

Restoring what I did not steal

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Date: 16 April 2017

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[0 : 00] Let us now turn to the book of Psalms and Psalm 69, a psalm we have just been singing. We read the first four verses.

It's to the choir master according to lilies of David. Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold. I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me.

I am weary with my crying out. My throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God. More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without a cause.

Mighty are those who would destroy me, those who attack me with lies. What I did not steal must I now restore.

[1 : 16] Particularly that last phrase and question at the end of verse 4. What I did not steal must I now restore.

Most of us, I am sure, are old enough to remember the great train robbery of 1963 when an overnight mail train was stopped by a gang and they availed themselves of £2.6 million from that robbery.

Some of us also will remember the Brinks Mat robbery. It took place in 1983 where a gang broke into a warehouse near Heathrow Airport and stole gold bullion and diamonds and cash to the value of £26 million.

And only two years ago on the Easter bank holiday in London there was the Hatton Garden robbery where £200 million worth of diamonds and gold and jewellery were robbed from safe deposit boxes. Great robberies indeed. But we have a reference in Psalm 69 here at the end of verse 4. What I did not steal must I now restore.

[3 : 11] And the first question I think we need to ask ourselves is who is speaking in this psalm? Well, certainly the author was David.

But a higher and a greater than David is speaking in the psalm. This is one of what we call the Messianic psalms.

Like Psalm 22, this psalm also speaks of the sufferings of the Saviour as he made reconciliation by his sufferings and death upon the cross.

And he says from the beginning, Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold.

I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me and so on. The expressions are expressions of great anguish and pain because the Lord Jesus Christ is experiencing the flood waters of God's wrath against sin as he there hangs between heaven and earth upon the cross as the substitute and the surety of his own people.

[4 : 29] He takes their place. He takes their punishment so that his people may be blessed with eternal blessings. Why did I read from Genesis chapter 3 and tie it in with the question at the end of verse 4 here?

Well, because chapter 3 in Genesis in many respects is a description of the greatest robbery that ever took place in the world.

Adam and Eve were created by the Lord and placed there in the Garden of Eden in a holy and a happy state.

They were holy in their affections, holy in their thoughts, holy in their will, holy in all their words and actions.

They pleased God by everything they did. It's as if they were walking on the Lord's path without fault. They were enriched by the fellowship of God and the blessings of God as two righteous

people who pleased God at every turn.

[5 : 50] But we see that Satan came and he began speaking to Eve and he started trying to reason her out of the situation in which she was by highlighting the beauty of this tree and the attractiveness of it and the wonderful blessing it would be to them to eat of its fruit.

Then they would be as wise as God himself knowing good and evil. But in taking the forbidden fruit and eating of it, Adam and Eve lost the wonderful blessing that they enjoyed.

And I'm just going to highlight a number of things that it seems to me that they lost in this great robbery that was committed by Satan and by sin upon Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

And then I'm going to suggest that an even greater robbery took place in that God himself was robbed in that situation.

It's as if God's declarative glory and his sovereignty was so challenged by what happened in the Garden of Eden that the wrath of God was ready to break out upon those who sinned.

[7 : 36] And we see what was going to happen to them as the chapter unfolds. And at the very end of the chapter they were thrust forth from the Garden of Eden and God placed cherubim and a flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life.

In other words if they are going to receive the blessings of eternal life they must negotiate this flaming sword of God's justice.

And that's exactly what we have at the beginning of chapter 69 in the book of Psalms. The Lord Jesus is there and he on behalf of his people is negotiating the sword of God's justice and God's just wrath is being poured upon him.

I have come into deep waters the flood sweeps over me I'm weary with my crying out my throat is parched my eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.

And you remember that climactic statement that he said upon the cross my God, my God why have you forsaken me? And he comes to the end of verse 4 and he said what I did not steal must I now restore first of all what was stolen and then secondly how was it restored what was stolen from man well think first of all that man was robbed of his spiritual sight and spiritual understanding.

[9 : 28] There's a very telling verse there in Isaiah the beginning of chapter 1 when the Lord says the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib but Israel does not know my people do not understand.

What's the reason for that? What's the reason for us being so spiritually dim and benighted and darkened because the great robbery was carried out in the experience of Adam and Eve and we are Adam's family and we are guilty of Adam's first sin and the guilt of Adam's first sin rests upon us.

He was robbed of his light. He was robbed of his life. You see when the apostle Paul is writing to the Ephesian church the beginning of chapter 2 in Ephesians he starts by saying this you who are dead in trespasses and in sins.

How did that death come about? It came about in a spiritual sense when Adam lost his spiritual life he didn't lose his physical life at that point although the seed of spiritual death was sown at the point of his disobedience when he sinned against God the Lord said the day that you eat thereof you will surely die and the seed of physical death entered his experience but actual spiritual death overtook him.

he lost his wisdom he lost his spiritual life and that's a calamity he lost his wisdom remember it said there that when they realized that they were naked they clothed themselves with the leaves of the tree of the garden and then they went and hid themselves among the trees when they heard the voice of the Lord as he walked in the garden in the cool of the day and he said where are you and they thought in their foolishness that they were able to hide themselves from God they knew before that before they had sinned that they couldn't hide from him they wouldn't want to but now they think they can because they've lost their wisdom and in the understanding of who God is they were robbed of their righteousness righteousness it's a wonderful concept somebody who is righteous he is able to stand before God uncondemned and that's exactly the way Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden before they sinned they were pleasing God with everything they thought everything they said everything they did and they were able to stand uncondemned because they weren't lawbreakers but now because they broke the law they became unrighteous and they were rejected from the garden of Eden what does Isaiah say regarding Israel in Isaiah 64 all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags your attempts at being good people really they don't come up to the standard of my righteousness they're like filthy rags in my presence and where was this started it started in the

garden of Eden when man sinned he lost his righteousness he lost the beauty of holiness holiness of heart separation from all that was suspect and sinful that constituted his holiness but now that he has sinned he has lost that marvelous separation and consecration to God that there's a sense in which he lost his God what does the New Testament say in Ephesians 2 and 12 you he said in your lost condition were without

[14 : 09] God and without hope in the world a godless person a hopeless person a dead person a person who is unrighteous who is a sinner before God they really lost their paradise in which they were God created them and placed them in that paradise of a garden the garden of Eden that's the greatest robbery that took place in the experience of mankind but what about the other aspect the robbery regarding God will a man rob God Malachi asks and he said yes you have robbed me in tithes and in offerings you have not given me what I was due what I required of you and that's exactly what happened here in relation to the attitude of Satan to God he sought to take from God his sovereignty and his revealed glory you see

God had just created the world and he made everything glorious and beautiful by the word of his power in the space of six days and all very good and he made man after his own image with knowledge and righteousness and holiness and God's creative glory and his wisdom and his holiness were all revealed in the creation that was round about but when Satan came he started saying did God say that you would die did God say you mustn't eat of this surely he didn't say that see that's a challenge to the sovereignty and the word of God and when Eve stretched forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit it's as if she was allying herself with Satan and saying well I'm not willing to lie under the sovereign authority of God and by eating the forbidden fruit they both said we don't want the sovereign

God to be over us we don't want the glory of the creator to dominate and rule our lives and there's a sense in which God's wisdom and power and holiness and justice were all grossly offended by the sin of man and that was a great great robbery in the garden of Eden but coming to the end of verse 4 in Psalm 69 we hear the Lord Jesus Christ saying what I did not steal must I now restore the Lord Jesus Christ at this point he reveals himself as one as I mentioned a few moments ago as the surety of his people and the substitute of his people he is the mediator between

God and sinful man the substitute as you know is somebody who stands in the place of somebody else see it happening football a player comes off the field substitute comes off the substitute bench and plays in his place a surety is somewhat different in that the surety pays what the other person is not able to pay and he goes and he pays what the other man is not able to pay he comes and he fulfills something in his place and Jesus here is saying I did not steal the life of man I did not take away the light of man I did not take away the righteousness of man neither did

I take away the glory of God the revealed glory of God you know that the essential glory of God cannot be robbed but the revealed glory of God is often attacked and that's what happened in the garden of Eden the revealed glory and authority and sovereignty of God was not only challenged but fiercely attacked so that God's law and God's authority was trampled underfoot through sin and through Satan achieving what they did in the life of Adam and Eve now Jesus says I did not steal anything but I have come into this world so that what has been stolen will most certainly be restored and thinking of first of all

[20 : 06] God himself how was Jesus going to restore the way God's glory had been challenged and God's authority and sovereignty had been challenged and robbed in the way it was in the fall of man well if you read in John's gospel chapter 17 Jesus is coming to the end of his life in the world and you know he prays in John 17 4 and he says father father I have glorified you on the earth I have finished the work that you gave me to do and I think the words on the earth are significant in that particular phrase I have glorified you on the earth

I have come to this world this theatre of operations where Satan was at work from the beginning of human history and where this great robbery has been carried out and I have come to that place and I have come in such a way as to finish the work that you have entrusted to me from all eternity in the covenant of redemption how did the Lord Jesus restore God's sovereignty and God's revealed glory well first of all is this not true that he came and he was made under the law and he lived his life in accordance with the law of

God and he magnified the law and he magnified God himself who is the law giver by being obedient to every detail of the law in his thoughts in his words and in all his actions so he magnified the law and he upheld the sovereign glory of God in living the way he lived in this world what about the

justice of God that was offended by the sin of man well it says that he gave himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God coming back to the cherubim and the flaming sword in chapter 3 of

Genesis it is as if he himself undertook to negotiate what these words mean the flaming sword I believe it means the justice of God and the justice of God needed to have full satisfaction for all the sin that had been committed against God and against his revealed glory must I now restore it and Jesus did restore it he magnified the law he made the law honourable he pleased the father in everything he did he submitted to every requirement that God laid upon him isn't it wonderful when you read through these words and when you go on to the gospels also you realise the extent and the depth of the business in which our saviour was engaged he was engaged in making peace with our holy

God on behalf of a sinful people he was engaged with magnifying the Lord in all that he said and all that he did they say that the resurrection of Christ is the father's signature of approval of all that Christ did as saviour he was three days as we know under the power of death in the grave when the women went to the grave early in the morning and the first day of the week they went fully laden with their spices and ointments anticipating having to anoint his dead body and the question they had on their lips was who will move for us the stone but when they reached there the stone had already been moved and when they looked in there was no saviour there why because he had risen from the dead and it's as if

[25 : 45] God in heaven signed off the marvellous work in which Christ had been engaged and he said yes he has paid all that I asked of him to pay but what about Christ restoring to man what man lost in this awful robbery in the garden of Eden well of course by grace when we believe in Jesus he restored to us spiritual sight he gives us spiritual sight he gives us spiritual light and that's the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ let there be light God spoke at the beginning of the creation and he says the same thing in relation to the beginning of the new creation in the soul of those whom he saves he brings the light of the gospel into your soul so that you see your need and you see that

Christ is able to satisfy and meet every need you have as a sinner on the way to eternity he gives only light but life I give them eternal life and that word given original is present continuous I am giving them eternal life from the point at which they believe I continue to give them this life that is eternal in all its dimensions and they shall never perish neither shall any of them be plucked from my hand what a glorious gospel that is he restores wisdom to us we are so foolish by nature we make choice of the wrong things and our priorities upside down the things that are most trivial they very often are on the top and the most important things they are left on the bottom of our life but when we are made wise unto salvation we seek first the kingdom of

God and his righteousness and all other things then will be added unto us what about our righteousness and our standing before God how does Paul address this marvelous thing well in Romans chapter 5 he says we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ being justified by faith in other words when we believe in Jesus all that Christ has done in our room and in our place is made over to our account when we are connected to Jesus by faith the great lines man connects us up in such a way that we have now as standing before God uncondemned because the righteousness of

Christ is the robe that we know wear and not the tatty robe of our own self righteousness which is our filthy rags by all that Christ did he restored our peace think of the awful situation that must have prevailed in Adam's mind and in his conscience and in his affections and in his physical life because he was no longer at peace with God after he sinned but when the blessings of the gospel of peace are applied to us we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ we have peace within ourselves peace of conscience joy in the

Holy Ghost all these wonderful blessings that the Lord sees fit to bestow upon us or to be in fellowship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Jesus says what I did not steal now must I restore he must restore it and God was happy that he did restore it when he gave proof of his approval of all that Jesus had done when he raised him from the dead raised him from the dead Christ paid back all that had been taken away a wonderful word in the

[31 : 38] Greek that tells the marvel of what Jesus finished on the cross when he says it is finished the word is a single word in the Greek that's in the perfect tense which means that it happened and its effects continue and when Jesus said it is finished it wasn't just as it were that's it leave it aside

no the effects of all that Jesus did the payment he made the effects and the lasting effects of it continue throughout all eternity in the experience of God's people where are we this morning regarding this awful robbery that took place upon our ancestor

Adam are we still happy enough to be associated merely with Adam who was robbed of everything most precious or what about the last Adam who is the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks in these words and who was intent upon restoring that amazing thing that was stolen at the beginning of human history well Christ paid the price and this day he says look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else and in the New Testament he says come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest

I will give you riches beyond anything that this world can offer I will give you security that this world can only pretend to give I will give you blessedness and peace not as the world gives give I unto you he said to the disciples let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid the price has been paid God has been reconciled there is peace available through the blood of Jesus Christ all to come to him and to be found in him not having our own righteousness but the righteousness which is of God by faith Amen may God bless these thoughts to us let us pray