

01-09-09a Ecclesiastes

Let's continue our worship this morning by turning for our scripture reading to Psalm 91. Psalm 91. The first portion of this psalm should be familiar to us.

There are some who have memorized this entire psalm, which I commend. Psalm 91 bears directly on the portion of Ecclesiastes we will study this morning, which is chapter 6, the beginning portion of chapter 6, indeed pretty much the entire chapter. Psalm 91 says, And under his wings you shall take refuge.

His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you.

Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord who is my refuge, even the Most High your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways.

In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent. You shall trample underfoot.

Because he has set his love upon me, therefore I will deliver him. I will set him on high because he has known my name. He shall call upon me and I will answer him.

I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Of course those last three verses are in quotes and rightfully so, because these are the words of God. If you take a moment to pause and reflect and observe, you notice that there is the promise of deliverance, shelter, and protection in the middle section of this psalm. He says you will not be afraid of terror by night, arrows that fly by day, pestilence in darkness, destruction at noonday.

Others may be falling, it will not come near you. Only with your eyes you will look. This is the principle, this is not a proof text by any means, but there are those who think that the church is going to go through the tribulation.

There are verses where there is a big argument about whether the Greek says you will be delivered through the time of trouble or be delivered out of the time of trouble. Those who are mid-trib or post-tribulational in their dispensational theology think that the church is not raptured, that there is only one coming of Christ. It is both the rapture of the church and the second advent.

They don't see the seven year period separating the rapture and the second advent. But this is

the principle that you can see the destruction of the wicked without experiencing it yourself. Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked.

You are not going to have to endure along with them. He says no evil shall befall you in verse 10, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling. However, look at verse 15.

He shall call upon me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him in this time of trouble.

In the beginning it says there is not going to be any trouble. There will be no plague, no destruction, nothing will come near you, no arrows, no pestilences. Yet in verse 15 he says he shall call upon me and I will answer him and be with him in the day of trouble.

Is there trouble or is there not? And this is a carefully constructed psalm that is designed to point out to us that it depends on your perspective. Paul the apostle, from a human point of view, from a secular point of view, had all kinds of trouble. He was a criminal, he was jailed, he was beaten.

He was shipwrecked, he was afflicted with a malady of some sort, probably in his eyes. He suffered a great deal in terms of circumstances and yet you could talk to Paul and he is rejoicing. He says the sufferings of this present age are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed.

And so from Paul's perspective these were just a fly on the windshield, a very minor and insignificant thing. When God is with us as believers, what might seem to be an insurmountable obstacle or a tremendous difficulty or a terrible evil or calamity or catastrophe is a light and momentary affliction, not worthy to be compared. It all depends on what we dwell on, what we set our sights on.

We were talking Friday night in our study of Luke about the fact that you cannot measure. Jesus tells the disciples, you can't look at the men on whom the tower of Siloam fell and decide that they were worse sinners than anyone else in Jerusalem. You can't look at the Galileans that Pilate executed and mingled their blood with their sacrifices.

You can't look at them and say, well they were worse sinners than the rest of the Galileans. What you can look at is the fact that there is a swift and sudden judgment on those who do not change their minds, who do not pursue their calling. In the same way, you can't judge where someone stands with regard to God by looking at their circumstances and saying, well look, they're blessed, they're prosperous, they've got a wonderful set of circumstances here or there.

We can't look at ourselves and say, well I must be doing well with God because look at my bank account, look at my house, look at my car, look at my family, look at the esteem in which I'm held by others. There are a lot of believers who do this, and you might as well take a look at the Pharisees. They had wealth, they were highly esteemed, they had success and fame in a lot of

different areas, and Jesus roundly condemns them and pronounces woes upon their head.

So circumstances, good or bad, are not a telltale. I'd heard that term telltale all of my life until I went to the Naval Academy and found out what a telltale really is. It's the tail end of a piece of line.

There's a piece of line that is tied to a sail, and it's six or eight inches long, and it is there solely to be looked at. You look at it, and the telltale is going to blow whatever direction the air is moving across the sail. And as you know, sails don't just billow out like a parachute and pull the ship along.

Air travels across the surface of a sail, and it is a differential in pressure, much like what happens on an airplane wing. It's sort of like an airplane wing turned vertical instead of horizontal. In the same way that the horizontal wing of an airplane, because of the curved surface on one side, there's a reduction in pressure, and that lifts the plane into the air because you've got a flat underside and a curved topside of a wing that creates a pressure differential because the air has to travel faster in order to get over the wing at the same speed that the air underneath the wing is going past, and that creates a drop in pressure.

Well, turn that on end and make it vertical and angle it, and you have a sail. And sails that are curved accomplish the same thing. Well, telltales are attached to a sail to show the direction of airflow across the sail so that you can trim your sails and make sure that you get maximum advantage out of the movement of the air and make the best progress that you can on whichever tack you are on.

Well, circumstances are not necessarily a telltale of where we stand spiritually. Spiritual life and spiritual health are measured by a different standard of measure. It is not circumstances.

People tend to think, oh, this bad thing happened to me, it must be a sign. Well, it may be. You may be coming under judgment in circumstances.

God may be getting your attention by withdrawing provision. He may be bringing a weak area in your soul out into the open by facing you with a challenge that exposes that weak area. But you cannot look at every pressure and say, this is a sign, this is a signal, this is a communication from God.

Because even when we are faced with challenging circumstances, we really have to look into our soul and measure with the measure of faith, measure with the standard of the Word of God. Here is this crisis. Here is this difficulty.

Here is this challenge. Here is this fork in the road. I just saw Yogi Berra interviewed on one of these news programs.

The guy that had all the little whiteboards during the election. I forget his name. He interviewed

Yogi Berra.

And Yogi has just published a book of his memoirs and it's called, When You Come to a Fork in the Road, Take It. And of course he is famous for his little sayings. But we make decisions and God may point out to us the flaw in that decision or we may come to places where we have to make a decision, but we don't look, or we should not look, in circumstances and say, well, two birds flew overhead when I was thinking about option A, so they were doves, so it must be the Holy Spirit, so I'm going to do option A. I mean, there are people that do this.

God uses circumstances to create story problems in our soul that we solve with the information from the Word of God. We don't look in circumstances to find a solution. Circumstances present the problem.

The solution is in the Word of God. The guidance is in the Word of God. The strength and the enablement and the confidence and the hope comes from the Word of God.

Circumstances present the problems. The Word of God presents the solutions. God, the Holy Spirit, conveys that to our souls.

Do not look for solutions in circumstances. Look for solutions in the Word of God. That is the principle.

So here in this psalm we find sort of a contrast because on the one hand he says, you're delivered, you are protected, you are shielded, you are under the wing of God. He is your shield and your buckler. He's your refuge and your fortress.

You will not be afraid. There may be terrors by night. There may be arrows flying by day.

There may be pestilence in the night. There may be destruction laying waste at noonday. The difference is you're not going to be cowering.

You're not going to be fearful if you maintain your confidence in God. These things can be, people can be dropping all around you. We saw a movie that depicted the battle of Stalingrad this past week.

I think it was called Enemy at the Gates. It's ultimately about a sniper for the Russians and a sniper for the Germans who wind up trying to pick each other off in the midst of this battle. But they showed the Russians attempting to stop the attack of the Germans and these guys were dumped off of the boats and they were paired up.

One guy was given a rifle and there was a guy shouting over and over, the first man takes the rifle, the second man runs behind him. When the first man is killed, the second man picks up the rifle. He just kept saying this over and over.

They were just being told that they were going to be fed into the meat grinder. They would run forward and they would be decimated. The few that had survived the fusillade of bullets would turn around and try to return and the Russian officers would shoot them as they returned.

They said don't retreat and they would shoot anybody that was retreating. So you were shot if you went ahead, you were shot if you came behind. You want to talk about a hundred or a thousand falling at your side.

This man who eventually becomes the Russian sniper is one of these that's initially just dumped out of the cattle car and fed into the grinder and he manages to survive. But you think, well, there's just no hope. This is a hopeless situation.

Everyone is falling around me. Well, you may be in the midst of destruction and yet you're not destroyed. You may be in the midst of pestilence and yet you are not infected.

You are not cut down by it. Why is that? Even if you die, even if you do suffer some calamity circumstantially, that's in circumstances. That's where the problems are presented.

The answers are in the soul. The answer is in how do you look at this circumstance. Do you look at it as a calamity or do you look at it as an opportunity? It's just a story problem.

It is an exercise for faith. We tend to get more wrapped up in the problem than we are in solving it. We become emotional.

We become fearful. We become panicky. We become distressed.

And we forget that God at any moment can instantaneously deliver. And He chooses not to. Why? Because it is His will that we face this problem.

This is sort of like throwing your child in the pond for them to learn how to swim. You can snatch them out of there at any time. They are in no danger of drowning.

You make sure that they are going to be taken care of. But in their mind, this is a life and death struggle. But you as the parent, you leave them in there.

And you let them engage in that struggle because it's good for them. It's necessary. And there are many analogies to that in life where someone thinks that this is just awful.

You can think about boot camp. You can think about... I think about plebe year. And you can deliver yourself.

You can quit. You can resign. You can say, I've had enough.

And a lot of people do. But it is for a purpose. And when you recognize that there is a reason, there's a rationale.

I will not surely die. Other people have survived this. I can survive it.

That's just human rationale. But when you look at the fact that God is in control, if you know that God is your shield, if you're abiding in the shadow of the Almighty, then that is a greater reality than the calamity. And look at verse 14.

Because He has set His love upon me, therefore I will deliver Him. The status of our relationship with God determines the level of our deliverance. If we set our love upon God, what is setting love on God? It's the same as the first and greatest commandment.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. He is the highest priority. He is the most important thing.

We look at ourselves as servants in His household rather than owners of a household who are afraid somebody is going to break in and steal. We saw that in Luke. God says, because He has set His love upon me, I will deliver Him.

I will set Him on high because He has known my name. This is a lot more than knowing how to spell Elohim. God has magnified His word above His name.

The name of the Lord is His reputation. It's His being. It's His personality.

It's His character. It's His essence. And when you know God's name, this is what baptism is all about.

Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son. This is not an empty ritual where God's name becomes a mantra like the rosary. This is knowledge of God.

If you baptize someone in God's name, it means that they are immersed in the knowledge of Him, in what can be known of Him. He says that He has known my name. He shall call upon me and I will answer Him.

I will be with Him in trouble. I will deliver Him and honor Him. Why? Because the focus is on God, not on circumstances, not on calamities.

Our gaze and our attention never waver from the fact that we belong to God and we're under the shelter of His wing. This is a critically important thing for us to remember. It's why we're here.

Why doesn't God, at the point of salvation, just take us to be with Himself? Why does He leave us in the world where we can't see Him? We can't hear Him. We don't get the chance to just sit in church all day long. We don't get the chance to just sit and read our Bibles all day long.

We don't see the heavens open and see God sitting on His throne. We don't feel the Holy Spirit moving around inside us. Why are we here, immersed in earthly circumstances? It's the same

reason people throw their kids in the pond.

You have to learn to function. We have to learn to trust. We have to learn to think under pressure and think the right things.

That's why we're here. Let's turn back now to Ecclesiastes 6 where we resume our study after making pretty good progress in chapter 5. I'm sorely tempted to go back and review in chapter 5, but I'm not going to. I will simply say that Solomon points out different ways that people are deflected from having a life that achieves permanent value, from seizing and laying hold of something that lasts.

Most people end up with a life that is a vapor. Most people end up feeding on wind. You think you're full and you're not.

You think you're satisfied and that you have been satisfactory and you're not. You think you have achievements. You think you have something of substance and you really don't.

He talks about different areas where this can take place. Material gain. He that dies with the most toys wins idea.

People who leave a legacy. People who establish a foundation. Sometimes people establish a foundation in somebody else's name.

They have a sister or a wife or a relative who died of some disease, breast cancer, whatever it may be. They create a foundation to try to perpetuate this person's name. They want to honor that person and memorialize their love for that person by doing that.

That's the purpose of the effort that they put in. That's noble and praiseworthy from a human point of view, but if you think about it, at the judgment seat, let me just take a totally hypothetical example. Let's say that Patty got pancreatic cancer and died.

I am grief stricken and I don't want anybody else to go through what I've had to go through in losing my spouse, so I create the Patricia Hall Pancreatic Cancer Memorial Foundation. I drum up money and I go on TV and I write books and I tell the tragic story of how she succumbed to this disease and how brave she was in fighting through it. I commiserate and sympathize with all these other people who also have relatives who are going through pancreatic cancer.

I could be on Oprah. I could be on Good Morning America. I could become famous.

I could write a book. All of this with Patty's name attached to it. This happens all the time and people look up to it.

From the standpoint of being a believer, think about the judgment seat of Christ. You think, well now, isn't this trying to be beneficial to your fellow man and all that? Well, maybe. Why do we do

what we do? Is God glorified? Is this the Yahweh Elohim Pancreatic Cancer Foundation? Or is this the Patricia C. Hall sponsored by Sam Hall Pancreatic Cancer Foundation? Who is the attention focused on? Who is all of the time spent thinking about? Where is the name of God in this? People sometimes say, well, we're Christians and this and the other, but do you really want to spend your time and your days and drum up press notices and write books and cultivate donors and all the rest of this focusing on one specific disease and attaching one person's name to it? This sounds like a pretty cruel and cold-hearted example, but think about the judgment seat of Christ.

What constitutes gold and silver and precious stones? It is the fruit of faith. You don't have to go establish a foundation. You don't have to be altruistic.

You don't have to go out on a crusade to conquer a disease or to conquer a condition of poverty or racism or any of the other ills that afflict the world. There's nothing wrong with doing that in and of itself. It is why we do what we do.

Why is somebody motivated to start a foundation or adopt a cause and go out and crusade? And it can be a very noble crusade and it can be a very worthwhile effort. I am all in favor of scientists and laboratory guys figuring out how to cure diseases and how to fix damaged hearts and all of that. I think that's great.

I have family members that have benefited from the advances in modern science and medicine, and I am grateful to God for it. Nothing against those things, but we as believers have a calling. Do you want to spend your days and all of your spare time and effort crusading against a particular disease or a particular condition? Solomon, remember chapter 1? He says, I tried this.

What is crooked cannot be straightened. What is lacking cannot be filled. You can spend your whole life doing that and you're going to get to the end if that's all you're after and you're going to have emptiness.

You can crusade against poverty. You can crusade against lack of education. You can crusade against drugs.

You can crusade against all kinds of genuine evils in society. You can expend yourself, as Theodore Roosevelt said, you can spend yourself in a worthy cause. But for believers, there's only one worthy cause, and it is the cause of Christ.

It is the calling of God in Christ Jesus. That's why we're here. I've thought about this.

I have interest, most of us. We have interest in a lot of areas. We have interest in music.

We have interest in hobbies. We have interest in different games that are challenging and develop the mind and logical thinking. There's a whole new category of endeavor when it comes to computers.

There are people that have interactive games with other people, and there's problem solving. You can justify it 16 ways if you choose to, but you think about the investment of time in learning to master Star Trek, Elite Force, Hollow Match, or any of the other things. You think about the expenditure of time and effort involved in a lot of things.

We have a calling. We have a responsibility before God to exercise faith in the things that we do and not become distracted. Well, this is what Solomon talked about in chapter 5. You can increase goods.

You can increase fame. You can increase work and labor and effort. You can see good in what you do.

You can declare yourself to be good because you have spent yourself in a worthy cause. And not to say that believers cannot do these things or that believers cannot be involved in worthy causes. The question is, why do you do what you do? Is this genuinely an area where the circumstances that God has put before you, the story problem that God has put on your particular quiz, your particular test, is to work at a non-profit organization that does ministry or to engage in this particular crusade to cure a disease or whatever it might be? Not to say that that's not a possible set of circumstances for believers or that believers cannot produce the fruit of faith in those.

But it's like we said before. It's like we learned on Friday night. You cannot look at any crusade and say this is intrinsically good.

Just like you cannot look at any circumstance, any blessing that someone receives and say this person must be good because look how they're blessed. Or this person must be under discipline because look at how the tower fell on them. You cannot work backward.

This is like pushing a rope. You can't work backward. I was just reading a book this past week by Marilyn Voss Savant.

You may have seen it. If you ever see the Parade magazine in the Sunday paper, she's got a column in there. She's been in the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's highest IQ.

She is a very smart lady and very perceptive. She's written several books and one of them is called The Power of Logical Thinking which I just finished this week. It's very instructive because I've been, as a part of my recreational reading, trying to educate myself on logic and on logical fallacies.

You want to talk about some dull reading, I read a textbook on logic which is used in college courses. My lands. It was illogical to study that book, really.

But her book is more at the popular level and gives some really good examples including

examples of how statistics were used in the 1992 elections between Perot and President Bush, the first President Bush, and the former President Clinton and his running mate. How all these were used and how logical fallacies were perpetrated on the American public. Well, you can convince yourself or you can be convinced that something is right when it isn't.

Somebody can work. One of the fallacies is to work backward. This is like saying, you know, there's an A equals B, B equals C, therefore A equals C kind of a logic and you can say, you know, banana trees are actually shrubs, bananas are a fruit, therefore all fruits grow on shrubs.

You can't work backward and say that all fruit bearing trees are shrubs just because a banana bears fruit and a banana tree is actually in the shrub family or something along that line. Well, this is a logical fallacy that happens in the spiritual life among believers all the time. It happened in Jesus' day.

We look at circumstances and we judge where we stand with God based on circumstances rather than looking at where we are from the standpoint of faith. You can do altruistic things if it is an exercise of faith for you. If you are saying this is my good, I am good because I am doing this thing, you have just perpetrated a logical fallacy on yourself and you're going to wind up feeding on wind.

You're going to think you're full and you're not. So, it is not necessarily intrinsically good to do anything. You can be working hard at your job.

You can be training your children. There are people who train their children because they are obsessed with their children. There are people who work hard at their job because they are obsessed with their job.

There are people who do all kinds of things and justify it by saying this is an intrinsically good thing. Nothing for a believer is intrinsically good except faith. Whatever is not of faith is sin for a believer.

Faith is the measure. Paul said examine yourself. He didn't say examine yourself and see if your works are good.

He said examine yourself and see if you are in the faith. This is the measure by which we determine if we are on the narrow road that goes through the straight gate that leads to life or if we are on the wide and broad road that leads to destruction. Well, take a look now at chapter 6 in Ecclesiastes because Solomon is showing all of the pitfalls, all of the different areas of life, whether it's areas of accomplishment, areas of aggrandizement, having accumulated a lot of things, whether it is pronouncing oneself good because you find what you've done to be satisfying.

Look at chapter 6. Let's read it in the New King James before we retranslate it. There is an evil

which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men. A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that he lacks nothing for himself of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it.

This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction. If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he, for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice, but has not seen goodness.

Do not all go to one place. All the labor of a man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied. For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have who knows how to walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.

This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. Whatever one is, he has been named already, for it is known that he is man, and he cannot contend with him who is mightier than he. Since there are many things that increase vanity, how is man the better? Well, if you're like me, by this time you're totally confused by what this chapter says on the face of it in the New King James.

Indeed, you can look at the New American Standard in NIV. It doesn't fare much better. For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun? Well, I don't know about you, but I find this to be just completely confusing.

There are some things that sort of, kind of, maybe make sense, but they don't follow one from another. So let me begin by giving you a little bit more literal, and I hope more clear rendition of what this says in the Hebrew. It starts out, and it's pretty close.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun. Now, this is our old friend Raah, with the ayin, R-A-A-H, but this is not the verb to see. It is the word that means evil.

So it's raish, ayin, and hay. And it is the word that means calamity. It's a bad thing.

It ranges all the way from something that is unpleasant to something that is a total disaster. So let's translate this calamity. There is a calamity, because as soon as we say evil, we start bringing moral baggage with this that is not necessarily here.

There is a calamity which I have seen under the sun. Why does he say, I've seen it under the sun? Because this is focusing specifically on the nature of human life. What happens between birth and death? What happens between the rising and setting of the sun? So I used to listen to a pastor on tape that had an unconscious habit.

I'm sure I have unconscious habits. There are probably people saying something about me along

these lines. Everybody has sort of verbal tics.

But I've heard more than one of us in the preaching and teaching realm. Anytime you want to sort of, not exactly pontificate, but anytime you want to make a general statement about how things go for people, we use this phrase, in life. You say, you know, this is what happens in life.

If you want to succeed in life, if you want to be happy in life. You just find this prepositional phrase, in life, peppered all through just over and over again to where you began to notice it. And if you think about it, you could leave that out and it would make equal sense.

If you want to be happy, if you want to be prosperous, you don't have to say if you want to be happy in life, where else are you going to be happy but in life? Where else are you going to be prosperous but in life? Where else are you going to succeed but in life? And so it's sort of an unnecessary appendage and I think, you know, we use these things sometimes to unconsciously gain time to think about, you know, the end of our train of thought. Well, there's a tendency to think of under the sun as this in life type of thing. Where, why doesn't he just say there is an evil which I have seen and it is common among men.

He says, I've seen it under the sun. Well, under the sun is a reminder of chapter one. It is a reminder of our responsibility.

We're only under the sun, you know, a day is a pretty short span of time. And under the sun means you've just got this one day to live. You've got this, it is a reminder of the brevity of life.

This is a calamity and one feature of this calamity is it's a shame because life is so brief. I probably could have pointed this out earlier in Ecclesiastes, but anytime you find this phrase under the sun, it is a reminder that life is brief. This calamity is doubly so because there's not that much time that you can afford to waste any.

There is a calamity which I have seen under the sun. You could say in this brief life, which would sort of convey the same sense. Not just in life, but in this brief life, under the sun, you've just got from sunrise to sunset to get your work done.

And then it says, it is common among men. And this literally says it is multiplied. It is numerous.

And this is a new thing that Solomon has not said before. He's pointed out many calamities. He's pointed out many evils that he has seen under the sun.

But this is the first time that he's used this particular descriptive phrase. He says it is literally, ravah means it's multiplied. There are great numbers of it among men or upon man.

It literally says, al ha'adam. Al means honor upon. Ha'adam.

It is multiplied upon man. It's just common among men. It's not a bad translation.

And here it is. A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor. I looked at these words for riches and wealth.

I could take you to the lexical definitions. But these are commonly associated words. There are word pairs in Hebrew and in the Bible that sort of always go together like God's word and God's commandments.

When you look at Psalm 119 and you see all of these synonyms and they often come in pairs. Wisdom and knowledge is a common pair. You say, well, is there a real distinction between those two? Well, there is.

They emphasize different things. The same thing is true here. And actually, I would translate these backward because the first word is a singular and the second word is a plural.

And really, if you just switch these, you get the Hebrew sense. A man to whom God has given wealth, this is the singular word, and riches is the plural word. If you're studying Hebrew and you want to know what these are, the first one is osher, O-S-H-E-R.

A man to whom God has given osher, which is wealth, and nekasim, nekasim, N-I-C, it's actually an apostrophe, C-A-S-I-M. And of course the I-M, you recognize that as the Hebrew plural. It's technically a dual, but it's a plural.

So, to whom God has given wealth and riches. Now, what's the difference? Well, think about it in English. Wealth is sort of all one thing.

When you say, oh, he has great wealth, this is a status. This is a condition. It is a level that you occupy when you possess wealth.

Riches has more the idea of the individual things that make up that wealth. So you have the standing of one who is wealthy. You are greatly prospered.

This emphasizes your condition, your status. Riches goes to the individual possessions. You look and you see, my goodness, look at the cars and the houses and the appliances and the technology and all the different things that one possesses that constitute or make up or cause one to be in that status.

So you have the status and you have the things that go with that status, is the idea. So there really is a reason for both of these words to be here. Otherwise he would just say, I've seen wealth.

But he says wealth and riches. You know, the wealthy move in their own circles. They hobnob with one another.

They play golf together. They go to the exclusive clubs. They are found in certain places.

They occupy a certain strata of society. That's the wealth. Riches are the things that they manipulate in that realm.

A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor. This is literally glory. Kavod.

K-A-V-O-D. Kavod. When you talk about the glory of God in the Old Testament, Kavod literally means heavy.

And it had the idea that you have this weight. In fact, this is probably in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he talked about the eternal weight of glory. Kavod means heavy.

Someone who was honored and well thought of. A lot of times they were fat because they were prosperous. Gold is heavy.

Things that were valuable were heavy. A vine full of grapes or a branch full of figs is heavy. And so in the ancient Semitic mind, heaviness became associated with something that is well thought of, that is esteemed, that is glorious.

And Kavod literally means heavy, but it came to mean glory or honor. So a man to whom God has given wealth and riches and honor so that he lacks nothing for himself of all that he desires. Yet God does not give him power.

And this word for power has its origin in the same word from which the Arabs get the word sultan, shultan. And this is an authority word. This is ruling power.

There are lots of different kinds of power. There's physical power. There's mental power.

There is endurance type power. There is, you know, you've got five different words for power in Greek. Energeo and so forth.

Well, this is ruling power. This is whether or not you're the sultan of your domain here. And you have all these things, but they all are attributed to you.

You have wealth. You have riches. You have glory.

But you are not given the power in the sense of ruling power to eat. And this is the word achal, A-C-H-A-L, which is the Hebrew word to eat. But it comes to mean to partake of, to actually, you know, it's kind of like King Midas had all this gold that he couldn't enjoy.

He didn't have the power to, because it was right there in the midst of it, but he couldn't. There's lots of Greek mythology and things where there's something hanging right in front of you, but you can't reach out and grab it. You can't actually enjoy it or partake of it.

It says, God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner eats it. And this is the very same word, consume or partake. And he says, this is, and you can imagine what the word is behind

vanity here, havel.

This is havel, and it is an evil affliction. This is literally, this is a calamitous sickness. This is the standard Hebrew word for sickness.

When it says affliction, this is like disease. And then you have ra'ah with the evil ion in it again. This is a calamitous sickness.

So here, someone has received all of these great things, but he cannot eat of it. Somebody else consumes it. And this is the word for foreigner.

This is someone, a non-Israelite in the world of Israel, an alien. Well, we need to take a little time and see what this means. So we'll pause here and take our break.

We, of course, do not want to be in this category, do we? We want to have the capacity to enjoy and fulfill the potential of the things that God gives us. Well, we're going to come back from the break and find out what Solomon has to say about that. Let's pause here.