

Pursuit of Money is Hebel

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[0:00] Let's take the scriptures and turn to Ecclesiastes chapter 5.!

Beginning at Ecclesiastes 5 and verse 8. If you see the poor oppressed in a district and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things.

For one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. The increase from the land is taken by all. The king himself profits from the fields.

Whoever loves money never has money enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This, too, is meaningless.

As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much.

[1:24] But the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep. I have seen a grievous evil under the sun. Wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner.

Or wealth lost through some misfortune. So that when he has a son, there is nothing left for him. Naked a man comes from his mother's womb.

And as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand.

This, too, is a grievous evil. As a man comes, so he departs.

And what does he gain since he toils for the wind? All his days he eats in darkness with great frustration, affliction, and anger. Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him.

For this is his lot. Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work, this is a gift of God.

[2:37] He seldom reflects on the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart. I've seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on men.

God gives a man wealth, possessions, and honor so that he lacks nothing his heart desires. But God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead.

This is meaningless. A grievous evil. A man may have a hundred children and live many years, yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.

It comes without meaning. It departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice over, but fails to enjoy his prosperity.

Do not all go to the same place. All men's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied. What advantage has a wise man over a fool?

[3:57] What does a poor man gain? By knowing how to conduct himself before others. Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite.

This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. Whatever exists has already been named, and what man is has been known.

No man can tend with one who is stronger than he. The more the words, the less the meaning. And how does that profit anyone?

For who knows what is good for a man in life during the few and meaningless days he passes through like a shadow. Who can tell him what will happen under the sun after he is gone?

Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain, and there he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

[5:01] And after giving Jesus a chance to see the wealth and the glory, Satan whispered, all this I will give you if you bow down and worship me.

Satan's most audacious temptation was hung on the hook with the most attractive bait. Kingdoms and splendor and wealth and nations and all that they could bring.

That was the temptation. And wealth is still one of Satan's favorite lures when he goes fishing for men. And he gets all kinds of men to bite on that bait.

Rich men will swallow the hook completely, and poor men will chase the bait even if they never get it. And young people will live for a taste of the worm, and old people will protect what they've tasted with their lives.

And Jesus saw through that temptation. And if we are going to really live a life that is pleasing to God and really live a life that is well lived in these few days under the sun, we have to see through that temptation ourselves.

[6:18] And that's where Ecclesiastes, and this section of Ecclesiastes, is so helpful. If you want to live a happy life, then listen in, as Kola teaches us about the havel of money, and he teaches us a better way.

And that might sound like a grand promise that no one really could keep. Live a better life, I mean, that sort of sounds like a prosperity gospel thing, but it's not. Look at verse 19 of chapter 5.

Moreover, moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot, and be happy in his work, this is a gift of God.

He seldom reflects on the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart. The reason we're taking such a large section today is that Ecclesiastes 5.8, all the way through chapter 6, is one unit.

And it is all centered on verses 19 and 20. And that's where Kola is taking us, to verses 19 and 20.

[7:39] If you want to be occupied with gladness of heart all the days of your life, if you want to live a life well lived, then listen to what he says.

Listen to what he says. We have three points tonight. The first is that the pursuit of money is Havel. That's meaningless. It's futile. It's frustrating. And the second is prosperity without grace is Havel. Prosperity without grace is Havel. And the third is he shows us a beautiful alternative, a better way to live. Well, first we're going to talk about the pursuit of money as Havel.

And he begins with an observation about the pursuit of money on a very public scale, on a systemic scale. You see that in verses 8 and 9. If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things.

Now, Koholeth has already talked about oppression. He's given us God's reason for allowing oppression. And now he brings it up again to bring the human explanation for it.

[8:51] He gave God's reason for it in chapter 3, verse 18. As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. That's God's purpose in oppression.

And now here's the human reason for it. For one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. The increase from the land is taken by all, and the king himself profits from the field.

So what's the human reason for oppression in our culture? It's because people in the system love money. They love money.

And there's nothing new under the sun, is there? Systemic fleecing has always gone on, and it always will go on. People love money.

People love money. And everyone in the system wants in on the take. So one level of government takes some, and then the next higher level up, they take their share, and up and up it goes until the very top.

[9:58] And who is at the top of this giant pyramid scheme? It's the king himself. He's taking from all the fields. Well, what should our response be?

What should our response be? Don't be surprised when you see these things going on. Don't be surprised. Corruption is the norm. It is not the exception.

It's the norm. Brothers and sisters, we can't be so naive to think that many people who are in office are there for our good. It's not true. That might be true in some cases, but there is a systemic, a system-wide problem with all of government, and it's the love of money.

The love of money. And that's what it means to live in a fallen world. That's what it means to live in a fallen world, and so we need to get used to it.

We shouldn't be surprised anymore when we see these things happening. Yes, we can be morally outraged, and we can fight for justice, but Coleth is saying, don't go off the deep end.

[11:12] You have to understand that this is part and parcel of living in this world that we find ourselves in. It's not the end of the world when you see these things. It's not the end of the world.

It is the world. So he moves from a systemic pursuit of wealth to its more individual manifestations. And so remember in this part, we're talking about the pursuit of wealth.

If you look at some of the words, as goods increase, and this man is never satisfied with his income, and he's hoarding, he's saving. So this whole part is talking about I haven't arrived, and I am pursuing wealth.

I'm not where I want to be, but I'm going forward. And so he's telling us that that whole idea, it's havel, it's futility, it's frustrating.

There's five problems with pursuing money, and he gives us those. And you see the first problem in verse 10. Whoever loves money never has money enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.

[12:16] So the first problem is wealth does not satisfy. Young people, did you hear that? Wealth does not satisfy. How much is enough?

John Rockefeller said, just a little more. And maybe that's what you're saying. I just want a little more. Well, why aren't you satisfied with what you do have? It's because enough is never enough. Enough is never enough. And you think, if I just had a little bit more, then I would be happy. Or maybe you're thinking, if I had a lot more, then I would be happy. And either way, you're wrong. You're wrong. Wealth does not satisfy in any sense. So how many strung out movie stars do you need to see before you realize that enough is never enough?

And how many suicidal, depressed CEOs do you need to see before you know that it's not enough? Just a little more?

[13:17] Just a lot more? It's never enough. So don't be fooled. Look! The pursuit of money, it's trying to, the pursuing of money, it's like trying to get out of a hole by digging down.

And the more you shovel, the more you dig, you're further from getting out. It's meaningless. It's a goose chase with no goose.

Well, the second problem is with money is that it attracts parasites. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what's the benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? Well, this was just in the news this week. I'll just read it. New York Knicks center Eddie Curry defaulted on a \$570,000 personal loan while keeping a lifestyle that included a \$17,000 a month suburban New York home, a \$6,000 a month personal chef, and a dozen cars he had bought for himself and relatives, a judge said.

Curry argued he couldn't pay off the debt at \$75,000 a month because of his existing bills, which include \$30,000 a month in household expenses at his family's White Plains, New York home, nearly \$17,000 a month in payments to various other relatives according to the court order.

[14:46] So did you hear what part of Eddie Curry's problem is? \$17,000 a month in payments to relatives, \$6,000 a month to a personal chef, \$30,000 in random household expenses.

It's amazing how wealth attracts parasites right out of the woodwork they come. Proverbs 14, 20, Riley says, the rich have many friends.

The rich have many friends. And there's the problem, the problem with pursuing money. The more money you have, the more people attach themselves to your life.

Until it gets to the point where you can't even enjoy the things that you have anymore. Why? Well, because they're enjoying them. They've taken it all and they're enjoying it.

The third problem with pursuing wealth is insomnia. Verse 12, the sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep.

[15:54] So here's a poor ditch digger and he works hard all day. He comes home, he enjoys a little food, and he falls asleep.

And here's a wealthy businessman. And he eats dinner at the finest restaurant, has the finest foods, all of that. His life is full of good things.

He has an abundance of them. But at night, all he can do is toss and turn as the clock can slowly wind around the clock. He can't sleep.

Why? Well, it's the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep. Did you hear that? It's his good things that keep him from sleeping.

So the rich man, in most cases, he's trusting in his wealth. And he's afraid to lose it. And so he can't sleep. He's up all night thinking about all the different ways that somehow his money could be taken

from him.

[16:58] But you know what? It's not just true of the man who trusts in his riches. This is true of all rich people. Pretty much. So here's a Christian businessman.

And he isn't trusting in his wealth, but he knows that he's been entrusted with a lot. And to whom much is given, much will be expected.

And so the weight of his possessions take away his sleep. So don't anyone be fooled. Being wealthy is not all it's cracked up to be.

The fourth problem is sudden loss. And that's what Kolath calls a grievous evil. A sickening evil. Wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner or wealth lost through some misfortune so that when he has a son, there is nothing left for him.

Kolath says, I've seen this. A man has been hoarding his wealth. Not for himself. He's not doing it for himself. He's doing it for his son. It's not because he's selfish. He wants to provide for his son.

[18:16] And so he's saving and he's saving. But then some misfortune happens. Just like that, his money takes wings and flies away. And the son is left with nothing.

So all the hoarding, all the saving, is undone in a stroke. And that's what coalesces. That's why he says, this is sick. This is grievous.

This isn't something that anyone should be happy about. See, the man had a noble goal. He wanted to do good. But money is so unstable.

It's just like sand. It washes away so quickly. Well, how many times have we seen this? How many Enron scandals or Bernie Madoff scandals or stock market crashes or just sudden job losses or small businesses, things are going well and something happens and there the business goes.

How many times do we need to see that before we realize that we can't put our trust in our wealth?

So yes, have an emergency fund.

[19:26] But don't depend on it. All hoarded, all invested, all saved money is going to leave you one time or another. It's going to leave you sooner or later.

That's what you see next. He, that is the man who's been hoarding, he takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand. There's nothing permanent about wealth.

The old saying goes, you never see a U-Haul following a hearse. Never happens. So the fifth problem, fifth problem is this. the pursuit of money takes you to someplace that you don't ever want to be.

Verse 16, this too is a grievous evil. As a man comes, so he departs. And what does he gain since he toils for the wind? All his days he eats in darkness with great frustration, affliction, and anger.

Do you hear Job in that verse? Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I will depart. Or 1 Timothy 6, for we brought nothing into this world and we could take nothing out of it.

[20:42] People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. Do you see the ruin and the destruction in this man?

He eats in darkness. So his food brings him no joy. Or it could be that he has no money for even oil. It might be something like that.

So he's eating in darkness. He's frustrated all day long. Things never go his way. And he's afflicted. Life weighs down on him.

And all of his circumstances seem to be punishing him. His thoughts punish him. And guilt drives him. And he's always afraid. And he's angry.

He's angry. And wouldn't you be angry if all the money that you saved just gone. Just like that.

Sudden misfortune destroyed his wealth and his hopes were dashed.

[21:44] And so now his life is just one long night. Seven times sealed. And so that's the havel of pursuing wealth.

And someone might say someone might say you know not all people who pursue wealth end up eating in darkness frustrated and angry. And some people actually arrive.

They do become prosperous. They do become wealthy. And their lives aren't marked with ruin and destruction. And Kolef knows that. Isn't he so realistic?

He doesn't let us escape anywhere. He knows what is real. And that's why he tells us about the next havel. The havel of prosperity. So this man he's not pursuing anymore.

He's arrived of prosperity without God's gift of grace. So prosperity the havel of prosperity without God's gift of grace.

[22:44] Look at chapter 6 verse 1. I've seen another evil under the sun and it weighs heavily on men. God gives a man wealth possessions and honor so that he lacks nothing his heart desires but God does not enable him to enjoy them and a stranger enjoys them instead.

This is Havel meaningless a grievous sickening evil. So this man doesn't need to pursue wealth. He's arrived and he has wealth, possessions, and honors.

He lacks nothing that he could want except for one thing. He lacks God's enabling grace to enjoy the things that God has given him.

And Kohaleth looks at that and says that's sickening. a man who suddenly loses his fortune, that's bad, but this might just be worse. So God, I want you to think about this.

God blesses a man with everything. He has all kinds of things. He blesses them with all these things that he could enjoy, but he doesn't give him the grace to enjoy them.

[24:02] So he gives them the can of peaches, but he keeps the can opener for himself. And that's hard for us to wrap our minds around.

It's Havel. It's an enigma. It's confusing. It's frustrating to think about. And it happens, though. And it happens often enough that he says this weighs heavily on man.

So God puts a burden on man. We've already seen this. God sovereignly gives wealth. We saw that in Ecclesiastes 3.

God is doing all these things. He's sovereign all the time. And so he sovereignly gives wealth, and then he sovereignly withholds the ability to enjoy it. And so God is sovereign in places that we like, and he's sovereign in places that we don't like.

And then he pushes the issue further. He says, this man, he could have 100 children, and he could live 1,000 years two times over.

[25:13] So he could live 2,000 years, and he could have all the prosperity, but if he can't enjoy it, then it would have been better. A stillborn child is better off than he.

So how bad is life if God gives you all those sorts of good things, but then he doesn't give you grace to enjoy it? Colossus, it would have been better for you never to have been born.

So can you believe that? So what's the value of prosperity without grace? It's worthless. It's less than worthless. It would have been better for that 2,000 year old man with all sorts of children and all sorts of wealth to have come out of his mother dead than to have lived one day of this life.

Why is it better? Well, he says at least that stillborn child has rest. This man apparently has no rest in life and no rest in death.

The stillborn comes in Havel. You see that in verse 4. It comes without meaning. It comes to no purpose. It comes in darkness. It departs in darkness.

[26:31] Its name is shrouded in darkness. And so the name of someone was more than just a label. It was their identity, their personality.

And Koh Allah says this stillborn baby with no identity, no personality, he had no purpose for his life, is better off than this rich man.

because at least he knows peace. And so brothers and sisters, the point is, don't envy the rich because you have no idea what kind of nightmarish life you might be wishing upon yourself.

There is a life that is worse than to have never have lived at all. And it's a life lived with all sorts of good things, but with no grace.

It's having the can of peaches but no way of enjoying them, but no can opener. Well, now in verses 8 through 12, he answers a series of objections.

[27:42] And see, there's always naysayers in the crowd, and I'm sure there's naysayers in this crowd that says, you know what, I just don't believe it. I just don't believe it. You're saying that wealth isn't all it's cracked up to be, and that it can actually be a bad thing, but I don't believe it.

You don't understand the situation that I'm in. Well, if that's you, and you don't really believe what I'm saying, you really don't believe what Ecclesiastes is saying, then listen to how Coleth answers these objections.

Verse 7, all men's efforts are for his mouth, yet his appetite is never satisfied. What's going on here? I think Coleth is assuming that someone is asking, you know what, isn't it good, shouldn't we be working in order to eat, in order to provide for ourselves?

Work is the way that we provide, and there is a sense in which that kind of work is good. If a man will not work, he shouldn't eat.

That's the truth. But Coleth seems to be pushing on the same button that Jesus was pushing on in Luke chapter 12, when he said this, consider how the lilies grow.

[28 : 53] They don't labor or spin. That means they don't work. They don't go to a job. They don't do anything. And don't set your heart on what you will eat or drink.

Do not worry about it, for the pagan world runs after all such things. There is a kind of working to provide food for yourself that is absolutely damning.

When you work only to provide, then you get sucked into a vicious cycle that you see in verse 7. And so you work to eat, and you eat so you have the strength to go to work.

And around and around you go. And you always work, and you always end up hungry. And so it goes on and on. So don't be fooled. Not all working to provide is good.

There is a kind of work where you're, when that is the, that's the only thing that you're doing it for, that is the recipe for a ruinous, a sad life.

[30 : 03] It's never good when the only end is your needs. The next objection comes from the traditional wise man. This is interesting. these were Job's friends.

These were the average Israelite Joes who figured, you know what, wisdom is the pathway to wealth. How many times in Proverbs is that clearly shown?

That it seems to be that if you're wise, then you're going to be wealthy. And so you should want to be wise so you can have the wealth.

And so they're saying yes, but isn't work the pathway or isn't wisdom supposed to be the pathway to wealth? Isn't wisdom supposed to be the pathway of wealth?

Well, it coalesces not so fast. Not so fast. What advantage does a wise man have over a fool? In this matter, what advantage does a wise man have over a fool?

[31 : 07] And what does a poor man gain by knowing how to conduct himself before others? So Coleth is saying, we need to be careful.

There's no necessary connection between being wise and being wealthy. So any six-foot-nine basketball player, some six-foot-nine fool who can dribble a basketball, will make more money than you guys will your entire lives this year.

That's true. And there are poor people who know how to handle themselves. They're wise. They know how to conduct themselves around people, but guess what? They're still poor.

They are still poor. And so, wise man, if you think wisdom is the pathway to wealth, then open up your eyes. You're just plain wrong. Sometimes it is.

Sometimes it's not. Well, the next objection seems to come from someone who says, you know what, I'm not falling all over myself in order to get rich. I just want a few good things and that will be enough.

[32 : 15] And so this is the harder one to nail down because this is the more moderate person. And they have a proverb of their own. Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite.

You see, I just want a few good things right in front of me. I'm not chasing, going over every hill in order to find some get quick rich scheme.

I'm not lining up at the line to get lottery. I just want a healthy bank account. I just want to save enough for my retirement.

I have very modest goals. This is what I want to do. But what does Colossus say about even this moderate approach? And he's really poking us hard.

What does he say? Havel. It's a chasing after the wind. It's not just the roving of the appetite in verse 9 that is meaningless.

[33 : 16] The whole thing is meaningless. The whole thing is a chasing after the wind. Well, the next objection is wait a second.

Okay. You know what? I know that's true for those people. But this is a different situation than I'm in. This isn't true for me. I'm different. The situation I'm in is different.

I know it's true for them but give me a chance. Give me a chance to try to do this whole wealth thing. And you know what? I can do it right even when everyone else is doing wrong.

Yeah, right. Everyone is the exception. Everyone's the exception. But whatever exists has already been named and what man is has been known. There is nothing new under the sun.

So your situation is no different than anyone else's situation and you're not different. What you are has already been known. You've already been measured and you've already been found wanting.

[34 : 19] you're not different. No man can contend with one who is stronger than he. I think this is talking about God. If you are pursuing wealth, if that's what you're living for, what you are doing is fighting against God and you are contending with someone who is stronger than you are.

And no one can box God and win. That's what he's saying. And then all your talk, all this talk, all these objections, it's just hot air.

It's just hot air. The more you object, the more you argue, the more words you use, the less meaning they have. And what does it profit anyone? And so you're just talking and talking and trying to explain why it's better for you, why wealth is really the answer for you.

And he's saying you're talking and talking, but the more you talk, the less meaning you have. And so God is backing us into a corner where he's cut off all the objections and he's taking away every excuse and he says, stop talking.

You're just babbling like an idiot. Do your words do anyone any good? Do all these objections really overcome what I'm saying?

[35 : 44] So stop talking and listen. You don't know what is good for you. Your life is very limited.

You come and you go. Your life is short and it's fleeting. It's like a shadow. And you don't know what's good for you. We can go down to the nursery and ask some of those babies what is good for them.

And they don't have the slightest clue. Would you give your five-year-old everything they ask for? No. And that's what we're like. We think we know what's good for us but we don't.

And we are so stubborn about bowing down to this idol of wealth, aren't we? We're so stubborn about it. We think that we know what's good for us but we don't.

And we're so limited. We can't tell what's going to happen after we die. What will happen under the sun after he's gone. So our life comes and goes and we're here for such a short time that we don't have time to figure out what's good for us and what's bad for us.

[36 : 54] There's no reason for our arrogant pursuit of wealth. When God is saying this is futile, there's no point in us saying, well, it's not futile for me.

It's not. And Coleth can only say, you got to understand who you are. You have to understand your limitations.

You're here, you're gone. Your life is a mist. So don't pursue wealth and don't think that if I could just arrive that I'll be happy. It's not true.

Well, Coleth, he's popped this pretty, balloon of wealth. And he's shown us what it is.

So for all of Satan's bluster and all of the world's huffing and puffing, all that balloon is full of air. It's empty. It's a veil.

[37 : 54] And now he shows us a more beautiful way. So go back to chapter 5, verse 18. Then I realized that it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in his toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given him, for this is his lot.

You could translate it. Then I realized that it is good and beautiful for a man to eat and drink. So what's the good way?

What's the beautiful way to live? Well, it's to eat and drink and find satisfaction in your labor. Well, how can you do that?

Well, the next verse answers, Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work, this is a gift of God.

So the beautiful life, the better way, the good way, is the life lived under the grace of God. So living on your works, living on your works leads to darkness, frustration and anger, but living under God's grace leads to this beautiful happiness of verses 19 and 20.

[39 : 19] And so God, in his grace, he gives us the can of peaches, and then he gives us the can opener called grace. And we get to enjoy this life because of his grace.

And so, how does living under grace work? How is it different than living like a rich man or someone who's pursuing wealth?

Well, instead of saying today, I have to leave my cave and I have to kill something or I'm going to starve, I'm going to say, you know what? My father in heaven knows what I need.

And he's going to worry about it for me so I don't have to worry about it. So I'm going to go to my job and I'm going to enjoy it because you know what? It's a gift from him. And instead of dreading, of waking up and dreading a monotonous job that I'm just going to wake up and say, Lord, I'm alive.

That's grace. Because I deserve to die in my sleep and wake up in hell. But here I am. I'm alive. That's amazing grace. So thank you, God.

[40 : 35] And then when I go to my breakfast table, I'm going to eat my cereal and drink my coffee and I'm going to enjoy it and say, you know what? I don't deserve this. I deserve to starve.

But here God's giving this to me and so I'm going to enjoy it. What kind of grace is this? This is amazing grace that I'm enjoying right here at the breakfast table.

And I'm going to go to work at my monotonous job and instead of killing myself in order to get ahead, I'm going to enjoy it because this job is a gift from God.

He didn't have to give me work to do, but you know what? Man needs work to do. And he gave me this job. He has this job perfectly picked out for me right now and he's given it to me to do.

He knows what's good for me. Man, he doesn't know what's good for him, but God, the Father, knows what's good for a man to do. And so here he is. He gives me this job. What kind of grace is this?

[41 : 33] This is amazing grace. And so when I get home, I'm going to play with my kids and I'm going to flirt with my wife and I'm going to go to sleep because it's a gift from God and I'm going to do it all to the praise of his glorious grace.

And you know what? If you do that day after day, your life takes on a different color. It becomes the beautiful life, becomes the good life.

life. And yeah, you know what? Everything Ecclesiastes up to this point has said is true. You are getting nowhere. At the end of the day, you're going to be naked and in a coffin and that's it.

And you come naked and you leave naked. But God keeps you so happy in between. You don't even think about it. It doesn't trouble you.

So do you see the beauty of living under God's grace? When you do, God keeps you so occupied with all these good things that he's giving you that in a way your life is lifted out of the nastiness, the havel, and it fades from view.

[42 : 54] It's still there, but who cares? God loves me. He's taking care of me. He's pouring out his gifts on me. He's giving me this job and this family and these things to enjoy.

And he's so good. And I can't help but be happy about it. And so, brothers and sisters, this is a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

This isn't some prosperity gospel. I mean, we've shot that out of the water already, haven't we? This isn't that. This is what a beautiful, spiritual life looks like in day-to-day activities at its best.

And that's what Jesus came to give us. I came to give them life that they might have life to the full.

And that verse, that Jesus' intentions for us, that has immense connotations for eternal life.

life. I mean, the fullness of life is not ever found here, but it will someday in the future. But, he came that we might enter the kingdom of God.

[44 : 07] And what is the kingdom of God described like so many times in the gospels? Jesus uses the banquet, the feast. feast. And so, that's what the kingdom of God is like.

And we enter into the kingdom of God. And so, God is the host, and we are the guests, and he showers good things on us. And so, when we live under grace, day by day, we start feasting now.

We start enjoying it now. More will come later, but now, he's given us something to enjoy. And so, my unbelieving friends, you don't know what you're missing.

You don't know what you're missing. Your pursuit of wealth is killing you. And God is offering you life, real life, to enjoy. And you can have it. It's in Jesus.

Every grace comes through him and through the cross. And so, all the grace that you need to enjoy, this short life, that you're going to be here for a little bit and then gone and into eternity, it's in Jesus.

[45 : 14] And so, do you really think that the God of the universe, who is full of joy, who's overflowing with joy, wants you to be miserable? Is he telling you to come to him so that you can be miserable?

No, he's saying, come so that you can actually live, that you can enjoy life and life to the fullest. But you have to turn from your sin.

You can't love God and money. It's either one or the other. So which will you choose? Choose life.

Choose life. I mean, God sent his son and this love that you might have him if you want him.

So choose life. And in God's mercy, if you come to him, he will forgive all of your sins.

[46 : 15] Just think of that. All of them. Gone. So choose life. Choose life. Well, let's sing.

Let's sing of that feast that we begin to enjoy now and that we will enjoy forever and ever. And even in hymn 271, how sweet and awful is the place.

It's a prayer that God would fill up his church. Hymn 271, let's stand as we sing. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for a redeeming grace. Thank you for saving amazing grace. That you would call sinners like us who have scorned you so many times, who have surely forfeited all your favor and every smile.

Thank you for calling us, for drawing us to yourself. Holy Spirit, thank you for putting your hands around our hearts and making us new and giving us new desires and making us new within writing the law in our hearts that we would love God.

[47 : 40] Thank you for the gospel, for the gospel of Jesus Christ that tells us that all of our sins can be forgiven, that we can be adopted into your family through Jesus Christ.

I pray that you would exalt your grace in our lives, exalt your grace at our breakfast tables and our lunch tables and in every room of our house and at our work and in every part of our lives, that we would be enjoying your gifts and then turning them to your praise.

God, I pray that you would not enjoy anything and refuse to thank you for it or experience some good thing and refuse to enjoy it.

Father, I pray that you would help us to be godly, godly in our everyday lives. And Father, I pray for those who do not love you, who are still in love with themselves and with the sin of their hearts.

Will you call them and woo them to yourself? Oh, good shepherd, make your voice heard tonight. In Jesus' name, amen.