

Job 15:8

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[0 : 0 0] Job chapter 15 we read in verse 8 Hast thou heard the secret of God and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself Hast thou heard the secret of God and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself well the most obvious question tonight with regard to this verse is what is this, this secret of God how do I know if I heard it, if it is a secret let alone restrain wisdom to myself what is meant by the secret of God well it's a phrase which is used various times in scripture but there's a certain consistency about how it is used in Proverbs chapter 3 read in verses 31 and 32 Envy thou not the oppressor and choose none of his ways for the flower is abomination to the Lord but his secret is with the righteous his secret is with the righteous the righteous and then we look in Job again chapter 29 we see in verse 4 as I was in the days of my youth

Job is saying when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle the secret of God was upon my tabernacle now what's the context of that verse every text is a context so we see in chapter 29 read the first eight verses moreover Job continues Job continues Paragon said oh that I were as in months past as in the days when God preserved me when his candles shined upon my head and when by his light I walked through darkness as I was in the days of my youth when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle when the almighty was yet with me when my children were about me when I washed my steps with butter and the rock poured me out rivers of oil when I went out to the gate through the city when I prepared my seat in the street the young men saw me and hid themselves and the age of the roads and stood up the princes refrained talking and laid their hand on their mouth and so on now what is Job describing there he's describing a situation that he remembers and the context there is about his relationship with the Lord when the Lord was blessing him he was giving honour to the Lord as far as he was able and God was honouring him and he was receiving God's blessing we might even go further and there's perhaps a little hint you know verse 3 of chapter 29 when his candle shined upon my head now we think of a candle we think of the little sort of oval tongue of fire that's at the top of a candle when it's lit and remember that when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples at the time of Pentecost it said that there was a noise from heaven like a rushing mighty wind and then there appeared as it were cloven tongues of fire that settled upon the heads of each of them settled upon them and is this something that Job is thinking at the presence of God's Spirit with it when his candle shined upon my head and when by his light

I walked through darkness when God's Spirit perhaps enlightened his way at any rate certainly he's talking about a time when he walked with God and God in that sense if you can say it rememberly walked with him and God was honouring him and he was receiving God's blessing as I was in the days of my youth when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle and if we turn up and read in Psalm 25 we see at verse 14 for example the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him now previously in Proverbs it said you know that he resists the power but the secret of the Lord is with the righteous now of course nobody is righteous in and of themselves we only have one righteousness and that's the Lord our righteousness for those who fear the Lord and know that he alone is righteous they're in that sense walking in his righteousness the secret of the Lord Psalm 25 verse 14 is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant he will in other words reveal that which is the nature of his relationship in the covenant covenant of grace what is the the context again of this verse 14 well we go back to for example verse 8 good and upright is the Lord therefore will he teach sinners in the way the meek will he guide in judgment and the meek will he teach his way all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies for thy name's sake

O Lord pardon my iniquity for it is great what man is he that fear the Lord him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose his soul shall dwell at ease his seed shall inherit the earth the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant mine eyes are ever toward the Lord for he shall pluck my feet out of the net turn ye unto me and have mercy upon me for I am desolate and afflicted the troubles of my heart are enlarged O bring thou me out of my distresses look upon my affliction and my pain and forgive all my sins now this section you read there in Psalm 25 it's about judgment and consciousness of sin of mercy and of meekness and the forgiveness of sin which the sinner is only too aware of and his reference again there in verse 10 of Psalm 25 to his covenant and his testimonies and these are the things part of what is revealed he will show them his covenant the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him even though they are clearly walking to an extent in ways that are at times sinful and they're conscious of their own sin they're conscious of being taken in the net as it were of their own sin but they cry to the Lord to deliver them this is about judgment and mercy this is about the meekness the mercy the forgiveness which the sinner needs and which he's only too well aware of we look also chapter 27 of Psalm

Psalm 27 and verse 5 for example for in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me he shall set me up upon a rock and in chapter 31 and verse 20 thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strike of time tabernacle means a tent a tent which as we know is maybe a shelter from the work of the elements but it is not all that strong a protection if you're really wanting protection you'd want a strong tower you'd want solid walls a tent a pavilion wouldn't be exactly the strongest of protection and the safest hiding place in other words this cannot be a literal hiding in a physical tabernacle rather this is illustrative language it is we might say you know symbolic almost but it's not an instead of symbol as opposed to reality but it is poetic language to describe something deeper than a mere physical hiding it's more akin to the relationship verses already quoted from John and from

[7 : 27] Psalm 25 and if it cannot be a mere physical literal meaning then it must be something more spiritual if it's not physical and tangible then it must have a more spiritual meaning and we'd have to ask that if the sinner is being hidden in God's pavilion in the secret of his tabernacle of his pavilion whereby he is kept and hidden is that what makes it a secret is that what makes it so secret that the person sins are hidden away and if it is a secret you might say why is what God is doing if it is a secret why is it a more secret I mean Jesus himself said John 18 in verses 19 to 21 we read a high priest a high priest asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine Jesus answered him I speak openly to the world I have taught in the synagogue and in the temple whether the Jews always resort and in secret have I said nothing why askest thou me ask them which heard me what I have said unto them behold they know what I said they know what I said we'll ask ourselves is that the case with us do we know what Jesus has said hast thou heard the secret of God and hast thou restrained wisdom to thyself have we understood have you understood has the

Lord awakened you by his spirit that we may have heard the words that are uttered lots of people can sit under the sound of the gospel they can hear exposition of God's word they can read God's word they can sing God's word but as we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 14 but the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned this you see is the big difference between those who know the Lord and those who merely know of him the unconverted listener may content himself or herself with a form of godliness but denying the power thereof such may be inwardly secretly offended if there are those perhaps younger in their church experience or the exposure to the gospel or to the word who perhaps with less head knowledge of scriptural truths or as it were may bypass and overtake those who have been sitting under it for a lot longer now when these become transformed with Christ and filled with his love and zeal might not the voice of outward religion say as we read here verses 9 and 10 in our chapter joshua 15 what knowest thou that we know not what understandest thou which is not in us with us both the grey headed and very aged men much held on the late father who do you think you are we've been doing this for years we've been sitting under this side of the gospel for years we've got knowledge in our heads we've got the experience we've got those we run along with those we ourselves have known old grey headed men a great experience who are you to think you're better than them who are you to think you're better than us well of course the converted sinner does not think they're better than anyone they're just very thankful what Christ has done for them they know it's not about them it's all about him it's this part of the secret of the

Lord when these become transformed with Christ and filled with his love and zeal that is not a work of themselves it's something somebody has done and somebody has done not merely in their outward walk because their outward walk may be no different from those who are outwardly walking perfectly respectably and have been sitting under the sound and knowledge of the things of God for years so outwardly there's not a lot of difference in the outward walk but something has changed within something has changed in the secret place where the Lord works as if not to condemn that perfectly respectable behaviour or indeed the unconverted or whatever listening to the word of God that's what everybody wants everybody wants as much as possible of the unconverted to hear God's word to sit under to be in God's house everybody wants sinners to be conforming at least their outward lives at the very least to the feet of the Lord and to obedience to his words nothing wrong with any of that it's good and healthy but there is so much more to be discovered and delighted in it's like if somebody gives you a packet of your favourite biscuits and there's all the pictures of them on the outside and look fantastic and put them away in the cupboard and then somebody says oh I love these biscuits you know oh yes look

I've got them here in the cupboard and you take them out there's the packet still as lovely as ever and then you put it away again and you don't eat them and you don't get the good of them and you don't get the nourishment and the enjoyment but there they are in the packet they're there they're looking as beautiful as ever eventually of course the cell by day goes past and if you finally do open them up they don't taste the half as good as you thought they would because they've been allowed just to go off allowed to go moldy allowed to go dry allowed to go past their date stale and we do get to a stage sometimes where we have just had for so long the good things have been right in front of us but we just haven't partaken and by the time we do and it may even be a deathbed conversion or whatever and that may be a deathbed conversion just as much saving as something some of you saving the days of their youth but the taste whilst a great relief will be nothing like as sweet and nothing like as fresh it will be filled with regret not for the salvation that has been won but with all the years it might have been and all the joy in the

Lord that has been passed by and missed and all the opportunities to serve the Lord that have not been taken the biscuits may have the food may have its same nutrients and same ingredients but there's a stableness to it now as opposed to a sweetness and freshness which would have made it so much more enjoyable to have exactly the same composition will be in the packet will be exactly the same but it's no longer the freshness and the sweetness that once it was there is so much more to be discovered and delighted in with the Lord than nearly outward conformity to a certain kind of lifestyle that conformity to what God says in his word the fear of the Lord the law of the Lord it's all good it's all correct and right and everybody should be doing it but it's not all there is the outward packaging is not the whole story there is an inward nourishment and joy and sweetness which the

[14 : 51] Lord desires us to be able to avail ourselves of now for example somebody were to under take cycling you know cycling can be a lot of fresh air and exercise with cycling and of course every summer we see the roads absolutely choked with cyclists up and down the Clicham and all over the roads and so on and it's a good healthy activity and it gives you great mobility and cover great distances and so on but if you saw somebody who was cycling on the main road in the height of summer or up and down the Clicham or the last cycle whatever and there they were cycling away with all their high-vis gear and all their light driving everything else but they had stabilisers on their bike and you would think well quiet now but they're sitting on the road going up and down the hills and coming here to say if there's no good stabilisers what would it mean?

It would mean they were still learning they're still learning how to ride a bike if not truly learned how to ride they can't do without the stabilisers and stabilisers are great when you're lying they're fine for small children for those who are not yet confident about how to ride a bicycle people say about it well it's just like riding a bike and what they mean is that once you've learned how to do it in a sense you never lose it but until you've learned how to do it you watch some young person child who's just learning from the first they're wobbling all over the place and then they come crashing down they're always going to keep crashing down until they get ahead of it doesn't matter how many times you hold the saddle how many times you run alongside them they're going to fall off sometimes stabilisers are a great help you can't go and stabilisers forever the beauty and the freedom of cycling means you're going to surpass them you don't go past them in a sense the law of the law the regulations and the requirements they're like stabilisers they're there to sort of get you in the right tram lines get you in the straight line while you're still learning and once you learn how to cycle it doesn't mean oh well

I don't need the stabilisers now I can wobble all over the place however I like all that would show is that you can't ride the bike when you can ride the bike without stabilisation you're going in a straight line you can go up the hills and down the hills you can turn the corners you can do everything without falling off and that's what it's like when we become full grown into the things of the Lord it's not that we throw off the law or the rules and commands of God but rather we don't need to be bound by them because we have Christ the secret of the Lord in our heart which means we can go round the corners up the hills in straight lines without the stabilisers what guides the believer is not commandments and traditions and teachings and statutes and so on it's Christ and for the love of Christ we do the things which perhaps outwardly somebody who's merely conforming to a certain religious practice they might do many of the same things but they do it because they see it as rules or regulations or requirements as stabilisers instead of as the freedom and the liberty and the love or the free cycling road just as the believer when they are completely converted and free in Christ they are uncited by laws and commandments and so on but still they keep them when Jesus gives the sermon on the mount he's not saying oh yeah forget about the Lord just do your own thing he says think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets

I have not come to destroy but to fulfill for until heaven and earth pass away one job or one tittle shall no wise pass from the law to all be fulfilled and if we were to go on these verses 11 to 13 then in Job 15 here we say are the consolations of God small with thee is there any secret thing with thee why did thine heart carry thee away what do thy eyes wink at that thou turnest thy spirit against God and let us such words go out of thy mouth we could say well is that not how we are if we're just bound by regulation and law are we are we not professing as we ought to be are we not living as we ought to be or perhaps there can be almost as much constraint if we have been changed in our heart but we haven't expressed it outwardly that's almost as tight and restrictive a place as is the law and commandments without Christ in the heart then we're just following the rules and we're just got the stabilizers and it's kind of dead practice but to know the secret of the

Lord and Christ in the heart and to be longing to burst out of that into the freedom that is in Christ alone and not quite having the courage to do it or profess without worry yes we're still hidden in the tent as it were the flaps are still tied we're in the secret place in the pavilion but we're not coming out as it were into the sunshine they know in every branch of Christ's church there are those who ought to be professing ought to be free in Christ ought to be going up under the fullness of it and are not or not yet and yet one reason that might hold them back is what we see in these verses 14 to 16 because this is the truth of what man is like what is man that he should be clean and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous behold he putteth no trust in his saints here the heavens are not clean in his sight that's in God's sight how much more abominable and filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water and that is a true description you know when the devil says to us you can't possibly be a true

[20 : 38] Christian you can't possibly belong to the Lord look how sinful you are look how bad you are look what a mess you make of it every day of your life and you see when the great accuser of the Lord shall whisper this in you although he's the father of lies he doesn't need to lie because all of that is true we do make a mess of it we do follow we do stumble we do fail so often we are not saved because we are righteous we're saved because Christ is our righteousness we're not saved because we're good but because Christ is perfect but this is an accurate description of the ingrained filth of the human heart if anything it should show to man the impossibility of being saved by any other means than a perfect righteous God the propensity for dark and evil thoughts and desires not perhaps outward actions because the fear of man is a powerful disincentive to much public evil and people who might not restrain themselves from doing evil things because of the fear of the Lord they might certainly restrain themselves because the fear of what their neighbours will say are being gossiped about so the fear of man can be a powerful constraint but sin the fact of the consequences of separation from God you know just like when we think

God doesn't see if you're away from home sometimes people do things they would never do in their own home and environment it's just like a little child to an extent you know if a little child is shy and maybe they cover over their head with their jacket or their coat or with a blanket or something and their lower body and their wee legs are still sticking out but they think you can't see them because they can't see you they cover over their head and their eyes and they can't see you and they think because they can't see you you can't see that and they're all still perfectly visible and that's what sometimes what we're a bit like with God we think well we can't see God so that means God can't see us he can't see what I do if I do it in my own home environment God can see that but if I'm away from home and I'm walking and I'm throwing off on his feet that God can't see what I'm doing there yes he can he sees everything all the time separation from God is in the heart it's not a physical thing and it would leave us indeed abominable and filthy with a capacity for iniquity which as we see in verse 16 is like a raging thirst which must be satiated and yet is never fulfilled he drinketh iniquity like water it's like somebody in a boat at sea and they're thirsty as they start scooping up the sea water to drink that's not going to quench their thirst that's going to make it worse that's going to drive them mad the dehydration that will set in in their body and within them is going to become completely fatal to them and the more they drink the sea water the worse it's going to get and this is what drinketh iniquity like water seeking to be satisfied but it's just killing you it's just destroying you more and more that's what iniquity does when we drink it up like water then why should

God take note of man what is man that he should be clean he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous or that God should ever notice him at all we should start with the fact we must start with the fact and then go on to the reason you know we think what is man that God should take notice of why should God notice man in any way we've got to start with the fact then we can go on to the reason why should God take note of sin ridden creatures like us who despise his mercies and his benefits we who deny him in a hundred ways every week who are of the stock and the seed of those who slew the prophets that is the Jews or who killed the son of God that is the Gentiles because remember it was the Romans that put him to death on the cross and martyred so many of his saints but as we said let's begin with the fact and then go on to the reasons if we can we can begin with a stark and undeniable fact that he does care he does take note of mankind he does want to deliver and to save

Psalms 8 remember we read there verses 3 to 5 when I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers the moon and the stars which thou hast obtained what is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him well thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour and when we think of what you know both Mary and then Zacharias say in Luke chapter 1 you know Mary said my soul doth magnify the Lord my spirit doth rejoice in thee O my saviour but he hath regarded the lowest state of his army for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed and yes you get a unique position to fulfil but every saint who is saved by the Lord is blessed for he that is mighty hath done to me great things and holy is his name his mercies on them that fear him from generation to generation he hath showed strength with his arm he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts he hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree he hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath set empty away he hath opened his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spake to our fathers to Abram and to his seed forever these are things

God has done not all we hope eventually he will do but may he is praising on the fact of what God has done and then you get Zacharias towards the end of that chapter from verse 68 blessed be the Lord God of Israel he hath visited and redeemed his people he hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house in the house of his servant David as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began again that he has been consistent with his word before that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us to perform the mercy promised to our fathers to remember his holy covenant the oath which he swore to our father Abraham and he would grant unto us that we be delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before all the days of our wrath and so on these are all things God has done but why has he done why would he want to do them what is man that he should be clean he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous well man should be clean because he was made by God in the image of God for fellowship with God as the God had his fellowship within himself man was made for this fellowship and to glorify his maker and enjoy him forever this is what man is that he should be clean that's why he should be clean that's why the Lord should take notice of him and does take notice of him and it is also why the Lord has never given up on mankind

[28 : 02] Galatians 4 we read that when the fullness of time was come God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons and because your sons God has sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts crying Abba the Father as we've said so many times before of course this isn't a sort of gender specific thing it's not just boys that get saved we all become honorary sons because sons inherit in the law sons inherit so we all become honorary sons in the same way as you know the house of lords for example nowadays is absolutely stuffed chock-a-block with people who haven't got the least nobility or birth or blood or blue blood or whatever it was traditionally in their veins they're not descended from Viscount so and so or the duke or whatever it is it's stuffed full of people who've just recreated Lord this or Lord that or lady the next thing and who began their life as perfectly ordinary people in perfectly ordinary jobs and they've just been given a title and the title they've been given means that they are no less members of the house of lords or members of the nobility than the 27th duke of somebody or other it doesn't matter they have been ennobled they have been given that status even though some you could say were noble born and others have just been created in the last 10 years or 5 years or 2 years it doesn't matter their status is exactly the same so it doesn't matter whether we are born physically sons or born daughters or whatever we're given the status of those ennobled those who inherit and by this spirit

God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts crying Abba Father enabled to recognize God as our father by this spirit we come to him and by none else it must be his own spirit that calls us and brings us because it cannot be any other no other spirit can call you to God no other spirit can send you to God if you invite somebody to dinner invite somebody for a meal you can only invite them really to your own house or maybe to a restaurant or place where you're treating them you can only invite them to your home you can't say let's all go and have dinner at so and so's house or I'd like to invite you to dinner at my next door without telling them you can't invite somebody else's house you can't invite yourself to a different place that they haven't called you to you can only invite to what is your own you can only invite somebody your home for dinner or to dinner that you are preparing or to a treat that you are standing in a hotel or wherever it might be but it's your event that they are being invited and you can't invite yourself or others to somebody else's event you can't just say oh there's a wedding one in the next parish or whatever why don't you go to that

I'll invite you to it or I'll go too if you haven't you might be politely tolerated for a while but eventually you don't belong you're not an invited guest much less you want a family in John 3 verse 27 Jesus says a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven if we are going to be called or invited to be the Lord called or invited to heaven to follow him it must have come from heaven that invitation because we somebody else is somebody else's address it's like John the Baptist says he must increase but I must decrease the self must decrease but Christ must be glorified John 6 verse 65 therefore said I unto you that no man can come to me except it were given unto him of my father but the father does call for the spirit and the bride say come that's what we read in

Revelation the very last chapter in the Bible verse 17 chapter 22 the spirit and the bride say come and let him that he say come and let him that is a thirst come and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely if you invite to a wedding it's the bride that invites you well you know well and truly you've got a right to be there there's your invitation there's her signature at the bottom the bride has invited you to her wedding you've got a right to be there and the spirit is the one that moves that invitation but do we hear that invitation hast thou heard the secret of God and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself the feet of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom this thou restrain wisdom to thyself keep it not to yourself declare it own it publish it abroad make it so much a part of you that you can no more let go of it than cease breathe it that your life be bound up with that of Christ let this be common knowledge let it be something you profess let it be something you live out so it's not a secret you know when I was just at the stage of leaving primary school boys and girls weren't quite of at ease with each other and hadn't quite gotten into the stage of being okay to fancy somebody else if somebody said to you primary six or seven oh so and so fancies that person and if they said no no I don't then of course it just became gossip it just became a source of teasing but supposing they were able to say with confidence and brazenness yeah I do yeah I can't take my eyes off of course

I fancy them then okay it might be laughter for a moment but news would soon die down if you own it if you acknowledge it and say yes of course I love the Lord of course I miss of course I declare well I profess it open it's not a secret and it stops being something you can be attacked for if you open it and if you try and say no no no I'm not that no no I would never do that I'm trying to fit in with the world I'm trying to walk both sides of the line you can't do that similarly you have to either firm or deny you can't keep it to yourself your life is bound up with that of Christ let this be common knowledge and yet let there be one thing that is hidden that is the sense you like your old life for it is no more you that live it for the believer has died to self Colossians chapter 3 verse 3 for you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God there I would suggest to you is the ultimate secrecy the ultimate hiding within of the pavilion of his life his flesh his reality his power his righteousness your life is no more your own your life is no more self centered and open about these things it is hidden it is hidden now in the pavilion of his life of his righteousness ye are dead and your life is hid with

[35 : 25] Christ in God the ultimate secret you might say hast thou heard hast thou received the secret of God let us pray