

## THE HAND OF THE LORD HATH DONE THIS

Dear sorrowing friends. We are gathered here in this Sanctuary today to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God. WE are gathered here to praise our God for His matchless mercies shown to the children of men. But we are also gathered here today to honor our departed Brother in Christ. And we are here to show our love and concern for the family.

In this hour of bereavement, I am grateful that I as a Christian Pastor, have the opportunity to call your attention to the only thing that can give you genuine comfort: the matchless word of God.

I have already read to you from the Gospel of John the words: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe in me."

I have read the wonderful words from Romans 8, where we are told that nothing will separate us from the Love of God. The cross of Christ proves that. Everything else in life must be related to the Cross. A God who would make such a great sacrifice for us is certainly going to cause everything else to work for the good to those who love Him.

Now I would like to call your attention specifically to two verses from the book of Job: "Who knows not in all these things that the hand of the Lord hath brought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind."

These God-inspired words were written by Job. Job was in real trouble. His seven sons and 3 daughters had died. He had lost all of his property. He had become critically ill. And now his wife came to him and said: "Why don't you forsake God and die. Why don't you forget all about a God that lets a thing like this happen to you?" And Job said: "You are talking like one of those foolish women."

There are many people today who talk like Job's wife, who talk foolishly. There are people who will come to you and say: "Well he had to go. When his number was up, his number was up." This is talking foolishly. We as Christians know that our times are in God's hands. His is the One who gives life. He is the One who takes life.

Then again the friends of Job came to him and said: "Job, you must have been a wicked man at one time. And now God is punishing you. He is angry with you." So also, the children of the world think that all trials, troubles and griefs come as a result of some specific sin. Sometimes, our own sinful hearts have thoughts like this, and we think "Is God angry with me?" Isn't God unjust

to let something like this happen?" That again is foolish thinking and we aren't listening to the voice of God.

Job preached a message to his friends and wife. He says: "Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach you; and the birds of the air, they shall tell you; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach you; and the fish of the sea shall declare unto you."

Job is telling his friends: "Why even the birds and the fish and the beasts can tell you that the times of people, the times of everything that has life and breath, are in the hands of God. He created all living things and they are dependent on Him. "In Him they live and move and have their being." And we are further told that not even a sparrow will fall to the ground without His will. Job then proceeds to say that what has happened to him, to his sons and daughters, to his property -- is God's doing. "The hand of the Lord hath done this, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.

Job is here teaching his friends and teaching us all a lesson we really need to hear at a time like this. We must be reminded that we are all under the providence of God. God has placed us here. The birth of a child is not a biological accident. It is God's doing. We are a precious gift of almighty God.

God gives people life. God preserves the lives of people. Not a sparrow falls, but the Lord knows. There are no accidents with God. The Lord cares, the Lord is concerned. And so when you think of Bill, remind yourselves of these diving truths, and say with Job: "In His hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind." *Stop*

Recall for a moment the days when Jesus walked the dusty roads of Palestine. People brought the sick to Him. He frequently said: "This sickness is not unto death, but that the glory of God might be revealed." Do you remember the death of Lazarus? He was a very dear friend of Jesus. His death and the grief of his sisters caused Jesus to weep. He told His disciples "this sickness is not unto death, but that the glory of God might be revealed."

So today, the Lord says the same to us concerning Bill. Somehow, in some way, He is working out His good and holy purpose for you and perhaps for some others who are acquainted with what has happened. Never forget how much God loves you.

Job in his hour of great distress could reprove those who spoke foolishly. He could say: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." And Job could also say: "I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the last day upon the earth and I shall be raised and see Him again - face to face."

This is the faith I pray the Lord will work in your hearts. May you, in your deep grief be able to say "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection, and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Believe the Word of God. Trust in God. For God will guide you by His blessed hand and give you His peace.

May God graciously comfort you.

Amen