

Work and the Enjoyment of Life

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[0:00] Ecclesiastes take us right up to that appointment that we each have with death.

! Let's see what the teacher has for us tonight.! We'll begin reading at verse 12 and read to the end of chapter 2.

Then I turn my thoughts to consider wisdom and also madness and folly.

What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness. But I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

[1:00] Then I thought in my heart, the fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise? I said in my heart, this too is meaningless.

For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered. In days to come, both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die.

So I hated life because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool.

Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun.

[2:08] For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge, and skill. And then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief.

Even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless. A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work.

This too I see is from the hand of God. For without him who can eat or find enjoyment? To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness.

But to the sinner, he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless.

[3:19] A chasing after the wind. There are moments that make you want to scream. You spend all day Saturday, men, trying to fix your car.

And you spent five hours digging down into the engine to replace the part that you think needs replaced. And then you spent three more hours putting it all back together. And the whole time, you know how it is.

You're dropping nuts and you're scraping your hand and you can't find the right wrench. And your knuckles are bleeding. And you've made three trips to the auto parts store.

And it's not nice out, of course. It's never nice out. It's about 35 degrees, we'll say. And there's this nice little mist. And you don't want to spend your whole day Saturday freezing, fixing your car.

But you have. And as night falls, you slide in behind the driver's seat, behind the wheel. And you slide your car key into the ignition.

[4:28] You turn it. And nothing happens. And you take the key out. You lay hands on it. And you pray. And you slide the key into the ignition.

You turn it. And nothing happens. And at this point, you don't know if you want to scream or cry. I just spent all my day for nothing.

Nothing. And I'm going to either have to dig into that engine again, or I'm going to have to call the tow truck and pay 50 bucks for them to take it to the auto parts store.

And then I'm going to have to pay, or to the garage. And then I'm going to have to pay \$800, \$1,000 for them to fix this car that is always breaking down. And my whole day was wasted on nothing. And as you try yanking the steering wheel off the column, you put your head down. You say, why, God? Why? Why?

[5 : 27] I'm sure you've never been there, right? But that's where we see Koalath, the teacher, our sage.

That's where he goes this evening. And he's going to go there in a lot bigger way than you ever have with your car or any other problem you've ever been frustrated with.

But today, this evening, it's good because actually we get some good news at the end. He's going to give us some positive advice that we can take with us.

See, Ecclesiastes isn't all doom and gloom. There is a lot of it. But it's actually a book about joy. And today we get our first taste of that joy.

Anyway, so you remember Koalath, he's our teacher, our preacher, our sage. And he's gone in search for what is good for a man to do under the sun.

[6 : 25] And he's trying to find some way out of this monotony, out of this frustration, the futility of the short life that we live under the sun that he calls Havel.

He's trying to find his way out of that. He's tried wisdom and analysis. He's tried to look at the problem and solve it. And he found Havel. He found grief. And he tried pleasure and the good life last time.

And maybe if you can't think your way out of the problem, maybe you can just enjoy life. Maybe you can laugh your way out of it. And what did he say? Laughter is madness.

It's insanity. You can't laugh at a problem and make it go away. And what does pleasure accomplish? Nothing. That too is Havel. So the good life, the American dream that we saw last week, that can't solve the problem.

That can't save you from this gnawing sense of futility that shadows your life. And so that brings us up to the conclusions of this first section, the conclusion of the first section of this book.

[7 : 30] The experiment is now over. He's been experimenting. It's over. And like a good scientist, he reviews his experiment and draws certain conclusions from all of his searching and trying.

And so we're going to look at his conclusions tonight. We're going to see and divide his conclusions into three points. A horrible realization, a hateful reality, and then finally, a hopeful resolution.

So first, a horrible realization. And we can see this horrible realization in verses 12 through 16.

So let's look at verse 12. Then I turn my thoughts to consider wisdom and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done?

So basically he's saying, I went back and I'm going over the same territory again and I reviewed what I did and I looked at wisdom and I found nothing. And I looked at folly and madness and laughter and wine and women and I didn't find anything there.

[8 : 41] So can anyone do more than what I did? Is there any place that I didn't look? I looked high and I looked low and I went into the classroom and I went into the bar.

I tried laughter and I tried wisdom. I tried treasure and I tried pleasure. I denied myself nothing that my eyes could see. There's nothing that could be done that I didn't try.

So, Kola, what did you discover then? What's your conclusion? Well, I discovered that wisdom is better than folly. If anyone was thinking that he was going to throw wisdom out because it didn't serve any purpose, you'd be wrong.

Wisdom is better than folly. Neither can help you escape Havel, but wisdom is still better. You say, wait a second.

If neither can help you out of this problem, then why wouldn't folly be just as good as wisdom? I mean, why not be a fool? It doesn't matter, right?

[9 : 50] And Kola says, wrong. Look at verse 13. Wisdom. I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

The wise man has eyes in his head while the fool walks in the darkness. So, neither ultimately, neither wisdom or folly, they don't solve the riddle of life, but a fool is walking in the dark.

So, if you're a fool, you're walking around, we'll say, inner city Chicago with a blindfold on. And if you don't get mugged, you're going to get ran over by a car.

But if you're wise, well, you're walking around inner city Chicago, but at least you can see what's going on around you. You're walking with your eyes wide open. So, wisdom is better than folly.

Wisdom helps you to navigate this dark world that we're living in. It provides light. So, wisdom is better. wisdom is supreme. Whatever it costs, get wisdom.

[10:50] And though it costs all you have, get understanding. And all the sages in the room say, whew, I, that's a relief. I, all this talk about the futility of wisdom, that was kind of starting to scare me.

But Coles says, wait, I'm not done yet. you're not escaping so easy. You're not getting out of this wrestling match so easy. And he pulls us back into the wrestling match and he says, but then, I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

So, the sun came up for a minute and then just as quickly as it came up, it goes down. Yeah, wisdom is good. It's better than folly.

And then the sun sets and in the growing darkness, Coles comes to the horrible realization that whether you're wise or whether you're a fool, you end up in the same place.

So, look at verse 15. Then I thought in my heart, the fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?

[12:02] What then, what do I gain by being wise? And the answer is nothing. So, I said in my heart, this too is Havel. For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered and days to come both will be forgotten.

Like the fool, the wise man too must die. The fool will die, but then again, the wise man is going to die too. And, if you both die, then what does it really matter whether you're wise or foolish?

And so, let's go down into the basement of the funeral home or in the back room and there we have two coffins lying there and one belongs to a fool and one belongs to a wise man and they are laying in their coffins.

Can you tell which one was wise and which one was a fool? No, because they're both cold, stone, dead.

Nicola says, you have to be kidding me. this is going to be me, but I'm wise. Death is going to overtake me and it doesn't matter whether I was wise or a fool.

[13:13] See, a wise man doesn't escape the ultimate havel, death. And death seems, it seems, to nullify wisdom.

It seems to make everything equal. What then do I gain by being wise? And the implied answer is, nothing. Nothing?

Really? Is that what he's saying? Death takes every activity that we do under the sun and it buries it in havel, in meaninglessness.

And so the temptation now is to say, but wait a second, this can't mean what he's saying it means. What about heaven? And what about hell? And what about the resurrection? Doesn't wisdom and folly matter in the afterlife, in light of those realities? Yes.

[14:15] Yes, they do. They certainly do. But you have to remember coalesce perspective, the angle at which he's looking at things. the scope of his investigation, the scope of this book, the angle of his perspective, it doesn't include those realities.

He's talking about this present, here and now life. And so when life is viewed from that angle, wisdom is only relatively better than folly.

Because as far as life goes on this earth, wisdom and folly end up in the same coffin. And the wise and the fool are both forgotten. The earth forgets them, people forget them, you don't remember either one.

So let me ask you, what do you know about Ethan the Ezraite? What do you know about Heman, Calcol, and Darda? What do you know about Ahithophel?

Unless you're some sort of master Bible trivia person, you're going to say, I don't really know anything about those people. I don't think I've ever heard of them. In 1 Kings, Solomon, it's talking about how wise Solomon is, and it says that Solomon's wisdom was greater than Ethan and Heman and Calcol and Darda.

[15:38] So they were obviously these great wise men, but we don't know anything about them. And Ahithophel was so wise that the Bible says that asking a question to him was like asking a question straight to God.

So do you know, what do you know about him? We don't know anything about him. We do know one thing, I take that back. One time at the end of his life, his advice was not taken, and he went out and he hung himself.

That was what we know about Ahithophel. And Coleth comes to the horrible realization that as wise as I am, I'm going to die. And I will die, and I will be forgotten.

And my wisdom, and all my skill in living, it's going to mean nothing. Like you forget a dream when you wake up, people are going to forget me.

And they remember no more. So let me, you're good at living. We'll say you're wise. There are many wise people here. You're wise with your money, and you raise your children well.

[16:51] And you know the right thing to do at the right time, and you know how to control your tongue. You're wise about that, and you don't let your mouth go on and on. And that's good, but guess what?

You're going to end up six feet under, just like a fool. And so does it really matter whether you were good, you wise or not?

Who cares? So I walk through the cemetery by my house a lot, and I look at the names of the people engraved on their memorials.

And you know how much their lives mean to me? Nothing. They don't mean a thing. I couldn't care less about how they live.

And I'm not being mean, and I'm just telling you the truth. And you'd walk by the same people, and you don't care about them. I don't think, boy, I'm glad John Klingenshammer, he was wise.

[17:52] But John Jr., he was a fool, and I really regret that. I don't say those things, because I don't care. It doesn't matter to me, and it doesn't matter to his descendants, or to anyone else alive today.

And that might sound mean, and it might sound irreverent, but you know it's true. And that's the horrible realization that Koaleth comes to. And, my friends, that is part of God's wisdom for us. If we're going to live in this life, we need to understand that and embrace that reality. Your great wisdom is good. It is good. But at the end, in this world, it's Havel.

And it flies away, and you put your hands around it, and you find nothing. But now, Koaleth goes deeper. I thought that was depressing.

It's getting worse. He comes to this horrible realization, and then that horrible realization opens the door to an absolutely hateful reality.

[19:01] And this is Koaleth's second conclusion. Verse 17, So I hated life. I hated life. Because all the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me.

All of it is Havel, a chasing after the wind. So Koaleth looks around, and he says, I can't believe this. I hate this. I hate this.

I hate everything that I've been working on. You know, my Garden of Eden, I look at it, and I don't like it. I hate it. All my slaves, all my music, all my harem, everything, all my wisdom, I looked at all my labor, and I hated it all.

All this work that I've been doing, it is grievous. That's evil. All the work he's talking about, it's not strictly your nine-to-five job. He's talking about everything that you're engaged in.

It's working your job, but it's your hobbies, and it's your fun, and it's your gardens, and it's your vineyards, and it's your building your houses and making your businesses. It's everything that we do as men.

[20:01] It's the work of men that we do under the sun, and he says every bit of it is evil. And you know, by evil, he doesn't mean that it's wicked.

He just means it's grievous. It's hateful. So, Colaeth, why do you hate it? Why do you hate all this so much? Because I must leave it to one who comes after me.

I have to leave it to someone else, and who knows whether he'll be a wise man or a fool, yet he will have control over all my work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun.

This is Havel. So, do you see what Colaeth is saying? I'm going to work and work, and I'm going to sweat, and I'm going to stay up late, and I'm going to work wisely, and I'm going to build my gardens, and I'm going to make my palace, and I'm going to make this nation, and I'm going to administer justice, and I'm going to pour my life, and my effort, and my wisdom into it, and then I'm going to do that, and I'm going to hand it all over to my son, or to my successor, so he can control it. And who knows whether he'll be a wise man or a fool. See, I'm wise, but my son, I'm not so sure of. He might be a total fool, and take what I have worked so hard at, and ruin it.

[21:31] I'm going to hand it over to a fool, and everything that I poured my life into, my wisdom into, is going to be undone, and my gardens will be weed infested, and he'll waste my money, and

he'll destroy the nation that I've been building, and I can't control any of it.

I can't control the work of my hands anymore because I've died. And you know, that's precisely what happened to Solomon in Solomon's kingdom.

Solomon handed it over to his son, Rehoboam, and Rehoboam was a fool. How long did it take for Rehoboam to ruin his father's kingdom? It was, well, less than a year, and the whole nation was in ruins.

The north was fighting the south, and the entire country was in shambles, and all of Solomon's work to create this bureaucracy that would bring prosperity to Israel, it was all ruined.

It was ruined. And all of his work was for nothing, and it flew away like the wind. You couldn't catch it because it was gone. And Kola sees that, and he hates it.

[22 : 50] So what's the point of working if you're going to hand it over to someone who's going to ruin it? Someone might say, but my son is not a fool. My son is a wise man, so my son will be, will take good care of my legacy.

And yeah, that might be true. But you can't say the same for your grandson or your great-grandson. At some point, your work and your wisdom is going to be put into the hands of a fool.

And just like that, it will come to ruin. That's the way the world works. That's Havel in action. That's the curse in action.

All of man's work, all of man's wisdom, whether God-given or not, it's bound for ruin. Well, Coaleth, why do you hate life so much?

Well, because I'm going to hand it over to someone who didn't work for it. I worked for it, and he gets it for free. And that's what verse 21 says.

[23 : 53] For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. See, I bought it at full price, and then a chump comes along and buys it for pennies on the dollar, and he buys it at a garage sale.

We were going through James last year. My wife wrote on her Facebook status. I didn't ask permission for this one, but she did. It's okay, honey. She says, woe to you, she wrote this, woe to you rich men.

I will treat your garage sale like a Walmart. And it was funny at the time, and you know what? It's really so true. Those people, they worked hard.

They made their money. They went to the mall. They bought their stuff at full price, and then my wife paid a quarter for it. And that's life.

That's how it works. Someone built your house, and now you're living in it. And guess what? In a few years, someone else is going to be enjoying your landscaping.

[25 : 00] That you worked for, and they're just going to sit back in their lawn chair and enjoy it. And you plant, but you don't harvest. And you weed the garden, and they take the fruit.

You spend your time and your energy watering and digging, and then you give it to someone else. And they enjoy it. And Coalice says, that is a hell. That is a great misfortune.

And we don't see it as a great misfortune. I mean, someone might be saying, but isn't it good to leave something to your children? Isn't it good to give them an inheritance?

Doesn't Proverbs say something like that? Yes, it does. And it is good. But that's only a reality, because we live in a fallen world. Adam and Eve were never meant to make this beautiful garden, and then die, and then give it to their children.

They were meant to reap the reward for their labor. They were made. We were made to taste and enjoy the things that we've worked for. But it doesn't happen.

[26 : 04] And so Coalice says, look at this. Look at this situation. If your eyes are opened, you should be saying, I hate this. This isn't right. And so Coalice cries out in grief and anger.

What does a man get for all of his toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? Nothing. Nothing at all. And all his days are work and pain and grief, and even at night his mind does not rest.

That is Havel. So man works, and he stays up late, and he sweats. And then he can't even sleep, because he hears work with her sirens song calling him.

And yet, ultimately, what does work give him? Nothing. It's all futile. So this is pretty much the low point of this section.

And thankfully, Coalice doesn't leave us there. I told you he's going to rub your face and all your failure, and he's going to rub your face and your weakness and your inability.

[27:16] He's going to punch you in the stomach, and he's done that. He's just showed you that all of your work is really, really futile as far as this under-the-sun life goes.

And now he's done it. And he does something very surprising, and he's going to do this again and again. Just when you're curling over, thinking, this is it. He gives you a kiss on the face, and he tells you to run along and enjoy your life.

Out of the ashes, he sees a very hopeful resolution for the situation. So look at verse 24. A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work.

This, too, I see, is from the hand of God. For without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? And if you're reading this, you're thinking, what? What?

I don't get this. I thought you said this was all futile, this eating and drinking and working. I thought you just said that was, that wasn't the way out of Havel. You said you tried it and you failed.

[28:22] And so how can you now turn around and tell me and tell us to go eat and drink and find satisfaction in your work? How can you say that is the best way to live? Are you like talking out of both sides of your mouth?

Are you out of your mind? What? What are you saying? He's not out of his mind. His advice is good and it's sound and this is spirituality at its nitty gritty best.

This is what God's wisdom is for living in a fallen world where things don't make sense, where you're going to do your landscaping and then someone else is going to enjoy it.

And you're going to, you know, go to work and it's going to be boring. It's going to be the same thing tomorrow and the next day and the next day. So how do you live? He's telling you to rejoice in your meaningless, your Havel life.

So go eat your pizza. Do you get it? Go grill a steak and enjoy it. So drink your wine or your Coke or whatever and do it.

[29:31] Go to work. Yeah, it's a monotonous job. Yeah, you feel like a mouse running on the wheel like crazy. So what? You only get one time around.

So you better enjoy it. And but you say, wait a second. You didn't answer the question. So I'll ask it again. He tried and that didn't work.

So why are you telling me now to do it? Why are you telling me that that's good advice? He tried food and he tried wine and he tried work and it was all Havel. So how can you say now that this is the best way that a man can live under the sun?

And so here is his answer. And you need to pay very close attention to what he said. And he says this because before I was trying to work and I was trying to escape Havel.

I was trying to ask what is what is man? I was asking the question, what does man get for his work? So what does a man get for his work?

[30:34] What's the profit for it? So men work and then what is the payoff? That's my question. Is it wisdom? Is wisdom the payoff? Is pleasure the payoff? Is the good life the payoff?

Where I work and this is what I get to enjoy. So what's the reward for living and working and doing things? And I looked for the payoff and everywhere I looked, the rewards failed.

The good life failed. Wine failed. Women failed. Pleasure failed. It was all Havel. But then I saw the truth. I said, I saw how those things fit in really.

Those are not rewards for your work. He said, I saw God's grace. Those things aren't the reward for my work. Those things are a gift from God.

They come from his hand. Did you see that in verse 24? This too I see is from the hand of God. So this whole time he's been talking about things that come from the hand of God and a lot of it is frustration.

[31:40] This is what God has done. He's twisted the twisted things. And then he says, all of a sudden, this is what God has given to you to enjoy these things. They come from his hand.

And so life and labor are not the reward for our work. That stake is God's gift to you. And your wife is God's gift to you.

And the ability to work, that's God's gift to you. Work was never meant to give you the meaning of your life. You know that? You weren't supposed to go to your job and find all this great satisfaction and the ultimate purpose for your existence.

God gives you a job so that you can go to the store and buy groceries and eat them with your kids and then buy a comfy bed and go to sleep at night. And that's all.

That's God's gift to you for this under the sun life. And so what is the difference between Coal S's old way of doing things, where it's all Havel, and his new way, where it's Havel, but it's a better way of doing it, before it was life lived on the basis of my work.

[32:51] So I do this and joy should follow. And what did he find? It was Havel. And now he sees how grace enters the picture where God gives you things. So I don't deserve this steak.

But boy, it's yummy. And I don't deserve this job. But you know what? It isn't so bad. Yeah, it's not getting me anywhere. It's boring.

But you know what? It's something to do. God has given this to me to do. And so God wants me to dig a hole in the ground so I can fill it in tomorrow. Well, that's what he wants.

That's his gift for me. He thinks it's good for me. And he loves me. And that is what he wants me to do today. It's not a big deal. It's not a huge thing. It's not the purpose of my life.

It's just a little thing. And it's God's gift to me. And so Kola tells you. And he tells you younger people. And he tells you older people. Take life from God's hands.

[33:51] And really enjoy it. Go home and eat your food and be happy. Sit down and really pray. I know you pray over your food.

But he wants it to be more than a habit. He wants you to take it from God's hand and be happy about it. God wants you to thank him and really enjoy your food.

And he wants you to go home and enjoy your children and enjoy living with your wife. And he wants you to wake up tomorrow and go to your silly job and be happy. Because it's his gift to you.

You have something to do. So, you're not saving the world. You're just going to work. And so, if you're always bitter. And you're always restless about life.

Then God hasn't opened your eyes to how life is working. And that's how Kola ends the chapter. To the man who pleases him. God gives wisdom.

[34:50] Knowledge. Well, we've already talked about those two. But then did you see the third one? He gives you happiness. But to the sinner, he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand over to the one who pleases God.

This too is Havel, a chasing after the wind. So, if you're living to please God, then God gives you wisdom and knowledge and happiness.

He gives you the ability to enjoy this fleeting life that you can't hold on to. See, he's giving everyone the same stuff, more or less. You know, he's giving you life and work and food and all that.

And he's giving the righteous and the unrighteous the same can of peaches. And no matter how the unrighteous try, they can't find, they can't open it up and they can't enjoy what the gift is.

But to the righteous, those who are trying to please God, God gives them the can opener. And he tells them to enjoy what he's given them.

[35:55] And the can opener is grace. It's realizing that I don't deserve any of this stuff, but he's giving it to me. And so I should enjoy it. And so when you're living on grace, when grace is filling your mind, when you realize, I don't deserve this, but God is loving and kind and he's just giving it to me, then you can really take every little thing and enjoy it.

But when you're trying to work and you're trying to find satisfaction in the meaning of life on your own terms and from your own labor, then you're what Coaleth calls a sinner.

And no matter how much you work, you aren't going to be happy. And you're going to give it to someone else when you're done with it. In other words, you're never going to find what you're looking for.

You can be as rich as Solomon, but unless you learn to be a grateful beggar, you'll never be happy. See, successful, happy living is no different than salvation.

Do you see that? If you try to earn God's favor, you try to win your way into heaven, you will fail every single time. But if you take salvation as a gift from God at the cost of his son, but freely given to you, then you'll be saved.

[37:18] See, enjoying life in this world that is falling apart, in the midst of Havel, and salvation rest on the same foundation.

They rest on grace. And it's all because of Jesus that you get to enjoy your life. Every little thing that is fleeing away. So when I see the stake, and I say, you know what, I don't deserve this, but Jesus earned it for me.

You enjoy it, don't you? You're not trying to find all your meaning and life out of it. You're not trying to find everlasting happiness in food. You just take it from Jesus. And he wins it for you at the cross,

and now you get to enjoy it.

And so when you see, you know what, I don't deserve this job. This job, I didn't earn it. It's a gift from God. Jesus earned it for me. And so this job is tolerable.

And it's even enjoyable. Because all my life and all my meaning is not in that. And so when you see, you know what, I don't deserve to live another day. But Jesus earned life for me.

[38:24] Then you know what? You can enjoy this frustrated little life that God has given you. He doesn't make everything go away. He doesn't make all the problems go away. But if you are on your knees, and you're at the foot of grace, then you can find life that is frustrating, even enjoyable.

And see, the grace of our Lord Jesus changes everything. It changes your life, and it changes eternity. And so if you don't know him, take him. So repent of living life on your own terms, and in your own way, with your own rules, and come to Jesus.

Because Jesus is ready to save you. And he's ready to save you for eternity. And he's ready to give you the ability to enjoy this fleeting, frustrated, difficult life.

And so let me ask you, brothers and sisters, is your gospel, what does your gospel look like? Is it merry? You know, is it happy? Does your gospel include eating, and drinking, and laughing, and sweating, and working with joy?

[39:40] Is that how you're living? And that, you know what? The gospel gives me all of these things. Do you preach a gospel of grace, not just with your tongue, but with the way that you're living?

Or do you say by the way that you live, that, you know what, I've worked really hard, and I am frustrated that everything's falling apart? Or are you saying, you know what? I didn't deserve any of this.

And here, Jesus is giving it to me. And God is gracious. Jesus is kind. I don't deserve any of this, but here I am. And if you've really understood the extent of the gospel, it not only reaches into your heart, it reaches into your kitchen, and into your living room.

It reaches into every part of your life. And so you shouldn't be able to contain the joy that Jesus has given you, because every day, all the time, you're bumping into his gifts.

And that should make you happy. So it comes free to you, but it costs our Lord everything. And the price of an enjoyable life lived in a very difficult circumstance.

[40:56] That price should make you cherish his gifts all the more, to hold them all the more loosely, to be able to give them up for his sake. He laid down his life for you, and so you should be ready to lay down your life for him.

Well, let that grace, the grace of our Lord, motivate you to enjoy this fleeting life, and really enjoy it to God's praise, because it is his gift to you.

Well, we sing of God's glory, and the labor of our hands, and what Jesus has done to redeem all of that from the overhead.

Let's stand as we sing, and God all nature sings thy glory. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

Holy Spirit, thank you for inspiring scripture to help us to live in this world that is falling apart. And thank you that your redemption extends to the ends of the earth and will include all things and all people, that from every nation and every tribe and every people and every tongue, you will be known, and your kingdom will be built.

[42:20] And thank you that one day the curse will be removed, and the frustration will be ended, and things will be the way they were supposed to be, and things will be even better than that.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your dying love for us. Thank you that you have won us every enjoyable and delightful thing that we come across.

Father, I pray that you would give us grace to fill our lives with joy and what you have done for us as we take your gifts, as we take food and drink, and the pleasures that come our way, to take them as gifts from your hand and to really enjoy them as your children.

Father, I pray that you would open the hearts of any person here who does not know you, that you would work and save, that you would take them off of their own way and their own works and put them onto the path of grace and the path of Jesus and his work on the cross.

Thank you that he died. Thank you that you raised him from the dead. And we eagerly long and wait with expectation for his coming.

[43:48] And so we pray, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.