

11.17.24

Genesis
Chapter 3 - God's Grace Questioned
The Merciful Push (vs. 22-24)

Genesis 3:22-24: Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

To be pushed out by God, I think the initial thought is, “God is angry at me.” That this is really God in a sense of perhaps even vindictiveness. Of course, we know that

can't be true because we know that Jesus Christ is the exact representation of the nature of who God is, and I just can't picture Christ pushing people away from good things. It's not the way He is and it's not who He is, but because of our humanists, and because the way we think, we project our feelings on God, and we say, "Well, I'd be angry." If you think about all the things that God has done, He created all these wonderful things for man. Everything was good. It was literally very good. Every good and perfect gift is coming from above, and there's no variance or shadow of shifting with Him. It's all good and He always meant good and will always mean good. Nevertheless, man takes that good and he rebels against God.

So, if you look at the passage in Chapter 3 in particular, you begin to see man's rebellion and treachery that he believes another instead of believing God. You do all these things for man; you show your graciousness and your kindness with great alacrity. It's not like somebody was twisting God's arm and going, "You have to be nice to these people." It was God's graciousness that just

overflowed, and He wanted to. Nevertheless, man decided he was going to believe somebody else other than God. In spite of all the good that He did; in spite of all the wonderful things that He did, he rejected the One that had been gracious to him, and he believed the one that was not. It is man that would abandon a relationship for personal gain. Think about that, just for gain, perhaps for immediate gratification, man is going to abandon a relationship with God. What is it that would cause you to abandon a relationship? We oftentimes make reference to Christ as He's talking to the woman at the well, and of course the disciples come up to Him during that time and they go, "It's time to eat." and He says, "I can't eat. I've got somebody here that I'm talking to." And you begin to realize that the relationship was more important than the human senses. Nevertheless, in this particular passage, man would abandon a relationship for personal gain and immediate gratification. He would try to hide and cover up when he's found out. Instead of pursuing reconciliation, man's going to put up a wall, and he's going to hide from God, the very One that had given him all these things. If that wasn't bad enough, he would go

around blaming somebody else, whether it be the woman or whether it be God for the things that had happened to him. If I were God, I'd be mad. If I were God, I would give them what they deserve. "Get them out of this garden. They don't deserve to be here." And I'd push them out, but that's not what God's doing within the passage.

You're misreading God because Scripture tells us that God is love and everything that He does, He does out of love for us. As you see, even the beginning of this God, in spite of man rejecting Him and God, in spite of what man does to Him in his treacherous response, instead of criticizing man, God will call out man. He'll start off by going,

"Where are you?" I mean, He could have immediately just leveled them and said, "We'll just start over again. There's plenty of dirt where you came from." And maybe I would have thought that way, but God's not going to think that way. So, instead of criticizing, He's going to call them.

Instead of cursing them, He's going to correct them. We talked about the cursing of the serpent and the cursing of the ground, but not the cursing of man, not the cursing of the woman. God was going to begin to discipline them and use specific things to bring about a reconciliation, and

He is beginning that wonderful work. The same God is literally not going to condemn them, but He's going to cover them. If in fact you were trying to get back at somebody, you wouldn't try to cover their shame, you would try to expose their shame, but He covers them. So, the response that we've seen and continue to see is continuing to build up to the manifestation of God's love towards man in spite of what man does. His grace has been shown at the very beginning of creation, now we begin to see His grace through reconciliation. Through all of these things, God is calling men back, "Where are you? We're going to do this to bring you back, and I'm going to cover your shame."

So, when we pick up in verse 22, we begin to read verses 22, 23, and 24. This is not God pushing away, this is God pushing to save, and it is His graciousness that's doing it within the passage. If you look at the very beginning of this verse,

(Genesis 3:22) "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil..."

That phrase alone is making us think, “Ok, God's really upset at the fact that he's becoming like Them. No, He's not. In fact, it is the very desire of God that we become like Him. As Paul will write, that were being transformed into the image of His Son.

(Matthew 5:48) “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

God is calling us to be like Him. What has happened with this knowledge of good and evil is that man is now seeing things on a different level and drawing close. Now, when God says, “Man has become like Us,” of course, just take into consideration the Trinity, as you see at the very beginning of creation in which not only God spoke, which is Christ, the living word of God, and the Spirit moves across the face of the water, and of course, God, the Father, but He is then saying that they became like Him in a specific way.

The passage will read this way if you look,

“... “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil...””

So, just make note, God is not saying, “Man has become like Us” in the fact that he's omnipresent. Man has not “become like Us” in the matter of omniscient. All of the qualities of God are not being ushered into this particular passage, but in the sense that man now knows and is experiencing and is perceiving the knowledge of good and evil; he has become like God. In other words, he will not only perceive what it's like to know that which is not only good, but the contrast of that, that which is hurtful, calamitous, difficult, painful, toilsome, sorrowful. All these things that come under the category of evil or “ra”, the difficult things of our life. He will literally experience those things. He'll come into a world in which he begins to experience those difficult things. Whereas up to this point, he had not experienced the depth of sorrow and pain and suffering and difficulty in all those things, but now he will. Of course, even as a man is directed out of the garden, and as he begins to toil with the soil; the words such as, “You're going to toil,” “you're going to

have sweat,” and these are all interesting pictures. The woman giving birth in great pain, you're going to see. So, they're going to experience these things which they had never experienced before and, in that category, they're going to be like God. It will be that sense that will literally bring them closer to God, which is certainly God's intent.

“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” —”

“I’ve got to push him out.”

Now, the very fact that God has actually given us the reason why He's pushing us out should be noted. You might just want to sit and think about all the things that aren't listed in the text. One is, “I'm going to push him out because I'm really mad at him.” “I'm going to push him out because I'm going to give them what they deserve.” A lot of these phrases are thoughts that maybe come in our head, but He's actually saying, “I don't want him messing with that tree.” The question is, why wouldn't God want

us to mess with this tree? Here again, it has to be this sense of love that's directing Him. The tree is representative, of course, as it says within the passage of a life eternal. More specifically, of the very immortality that they gave up by eating from the other tree. So, the question is, why would God in any way push me away from recovering immortality because that's a wonderful gift, isn't it? The problem is that if in fact they recovered immortality in this state, it would be a state that would be without reconciliation. It would be with eternal treachery, because we know that they've already been treacherous towards God and towards one another. So, the state of treachery would continue to exist. The state of deception would continue exist and selfishness and blame and abuse. All of these things are in the garden with them at this particular point in time. So eternal life; what would eternal life look like with treachery, deceit, selfishness, blame? What would eternal life look like with abuse eternally in the life of someone? "So, lest they take out their hand and they grasp eternal life in this particular state in the way in which they are right now, I'm going to push them out." So, what we're going to see within the

passage is that God is pushing man away from two things. One is life everlasting and the second is within the passage, paradise. There are two things that He's actually pushing him towards, and the two things that He's pushing him towards is to cultivate the ground, and then he's going to be pushed towards what I believe to be reconciliation in this. So, as we look at the passage, He begins to say, "I don't want him to have this eternal life."

God's graciousness is really revealed within this passage, and you realize that death is really necessary at this particular juncture. Why would death be necessary? Because death actually brings an end to the treachery, to the heartache, to the pain, to the suffering. Death will bring an end to it.

Romans 6 will give you an example of this. It conveys that we can actually share the death of Christ in our lives today and in our baptism. We're baptized into death. The necessity of death is conveyed all the way through Scripture. You're going to have to die to stop this so that we can then have new life, but you can't live forever in

this state. One of the things that you see pre-diluvian, that is the before the flood, the perception is that if people live a long time, “Wow, they live a long time, they're going to be a lot nicer because they have like 965 years to learn how to be nice and they're going to really get along.” Well, then, why did you have to have a flood? Because every thought of man was continually evil. What it reveals to us before the flood is what it would look like if you began to live forever. If you could just imagine, I can't think of it getting any worse than every single thought of man was continually evil all the time. I can't think of it getting worse than that, but apparently, it could. So, the graciousness of God in pulling man away from this.

(Romans 6:4) “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

(Romans 6:5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

(Romans 6:6) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with..."

It has to end somewhere, and death really, is that wonderful door that ends all of these things in our life.

"... so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

(Romans 6:7) for he who has died is freed from sin."

So, it really becomes a release. It is the graciousness of God to not let us take that tree and embrace it.

(Romans 6:8) "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

What a wonderful passage.

If you look with me in Revelation, you kind of have a glimpse of this as well as we see in the eternal state, the way things are going to be.

The day is coming when,

(Revelation 21:4) “...He will wipe away every tear...”

Well, that's sorrow. That's part of evil. That's part of the things that man began to embrace.

“... He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain...”

We need to end those things, and death does.

So, it's the graciousness of God in this context to take man and to push him away from the very things that would literally doom him forever in this particular state in which he's in.

God, as well, is pushing him out of paradise because if you look in the passage,

(Genesis 3:23) “therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden...”

So, He's not only pushing him away from the tree of life, but He's pushing him away from the garden. Another way of putting it is “manicured forest;” a wonderful, pleasant

place, because the name “Eden” actually means “pleasure.” So, what God is pushing him away from is what? Pleasure. Yeah. God is pushing him away from pleasure. To do what? To work. Yeah. How mean God is. I remember my kids, when I told them, “You need to go get a job.” I think their first reaction was, “Why?” I'm so mean, aren't I? But wow, how they began to appreciate things once they did, and I think they like me better.

The passage is making reference to the fact that He's going to push them out of that pleasurable place and bring them into the world of,

(Genesis 3:17) “...In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.”

(Genesis 3:18) “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for
you;”

And you will eat the plants of the field;”

(Genesis 3:19) By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread...”

It's going to be rough. It's not going to be easy, but God is not wiping men out. He's training them. He's disciplining. Hebrews 12 says who the Lord loves, He disciplines. We're seeing within the passage that clearly God is rescuing man. I know this is going to sound bizarre, from paradise; because you begin to see and understand, as the beginning of Genesis 3 revealed, is that paradise is a place where man tends to let his guard down. Paradise is a place where he shirks his responsibilities, where he thinks of only himself, and paradise is a place where he takes for granted the goodness of God. Paradise in and of itself is a wonderful place, but with man's heart and the condition that it's in, it's a horrible place because it literally fosters entitlement.

I'll give you an example of this in Deuteronomy 6. You begin to see that God desires man to get to work. The Book of Deuteronomy is really taking men into that promised land. When you think of the Promised Land, of course, everything is wonderful. That's why we got out of Egypt, to go into the promised land, right? So,

Deuteronomy 6, but there's a warning in particular, if you drop on down to verse 10,

(Deuteronomy 6:10) “Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build.”

I like stuff that I don't have to work for, don't you? It's like those freebies.

(Deuteronomy 6:11) “and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied,

(Deuteronomy 6:12) then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(Deuteronomy 6:13) “You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name.”

What's the tendency when you have everything handed to you? The tendency is to forget good, to give thanks to God, to be thankful for the things that He's given.

You see the same thing in Deuteronomy 8:7, it reads this way,

“For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land...”

Now, this phrase follows his statement, “You do know why you went through the wilderness?” I've oftentimes thought with Abraham in Genesis 12, you have Abraham being called into the Promised Land. I could just see Abraham, “Everything's going to be cool. Everything's going to be great. I'm going to the Promised Land.” And what's the first thing God does in Genesis 12? Famine. Was it God's desire that Abraham go to Egypt? No. He needed to be in the land with the famine that he might trust in God; that going into the land of famine would be an act of actually causing Abraham to appreciate things more, humbling him more.

In fact, the way that it's put here,

(Deuteronomy 8:2) “You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness...”

Why take somebody into the wilderness? Why take Moses and have him 40 years in the wilderness before he leads the people out of the wilderness? Why do that? Whether it's Jacob or Joseph or Abraham, they all had to go through it. Why? Well, if you look in the passage, “You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you...”

Yeah, there's a real problem with paradise. It's not too humbling. You go, “I don't know why, but I think I deserve all this.” It is interesting to me that right after God begins to discipline Adam, one of the first things that he does is he turns to his wife, and he says, “I'm going to call you Eve, because through you is going to come life.” And you realize he's appreciating his wife. Think about it, all the time before they fell in sin, he was calling her, “Hey, you.” But now he actually names her, and you can see the personal relationship that he has.

(Deuteronomy 8:3) “He humbled you and let you be hungry...”

It's that which is going to cause you to put your trust in God, to appreciate the things that He's given you; manna from heaven, all of these wonderful things. In fact, the worst thing that you do for any relationship is just give everybody everything. Nobody will actually care for anybody but themselves. So, pushing away from paradise, what a gift that is. It's the graciousness of God when you consider the kindness of God in this. All the way through, God is really preparing man for not only reconciliation to God, but reconciliation towards one another.

In fact, the way that it reads here back in Genesis, (Genesis 3:23) “therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground...”

You might want to put in there, *“'ăḏāmâ.”* That's the word for “ground” in the text. That particular word, *“'ăḏāmâ,”* is also used to describe the earth as a whole, and the people in it, because we know that they came out of it. In fact, He reminds them of this, “You're going to go back in the ground from which you came because from out of the ground you came.” The point is

that you're going to work to have relationships. Did you ever wonder why it was so hard to have a relationship with people? Think about how gracious God is. I guess He could have just plopped our kids in our lap and they're like, automatically 20 or something like that, but He makes them small so we can “beat” them up. I mean, so we can at least win. It is the graciousness of God through this that we begin to invest in these lives, and by virtue of us doing that, we feel closer to them, and they feel closer to us because we had been there when they were going through difficulty. We had been there when they had gone through sorrow. We were there to direct them and to correct them. We were there for them. That takes a lot of cultivation. But if you think about it, it brings about a great reconciliation of relationships whether it's with God or with man. Let me just say this, you begin to trust God a lot more when you have to deal with that old “*'ădāmâ,*” mankind; when you begin to deal with those relationships that are out there. Therefore, you need to cultivate. I think this is one of the reasons why Psalm 37 says dwell in the land, cultivate faithfulness, and delight yourself in the Lord; He'll give you the desires of your heart. These are all

things that are necessary in our lives, and it is part of the pushing of God that really is rescuing us through all of this. That God is bringing about good in the midst of the pushing if I could put it that way.

(Genesis 3:24) “So He drove the man out...”

Now, I want you to drop back really quick in verse 23, at the beginning,

“therefore the LORD God sent him out...”

That's a very innocuous way of saying that it wasn't like He was just expelling him or throwing him out. He won't let you get that picture in your head. It's more like He sent out, in the sense of like sending out the disciples. So, it wasn't like God was in anger, pushing him out, throwing him out or whatever, kicking him out. So, the words “drove out” in verse 24, really has that sense of connotation that God was literally keeping him from something for his good.

“So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden...”

“East” is a very interesting word, and one that we could talk about all day, really, but we know that the promise of the Christ is going to come, as Scripture tells us in Jerusalem, at the east gate and the gate will someday be open, and the Messiah will come. It is that wonderful picture that we have in Psalm 19, where it refers to the sun that rises from the east; that picture of the bridegroom. Psalm 19 refers to the sun as like a bridegroom that comes up. So, every single day we have this interesting and wonderful dress rehearsal of Christ coming in the east. It is to be noted that the word “east” itself refers to the eternity past. That's an interesting point, and it's as if God wants man looking back specifically, the way things were originally, that is the relationship. As he looks into that, the way things were initially, he remembers, “I used to walk and talk and have fellowship with God.” So, he has this sense of expectation, “I can hardly wait till He comes again; till I have that reconciliation with Him.”

So, you have this angelic being, the cherubim, and it's very strange, but the name seems to infer both gracious as well as strong. So, we have God's strength that is mingled with His graciousness. In putting this angelic being, the cherubim, “*k^arûb*” is probably the way that it's pronounced, with this flaming sword, which the only place that particular sword is mentioned is again with the Egyptians in Exodus 7. The word makes reference to a kind of enchantment; a mystical thing. God was wanting man to look at what had been, and He wanted him to think how wonderful it would be, as Paul will write in Ephesians, this wonderful mystery that God will come and save us again. It's a wonderful mystery. If you think about it, it was mystery that drew the woman to partake. So, it's a wonderful mystery of our gospel that God is using to draw us back to Him.

So, you have this wonderful picture,

“... sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”

So, you have a pushing away from everlasting life and paradise, which may basically be God pushing you away from entitlement, greed, selfishness, self-centeredness, treachery, and violence. It's the goodness of God to push us away and to push us to cultivating the ground, to work, being responsible, and ultimately to that relationship.

David has something similar that happens to him as well as Jeremiah and let me just have you turn to the Jeremiah text first, and then I'm going to have you turn to the David passage, which in many respects kind of reveals what God is doing, and let me just say this, how we might initially feel. I don't know if you've ever felt God's pushing you out from something, but I can tell you that the initial thought is "Poor me. God is pushing me out." and Jeremiah felt that same way.

(Jeremiah 15:16) "Your words were found and I ate them, And Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart..."

In other words, "I loved You. I loved Your word. What did I get for it? Heartache." Right.

(Jeremiah 15:17) “I did not sit in the circle of merry-makers...”

Wow, I'm really losing out here. If you think about it, actually the word for commandment in the Proverbs that is used, “*mišvâ*” is always used in context with God pushing us away from something or taking us away from something. It is a warning not to do something which in our minds is “God’s just holding something back from me. He's just being mean to me because I can't party with everybody else.”

“I did not sit in the circle of merry-makers,
Nor did I exult.
Because of Your hand upon me...”

I guess you can put in there, “You pushed me out. You wouldn't let me play with it.” And I think a lot of times in our life, we feel like we're the losers because we've been pushed out.

You see that same kind of thing that David was dealing with, if you look in Psalm 34. It actually comes out of a particular setting in which David was feeling, I guess we could say, despised and rejected. That sound familiar at

all? Of course, Isaiah 53 makes reference to our Savior dealing with that. In Psalm 34, if you look at the heading of the Psalm, it is not something that has been added, it is actually Scripture. So, if you look at the heading of the Psalm, it says,

“A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.”

The context is that David was driven away. Now, to understand the full history of this, you have to remember that David had been running from Saul. So, David had been expelled from the kingdom of Israel by Saul. So, he's already been rejected by Saul. He is now going before “Achish.” “Abimelech” is actually a title, but he comes before Abimelech, and his goal is to maybe be accepted, but he's just hiding. He's afraid that he might be found out who he is. So, he acts like a madman in order to disguise himself.

If you look in 1 Samuel 21, you'll see him going through this, and what's interesting to me is what happens afterwards.

(1 Samuel 21:10) “Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath.”

Verse 13 reminds us that he disguised himself as he seemed to be insane before him. He disguised himself as a madman, so that Achish wouldn't recognize him.

(1 Samuel 22:1) “So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard of it, they went down there to him.”

Now, who do you think his audience was? Here they are,

(1 Samuel 22:2) “Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.”

What is the passage telling us? That he goes out of a place of elevation and goes into the deepest valley, and much to his surprise, there's a lot of people in that valley. I think this is where cultivation and ministry begin.

I remember one of my professors, actually, I think he was the doctor in charge of the master's program at Moody, but I remember talking with him and he says, "Let me tell you something. If in fact you start at church, and you do it right," he says, "This is the way it's going to happen." He said, "It's like my little birdhouse in the back." And I go, "Ok, this is going to be great." He said, "I take this bird house and the bird feeder, and I put it out there" and he says, "All the plain, ordinary sparrows and all those normal birds that you're going to see that maybe you don't necessarily want in your yard, but they're going to come first." He says, "But you keep feeding them because what's going to happen is that the Lord is going to begin to bring even greater." But he says, "You have to be faithful with those that are initial." And you see Jesus going, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And I remember thinking on that particular day, we will refuse no one that's hurting. We will minister to them first because it's through them that God blesses. Scripture tells us that it's the poor that actually are rich in faith, but God begins to

soften our hearts because you know what? We begin to realize we're one of them. We've gone through this.

So, it is Psalm 34 that comes out of this and it's to be noted how he starts off. It begins this way,

(Psalm 34:1) “I will bless the LORD at all times...”

Where did the praise come from? I don't really see Adam doing that in paradise, but I can tell you where the praise came from; the hardship, the difficulty, the pain, the suffering, the cultivating. In the difficult times, he began to appreciate things, he began to be thankful.

“I will bless the LORD at all times;

His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

(Psalm 34:2) My soul will make its boast in the LORD;

The humble will hear it and rejoice.

(Psalm 34:3) O magnify the LORD with me,

And let us exalt His name together.

(Psalm 34:4) I sought the LORD, and He answered me,

And delivered me from all my fears.”

If you haven't experienced fears than you can't experience deliverance. It's impossible.

(Psalm 34:5) “They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces will never be ashamed.

(Psalm 34:6) This poor man cried, and the LORD heard
him

And saved him out of all his troubles.

(Psalm 34:7) The angel of the LORD encamps around
those who fear Him,

And rescues them.

(Psalm 34:8) O taste and see that the LORD is good...”

It's an interesting transition. He goes into, “I've experienced this. Now, I want you to experience.” Why does he care about anybody else? Why isn't he selfish?

Because God literally sucks the selfish right out of you when you begin to cultivate that land. It's so bizarre.

When I began to serve other people, then I stopped being selfish. When I suffered hardship and I suffered pain, then I stopped just caring for myself. God pushing me out of

ease and comfort and pleasure is one of the greatest things that He ever did for me.

Lamentations puts it another way and let me just have you read this, and we'll close with this text. Jeremiah, of course, was wrestling with the fact that he felt pushed out, but he'll come to his senses and Jeremiah will come to appreciate the fact of the difficulties in his life.

Lamentations 3, if you pick up with me, and one of the greatest encouraging passages of all the Scripture come out of Lamentations 3, which reminds us,

(Lamentations 3:22) “The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease,

For His compassions never fail.

(Lamentations 3:23) They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

But then he goes on, and it reads this way,

(Lamentations 3:24) “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,

“Therefore I have hope in Him.”

(Lamentations 3:25) The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,

To the person who seeks Him.

(Lamentations 3:26) It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD.”

There's something that happens in the waiting. Give a person whatever they want, whenever they want it, don't let them wait for it, and there's something treacherous that begins to grow. Have a person wait, and there's a character that begins to grow. Very interesting.

(Lamentations 3:27) “It is good for a man that he should bear

The yoke in his youth.”

“That poor boy, he's got to go to work.” Good for him. He's going to come back and say, “Thank you, Mom and Dad for that pea soup that you made.”

(Lamentations 3:28) “Let him sit alone and be silent Since He has laid it on him.

(Lamentations 3:29) Let him put his mouth in the dust, Perhaps there is hope.

(Lamentations 3:30) Let him give his cheek to the smiter,
Let him be filled with reproach.

(Lamentations 3:31) For the Lord will not reject forever,

(Lamentations 3:32) For if He causes grief,

Then He will have compassion

According to His abundant lovingkindness.

(Lamentations 3:33) For He does not afflict willingly

Or grieve the sons of men.

(Lamentations 3:34) To crush under His feet

All the prisoners of the land,

(Lamentations 3:35) To deprive a man of justice

In the presence of the Most High,

(Lamentations 3:36) To defraud a man in his lawsuit—

Of these things the Lord does not approve.

(Lamentations 3:37) Who is there who speaks and it

comes to pass,

Unless the Lord has commanded it?

(Lamentations 3:38) Is it not from the mouth of the Most

High

That both good and ill go forth?"

“Man has become like one of Us.” You know what that is? That's man has become empathetic; he's become compassionate; he's become responsible; he's become loving; he's become selfless; he's become sacrificial. God is good to push, isn't He?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for the push away from the very things that would doom us forever in a world of hurt, pain, treachery, selfishness, and greed. That You would push us away from the pleasures that would so easily spoil us and deprive us of true growth; that You would push us toward work, hardship, sacrifice; that You would even call us as servants of Yours and say, “Take up your cross. Follow Me. Come be like Me. See what it's like to love sacrificially, for there is no greater love than one lay down his life for a friend.” Father, thank You for pushing us. Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. Perhaps you feel pushed. You feel pushed out of ease and comfort. You feel pushed out of things that you thought were the

greatest things in your life, and yet in the pushing rest assured, God is doing it because He loves you.