

Hebel in Relationships

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[0:00] And in the reading and in the preaching of God's word, God speaks, and so we should hear it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.

Amen. Verses 4 through 16 of Ecclesiastes chapter 4. And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor.

This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. The fool folds his hands and ruins himself. Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Again, I saw something meaningless under the sun. There was a man all alone. He had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

For whom am I toiling? He asked. And why am I depriving myself of enjoyment? This too is meaningless, a miserable business.

[1:20] Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Better a fool but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning.

The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor.

There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

[2:33] I'm not sure what I have to do to depress some of you. I've been giving it my best shot.

And last week I fired all my barrels. And then on Wednesday someone told me, I can't help but being encouraged.

And because I keep thinking, but Christ. And that's really music to my ears. If, well, Jesus Christ is the answer to the havel of Ecclesiastes.

We sing at Christmastime, you remember, he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

And so if Ecclesiastes is opening your eyes to the frustration of living in a God-cursed world and chasing you to Jesus Christ, then it is doing its work.

[3:37] And so it's discouraging, and yet in a very odd way, very encouraging, this book. This evening, Koholeth looks into three more areas of havel.

And it's hard to find a clear literary theme in the remaining part of chapter four. But if there is a single theme, I think it may be havel in community.

Havel in community. All three kinds of havel that Koholeth looks at involves a breakdown in relationships, a breakdown in community relationships, and for the first two, he actually gives a remedy.

And for the third one, he just leaves us to ponder what our response should be. Well, I was talking to Shlameet Thompson, she, at the ARPCA GA, and she's the daughter of Baruch Meaz.

And her first language is Hebrew. And so I took the time and I asked her, well, what does havel mean? And, of course, like modern Hebrew and biblical Hebrew, they're not exactly a one-to-one equivalent, but they have a surprising high degree of similarity.

[4:56] And if you're curious as to why, you can ask me later. And I asked her, what does havel mean? And she said a lot of things, but she kept on saying this, havel means stupid.

It's doing stupid things. And that's what she just, she said that a lot. And the reason I bring that up this evening is that we're going to see some things that are probably best described as stupid. And I don't mean that lightly or anything like that. It's just men in their sinfulness do things to themselves that ruin them.

So they make themselves unhappy. So they fall into the same trap over and over again. And that's probably a good description of stupid.

And that comes under coalesced, big umbrella idea that he calls havel. It has lots of meanings, but they sort of all fit under this idea of there's frustration and things are not right and things are fleeting.

[6:06] And in this case, men do things that don't make any sense. Well, first we want to look at the havel of jealousy. The havel of jealousy.

So look at verse 4. Of chapter 4. And I saw that all labor and all achievements spring from man's envy or jealousy of his neighbor.

This too is havel. This is meaningless. A chasing after the wind. And you can see the community breakdown here, can't you? People don't work to help their neighbor.

They work because they are jealous of their neighbor. And so they look at what others have achieved. And instead of being happy for them, instead of loving them because of their achievement, they're envious.

And so sinful men, sinful man, sinful mankind, work. Sinful man works for sinful reasons. And sinful motivations can take a man far.

[7:12] It can make a man work hard. Have you seen that in your life? Or in your neighbor's life? So you walk out the front door of your house and you look over at your neighbor's driveway.

And there is a nice brand new car that they must have bought the evening before. And you look at your older car. And all of a sudden, you're not so happy anymore.

So what happens? Well, as you drive off to work, you say, you know what? I need a promotion. I need to work. I need to work harder.

I need to put my nose to the grindstone. I need to really apply myself. And if I apply myself, I know I will get promoted and I will get paid more. And so what happens?

You stay later at work. And you work harder. And you toil away. And you give 120%. And you move up. Up.

[8:11] Up. In the company. And you buy that car. And of course, that's when your neighbor buys the nicer car and purchases something better. But do you see the subtlety of jealousy?

Jealousy will... It's not going to make you scratch your neighbor's car. It's not going to make you throw a temper tantrum on the floor. It's going to put you to work. And you're going to work harder. You strive for more. And a lot of times, you get more. We need to be honest. You do get more. Well, how common is that? Well, see what he says.

All labor, all achievement, is the product of man's jealousy. Is that literally true? Is that a hyperbole? Is he exaggerating to make a point? Well, I'm not sure. I think what he's doing is he's uncovering the heart of sinful men.

[9:15] Men, they don't work for love. They work out of envy. They don't work out of freedom. Men feel constrained to work because they are envious of their neighbor.

Sinful men aren't free. They're enslaved to their jealousy because they can't stand the idea of someone having something that they don't have, of having some achievement, of having some fame, some esteem, some approval.

And that kills them inside. And so jealousy breaks down the community. And so, instead of loving your neighbor, now you have an adversarial, competitive relationship with him.

And it ruins community, and then it ruins work. It makes people successful, but miserable. So, Koholeth looks at the situation and he says, you know what, keeping up with the Joneses is Havel. It's meaningless. It's stupid. Why do something that you hate or why be miserable at a job that you are perfect for just because you can't be satisfied with the amount of money that you have?

[10:34] because you might be getting paid less than some other job. And Koholeth says, that's Havel. When that's going on in your life, it's chasing after the wind.

One person called it, it's a wild goose chase, and there's no goose. You're just running around. And so young people, you're making very important decisions in your life now.

You're deciding careers. You're deciding what you're going to do for the rest of your life and how you're going to work and Koholeth says, stop. Just stop for a minute and think.

Are you doing this? Are you choosing this because of envy? Don't choose a job because you can make a lot of money at it and then you can have a nice car and live in a mansion. because that's pointless. That's Havel. You're only going to make yourself miserable by being motivated by envy.

[11 : 36] Well, then Koholeth imagines in the next verse, he imagines someone saying, you know what? That's right. That is right. There's no point in killing myself for just keeping up with the Joneses.

I know that. I mean, hard work is no fun. And the easy life, that's the life for me. That's what I want to do. Or maybe this is a more pious-sounding objection.

Well, it's a dog-eat-dog world out there. And I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to have anything to do with that kind of scene. And Koholeth looks at that and he says, that's just foolish.

Look at verse 5. The fool folds his hands and ruins himself. So if you think the solution to envy is laziness, you're wrong.

That's madness. You fold your hands and yeah, guess what? You don't keep up with the Joneses, but you also don't have anything to eat if you're lazy.

[12 : 40] The NIV translates it, he ruins himself. Literally, he consumes himself. And so, laziness, it doesn't make you escape from envy. It turns you into a self-cannibal.

It isn't wisdom. It's self-cannibalism. And only a fool, only a fool thinks he can get along without work, without hard work.

Well, then what do you do? What do you do? Koholeth says, you choose the middle road. better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Charles Spurgeon said, when faced with two bad options, you choose neither. And Koholeth says the same thing. Don't kill yourself out of envy.

Don't kill yourself working because you're envious, but don't be lazy. There's a middle road. Instead, choose contentment.

[13 : 42] It's much better to have one handful with peace and quiet than two handfuls with lots of toil, a lot of pointless toil. In other words, learn to take a break.

Learn to take a break. brothers and sisters, do you know how to Sabbath? How to Sabbath? Do you know how to take naps?

And that doesn't sound very religious, but it is. It's wisdom. Work hard, yes, but don't kill yourself trying to keep up with your neighbors. Life is too short.

You are going to die. So you need to remember that. So gentlemen, don't sacrifice God's gift of life. Isn't that what Ecclesiastes has been saying over and over again?

Life is a gift from God that we need to enjoy, that we need to be responsible in enjoying it.

Gentlemen, don't sacrifice that gift for endless promotions.

[14 : 50] Don't sacrifice your families just to keep up with your neighbors. And ladies, don't sacrifice your children your family, your home, your life for more and more money.

And students, this comes about a week too late for most of you. But don't make a GPA an idol.

Don't stay up into the wee hours of the night night after night in order to get an A. who says you have to get an A. Coleth would say, you know what, take the B and go to sleep.

That's wisdom. Work hard, yes, but rest and recreate often. And then, you know what will happen? You'll have time to enjoy your neighbors.

You'll have time to enjoy your family and your friends because you're going to be not working out of envy, but you're going to be working out of contentment and so you'll be able to enjoy them.

[15 : 55] And so do you see how contentment heals a community? So when you're not killing yourself in order to get ahead of them and you're not in this competitive relationship anymore, then you have time to love them.

You have time to talk to them. You have time to be with friends at church. You have time to hang out with your teenage children. You have time to just sit and eat and enjoy your food around the table.

And you have the time to take a nap with your wife every now and then. And that's wisdom. The havel, the answer to the havel of envy is contentment, is learning to rest.

Well, let's look at verse 7 to the second area. Again, I saw something meaningless under the sun. There was a man alone and he had neither son nor brother.

And so now Coleth, he's moving out of envy and now he's talking about the havel of loneliness. And the man, he is working only for himself.

[17:04] He doesn't have a son or a brother. And in that culture, those are the people who are typically going to inherit the man's estate that he's going to hand these to when he dies.

But he doesn't have anyone. He's alone. And he doesn't care that he's alone because he has something much more important on his mind. He has work to do. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.

And he works and he works. And so now, it's not because he's envious that he's working. Instead, did you see what he's working for? He's working because he's not content with his savings account. He's not content with his balance. His account balance is always too low. And no doubt, he lies to himself and says, I need to save more.

I need to work because, you know, we just went through this recession and I saw people suffering and I don't ever want to do that and so I need to be able to pad myself and protect myself.

[18:11] And I better go in early and I better save more. And he doesn't enjoy his work. It's toil to him. And he's working so that he can get money so that he can work some more.

And it's meaningless. And finally, he asks himself, for whom am I toiling? And why am I depriving myself of enjoyment? Why am I doing this? Who can I share this with?

I don't have anyone. I don't have anyone to give it to. I'm married to my job and that's all I have. And Cole left looks at that and he says, that is Havel.

That's probably a good place to say that is stupid. That's futile. That's pointless. That is useless and absurd. Would anyone in their right mind change trade, their wealth for friends?

Well, they wouldn't. But that's what sinful men do. They sacrifice their family and they sacrifice friendships and they sacrifice relationships in order to work more.

[19:21] And maybe that's what some of you used to do. And maybe it's something that you still struggle with. And if it is, see it for what it is.

It's a miserable business. See that? It's a miserable business. It's an evil task. Why would you do that?

It's a horrible way to live. It's self-inflicted pain. And if you don't have a son or a brother, that could be of no fault of your own.

It just might be that way. But if you have no one, if you don't even have a friend, it's because you work too much. It's your own fault.

And Coalesce says, that is miserable madness to choose work over friendship. Well, maybe you've heard this name, John Paul Getty.

[20:21] He's been dead for several years now. But he was a billionaire and he lived an incredible wealth all of his life. He was knighted. He was an American, but he loved England and he spent a lot of time there.

He was knighted by the Queen of England. He received numerous honors for his philanthropy work.

And near the end of his life, he said this, I've never known love or what it means to have a friend.

And brothers and sisters, that is miserable business. business. It's miserable madness. But loneliness has a solution, doesn't it?

It's called friendship. And friendship is something that money cannot buy. You can buy fans, but you can't buy friends. And so, Coalesce says, to have friends, that's real wealth.

To have no friends, that is real poverty. we were made to have friends. We were made to enjoy our friends.

[21:32] So let's go back to creation. And God creates the day and the night and he says, it is good. And he creates whales and dolphins and he says, it is good.

And he creates birds and little hedgehogs and he says, that's good. And then he makes a man and he says, what? It's not good. It's not good.

It's not good for man to be alone. Why? Because God has made us in his own image and that includes a lot of things, but it means that we're like him.

And you remember that God didn't create this world because he was lonely. He didn't create this world because he needed company. He had friends and he had family within the Trinity.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And before there was a star in the sky, before there was a single fish in the ocean, there were three perfect friends that didn't need anyone else.

[22:42] friends. And God has made man to be like him. And so you were made to enjoy, to need, to love, friendship.

And without friends, life is nothing but miserable business. business. And Koholeth tells us why. Look at verse 9.

Two are better than one because they get a good return for their work. And so, as we go through this next section, you need to realize that Koholeth is picturing all these verses as a business trip. And so imagine you're a businessman and you, you know, you're a trader more or less. And so you're going through towns and cities and through mountains and valleys and through the desert with your camels and with your animals and with your goods.

And just think of how much better that would be with someone to do it with you than by, all by yourself. Well, they get a good return for their work. Friends have, friends are great to have around because with you and him or you and her, you get more work done.

[23:58] You accomplish more. You have weaknesses and they have strengths. And you have strengths and they have weaknesses. And so, your weaknesses are compensated for by your friend.

And your strengths are used for the good of the other person. So your weaknesses are minimized and your strengths are maximized. And you can share resources with your friend.

And so, you know, when you have a friend, you don't have to have everything. and you don't have to buy everything because they have what you need and you have what they need.

And so, men, think about it. How good is it? Just how good is it to have a buddy, a friend, when you're working on your car and you need something, you need a tool that you're only going to need one time, but you have a friend who has it.

And you can go and you can borrow it and you can give it back and you don't have to buy it. See, life just goes better when you have a friend.

[25:00] It's just easier. And friendship is one of the beauties of the church. Do we all have the same strengths? No, we don't.

I'm good at one thing and you're good at another thing. And when we get together and you do what you're good at and I do what I'm good at, then we get more work done. So much more work done than if I'm over here and you're over there and we're just doing our thing, we're very inefficient, unproductive.

But when we're together, when we're acquainted with one another and we're befriending each other, friendship, it makes the church productive. It makes the wheels really go.

Well, why is friendship so good? Well, if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls down and has no one to help him up. Are you going to fall down in this life?

Yes, you are. You are going to fall down. But that is exactly when it's so good to have a friend to pick you up. There's nothing better than a friend to come alongside you when you are depressed, when you've fallen.

[26:15] And this might not be sin. This is just life. Sometimes we get knocked over. And that friend comes along beside us and he's not thinking about himself.

He's just thinking about us. And he says, you know what? What can I do to help you? You just name it and I'm there. I'll do it. That is so good. You're going to fall, but it's so good to have a friend to pick you up.

But pity the man who doesn't have such a friend. No matter how wealthy he is, he's a poor man. If all he has is money, but he has no friends. Well, why is friendship better than wealth?

Because if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? And of course, this is literally true, right? If you're a merchant and you're going along and you have people that you can sleep beside out in the cold desert, then you can stay warm.

But if you're all by yourself, you're going to freeze. And that's true, literally, but more importantly for us, it's true metaphorically.

[27:21] We are all walking through this life. And sometimes life is very cold. It is very hard. But if we have a friend, they can keep us warm.

It isn't so bad. Friends make this hard, cold life just more comfortable. More endurable. They don't keep the cold away.

They don't keep us from falling. But they do help us. Well, why is friendship better than wealth? Because friends are good defense. They're good defense.

Though one may be overpowered, do you see the one, two, three in this verse? Though the one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves, and a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. In other words, if you're going to fight me, you better bring more than just yourself. Because you're going to be in a heap of trouble because I'm not standing by myself.

[28:21] I have my friends with me. And I'm not alone. And friends can protect us from ourselves, and friends can protect us from other people who would do us harm.

And young ladies, what kind of girls get taken advantage of by guys, by boys, who are up to no good? And the answer is girls that are alone.

When a young lady has close friends who love her, and who care for her, and who talk to her, and when she has a dad and brothers to keep their eye on her, she's safe.

She's insulated from that person. And no one's going to touch her. And so, you need to ask yourself, are my friends protecting me, young people?

Are my friends protecting me, or do they do me harm by being with them? And if your friends don't protect you, then it's time to get some real new friends.

[29:27] Quick. Because how do you measure wealth? Do you measure it by your checkbook, or by the kind of friends that you have? And Cole Less says, you're a fool if you measure it by your checkbook.

But you are very wise. If you're wise and rich, if you have friends that love you, and who will stand with you, and who will help you, and who will protect you.

A fool measures by money, but a wise person measures by the kind of friends that he has. And Jesus Christ, he, Jesus Christ, had those kind of relationships.

He had those kind of friendships. Do you remember, he made friends with the twelve. And within the twelve, there were three, Peter, James, and John. And those were even closer. Those were his closer friends.

And they went with him up to the Mount of Transfiguration, and they saw things that he didn't allow them to tell other people. They saw him with his unveiled glory. And so they knew him better than others.

[30:32] And so when Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane, we read that this morning. Remember, Jesus went further in, and his three best friends, Peter, James, and John, went in with him.

And it was exactly because they were so close to him, they were his friends, that made their falling asleep so devastating.

Couldn't you watch and pray for just one hour with me? See, his friends let him down in his greatest hour of need.

And even John, remember John is the disciple that Jesus loved, even John ran away. And Jesus suffered that kind of betrayal, that kind of abandonment, to save his friends.

Because when they left, he still went on loving them, he still went on being their friend, because greater love has no one than this, than he lay down his life for his friends.

[31:35] And so Jesus treasured his friends. He treasured Peter, James, and John, and he treasured all of his friends who are alive today, and he gave himself up for them. He died for his friends.

Now, brothers and sisters, we are called to exhibit that same kind of friendship. No, we don't die, we're not able to die for one another's sins, of course not, but we can certainly bear with each other when the other person lets us down.

And we can sacrificially love each other, and we can enjoy each other, and we can encourage one another, because that's what Jesus did.

He spent his time, and his energy, and then when that was over, he spent his life blood, and friendship. And we honor his friendship to us, when we are the same kind of friends, to his people, when we do the same.

So is friendship serious to you? Is it important to you? Koalath says, you're a fool if you don't think so. Well, Koalath mentions one last area of Havel and community, and that is the Havel of politics.

[32:57] And so, we started with the man who's envious of his neighbor, and we saw the man who's all alone, and now we get a big picture of politics.

And it's probably good that we don't have a lot more time left, because politics is an area that can get anyone into trouble. Isn't that right? So please be merciful to me.

He begins with a proverb, and then he deconstructs, he shows why this proverb isn't as much as it's cracked up to be.

And the way he does it, he shows that there's something really wrong just with politics. There's something seriously wrong. Politics has Havel written all over it.

So first, the proverb, better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take a warning.

[34 : 02] And this is a very traditional sounding proverb. It's better to have a poor wise man ruling than a rich old king.

So the king is old and stubborn, he doesn't know how to take advice, he doesn't know how to take warning anymore, wisdom has left him. And so wisdom says, well, let's get rid of the old king.

And that makes sense. That makes sense. But as the story progresses, you see that it actually doesn't make really any difference.

The people are never happy. Politics is Havel. It's meaningless. It's fleeting. It's broken. It's cursed. The youth may come from prison to the kingship, where he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom.

So the young man might have been dirt poor, or he might have been a prisoner. This has probably been a political rebel, because it was generally in that time, it was the politically dangerous people that got thrown into prison, not ordinary criminals.

[35 : 16] And so he might have had this unsavory background, he might have been poor, he might have been a rebel, but if he's wise, then he's better than the fool who's in power now, who's on the throne now.

And so this is what happens. I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. And so the popularity is there.

There was no end of the people who were before him. And so things are looking good. The young man is wise, he's popular, there's no one who could count how many people followed him, everyone loved him, and that groundswell, that popularity took him from prison or poverty and it put him on the throne.

And so things are looking good in this kingdom. This young man has everything going for him. And things were looking up. It seemed like happy days are here again.

So there's a popular, young, wise king on the throne. But then something goes wrong.

[36 : 25] But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is Havel, chasing after the wind. People were upset with the old foolish king.

And so they thought, you know what, we'll put a young, wise king in his place. And now they're upset with him. He was the answer to all their problems. And yet, the problems must have still been there.

The same problems kept popping up. The same hard choices had to be made. The same sort of situations had to be taken care of. There were still poor people. There were still policies that weren't perfect.

And so what happens? His ratings fell. And you see that every election, don't you? The winner has the big high rating, and as time goes on, his ratings drop.

Well, what changed? Why did people go from loving him to hating him? Well, I can think of two answers. I'm not sure which one. It could be either one. Maybe the young, wise king turned into a foolish old king.

[37 : 32] Doesn't that happen sometimes? People go to Washington and say, I'm going to turn, I'm going to change how Washington works. And what happens? They don't change Washington.

Washington changes them. And love for power turns them into a fool. The other possibility, and I think this is the more frightening one, the other possibility is that this young man continued to be wise, but wisdom is never popular.

And people could only put up with his wisdom for so long before they couldn't take it anymore. It's hard to stay popular when you're making principled decisions based on righteousness, when you're making considered difficult choices.

It's hard to stay popular when you do the right thing, the wise thing. You just saw this week in Greece, if you were watching the news, they had to pass an austerity bill as what was an austerity plan.

And basically what happened was this bill, this plan, took away large incentives from the people, these government incentives from the people. The government had to do it.

[38:51] The government of Greece had to do it to save their economy. They made a tough choice. They made the choice that they had to make, even though it wasn't popular. And how did the people react?

Well, there's mayhem. There was widespread protest and demonstrations, and three officials were murdered. And so, whether you're here or abroad, people cannot put up with wisdom for very long in this broken world.

So what happened to the proverb at the very beginning? Better a wise youth than an old foolish king. It's true. It is true.

But politics never change. Wisdom and popularity mean nothing in the long run, politically speaking. It's a goose chase without a goose. And so there's never going to be a perfect policy. No man is the answer. No party is the answer.

[39:58] No movement is the answer. Popularity comes and it goes, but there's nothing new under the sun. And so the problem isn't the individual officials.

It's not who's in power. I mean, they have some blame, but he's talking about this whole system is broken. It's all Havel.

Everything is twisted about it. And it's fleeting. It's just wearing away. So this time, Coeth merely points it out.

And he lets us ponder and think about how we should respond. You've been in Ecclesiastes for a while now. How do you think Coeth would want us to respond?

What do you think he would say? Can you imagine him saying, so there's nothing better for a man to do than to eat and drink and enjoy his work, for this is God's gift to man.

[41:08] Can you imagine him saying that? I think that's exactly what he wants us to take away from this. Getting carried away with politics is foolish.

When we let politics determine our hopes and our fears, our anxieties and our dreams, we are living for something meaningless. And so there's wisdom in not being too big of a fan of Glenn Beck or Rush Limbaugh, and there's wisdom in not being too big of an enemy of Barack Obama.

We still fight for justice. We still vote. We still do our civic duty. We still pursue justice and righteousness.

But we don't do it like everyone else. We do it as Christians. And so you remember William Wilberforce. He fought to end slavery for 30, 40 years.

But he didn't do it like everyone else. He did it as a Christian. And so as Francis Schaeffer said, we may be co-belligerents. We might fight alongside with the left or the right, but we're never allies.

[42:26] If there is social injustice, say there is social injustice. If we need order, say we need order. But do not align yourself as though you are in either of these camps. You are an ally of neither.

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is different from either. It's totally different. So brothers and sisters, who should you fear more than any politician?

Jesus Christ. And who should you love more than any talk show host? Jesus Christ. And who should have the complete allegiance of your heart above any nation, above any policy, above any political system or economic system or government or man or party or anything like that?

It should be Jesus Christ because everything else is broken and it's fleeting and coalesce us. It's foolish. Jesus Christ alone died for you.

And Jesus Christ, His kingdom, His government alone will be the only one standing on the last day. And so He who is wise will take that to heart and say, I'm going to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

[43:45] righteousness. And that's what we need to do, brothers and sisters. Our Heavenly Father, we thank You that for many of us here, You have taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and moved us into the kingdom of the Son whom You love.

Thank You that You have joined our hearts to Him, that You have joined our destinies with His destiny of ruling over all of creation, and that His kingdom alone will stand on the last day.

Will You help us to love Your kingdom, O Lord, to give Your kingdom our strength and our time and our energy for everything else is fleeting.

Will You help us to be wise in the way that we balance all the things that we've been taught this evening of work and rest and friendship and in the area of politics, will You sanctify the way we think?

Will You shape us and fashion us with Your Word that we would think Your thoughts after You? And Father, I pray for all those here who are outside of Jesus, who haven't given their lives to Him, who have not been broken in repentance.

[45:08] Will You come, Holy Spirit, and take Your truth and fasten it into their heart. Take Your Word, which is like a hammer and a fire, and break open their hearts and give them a new heart.

Thank You that You have that kind of power. We pray that You would exert it today for Your great name's sake. And it's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. We're dismissed.