forever united with you in joyful reunion around the throne of God. There with him, you will raise your eternal anthems to the praise of him who has done all things

well, who has led you so wondrously and yet so wisely here below. May we all, by the grace of God, devout the rest of our pilgrimage here below, by being faithful to our Lord's Word. May we be faithful until death so that we will receive the crown of life.

Whatever God ordains is good
Holy his will abides
I'll be still whatever he does
And follow where he guides me
He is my God, though dark my road
He knoweth how to shield me
Therefore to him I'll yield me

O happy day when we shall stand
Amid the heavenly throng,
And sing with hosts from every land
The new celestial song
Oh blessed day! From far and near
The servants of the Lord
Shall meet the ransomed millions there
Who heard God's saving Word

God, may your bounteous grace inspire our hearts so that we all join the heavenly, white-robed choir upon that glorious day.

We now will bring our focus and faith back to the image of Jesus:

He was delivered into the hands of his enemies by the foreordained decree of God and was laid down before the foundation of the world (I Peter 1:20) - which testifies his love for us from eternity and his power and use over evil. Even so come Lord Jesus Christ be with us now and forever . . .

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the end.” Revelation 22:12-13