

PREFACE

“Life is full of perplexity. It is through pastor’s ministry that I come to understand and appreciate this truth. Today, pastor preached to us comprehensively on the book of Job. I was very ministered by the message. It cuts me deeply; it magnifies God and puts me to the dust. I see how finite and puny I am. I trembled at the prospect that God is in absolute control of my life. I am left to the mercy of God. Pastor showed us the vicissitudes of life through Job’s life. Whether it concerns his possessions, his health or his relationships with his wife and children, God confiscated them all. Job was stripped to the core of his being. All his support systems were totally taken away from him. One thing that I learned from today’s message is that God is in control of my life. Man is naturally a control freak, and would like to be in control. I am also a control freak. Through the yieldings of providence, Job was removed and stripped of everything in which he could have possibly trusted, and was made to confront the question—did he really know God? What God did was to show Job whether he knew Him (Job 42). Presently I have all these things intact in my life, but do I really know God? This is a very cutting question. God was trying to teach us through the life of Job whether we know Him experimentally. I trembled at the thought that if God is to take away all these things from my life, how would I respond? I see how superficial my relationship with God is. I may have a form of religion; it is still at best a man-ward religion. There still remains within me the Arminian and China-man mentality. I am indicted of using religion to prostitute myself for my own gain. God showed me I am a prostitute before Him. I felt God strip me bare right to the core of my being. As pastor exposed us, showing us that even if we go to the place of repentance, we are still treacherous. The marvel of it all is that God still desires that I should come back to Him in repentance. Job is such a godly man, yet God has to confront him. God put him in a crisis and he had to reckon with God personally. His seeking of God took on a new dimension, to the extent he questioned the Person of God, and tried to defend his own righteousness. There is the despair and desperation. God has to deal with us in like manner so as to strip us of all our presumption. Do I really know God? That is where I really tremble. I thank God that pastor showed me the prolonged silence of God is necessary. Yet Job did not give up. It drove him to seek God urgently for if God did not answer him, his sickness will prevail. However, as pastor pointed out, Job could have shortened the silence if he had submitted humbly to God’s dealing. When Job came, to the end of his tether, God sent a harbinger, Elihu, who defended the Person of God—that God is absolutely perfect and absolutely just in all His ways. This God is infinite and incomprehensible. The God of creation put forth this question to Job, ‘Can you comprehend Me?’ Pastor showed us that these attributes of God, which are manifested in His creation, are the same attributes which will also wrought salvation for His people. In the light of God’s sovereignty, what then must I do? Pastor showed that with respect to the Scriptures, I can sing the psalms and meditate upon His Word and walk in obedience to it. But when it comes to the secret will of God for me, I am to humble myself and submit to it. I must acknowledge that He is the Porter, I am the clay. God is absolutely sovereign in every compartment in my life, even in the realm of my salvation. Pastor showed me that my life is a canvas whereby God’s secret will is worked out daily. Every day is the unfolding of a new chapter of His secret will in my life. All that God requires is for me to submit and trust completely in Him. That is the difficult part and it is where I often fail Him. Yet, as pastor showed me, there is a place for prayer where I can resort to in all my struggles. When I heard this, my heart leapt for joy. This God Who is sovereign will hearken to my entreaties and cries. Prayer is not bargaining with God, but humbly submitting to His sovereign will and pleading with Him for mercy and help. I need to repent in dust and ashes. That is where I often fall short. Even a godly man like Job needed to empty his cup. He had a perceived form of piety and man-ward religion, but at the end, he came to reckon Who God is and that required him to empty his cup. I need to do so as well and that means submitting to His application of the law upon my life. May God be merciful to me. I felt pastor has been an Elihu to

me; not only has he interpreted the Word of God to me, he has also interpreted the dealings of God towards me in His providence. My safety is to cling on to my Elihu and enjoy the Word of God and the fellowship of God's people." *Zechariah Tan's Sabbath vespers in response to presiding pastor's sermon from the book of Job, John Bunyan house, Johor, Malaysia; 20 June AD 2010*