

Let Him Who Boasts

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 July 2007

Preacher: Paul Martin

[0:00] Jeremiah 8, beginning in verse 18. I mourn and horror grips me.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people? Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears.

I would weep day and night for the slain of my people. Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers so that I might leave my people and go away from them. For they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people.

They make ready their tongue like a bow to shoot lies. It is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another. They do not acknowledge me, declares the Lord.

Beware of your friends. Do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver and every friend a slanderer. Friend deceives friend and no one speaks the truth.

[1:25] They have taught their tongues to lie. They weary themselves with sinning. You live in the midst of deception. In their deceit, they refuse to acknowledge me, declares the Lord.

Therefore, this is what the Lord Almighty says. See, I will refine and test them. For what else can I do? Because of the sin of my people. Their tongue is a deadly arrow.

It speaks with deceit. With his mouth, each speaks cordially to his neighbor. But in his heart, he sets a trap for him. Should I not punish them for this, declares the Lord?

Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this? I will weep and wail for the mountains and take up a lament concerning the deep pastures. They are desolate and untraveled.

And the lowing of cattle is not heard. The birds of the air have fled and the animals are gone. I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there.

[2:26] What man is wise enough to understand this? Who has been instructed by the Lord and can explain it? Why has the land been ruined and laid waste like a desert that no one can cross?

The Lord said, It is because they have forsaken my law which I set before them. They have not obeyed me or followed my law. Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts.

They have followed the bales as their fathers taught them. Therefore, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says. See, I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water.

I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will pursue them with the sword until I have destroyed them. This is what the Lord Almighty says.

Consider now, call for the wailing women to come. Send for the most skillful of them. Let them come quickly and wail over us till our eyes overflow with tears and water streams from our eyelids.

[3:22] The sound of wailing is heard from Zion. How ruined we are! How great is our shame! We must leave our land because our houses are in ruin. Now, O women, hear the word of the Lord.

Open your ears to the words of His mouth. Teach your daughters how to wail. Teach one another a lament. Death has climbed in through our windows and has entered our fortresses.

It has cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the public squares. Say, this is what the Lord declares. The dead bodies of men will lie like refuse on the open field, like cut grain behind the reaper with no one to gather them.

This is what the Lord says. Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth.

For in these I delight, declares the Lord. The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh, Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all who live in the desert and distant places.

[4:41] For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart. Well, I do want to bring you greetings from Grace Fellowship Church North in Toronto.

Thank you for your prayers on our behalf. I know you pray for us, and we pray for you regularly as well, and praise God for what he continues to do as the gospel goes forth in Toronto and here in Bremen.

We are giving thanks to God with you for that new structure to my right. I took a tour on Thursday. No one invited me. I just decided to, so I snuck around and looked around.

It is very nice. And we give thanks to God for his good provision to you, and I can see that you need that space and look forward to that space filling up and you being faced with the problem of having to build again and again as God continues to bring more and more sinners to himself and brings great glory to himself and to his son, the Lord Jesus.

I also want to just say how humbling it really is for me to come and preach to you. You are fed a regular and steady diet from your Pastor John and Pastor Aaron that in many ways I feel out of place being in your pulpit because you receive the word of God faithfully week by week.

[6:12] I was blessed this morning to sit under Carl's ministry and just be refreshed in my own understanding of faith in God and putting that faith into action. And in many ways, that's precisely what I would like us to think about this morning.

If you have your Bible open there, I'd like you to turn to Jeremiah 9. We have read from really the beginning of this kind of sermon, if you like, or just a statement on Jeremiah's part that begins in chapter 8 and 18 and really continues past chapter 9.

But I would like for us to focus this morning on Jeremiah 9 in those familiar verses in verse 23 and verse 24. Now as you turn there, I want to remind you of what is one of my favorite stories in the Old Testament.

It is found in 2 Chronicles 14 where we read about King Asa. And Asa is faced with the million-man march of the Ethiopians.

He has an army of just over 500,000 men and he's really outnumbered two to one. And he does the right thing as the leader of God's people.

[7:35] He says, help. The same kind of thing you would probably do, hopefully, if you were faced with similar circumstances. And God brings about a remarkable victory.

It's the kind of victory that should never happen because here is an army outnumbered two to one and especially in the way battles were fought in that time, numbers mattered.

If you ran out of guys, you just sent the next bank of guys. Just keep sending people to die until you win. You kill all of them and you may lose a lot of guys in the process. So when you're outnumbered two to one, it's pretty much a given that the other team is going to win.

But God brings about a great victory and the people rejoice in his great deliverance. And Asa brings about great reforms in the nation and spiritual reforms and the worship of God is reestablished for the children of Israel and things are going along swimmingly until near the end of his life when now Israel gains strength and is about to attack.

And Asa doesn't cry out to God, but he cries out to a neighboring nation and says, you break your pact with them. Here's some money. Here's some gold. Here's some silver.

[8:54] Here's some trinkets. You take these things and as a payment, you now go and fight our enemies for us. The Lord has condemning things to say to Asa for that action.

But one of the things he says is, you did right in the past when you depended on me. Oh, Christian, don't you know that experience of time of great crisis in your life when there was nowhere else to go and you cried out to God and you experienced his great deliverance, his great power, his great mercy, his great grace in your life.

But then, perhaps as your own resources increased, another trial comes along and we find ourselves leaning on the things we can see, leaning on the things we can spend, leaning on the things that are tangible rather than he who is intangible and invisible to this naked eye, but not to the eye of faith.

And we do not turn to our God. Kids, I don't know if you're like me. I hope you're not. Because when I was a kid, I was faced with a problem.

One day, I said something to somebody at school that I probably shouldn't have said and I actually don't even remember what it was, but it got him mad.

[10:26] And so the gossip network kicked in and news went out that there was going to be a fight. That's how I found out about it. Someone said, hey, I heard you're fighting this guy.

And I said, I am. And I grew up with four sisters and they were all older than me and you don't learn how to fight when you have four sisters.

And I knew that and I knew that I was going to get beat up. And so I determined that I needed to get out of this fight. In fact, I pled with the guy who was going to beat me up. He was in my class and he said, no, I'm going to beat you up.

And so I, oh, okay. And so after school comes and I thought I'll wait them out. And so I kind of delay and stay at my locker and I'm waiting. And no, they're waiting.

And so I go and I think I'll go out another door and I go down to that door and there's guys waiting there and they're pointing at me and everybody's against me. It's me against the world. And I don't know if it's like this in the Bremen Public Schools or whatever school you're in, but in my school there was the teacher's door.

[11:25] And no one goes in or out of the teacher's door but the teacher's. And so I looked to the right and I looked to the left.

I gulped and I looked down the hallway to the teacher's door and I bolted as fast as I could down the hall, out the door, across the parking lot, up the hill, over the fence, into the field, down the field, never stopped until I got all the way home, closed the door, locked the door, pulled the curtains and sit.

And I was safe. until tomorrow. And I often ask myself now, why on earth didn't I just ask for help? Why didn't I ask a teacher for help? Why didn't I ask a parent for help? Why didn't I ask God for help? In Jeremiah chapter 9, the prophet speaks on behalf of the Lord these words.

Verse 23, Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man boast in his might.

[12:39] Let not the rich man boast in his riches. But let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me.

That I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth.

For in these things I delight, says the Lord. Whether you are a child or whether you are a grown-up, self-trust, self-reliance often runs deep.

You are entangled in some habitual sin. You are overwhelmed with parenting problems. You are anxious over your rapidly shrinking bank balance.

Where do you turn? To whom do you look? Or do you do what we so often do? You bear down. You try harder. You scheme a way out.

[13:49] You manipulate the circumstances through lies or lust or labor. Whatever it is, you don't ask for help. And here, the Lord says to us this day, My son, my daughter, look to me.

Look to me. Depend upon me. Now, Jeremiah, or the Lord, speaking through Jeremiah, begins with three false hopes.

We'll look at those first. And then secondly, we'll look at the one true hope. So I want us to begin by considering the three false hopes listed here by the prophet. You must understand that Jeremiah is writing this when Jerusalem is about to go under siege.

God is bringing the Egyptians, the Babylonians, He's bringing them in so that He might judge His people for their lack of a heart toward Him.

And so, the Lord is speaking through His prophet Jeremiah and He is saying to them, because of your disobedience, war is imminent. Destruction is coming.

[15:00] Bad things are going to happen. And now, Jeremiah, as the prophet of God, pleads on God's behalf with God's people for their repentance.

For a turning of their hearts back to God. And as the prophet speaks, this is what he says. He says, turn to God. This is what is going to happen. Your dead bodies will be spread out like dung on the field.

It will be like the harvest has come and the hay has been cut down but it's just left there to rot.

That's what it will be like for you if you do not turn to me. And so, in the midst of this kind of prophecy, the Lord says these words, Thus says Yahweh, thus says the Lord, let not the wise man boast of or boast in his wisdom.

wisdom. The word for wisdom here, the word for the wise man, is the one who is intelligent.

Sometimes the word even means the one who is crafty.

He's got some smarts. And in the war context in which we find this particular passage, what Jeremiah is really saying is something like this.

[16 : 18] Every army has its intelligence officers. They are the ones that are assigned, coming up with the places that we are going to battle, the timing of certain battles, finding out the resources of the enemy, matching those resources with our own.

It is the responsibility of the intelligence officers to come up with all of this information and then to give it to the commanders and the generals so that they can use the intelligence in the accomplishment of gaining victory in the battle.

And essentially what the Lord is saying here is something like this. don't let your intelligence officers boast in their intelligence.

The word boast here is halal. We get our word hallelujah, praise the Lord. The word boast has the idea of expressing sincere and deep thanks or the finding of satisfaction in something.

And in this context, the word is almost interchangeable with the word trust. boast. That's why I think what we get the greatest sense in our English language about what Jeremiah writes here is something like this.

[17 : 30] Don't let the wise man boast in his wisdom. Don't let him rely on that wisdom. Don't let him find his confidence in his wisdom. There's nothing to put his confidence in.

There's nothing to rely upon. Don't let the intelligence officer put his confidence in his intelligence. Then he goes on, let not the mighty man boast in his might.

Don't let the strong man, the seasoned soldier, the one who has proven his courage by valor on the battlefield. Don't let that drill sergeant, the man with battle scars, the man who says if there's a fight, put me at the front of the line.

Don't let that man boast, that strong man, in his strength. Then he goes on and says, let not the rich man boast in his riches.

A rich man is a person who has significant wealth. Someone who has a lot of stuff. It costs money to run a war.

[18 : 32] The war on terror costs the United States of America something close to 12 billion dollars a month. I can't even, I don't know how many zeros that is.

I stop after a hundred. It's just, it's a lot of zeros. How do you even fathom that much money? And a lot of times, as you read through the history of the world, you see that battles are won or lost on resources.

Somebody runs out of money, you can't buy any more bullets, you can't build any more guns, you lose. In World War II, the Germans, I can't remember the code name, I wish I could, had an operation, a secret operation of producing counterfeit American bills.

counterfeits. And the theory was that by producing these counterfeits in massive amounts, they would secretly get them into the United States markets and system and monetary system and then create inflation as the value of the dollar decreased and became less and less so that the United States could no longer fund the war effort.

It would have worked too. In fact, you can probably look online and you can see how someone discovered these things. They were all dumped in a lake. I think it was in Switzerland, but that's neither here nor there.

[19 : 49] So, here, because we are here, the Lord says this, don't let the wise man, the intelligence officer, boast in his intelligence. Don't let the mighty man, the seasoned soldier, boast in his abilities, put his confidence in his abilities.

And now here, don't let the war financiers, those who are wealthy in Jerusalem, those who are going to fund it, those who are standing around with everyone else and looking at the soldiers over here who have been victorious in battle, and looking at these directors of war efforts in the past who have shown their great strength and intelligence and wisdom, and this guy says, I've got a lot of money and it's a lot to lose, so I'm willing to spend much of my money in order for you to come up with a plan and you to make it happen.

And God looks upon those residents of Jerusalem and he says to them, don't put your confidence in your intelligence officers, don't put your confidence in your seasoned soldiers, don't put your confidence in your war financiers or in your cash flow.

Apparently, the people of Judah had good reason to put their confidence in those people. It's more than blind optimism.

Kids, do you know what blind optimism is? Well, I don't understand American sports, but I understand the Canadian sport, which is hockey. You call it ice hockey, we just call it hockey, because there is no other hockey.

[21 : 15] I don't know why you call it ice hockey, but we call it hockey. Blind optimism is when you are a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs. I was one the last time the Toronto Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup.

One. Now I am 41, which means 40 years have passed without a victory. And for some strange reason, at the start, at the end of every season, I go, that's it.

I'm not a fan. I'm not watching. I don't care about hockey. It is a useless sport. It's all about money. And then the first game comes and I'm glued. Because I think, well, maybe this year.

I've waited 40. Maybe it'll be 42, 41. That's blind optimism. It's never going to happen. Now, some people in Jerusalem might have a certain blind optimism about something, but my understanding of this time in Jerusalem's history is that it's not that way.

That people can look around and say, we've got the money. We've got the warriors. We've got the intelligence. We're going to be fine. And so when Jeremiah comes along and he says, you are going to be destroyed.

[22 : 26] Babylon is coming. People look at him and go, you're nuts. And if they come, we're fine. We've been here before. We'll be fine. The wisdom and the might and the riches, they were all there.

And at this stage in their history, Israel feels a certain confidence as they survey their potential enemies and invaders. They can look and say, we will be fine.

But they forgot the words of Solomon in Proverbs 21, 31. The horse is made ready for the battle.

But the victory belongs to who?

To the Lord. Or as David said to Goliath, the Lord does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hand.

Or as Joshua said when he was old and about to leave this earth to the children of Israel, it was the Lord, your God, who fought for you and gave you these lands.

[23 : 38] It is so easy to forget, isn't it Christian? So easy to forget that it is the Lord. So where is your boasting?

Where is your confidence? Where does your hope lie? Where is your trust? And I don't want the Sunday school answer. I want you to think for a moment about your life and to just rewind the tape a little bit, even this last week, and consider when the crisis came, when the temptation came, when the trial came, where was your hope?

Where was your confidence? Upon what did you rely? Was it an instantaneous turning to God and crying out for help, for deliverance, or was it looking to your television, or your money, or your spouse, or your stuff?

We are tempted over and over again to rely on our smarts, to depend on our stuff, and our own strength for getting us out of the trials we are in.

Aren't you tempted sometimes to run from obvious weakness, and to assemble all your resources?

I mean, that's typically how we respond, and I don't know where that saying comes, because it doesn't make any sense to me, pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps.

[25 : 18] I'm not sure I understand what that means, like, to do that, but I understand what the saying means. It means that's, you know, you're a self-made man, you're a person who takes care of things, you provide for your family, and so within America, especially, and it's part of what I love about America, and a little bit in Canada, too, we're just a little more socialized, so we don't have it as much.

Go ahead and make fun of me if you want, but there it is, and there's this sense that we are to do these things on our own. If there's a problem, we've got to just find a way to do it, and we've got to work things out, and we do not see that as Christians, it's not that we're to be passive, you know, nothings that just wait for God to zap us with the life or something, but rather, we are to look to God as our source of strength.

We're not to be pulling ourselves up. We are to be responsible and to do what the Lord says in His Word. We are to obey all of His holy commands, and we're to do them to His glory, and with great joy.

But when trials come, and when difficulties come, and when we are tempted to look around at our resources, at our intelligence, at our wisdom, at our strength, be it physical or be it just allegorical, that is the moment when we turn away from those false hopes, and we look now secondly to the one true hope for all mankind.

And we see it in verse 24. Don't boast in these things, says the Lord, but let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am, I am, who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things, steadfast love, righteousness, and justice, in these things, I delight, says the Lord.

[27:27] Jeremiah says, here is your one true hope, that you understand, the word understand means to have insight into, to comprehend something.

Here is a definition of the word in the Hebrew that I love, it says this, to understand is the process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts to come to a conclusion.

It is the process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts to come to a conclusion. So if you have five children, and some of them need to go to swimming, and others need to go to a friend's house, and some need to get to ballet, you have a complex arrangement of thoughts that need to be thought through in order to come to a conclusion that Johnny goes here, and Jimmy goes to ballet, no, Susie goes to ballet, and Jimmy goes over here to friend's house, and we'll drive this way on this time, and we'll get everybody where they need to be, whoo, done, feeling good.

It is a complex arrangement of thoughts, and so here, Jeremiah and the Lord use this word, let him who boasts, boast in this, the one who has a confidence, the one who is going to rely on something, let him rely, let him boast in this, that he understands, understands me.

It is no mark of godliness to say, who can understand god? I mean, at one level, it can be.

[29:07] There are certain aspects of god's complete transcendence, aspects of his holiness, and eternality, and his greatness, that we cannot fully plumb the depths of.

But we cannot emphasize god's transcendence at the expense of his imminence, that the fact that god is near, and that this same god who is great, and holy, and gracious, and eternal, and powerful, and mighty, says, call me Abba, incarnates in his son himself.

So here is god the son, who is one of us, in a human form, he is truly man, and yet truly god, he is imminent, he is close with us, he understands us, he made us, and he desires relationship with his people.

And so it is no badge of honor to say, you know what, I give up, I can't understand god. God can be understood. That's precisely what the Lord says here. If you're going to boast in something, boast in this, that you understand me, that you have thought through the complex arrangement of me, and come to conclusions about me.

And from where do we do this, but from his word. We look to god's word, and we read it, and we have that refining aspect of god's word changing us, and changing our understanding of who god is, because all of us are born idolaters.

[30:41] All of us are born with misconceptions about god. And we spend a lifetime as Christians, having our minds washed by the word, and our categories of thinking altered.

I'm not saying we're brainwashed. I don't want you to hear that. But what I am saying is that our whole understanding, we have to learn to ask the right questions about god. And we find that all the right answers are here in the book.

And as we read the book, we come to right conclusions about who god is, and how god acts, and what god does, and what god desires. Of course, god is complex.

But god is not illogical. He is not irrational. He's not impossible. He's not a jigsaw puzzle with pieces that don't match. And if the pieces don't match in your mind, that means you're not understanding the piece right.

And so you go back to his word. And friend, there's big pieces in my mind that don't fit yet. They don't think that any one of us has come to the perfect conclusions about god, and yet he's given us his word, and he desires for us to understand him.

[31:55] Do you see what Jeremiah says? Don't boast in your physical resources, but boast in your understanding of god. And that understanding, it seems to me, that that pondering of god then leads to the knowing of god.

For this is what he says. Let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me. And you know that word in the Hebrew means intimate knowledge. Adam knew his wife Eve, and they

gave birth to a child, a son.

It speaks of relational intimacy, of true knowledge, of a oneness. And so this is to be the Christian's boast. Boast in this, that you've thought and considered your god, and you understand your god. And from this understanding comes relationship with this god. I understand him. And I know him. Boast in this.

Be satisfied in this. Rely on this. That you understand and you know your god. Know who? Look what the lord says.

[33:02] Let him who boasts, boast in this, that he understands and knows me. That I am. And your Bible ought to have the words capitalized that come next.

L-O-R-D. Meaning Yahweh. That I am. I am. Kids, you remember back in Exodus chapter 3 when there's a burning bush and a voice comes from the bush that burns but doesn't actually burn. It's just a burning bush but it's not burning up. The voice says, take off your shoes for this is holy ground. And God reveals himself to Moses.

And one of the questions that Moses raises for this deity is he says, well, who should I say sent me? At this point we do not know the name of God.

And God replies to Moses, I am who I am. Yahweh. Tell them I am has sent you.

[34:06] What a name. Not long ago I was in a conversation with someone and he was a young guy and he was trying hard but it really was pathetic. Anyway, he was saying how, you know, the Bible was probably written by a small group of people that got together and maybe just even one man and he sat down and he wrote it all out and I just started to laugh.

And that wasn't very kind and it's not good evangelism but it just struck me as so funny because I thought if you've ever read the Bible, that's about the lamest thing you could ever say. Who in their right mind would come up with this for a name for God?

I am. No, we'd say Bubba or something. I mean, we'd just make up a name. We would think in our human categories. We would never think.

But here as the true God reveals himself, he says, I am. I am eternal. I have no beginning. I have no ending. Just ponder that for a little while, Moses.

And I am. That I am. There is none outside of me. All things exist by the exertion of my own will. I am directing the affairs of all mankind. I am the God who chooses.

[35:13] I am the God who loves. I am the God who gives life. I am. And now Jeremiah reaching back says, this is what the Lord says.

If you're going to boast, don't boast in your military officers and in your soldiers and in your paltry wealth. But boast in this, that you understand and know the I am.

Let this be your confidence. Rely on this God. That's who he is. But what does he do? In Exodus chapter 34, Moses has another meeting with God.

On the mount he goes and God passes by. And as he does, and Moses is hidden in the cleft of the rock, God proclaims to him his name.

Moses asked to see glory. And God says, you will see the parting image of my glory, but I will reveal to you my name.

[36:19] Because his name is his character. And one of the first things God says in his extended name is this.

I am the God of chesed, the God of loving kindness, the God of powerful, faithful love. And the NIV, and I don't want to mock your Bible, but this is one place where the NIV annoys me.

I love it in so many places. But this word chesed, I wish that all of our English Bibles would just be consistent and use the same terms all the time.

And the NIV is one of those Bibles that will use the word love sometimes, mercy other times, faithfulness other times, to translate this one word based on how they understand the context. But it is one of those Hebrew words that is so packed with theological freight that there are no direct English equivalents to carry all that this word says about God in one English word.

So, what does this word mean? God says this, I am the God who practices.

[37:30] I am the God who continually does. I am the God who consistently and constantly exercises chesed, powerful, faithful, loving, keeping of my promises.

If I had to define that word, I would give it that definition. The powerful and faithful and loving keeping of my promises. You see, it doesn't work very good when you put that into English.

It's just too long. I mean, so, I don't know. But I like the ESV. It gives us that steadfast love every time you see that word. But it ought to be a word you just study. Take your strongs, look it up, and just look up every occurrence of the word chesed.

It's all over the Old Testament. David talks about God's chesed as being higher than the stars and deeper than the ocean and as wide as the expanse of the sky. And he relies upon the God of chesed, the God of powerful, faithful, loving, and keeping of His promises.

Be gracious to me, O God of chesed, he says. And those Old Testament authors, they understood the meaning of that word to be speaking about how God can be relied upon.

[38 : 40] That God will keep His word. And so here God says, if you boast, boast in this, that you understand and know me, that I am, I am, who practices powerful, faithful, promise-keeping love towards my people.

And not only that, that I am the God of justice, the God of fairness. I am even-handed. I am equitable. And I am the God of righteousness, the God who does what is right and true.

In other words, God looks upon His people and He says, O people, rely on Me because I am the God who practices the keeping of My covenant.

God has made a covenant with His people. And He has told them, if you obey, you will be blessed. If you do not obey, you will be cursed. Cursing is coming because of disobedience. But just obey! And you will be blessed because I keep My covenant.

And I'm powerful to do it. And I'm faithful to do it. And I do it in love for My people. Do not put your confidence in your smarts, in your stuff.

[39 : 56] Rather, the Lord says, turn to Me. Not your imaginary strengths. Why do we think that, anyway? Why do we think that if we just get enough money in a bank account, we'll be okay?

Just read history. Why do we think that if we're just healthy, it'll be okay? Why do we think if I just look good, it'll be okay?

Why do I think if I can just get this body stronger, then I'll be okay? Okay. Why do we think right at the very end?

For in these things, for in hesed, for in righteousness, for in justice, for in these things, I delight.

Kids, do you know what makes God happy? I mean, as you're a kid, you ask yourself these kinds of questions. What makes Mama happy? Because if Mama happy, I'm happy, right? Well, you should ask that question about God.

[41 : 28] What makes God happy? He tells us right here. Being God. What makes God happy?

Being God. Well, if you try to work that into your own life and you think that I find pleasure in me, does that make me happy?

No, that's all wrong because we're tainted by sin and we're made to reflect God's glory to Him. But God finds pleasure in doing God things. See, God loves the good that He does.

And He loves and He delights in being God. If you love yourself, if you delight in yourself, that's all wrong for a lot of reasons.

Besides sin, you're only an image of the greatest good in the universe and you are a stained and faulty image of that. Sorry to break the news to you. But God, He's the greatest good and for Him to delight in anything less than Himself would be idolatry.

[42 : 36] He would not be God anymore. God is the greatest good. The best thing then that God can do for a sinner is enable that sinner to find pleasure in God. To delight in that which God delights in.

And therefore, you have all these verses in the Old Testament that tell us to do these three things. Practice chesed. Practice righteousness. Practice justice.

And so the very things God says, I delight in doing these things. Many scriptures tell us, Hosea 6.6, for I delight, I desire chesed and not sacrifice the knowledge of God rather than burnt offering.

There's one example. And all through the Old Testament you find these places where we are commanded to do the very things which God says, I delight in doing these things. In the context then of Jeremiah chapter 9, what Jeremiah is saying as he speaks on behalf of the Lord is something like this.

preach to your own heart what it is God loves. This is what my God loves. My God loves to come through for me.

[43 : 47] My God loves to keep His word. My God loves to be fair and just. My God loves to exercise powerful, faithful love for me.

He delights in it. But not when I run to Assyria for help. So again, let me ask you, what enemies surround your soul that tempt you to rely on your own wisdom, your own strength, your own resources, our brother Carl this morning said something like this, is faith, or rather is fear an entry point for faith in God.

I liked that. Fears will come. David feared. In the example we looked at in Sunday school today, David is in Gath. He is feigning madness before the Philistines and he is afraid of his life, losing his life.

And yet that fear was an entry point for faith in God. What are your fears?

Fear of poverty? Of war? Of relational breakdown? Fear of the future? Fear of sickness? What are your temptations?

[45 : 19] Are you tempted to anger? Are you tempted to lust? Are you tempted to envy? To sensuality? To anxiety? To greed? And then when those temptations come, when those fears come, when those enemies threaten, where do you turn?

Are you like the children of Israel saying, hey, we've got the planners over here, we've got the soldiers right here, and I've got the money, everything's going to be fine? Or do you look past the wisdom and the strength and the riches to God?

My confidence is in you, Lord. In the God who is the I Am, who has no beginning and no end. And I shall rely upon you because you are the God who delights in practicing powerful, faithful, promise-keeping love, keeping a new covenant with His children in Christ.

Do you take God at His word? Do you rely on what you know to be true about God? I think at the root of almost all sin is the lie that God is somehow less than He really is.

Go back to Eden. What does the devil say to Eve? God is not trustworthy, Eve, for He knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

[46 : 44] In other words, Satan says this to Eve, you know what? God is like me. Deceptive. He delights in falsehood, not chesed.

He delights in trickery, not justice. He delights in deception, not righteousness. And it strikes me that woven into the seam of every temptation is that same idea that God is not a God of chesed. God is not a God of righteousness. God is not a God of justice. So you had better fix this or endure that or suffer through the other thing on your own and in your own feeble strength.

God is not a God of sin. God is not a God of sin. And yet, just as God brought the Assyrians, the Babylonians against His children Israel, in His amazing grace, He brings trials and difficulties into your life as well in order to pry loose your grip from things that are seen to be held by a hand that is unseen.

And that is the best thing our loving God could ever do for us. Thus says Yahweh, let not the wise man boast in His wisdom.

[48 : 21] Let not the mighty man boast in His might. Let not the rich man boast in His riches. But let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am, I am, the God who practices chesed and righteousness and justice, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

The knowledge of God is the beginning of wisdom. Do you know God at all? Because if you do not know God, then everything I just said sounds like nonsense. If you do not know God, you live for this age.

You rely on these things. You depend on this strength. might I urge you to turn to Him and live.

The very best news that any human will ever hear is that Jesus Christ came to earth. God took upon Himself human form, human flesh.

And this same Lord Jesus said, I came to die in the place of sinners. He offered up His life.

[49 : 51] It was not an accident that Jesus died. Jesus said, the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. And so, in His purpose and in His plan and according to the divine foreknowledge of God, the Lord Jesus was offered up on that cross as a substitute sacrifice.

because of your sin, you deserve a cross. Because of your sin, you deserve the justice of God, the wrath of God, the judgment of God.

God in His grace, get this, sends His own Son, sinless and perfect, to die in the place and to take upon Himself the punishment that a sinner like you deserves.

And then God cries out in His patience to all men, boys, girls, women, all people everywhere, repent from relying on your wisdom and your strength and your riches and believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ.

Know Me through My Son. Jesus said, no one can come to the Father except through Me. So your only hope to know God is to turn to Christ.

[51 : 13] You could do it even now. Look to Christ and live. And then Christian, might I urge you, like me, to preach to your own heart.

When the trials come and when the temptations come, my God is the God who delights in chesed and in righteousness and in justice. and I will understand and boast that I know of Him and I will rely upon Him for my very life.

Good looks and state championships and manicured lawns and lots of money are all false hopes. you need your God and He can be found in Christ alone.

Let us pray. Let us pray. may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord.

Take what is true of your word and planted deep in our hearts and even this day give great opportunity for us.

[52 : 33] Make the choice clear between trusting in self and what is seen and trusting in our God who is faithful and true.

And I pray for every Christian here that when that choice presents itself this day that in your great grace and by the working of your own spirit you would lead them to thrust all trust upon you.

And I pray for every person who yet has not turned to Christ in repentance and in faith. I pray that your Holy Spirit would hound that soul until that moment they would turn to you and live.

Do these things for the glory of your great name in which we pray. Amen.