

Series: Luke 2024

Title: Delivered from Reproach

Text: Luke 1:24-25

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Luke 1: 24: And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25: Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

Subject: Delivered from Reproach

Due to Elizabeth being barren men and women reproached her. Reproach means to scorn, to shame, to disgrace, to mock, to taunt, to deride, to insult, to humiliate. Men usually reproach by imputing things they surmise or suppose but things that are not factual. They did this to Job. Worse, men did it to our Savior. They would say things like that God made Elizabeth barren due to her sin. Thankfully, no one can make a thing so by imputing or charging us with it.

This is not something new. Sinners delight to exalt self at the expense of another. Let someone find some way in which they think they are above another and they will use it to reproach. They will use it to exalt themselves before men by tearing down another. The first mention of the word "reproach" in the bible is Rachel saying the same thing as Elizabeth.

Genesis 30: 22: And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. 23: And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: 24: And she called his name Joseph;...

Proposition: The same as the Lord looked upon Rachel's condition and provided for her and took away her reproach, so the Lord looked upon each of his people and spiritually takes away our reproach. And Christ shall protect his people from the reproach of men.

OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION

Elizabeth's physical condition of being barren is the spiritual condition of all God's elect by nature. Due to Adam's one transgression, we all come into this world guilty sinners, spiritually barren, unable to produce spiritual fruit.

One of the greatest evidences of our depravity is that one sinner will reproach another sinner for sin. For one sinner to scorn, to slander, to humiliate another, when the one reproaching is a sinner the same as the other is a display of total depravity. Reproach is one sinner boasting in himself that he is better than another sinner.

Men reproach one another for all kinds of reasons. But there is much in scripture about one woman reproaching another who is barren. Perhaps, this is because bareness is such a good representation of our inability to produce spiritual fruit. Peninnah had children but Hannah had no children.

1 Samuel 1: 6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

But one sinner reproaching another is no different than what the Pharisee said within himself about the publican.

Luke 18: 11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

The one reproaching is a sinner just like the one he reproaches. Therefore, reproaching another simply condemns the very one doing the reproaching.

Romans 2: 1: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2: But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

Like Elizabeth, we are all incapable of producing spiritual fruit by nature. That is true before and after we are born-again of God. We only produced dead fruit while dead in sin because it all came from a sinful, depraved heart so it was done with legal motives.

Romans 6: 21: What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death.

We have no reason to reproach anyone, and to boast in self by doing so, because Christ produces all spiritual fruit.

Romans 7: 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5: For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

Philippians 1: 11: Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

But since Elizabeth was barren, others reproached her. Don't you know Elizabeth was already heartbroken that she was barren? Don't you know she had wept so many times over this? Yet, cruel, sinful men and women reproached, scorned her, because of something she had no ability to change. When the Lord chastens his child we are already heartbroken. But sinful men take delight to speak about to others and to reproach. Reproach is so painful to bear. Listen to the psalmist.

Psalms 42: 10: *As* with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where *is* thy God? [reproach cuts down deep into God's saints. But if you are reproached do as the psalmist] 11: Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

For those God everlastingly loves in Christ, for those Christ justified by his own blood, for those in whom Christ dwells, Christ is the health of our souls, which is the health of our demeanor, our countenance.

Remember this. Though men reproach us, the Lord will bless it to the heart of his child so we know it is the Lord who is dealing with us. When God's saints in Israel began to think they were self-sufficient, the Lord used whole nations to correct them. But the Lord made each of his saints know, personally, that the Lord did it. And the Lord healed them so that they praised him. The Lord did that for each one in particular.

One, the Lord will makes us know that no man pleads our cause and we cannot plead our own cause ourselves. It is better not to try to defend yourself when reproached. Trust the Lord. This is what the Lord said to Israel and this is what he says to us individually:

Jeremiah 30: 13: There is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up; thou hast no healing medicines. 14: All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not.

Two, the Lord will make his child to know this is the loving hand of our Father who is correcting us to keep us looking to him alone (Jer 30: 10-17). The Lord renews us to remember that he alone is the health of our soul. He promises,

Jeremiah 30:17: For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, *saying*, This *is* Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

Jeremiah 33: 6 Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

Christ is Peace and Truth and he heals us by revealing he is Peace and Truth for us. He heals our souls by renewing his child to remember that Christ has put away all our sin. If it is sin that men reproach you for, the good news is that Christ has already put that sin away for each of God's elect through his blood on the cross. He will cleanse our conscious and keep us knowing Christ alone is our standing with God. Thus Christ brings us to praise him.

Jeremiah 33: 8: And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. 9: And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

THE LORD ALONE SAVES FROM REPROACH

Only Christ heals and saves his people from reproach, like as Christ has done in saving us from sin, death and hell. For the sake of his people, the Son of God took flesh and blood like his people and he bore reproach as he saved us from our sins. Our Substitute bore reproach more than any man ever! Therefore, we can be sure he will save us from the reproach of men. Hear Christ speak.

Psalm 22: 6: But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7: All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, 8: He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

Psalm 69: 6: Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. 7: Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. 8: I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. 9: For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

If they reproached the innocent, perfect GodMan then you can be sure they will reproach you and me. No matter what our Savior did self-righteous men reproached him.

Psalm 69: 10: When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach. 11: I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. 12: They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards. 13: But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O LORD, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

Let's consider an example. One of our Savior's first sermons declared that God our Father saves whom he will and passes by whom he will. They reproached him and would have thrown him off a mountain.

Luke 4: 25: But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26: But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow. [he passed by many Israelite widows and saved one Gentile widow] 27: And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. [he passed by many lepers in Israel and saved one who was a Gentile. What was their response to this message?] 28: And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29: And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30: But he passing through the midst of them went his way...

He preached all are sinners and blind by nature. Christ preached that Christ alone gives sight and puts away the sin of his people. The Pharisee's reproached him, saying, "Are we blind also?" If we preach that Christ alone is able to quicken and make a sinner see and know Christ then we will receive the same reproach.

He preached that he is God. Christ declared to the Pharisees they believed not because they were not his sheep. He never gave them faith because they were not his people. Christ declared that he makes his sheep hear him and we follow him and no man shall pluck them out of my Father's hand nor out of my hand—"I and my Father are one." How did they respond?

John 10: 31: Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32: Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33: The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

We can expect the same reproach if we preach the same message that declares Christ is God and saves whom he will. But our Savior has taken away the shame and reproach of our sin in the sight of God—because he is our Righteousness. Then after saving his people on the cross, Christ comes through the gospel and produces life in us like he made Elizabeth have a child. By using us to preach Christ, he produces more living spiritual fruit—children of God—through the gospel. So now he says to his saints

Isaiah 54: 1: Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD....4: Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the REPROACH of thy widowhood any more. 5: For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

COMMIT YOUR CAUSE TO CHRIST

Our Savior committed his cause to God his Father when he was reproached. Let us do the same by committing our cause to Christ our God and our Savior. This is what Christ did when he was reproached by men. He committed it all to God his Father.

Psalms 69: 14: Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters...18: Draw nigh unto my soul, *and* redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. 19: Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee. 20: Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none. 21: They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

God the Father delivered our Savior from his suffering. Christ shall do the same for each one he redeemed. This is what the LORD will do for his people for the sake of Christ.

Zephaniah 3:17: The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. 18: I will gather *them that are* sorrowful for the solemn assembly *who* are of thee, *to whom* the reproach of it *was* a burden. 19: Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. 20:...saith the LORD.

Brethren, if we sin before this world then we will certainly bring reproach upon ourselves. Try to avoid it. As Nehemiah said, “Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies.” (Ne 5: 9). As Paul told Titus we do not want the doctrine of our Savior to be blasphemed by our sin.

But do not be surprised when you are reproached. The world will reproach us because we believe on Christ, even when they do not behold us sin. The self-righteous reproached our Savior and he was perfect. The unregenerate will reproach us because we trust Christ and give him all glory. Reproach will come because we declare God the Father chose whom he will, not by man’s will. Self-made religion will reproach us because we declare righteousness is Christ alone, not by our works. Holiness is Christ, not by our works. They will reproach us because we declare the new birth is by the Holy Spirit, not by us. We will be reproached us because we give all glory to God and none to man.

But the power of our Lord has made us willing to be identified with Christ and his people even though we know we shall be reproached. The same grace of God made Moses willing to suffer reproach for the sake of Christ.

Hebrews 11: 24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25: Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26: Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Christ is that reward! So we go to Christ and are willing to bear reproach for his name's sake. But when reproached we go to Christ and trust Christ to save us even as he has saved us from all our sins.

Hebrews 13: 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14: For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15: By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name...

And so we continue doing good as Christ gives us grace and power to follow him. These good works are acceptable to God in Christ, by Christ making all our works perfectly righteous and holy in himself. Therefore, God is pleased with them.

1 Peter 4: 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Brethren, never reproach anyone. But especially never reproach another brother or sister for whom Christ died, who Christ justified. Even if a brother falls terribly, still give them the benefit of the doubt that they are Christ's. Never speak doubtfully or shamefully of your brethren to anyone, even if they have sinned. Never even give ear to it from others. Instead, go to the Lord and pray for them. Go to their side and help them look to Christ

Romans 15: 1: We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2: Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. 3: For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 4: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 5: Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6: That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen!