

Daniel 06-05-14a

As we continue our worship this morning, this is the 14th day of May 2006. We will continue our study in the book of Daniel this morning in chapter 11 and moving into chapter 12. We will pause at this point to take the opportunity of exercising our priesthood and ensuring that we are in a condition and in a position to receive the ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

We can look together at God's word, but it is God's spirit who is truly the teacher, who through his supernatural work, rather than causing us to speak in tongues or have an ecstatic experience or heal or do anything of a temporary nature, he does a permanent work. He does the work of storing God's word in our souls and using it to transform us into the image and likeness of the Savior. I don't know about you, but given a choice between a temporary gift of the Spirit or a permanent ministry of the Spirit, I would take that permanent ministry every time.

This is our opportunity to see him at work in giving us insight and understanding in the soul, breaking up the rocks, plowing the soil, and planting the seed of God's word so that we can bear the fruit that God wants our lives to manifest. It is critically important that not only as we live our lives moment by moment and day by day, but particularly at the times when we are meditating on God's word or studying God's word together, that we ensure that we are susceptible to the ministry and the presence of God's Holy Spirit. Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is to receive the encouragement and the blessing that comes from fellowship with believers of like mind to reflect on your faithfulness, your grace, and the gifts that you have given us together as a group, whether it is a family, whether it is an assembly such as this.

In every case, we know that where two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, he is there in the midst, and he is the perfect reflection of your character and your plan and provision for the human race. We thank you for him. We thank you for his work on the cross, rescuing us from our lost and hopeless condition and entering us into relationship with you.

Particularly in this age, we are so privileged to be adopted as sons, to be entered into the body of Christ, to have the full-orbed ministry of your spirit and the completed canon of scripture as our guide and food for our souls. We live in a wonderful country. We live in an exciting time, even as challenges mount and as the spirit of Antichrist begins to be more and more manifest in the world.

We know that this is all accounted for and provided for in your plan, that you have allowed certain things in through the defense and through the hedge that you place around us for our benefit and for our good. We thank you for that. We thank you for the leadership that you have provided for us at the national and at the state and at the local level, the structure of our country and of our society that enables us to pursue our lives as believers in freedom.

We are not persecuted. We are not hunted down and imprisoned or killed. This is not the case

in many other areas of the world.

We are not in fear of our lives. We are not in fear of loss or of violence for our faith. We pray for those who are, and we ask a special blessing on them this morning, that you will be with them and minister your word through your spirit to them in a special way to give them encouragement and comfort and motivation to see the goal and the hope that lies before us.

We pray for those in the military and in our government who, through the exercise of their duties, may not be able to assemble, may not be able to receive a fresh look at your word this morning, that you will revive and renew the word that is already in their souls and minister it to them in a way that is an encouragement and provides strength, comfort, and guidance for the fulfillment of their duties as they seek to fulfill them before you. We ask your blessing now on our study in the book of Daniel and all of the passages that we look at this morning from your word. May the Lord Jesus Christ be glorified in all that we do.

We ask it in his name. Amen. Well, it is Mother's Day, and I thought about having the whole youngest mother stand up, oldest mother stand up, and give flowers and so on, but of course, that's a little bit more tradition than we will probably indulge ourselves in, and yet, because we do now have stained glass windows in the church, I felt like we ought to at least give some nod to the occasion.

So, our scripture reading this morning is going to be the traditional scripture reading for this day. You can guess it without me telling it to you. The last chapter in the book of Proverbs, and it is the utterance of King Lemuel, which his mother taught him, and it goes on into the description of the virtuous wife, and I think that there are a lot of ways of bearing fruit in your life.

Some people have children and some don't. It doesn't really matter in terms of the outcome in human history. God isn't looking to see how many children we can have.

He's looking to see what kind of fruit our soul will bear, and there is seed planted and there is fruit born in our lives as believers when we focus on the word of God. But, this is the reading churches all across the nation have been in this passage this morning, and why not us? We shouldn't avoid it just to be perverse, and it's a great chapter. Let me begin by pointing out that we know virtually nothing about Lemuel except that he was the king, and that verses 2 through 9 came from his mother.

Many see this as an alternate name or a nickname for Solomon, since he, as we know, is the author of this and this collection in general. Let's read this together. The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him.

What, my son? And what, son of my womb? And what, son of my vows? Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings. Of course, right away, if this is Solomon, you have to think he's a brave man to stick this in the collection. Maybe that's why he

put it last, because he didn't follow this advice in his own life.

700 wives and 300 concubines isn't my idea of not giving your strength to women. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink, lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted. Give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those who are bitter of heart.

Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her, so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeks wool and flax, and willingly works with her hands. She is like the merchant ships, she brings her food from afar. She also rises while it is yet night, and provides food for her household, and a portion for her maidservants.

She considers a field and buys it. From her profits she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and strengthens her arms.

She perceives that her merchandise is good, and her lamp does not go out by night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She extends her hand to the poor.

Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed with scarlet. She makes tapestry for herself.

Her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies sashes for the merchants.

Strength and honor are her clothing. She shall rejoice in time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.

She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also, and he praises her.

Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all. Charm is deceitful, and beauty is passing. But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates. The literal description. Not every woman is going to have a business that involves flax and that produces an income.

Not every woman is going to spin her own cloth. Not every woman has a house of

maidservants. In fact, most don't unless they have a daughter or two.

They can press into service as a maid. These are principles, aren't they? These are emblematic. They are symbolic for the attitude and the virtuous character of a godly woman.

Doesn't even have to be married for these things to be true. But the attitude toward the poor, the attitude toward those in the house, the attitude toward the husband, these are the three categories that all of these statements fall into, and it's all about the thoughts and intents of the heart. You may or may not find these specific expressions.

May or may not have literal, physical children. I know a number of couples who haven't had children, and it's just a circumstance. It's neither here nor there.

It's a choice for some. It's an impossibility for others. It isn't really the point.

I have had the same thought in terms of people who do have children. Some have sons. Some have daughters.

Some have sons and daughters. And people who get hung up about passing on their family name, they say, well, I've had only daughters. My name is going to perish.

I'm the end of a twig on the family tree, and they're going to get married and change their names, and I'll disappear. It's of complete and total immateriality. Everybody is going to have what lasts and what endures and the treasure that comes from God in the kingdoms which are to come, and these temporary time-bound relationships are going to be reflected only as far as they have a spiritual character.

If there is a marriage that has a spiritual component, well, that partnership is going to endure. If there are family units where there is a spiritual component, those relationships are going to endure. And there are other relationships that are just as legal and just as fine sounding on paper in this life that will not endure into the kingdom.

There are marriages where the people will be widely separated. One spouse will be in the New Jerusalem, and the other won't. And our relationships, as they translate into the future, are going to be of a completely higher order.

I think the truest and best relationships in marriage and in family are going to transcend anything that we experience in this life, because they have the power of God in them, and that is what truly makes them valuable. So, don't look at this so much in the literal sense. Look at it in the spiritual sense.

What do these reflect? There is a warning in verses four and five against the abuse of alcohol. Just as in the New Testament it says, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. This is the Old Testament equivalent, if you will.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel. It is not for kings to drink wine. And notice how it is repeated,

because it is emphatic.

Now, what does wine stand for? It is not just grabbing the old bottle of gallo and heading off to the basement to get soused. This is the pleasures of the world. Remember, she starts out by saying, don't give your strength to women or your ways to that which destroys kings.

This is sensual pleasure. In the ancient world, there were only a few ways that you could really obtain gratification of the flesh. You could get soused, or you could go the way of partying with the opposite gender.

And these have been multiplied almost infinitely in our day. We have lots of things that stand in for giving your strength to women or drinking wine. There are people who can't get detached from their iPod or their MP3 player.

It used to be in the 70s, before the miniature technology came along, people carried boom boxes around on their shoulder. You don't really see that anymore. But in those days, if you wanted portable music, you loaded the thing up with 6D batteries and carried it around with the big 4-inch speakers, blowing the music in one ear and out the other.

Well, now we have got people walking around, it used to really surprise me. And now it's a commonplace. I was walking into Home Depot yesterday, and there was a lady ahead of me that was just talking to herself up a blue streak.

She was talking, waving her arms. And I thought, well, you know, I used to see people like this on the corner and they were crackers. I remember in particular, I was driving through someplace out in the sticks.

I was a little bit lost. I was taking a shortcut and it didn't end up where I thought it would. I was in an unfamiliar place.

I was driving through one of these little four building towns where you get to an intersection and then you leave and you're gone. And there was a black man standing out on the corner of the one stoplight in this little town. Now this was back in the 70s, so I know he didn't have anything else going on.

He was just standing there. But he was preaching to somebody. He was waving his hands and talking and looking around.

I looked at him and he looked at me, but he just kind of looked past me and through me. And he was in some other venue. He wasn't really attached to the land of the living there.

And we used to think this is great. Well, now it's somebody with their little earpiece cell phone or they're singing along with their rap song or something. Used to be, you could tell when somebody was singing because they were singing too loud off key and you didn't hear any accompaniment.

And you would think, oh, they must have earphones on because they sound horrible and they don't know it. But now, even when people seem to be talking, they may be doing one of these talking rap deals coming out of their iPod. Well, all of this is, I mean, what is the matter with you that you can't go from your car to the store without listening to music? Or you can't wait until you get, I mean, this is my personal opinion now, that you can't confine your phone.

I carry a cell phone. I talk when people call me. But I was in the men's room of Lowe's or Home Depot or someplace, and there were two guys in there talking on their cell phones, echoing up over the doors of the stalls.

You know what I mean? You just think, could it not wait? Could you say, let me call you back? Or one guy called up somebody from in there. Fred, I just couldn't. I just think, but we are, you know, society is no longer based on face to face contact.

You know, you've got instant messaging, you've got email, you've got cell phones, and the little earpieces that people look like they've just stepped off a spaceship. I saw a lady just a couple days ago that had, I didn't realize it, but there was a blue light flashing in her hair. I looked at her and thought, is this a new kind of beret that you put in your hair? It's got this little blinking LED.

Well, come to find out, it was one of these little cell phone earpiece deals. Blinking away. And she wasn't talking to anybody.

I assume she wasn't talking to anybody. She was talking to me. Anyway, sensual pleasure.

We have, look at the infinitude of entertainment. Look at your next Radio Shack catalog. Look at the different ways that we can be amused.

Home entertainment centers, stuff in our cars, and so on. Think of those things when you go through and look at the contrast between the king, who is looking to wine or looking to women, ostensibly he could be looking to song, and this dissipates his strength. She says to him, when you do these things, it's going to dissipate your strength.

Do you want to be weak or do you want to be strong? Entertainment is a wonderful thing, and I am as big a gadget guy as you will ever find, but we have to have balance and we have to have limits, just like we do in any good thing. Food is good. Excess food is gluttony.

Boy, the old shelves are getting bare. I go to look for a word and it's not there. I kept wanting to say bigamy and maybe that wasn't it.

Gluttony. There is nothing wrong with a glass of wine, but a bottle of wine in a half hour or so, you're getting drunk. The Bible specifically says, be not drunk.

Lots of things are good in their place and in their limits and maintaining a balance, but if you get unbalanced, just like any martial arts instructor will tell you, you are not strong. You weaken

yourself. You put yourself in a vulnerable and potentially dangerous position.

Open your mouth for the speechless. Open your mouth in the cause of those who are appointed to die. We have a hymn, rescue the perishing, care for the dying, and this isn't talking, although it is a metaphor for those who are physically perishing and dying, but metaphorically speaking, look for those who are lost, in the grip of spiritual death and speak the truth in love.

Who can find a virtuous wife? This is actually an acrostic poem. Each of these remaining 22 verses begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet and so after Lemuel's mother gives him advice, he now expands on that initial advice. Do not give your strength to women or your ways to that which destroys kings.

And he says, you know what? This is what does the opposite of destroying a king. This is what makes a king. This is what makes a noble man in the area of the choice of a mate.

The wife of noble character has been mentioned earlier in Proverbs chapter 12 and verse 4, says an excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones. You can't beat the Bible for graphic descriptions. I would never think of that phrase, but when you think of rotteness in the bones, you think of something that's just going to crush and snap.

A wife who causes shame is a rotteness in the bones. What does that do? It takes away your strength. An excellent wife is like a crown.

It is the thing you notice first. Why do they put a king's crown on top of his head? It's the first thing you see. You can't look at the king without seeing the crown.

And that's the mark of his success and of his domination as the potentate, as the monarch. Ruth is also called a woman of noble character over in Ruth chapter 3, verse 11. Naomi tells Ruth, do not fear my daughter.

I will, uh, I'm sorry. Uh, Boaz says to Ruth, uh, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.

And this is something that is manifest. It's like the crown sitting on the king's head. It is visible.

When it says who can find such a woman, it doesn't mean they don't exist. It means that they should be admired because they are few and far between. We had the same phraseology in Proverbs chapter 20 in verse 6. Most men will proclaim each his own goodness.

Everybody's ready to tell you how good they are in either explicitly or implicitly, but who can find a faithful man? Lots of people talk a good fight, but who lives the good fight? Who fights the good fight of faith? Proverbs 20, verse 6. They are more valuable than rubies. What else can you think of as compared to rubies in the Proverbs? Wisdom. Proverbs chapter 8. Wisdom is

better than rubies.

All the things one may desire cannot be compared with her. And many times there are people who are single, either they're single their whole life or they are single through bereavement or they're single because their marriage necessarily dissolves. But this wife, you remember wisdom is pictured as a woman who calls out in the streets to young men.

And the picture there is let wisdom be your virtuous woman. Let wisdom be your wife. Let wisdom be your crown of glory.

Wisdom is also compared to a crown of glory. And so there is this great relationship in Proverbs especially, symbolically and suggestively between the virtuous woman and the principles of wisdom, of the truth of God's word. And you can make that your, you know, this supposedly this is what nuns do.

Nuns are betrothed to Christ and so on. Well, they have the right idea. They're just messed up.

But there's a sense in which all of us can betroth ourselves spiritually to wisdom because the word of God is the mind of Christ and we are the body and the bride of Christ. And to the extent that wisdom is pleasant to our soul, as we're seeing in Proverbs chapter 2, that memory verse, when we get to the second section there in chapter 2, when wisdom is pleasant to your soul, understanding will guard you and discretion will keep you and all these other good benefits happen. And it's a crown of glory.

It is strength to your bones instead of rottenness. And so there is a comparison that you can make between a great marriage and the believer who weds himself or herself to the word of God and lets that be the strength and the glory of their life. It's more valuable than rubies.

In verse 11, it says, the heart of her husband safely trusts her so that he will have no lack of gain. Three times in these 22 verses, you have this virtuous woman's husband mentioned. Here's the first one.

The next one is in verse 23. Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land. And the third one is in verse 28.

Her husband praises her. He trusts her and he doesn't have to worry about the household. He leaves it in her capable hand.

She takes care of that. And this is a foundation. He can look outward and fulfill his responsibility going all the way back to the assignments that God gave Adam and Eve when they left the garden.

She is responsible for the children. He is responsible to earn the bread by the sweat of his brow. That's the traditional model.

It doesn't mean you can't work in a different way. It doesn't mean that women can't be a source

of income and so on. But the model is that the wife and possibly mother is primarily overseeing the household.

That lets the man, it's a teamwork thing, that lets the man look outward and sit in the gates and do the things that his responsibility, his judgment is directed outward. Her responsibility and judgment are directed inward. She therefore is an asset, not a liability.

She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. It doesn't say as long as he is a great guy and maintains the romance or as long as he doesn't forget the anniversary. It says she does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

This reflects that same faithfulness that we saw earlier. Lots of men will tell you about their good, but who can find a faithful man? Well, here is a faithful woman. She does the shopping.

These merchant ships are now shopping carts. They go out and come back laden or trunks of cars or minivans or other great containers. Our little silver merchant ship out there in the driveway goes out and comes back fully laden with food from afar and plants and all kinds of other things.

She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and down in verse 18 it says her lamp does not go out by night. So she is faithful and consistent in fulfilling these duties from early dawn to late evening is the idea. In the early morning she rises up and gets the food preparation started.

At the end of the day when it gets dark she has the lamp and she is spinning the cloth. She does have an outward view in verse 20. She looks at the poor and in the area of charities and so forth to be supported.

This works out great because there are a lot of charities, for example, in Dallas where you can make clothing donations, you can make canned good donations. People will come up and pick up furniture and cast off items and so on. This makes sense if the woman is largely devoting her attention to the home.

She is the best one to choose what can go out. She extends her hand to the poor. She reaches out her hands to the needy.

She also has the means of doing this because this is the idea of personal and knowledgeable charity. It doesn't say behold a man rises up and sets aside 20 shekels for the poor. If you are in charge of the household goods you can give somebody some seed to plant.

You can give somebody something to tide them through a tough time. But the woman at the home seeing the poor, meeting the poor, talking with the poor and having a good idea of their needs can be wise in charity instead of impersonal and oblivious. Well, I'll mail off a check and let's hope it does somebody some good.

It's personal, it's individual, it's knowledgeable charity with what is available to her hand. She is charitable with what she has under her immediate control. In verse 21 it says she's not afraid of snow for all her household is clothed with scarlet.

They're not clothed with rags and they're not even clothed with ordinary clothes. Scarlet, as you may recall, was the expensive stuff. They're not just clothed, they're clothed well.

Now how is this possible? What if it's a poor family? Is she not a virtuous woman because she can't put scarlet on her children? Scarlet represents that which is admired and respected and which reflects wealth. If you go from the literal to the suggestive, to the spiritual side, what does this mean? The winter time is a time of coming trouble, a time of hardship. Winter was always hard in an agricultural economy because you have to have stored up in the summer and you've got to survive the winter so that you can plant and plow and get your next year's provisions.

So when it talks about her children and clothing them for the winter with scarlet, what's it really saying? She is attentive to the needs of the children and as she raises them, she teaches them those things which will prepare them for the hardships to come. The winter that will come when they leave the nest, go out into the cold world, and what she gives them is not just rags and tatters. The spiritual clothing, if you will, the spiritual preparation that she gives them, they are going to be rich in truth and in spiritual perspective and understanding when they go out into the cold world.

She will do for her children what Lemuel's mother has done for him in these first nine verses. Many people skip those first nine and just jump in at verse 10, but you really have to have that introduction because she is the virtuous woman that has put this in the heart of Lemuel to write this acrostic poem. He's looking at the example of his mother.

Who was Solomon's mother, by the way? Do you think she was a woman of this nature? Do you think that she was capable and that she clothed her son in scarlet and so forth? We know that she did, both in the literal sense and in the spiritual sense. And this is the reason that the line of Christ comes through women like Ruth and Bathsheba. Even Rahab the harlot had some scarlet on hand, didn't she? She makes tapestry for herself.

Her clothing is fine linen and purple. We know from the New Testament what this means. Don't let your adornment be of the external kind, but that raiment that is within.

Godly character, inner beauty. And it is my firm belief that regardless of what kind of physical appearance we have now, I think the resurrection is going to reflect on the outside what is developed on the inside. And there are going to be resurrection bodies that are going to be of extraordinary angelic beauty.

You remember what the angels looked like to the sodomites, in both sense of the word, when they came and visited Lot? They weren't even interested in women. They wanted those two

angels because they were extraordinarily beautiful to look upon. People in that town could not take their eyes off those two angels.

They are beautiful in appearance. You can imagine the angels of God, what they must look like, what Michael and Gabriel must look like. Prophets fell down at their feet thinking they were God himself because they reflect so much of God's character and God's integrity and God's beauty in their own beauty.

Well, this is what our resurrection bodies are going to do. And we don't have to worry so much about trying to nip and tuck and we should try to look nice, of course, everything in balance. But if you want an extreme makeover, work on your soul.

That's the body that's going to be around into the indefinite eternal future. And if people spent one percent of the time and effort on their spiritual and inner beauty as they did on their external, we'd have a lot more ability to reflect the glory of God in the eternal future, wouldn't we? She makes linen garments in verse 24 and sells them and supplies sashes for the merchants. She not only has enough for her family in terms of cloth that she makes, but she has some for others.

And once again, when you think about the teaching that mothers weave for their children or for anyone with whom they come in contact, sometimes it's going to be children in your extended family that you get to be the favorite uncle or the favorite aunt. But to the extent that you can weave that fabric by your example, by your daily life, by the things that you might say and provide for the future, provide these things not only for children, but you also have opportunities outward. It's sort of like the charity aspect where there are going to be friends, there are going to be co-workers, there are going to be associates, there are going to be neighbors.

And all of us know ladies who are now in the grandmother range who we have watched and seen be a blessing and a benefit to those on the outside as well as to their own family by doing many of the same things. The skills and the truths and the things that they've learned and woven together in their own soul, they are able to pass on to others. And there is mutual benefit.

There's blessing there and that blessing is returned. And that's really what's spoken of here by the sashes and the cloth that's taken outside the home. It's a benefit to everyone.

The household benefits and the people out there benefit. Because this woman not only looks to her own children and supplies them with what they need, but that wisdom and that insight from God can be a benefit to others on the outside as well. She opens her mouth with wisdom in verse 26, and on her tongue is the law of kindness.

We have many different kinds of law in Scripture, don't we? We have the law that is absolute. We have the law of the letter of the law which kills. And then we have the spirit of the law which

gives life.

And typically in a household, you find that the husband and father is more on the letter of the law. What did I say? Didn't you hear me? This is the rule. This is the policy.

This is the plan. This is the way it's going to happen. And then on behalf of the children, you have the mother and the wife interceding and saying, now dear, they're just children, you know, et cetera.

My dad used to call that running interference. They're always running interference for the kids. Well, that's the law of kindness.

That's what helps maintain balance in the home. You have to have a healthy balance. You do need the letter of the law.

You do need strict policy and guidance and justice, but justice is tempered with mercy. And on the lips of the virtuous woman is the law of kindness. And God himself is a perfect mixture of justice and righteousness and kindness and compassion.

He is the God of justice, but he is the God of love. Well, we can't get that all shoehorned into one human soul. And so God puts us together as couples.

And typically the woman has that nurturing and sympathetic instinct and that modifies and balances out the rather harsh marine-like nature of the man, at least in my observation. Her children rise up and call her blessed. Her husband also praises her.

It is important for all of us to remember to express appreciation. It is an easy thing to receive and to take and to be the beneficiary of things. Look at Israel in the wilderness.

The manna fell for 40 years, but there was only a fraction of them that remembered to look up to heaven. You remember the 10 lepers that Jesus cleansed and they immediately went away leaping and rejoicing and heading back to town. And then one turned around and came back and he was the Samaritan who remembered to come back and express appreciation.

It is a convicting principle in God's Word that we are not appreciative enough of those who labor, getting up before sunrise and laboring on into the evening, providing for the household. And the husband should praise her and the children should rise up and call her blessed. And this rising up is sort of an immediate thing like they will stand up and say, you're a great mom or whatever.

But there's a little bit of poetic expression there in the sense that when these children grow up, they're going to look back and really have an appreciation, especially when they have children of their own for their parents and the extent to which they did those good things. Many daughters have done well, the husband says, but you excel them all. And it's an easy thing for a husband who is married to a virtuous wife to say these words and mean them with all his heart

because for the husband, that woman is the best, designed by God.

It doesn't matter how you arrived into your marriage, whether you were saved or unsaved, or wherever you are. It's like my roommate used to tell me, wherever you go, there you are. Well, here you are.

And this, you know, here I am and the ones that God has given me. And it ought to be our endeavor to appreciate things as from God and say, you excel them all. You are the one for me.

You are a gift from God. And that's the way I choose to view you, no matter what. Despite my weaknesses, despite yours, for better, for worse, richer, poorer, you excel them all.

That has to be our attitude in both directions. Charm is deceitful. Beauty is passing.

But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. The key to all of this on both sides, whether it's children, the husband, or the virtuous woman, is fear of the Lord. That's what makes this work.

That's what makes it true. Well, it's a great passage. It's worth looking at on this day, on Mother's Day.

And that's what we've done. When we come back from our break, we'll resume our study in the book of Daniel at the end of chapter 11.