

01-10-21a Ecclesiastes

Let's continue our worship this morning by turning for our scripture reading to Proverbs chapter 14. Proverbs chapter 14. We're in a section in Ecclesiastes chapter 7 that contrasts wisdom and foolishness or the wise man and the fool and how the wise man can be dragged into error and folly and you will recall that there is quite a bit said and collected by Solomon in the Proverbs that addresses the very same theme.

Proverbs 14 is one such section. Always when you try to read a chapter in Proverbs you feel like you're getting the various pellets out of a shotgun shell and someday maybe we'll do some selected sections of Proverbs to show that what sometimes appears to be non sequitur and does not follow from one verse to the next is actually held together by thematic material or by vocabulary and in some cases in Hebrew the connections between words in one verse and the next even though they seem to address different subjects were actually a mnemonic device, a memory aid, so that one could memorize these aphorisms, these principles and recall them easily. But Proverbs chapter 14 says, the wise woman builds her house but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

You could just stop and have a whole sermon on that right there. It's often observed, I haven't seen it in my immediate vicinity lately I would be quick to say, but in the past especially when I was in the service on active duty, of course we were all younger and people in their twenties that have only been married for a short time or have just gotten married, you could see where someone had many advantages. They had a good income, they had job security because they had an obligation in the service and would get married and obtain housing or buy a house out in town if they knew they were going to be there several years and you would look on the surface and think, boy what a bright future, what a great set of circumstances this couple has.

But in being invited over for dinner or spending time or overhearing conversations or being told directly in some cases, the young lady that had married this lieutenant or captain would start crying the blues about all you know back when I lived in the east and we had this and we had that and now I'm out here in Oklahoma and there's just nothing in town, there's nothing to do, I can't find what I need to shop and instead of looking at all of the advantages and cherishing the love of her husband and so forth, the foolish woman got occupied with details of life and in many cases, I mean there was a forty-something percent divorce rate among service couples and especially in our age bracket and the reason is foolishness, not having capacity for life, not having capacity for love, not having capacity for happiness, overlooking many assets and many wonderful blessings and instead focusing on what they didn't have or what they wanted or why I can't survive on this second lieutenant's pay you know and just spoiling everything and that's the idea in this first verse, the wise woman builds her house, takes advantage of what is available and builds it up, the foolish pulls it down with their hands, what a silly thing to do to be in a house and just start pulling it down with your hands but both men and women can do this. He who walks in his

uprightness fears the Lord but he who is perverse in his ways despises him. The verb there for walk of course is halak, we are well acquainted with from Ecclesiastes.

In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride but the lips of the wise will preserve them. Where no oxen are, the trough is clean but much increase comes by the strength of an ox. A faithful witness does not lie but a false witness will utter lies.

I will explain these as we go because I want to get into our passage. Where no oxen are, the trough is clean. Well the trough is where you feed the oxen right but in the secular world would say it takes money to make money.

You've got to have oxen in order to plow the field to harvest the grain that will feed the oxen that will allow you to plow a larger field but this is speaking in the realm of wisdom and it is an Old Testament way of stating the principle to him who has more will be given but to him who has not even what he has will be taken away and you can see the common theme the wise woman has assets and has resources and has blessings in her household and she will build on those and create an even more stable and blessed household but if you have things and you don't even take advantage of them even what you have will be taken away same thing he who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord the fear of the Lord is going to increase your uprightness they they're like two pistons of an engine when you fear the Lord you're going to walk more uprightly and when you walk more uprightly you're going to fear the Lord more and you're going to take the level of a relationship that you have with the Lord and you're going to build on it and it's one foot in front of another it's a great thing about halak it signifies progress and forward movement but he who is perverse in his ways despises the Lord he and and despise can mean a lot of things ignore be apathetic toward be indifferent to disrespect in the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride but the lips of the wise will preserve them this attitude is going to come out in your speech are you going to start swinging the rod of pride with your mouth or are you going to have wise lips that preserves you and everyone around you where no oxen are the trough is clean oxen that's the engine that's what does the work that brings in the grain if you don't take advantage of the power if you don't take advantage of the resource that brings the grain in there's not going to be anything to feed that engine people who recognize the importance of the Word of God but don't expose themselves to it on a regular basis don't meditate on it on a regular basis lose interest and lose motivation and lose perspective which makes it even less likely that they're going to go back to the trough if you will and and plant the seeds that are going to produce a crop in the future and so the whole cycle breaks down a faithful witness does not lie but a false witness will utter lies you think well this is kind of self-evident if you're a liar you're going to tell lies if you're a true person you won't but the link here is between what you are and what you do a faithful witness this is a faithful person someone whose character reflects faithfulness reflects integrity that is going to be reflected in what in what they say a faithful witness does not lie a false witness will utter lies what you are will manifest itself in what you do what you say a scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it but knowledge is easy to him who understands have you ever seen

people my dad used to say this when I was a little boy he says well you keep asking me questions then you argue with my answers you know people sometimes ask questions but there's only one answer that they really want to hear if they hear anything other than what they're looking for they just pick it apart and find fault with it well a scoffer someone who is a professional fault finder seeks wisdom and does not find it he's going to just find something wrong with whatever he discovers by way of of wisdom but knowledge is easy to him who understands go from the presence of a foolish man when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge how do you find out that someone is a foolish man foolish people don't have a little tattoo on their forehead that says foolish man little blinking sign on their back you know they walk by you look at him foolish man foolish man how do we find out that someone is not a good person to spend time with in fellowship well it comes out in what they say someone who has integrity you see this thread that weaves its way through this entire section this entire chapter the lips of knowledge Jesus said this another way when you're looking for for the truth and you have teachers a variety of teachers a smorgasbord of churches and so forth well by their fruit you shall know them if you want to know what kind of tree it is look at the fruit you see tangerines hanging off of it it's a tangerine tree if you see a apple hanging off of it it's an apple tree trying to remember one of those citrus fruits is a cross I forget if it's a maybe it's the tangelo or something but some of those there's no such thing as the tree they get them by grafting I hope it's not the tangerine verse 8 the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way but the folly of fools is deceit and this is self-deceit the folly of fools is you know the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked and we deceive our own selves in many cases the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his own way we've talked about this in another context recently in studying the Pharisees the Pharisees busy themselves looking at everyone else and telling everyone else that their way is wrong but the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his own way to apply what he knows to what he himself is doing the folly of fools is deceit self-deceit and that leads to deceiving others fools mock at sin but among the upright there is grace the upright is going to avail himself of the grace of God and have the sin problem removed have the contamination of sin the unclean status removed by availing himself of God's grace the heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger does not share its joy we have you ever been extremely this happens a lot when people hear something that they really enjoy that sometimes they'll hear a really good sermon or they'll hear a great song or they'll read a wonderful book or they'll read an article or something and they hand it to you they say oh you know listen to this listen to this song or watch this program or whatever and the person that they communicate it to doesn't have the same reaction and there is a sense in which you are at a certain place at a certain time with us with a certain level of various things in your soul and something strikes you just right and it creates great joy in some cases in other cases something happens and it and you experience sorrow or bitterness and it's not communicable you can't really get someone else to sink to the same level or to rise to the same level as you have in response to something that happens on the outside and this is what's referred to here the heart knows its own bitterness a stranger does not share its joy someone on the outside isn't always going to be able to relate and this can lead to frustration the house of the wicked will be

overthrown but the tent of the upright will flourish you go all the way back to the beginning if you're upright your house is going to be under construction you're going to be building up your house if you are foolish you're going to be tearing it down with your own hands and God is going to pitch in and help if you start tearing down your house God will just pitch in and help you tear it down if you're building up your house God is going to pitch in and help you build it up verse 12 this is one of the great memory verses I learned this as a young child there is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death the old King James there is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof or the ends thereof are the ways of death even in laughter the heart may sorrow and the end of mirth may be grief this tells you that there's a difference between climate and weather even sad people you know there was a great deal of awkwardness right after the September 11th catastrophe all of the funny men on TV and some of them canceled their shows for several days because it just didn't seem appropriate to be lighthearted and humorous after the loss of thousands of lives and yet at a certain point they came back on the air the first show that Jay Leno had the first show that Conan O'Brien had were very interesting to watch because they felt very awkward trying to be lighthearted in the midst of a great tragedy and there were chuckles during that show but it didn't change the fact that there was a great amount of grief and there was a great amount of sorrow and just because you see people smile at funerals President Clinton got in a lot of trouble once because he emerged from a very somber event and was joking with one of his aides and they were laughing together then he glanced over to his left and saw the camera and he immediately put on this really sober face because it's inappropriate to be jesting at a funeral and it is also dangerous to misconstrue to observe someone and think well they have this attitude or that attitude because I saw them laughing or I saw them being mirthful even in laughter the heart may sorrow and the end of mirth after you have a little period of mirth there may still be grief the backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways but a good man will be satisfied from above the simple believes every word but the prudent considers well his steps all you have to do is think about get rich quick schemes and infomercials to realize the truth of this a wise man fears and departs from evil but a fool rages and is self-confident verse 15 and 16 sort of go together and especially when you think of it in the spiritual realm the simple believes every word there is a lot being said on Christian television programs Christian radio programs Christian literature quick fixes for problems presenting God as the big band-aid the big Excedrin pill he'll take away your pain he'll take away your problems the simple believes every word but the prudent has to consider well his steps am I going to commit to what I have heard is this the answer a wise man fears and departs from evil evil is a pattern of behavior this is a policy a set of priorities a fool rages and is self-confident when he starts feeling the effects of his bad pattern of life he just rails and says why does this happen to me and doesn't learn from it a quick-tempered man acts foolishly and a man of wicked intentions is hated the simple inherit folly but the prudent are crowned with knowledge the evil will bow before the good and the wicked at the gates of the righteous all you have to do is think about our New Testament study in Luke about the righteous who are inside the house of feasting and those who are outside because they did not seek in this life to enter the narrow gate the poor

man is hated even by his own neighbor but the rich has many friends you just have to ask yourself the question you know are these the kind of friends you want sort of like the profligate son called the prodigal who went off and had many friends until his money ran out then his only friends were the swine elbowing him out of the way at the trough he who despises his neighbor sins but he who has mercy on the poor happy is he do they not go astray who devise evil but mercy and truth belong to those who devise good of course devising evil and devising good this is what you think in your heart as a man thinketh in his heart so is he and if you devise evil in your heart you will go astray if you devise good in your heart you'll be characterized by mercy and truth in all labor there is profit but idle chatter leads only to poverty and idle chatter if you look at your text note there where it says the talk of the lips leads to poverty you know this is what we call talking a good fight or all hat and no cattle you know you put up a big front you talk oh yes well I'm getting ready to do that well it's when you buckle down and do the work that profit results the crown of the wise is their riches but the foolishness of fools is folly a true witness delivers souls but a deceitful witness speaks lies in the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence and his children will have a place of refuge the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to turn one away from the snares of death how can you avoid all of the negative comparisons all of the downsides that are presented in this passage of scripture the fear of the Lord in a multitude of people is a king's honor but in the lack of people is the downfall of a prince he who is slow to wrath has great understanding but he who is impulsive and again your text note says short of spirit exalts folly a sound heart is life to the body but envy is rottenness to the bones he who oppresses the poor reproaches his maker but he who honors him has mercy on the needy you begin to see that there are recurring references to the same idea and this is just like the warp and woof of a woven cloth and if we had time to do a structural analysis of this and show the comparisons and the contrasts and the progressive statements about each of these themes it'd be great if we had time to do that but we get the idea here first 32 the wicked is banished in his wickedness but the righteous has a refuge in his death and this particularly makes us think of our passage in Ecclesiastes where he says the day of death is better than the day of birth the wicked is banished in his wickedness but the righteous has a refuge in his death well a refuge is a place that you go to a place of safety in a place of confidence place of refreshment and restoration wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding but what is in the heart of fools is made known and this is another principle that is often overlooked we don't have to say everything we know wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding there's a time and a place to speak you know we have opinions we have insight because of wisdom and knowledge from God's Word but it's not always the time to speak we have to speak the truth in love and love picks its opportunities and discerns when it is time to speak and when it's time to remain silent Job's friends despite their errors in the dialogues in the book of Job had the wisdom to sit silent for a week when they observed the grief of Job they had wisdom in their hearts and the whole book of Job is the bringing out and the and the attempts at application of that wisdom and in some cases those attempts are faulty and the interplay this is not people coming in and saying like Job's wife saying well curse God and die these men are wise men they understand principles of the Word of God and they're trying to apply them in Job's

situation and it is discerning between better things that is the substance of the book of Job you have principles but which ones actually apply is it the principle that the sinful man will be disciplined by God well Job is not sinful so much of what is brought out in that regard does not apply and Job refutes them he says look that's not my problem that's not why I'm suffering this way well wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding it has a resting place it resides there remains there but what is in the heart of fools is made known if they have two or three things they're gonna trot them out on every occasion they're just gonna say the first thing that comes into their head righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people and one of the reasons our nation is on a general downward trend is because we do not have righteousness extolled we don't have righteousness made into a virtue instead it is virtuous to be tolerant it is virtuous to be willing to turn a blind eye to homosexuality to perversity to self-indulgence to arrogance and because of that and the toleration of sin it is a reproach to our nation and we are paying the price on a daily basis and one of these days our nation is going to pay a very great price when it is taken out of the picture the king's favor is toward a wise servant but his wrath is against him who causes shame and of course the king is the ruler as the ultimate authority this reflects divine truth God's favor is going to be toward a wise servant God's wrath will be against him who causes shame well these principles are worth reviewing and refreshing in our minds especially as we continue our study in Ecclesiastes chapter 7 our section that we have already covered in some detail are the first four verses a name is better than ointment and the day of death than the day of one's birth better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting for that is the end of all men and the living will take it to heart sorrow is better than laughter for by a sad countenance the heart is made better the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth I will review for you once again the translation of these first four verses that I've suggested to you a name is better than good ointment and there's a word play here because the word name is shame s-h-e-m and the word ointment is shaman s-h-e-m-e-n and one translation that tried to catch this word play a man translated this a name is better than Nard you know Spike Nard was one of the ointments one of the salves and the day of death than the day of one's birth and just in thinking about the statement made here a name is better than what is what is ointment or Nard sometimes it's used for healing sometimes it's used because it has a pleasant fragrance another man who tried to catch the fact that there's a word play here said fair fame is better than fragrance fame and fragrance trying to catch the alliteration there but ointment was also used as a perfume you know frankincense and that kind of thing had a had a pleasing aroma and one way of bringing out the truth here is to think of the fact that a name or character is something that's on the inside where perfume is something that's on the outside if you're a rotten person wearing an expensive cologne is not going to make you acceptable just because you smell good but the idea here as we've seen is really directed toward God are you known by God what is your name as far as God is concerned is the Lord going to look at you and recognize you and know where you are from and have your place card at the table in the kingdom or are you going to be one who is outside and he opens the door a crack and says I do not know you where you are from that name is

better than some superficial application of ointment that's supposed to make you smell good enough to get in a name is better than NARD a name is better than a good ointment and the day of death than the day of birth why would the day of death be better than the day of birth the comparison here remembering that these two lines stand side-by-side how would the day of birth compare to an ointment and the day of death compare to a name well on the day of birth what is it that's attractive about a newborn infant what goes on when a at the day of birth there's great celebration there's but it's all looking at potential babies are cute people look at a baby and say oh and you know you see baby pictures and it always kind of warms the heart people look at it but if you if you look at it in the cold light of day which nobody wants to do there's really nothing commendable about a baby it doesn't have intrinsic worth it's not admirable the way you admire Robert E Lee or the way you admire Stonewall Jackson or whoever it is you admire I admire those men I admire Theodore Roosevelt because he was a man of action he saw what needed to be done and he bent every effort toward making it happen even what it meant great personal sacrifice and strenuous effort on one's own part if it needed to be done these men went out and did it that is their reputation that's their legacy that's what they are known for that's their name well do you want to be booed and awed over like a baby because of superficial cuteness or do you want to be respected because of your name God isn't going to be particularly happy to see a lot of spiritual babies showing up at his doorstep on Resurrection Day when the kingdom is ready to be charged up and started are you going to staff the courts and the houses of government with babies or are you going to look for someone that has a reputation that has wisdom and knowledge and it's been demonstrated a name is better than a good smell and the day of death is better than the day of birth on the day of death that's when your reputation is finalized whatever it is that you have become through your life you're you've stopped becoming on the day of your death also contemplating thinking about the day of death as opposed to the day of birth I mentioned this last time and I think it's worth mentioning again many you hear from time to time people say well I celebrate my spiritual birthday on such-and-such a day you know looking back to the day of one's salvation but what we really ought to do is take time to contemplate the end of our earthly experience as believers it's a sobering thought what will be the final tally it's that another way of saying this would be when you sit down we used to have both at Navy and in seminary when I was in my college days you have essay tests if it's history or literature or something like that you sit down and have a blank blue book in front of you and the professor would pass out a sheet of paper and it would have one question on it over the next in the next two hours write everything you know that will answer this particular question you know summarize the history of the world beginning with Adam and up to the present day two hours or less you know fill up your blue book or whatever it might be so which is better the beginning of the test or the end of the test well it's at the end of the test that you find out how much you actually knew how well you had studied how closely you had paid attention what were the fruits of your participation in this class I also looked forward to the end of the test because good bad or indifferent it's over with so it is appropriate to contemplate what is the end of all men that's what verse 2 goes on to say better to walk to the house of mourning than to walk to the house of

feasting it's here in verse 2 it's talking about the journey leading to that place do you want to spend your time in anticipation of a great party walking to the house of feasting you know when you when you have a wonderful celebration on the horizon and what do people do maybe it's a wedding or it's a christening or it's a whatever might be the house of feasting what do people do they spend all of their time thinking about well what am I going to wear what food am I going to prepare who's going to be there oh I can't wait to see so and so again you know some people say boy it's going to be a great drunken revelry I can hardly wait the anticipation of a great event what do you think about versus when you're going to the house of mourning as you walk what do you think about well you reflect on this person whose life has ended when you're on the way to a funeral oftentimes you think about your own funeral what will people be thinking what will people be saying when it comes my time to lay in the pine box the journey to the house of mourning where that is what you're looking at coming up is more profitable than the journey to the house of feasting if all you do is live from one high point to the next and where's my next blessing where's my next celebration Solomon says it's better to walk to the house of mourning than to walk to the house of feasting in which itself is the end of all mankind well you can see the end of all mankind in each house everyone is ultimately going to end up being the guest of honor at the house of mourning and so there's sort of a double entendre there on the one hand in the house of mourning it makes you realize well my time is coming as well where my options will run out and I my page will have been written also in the house of feasting that's you can you can wind up wasting all your time in the house of feasting and it's destruction it renders you fruitless to spend all your time in celebration the living will set it upon his heart the living will take it to heart the living the ones who still have a chance to make options make choices take advantage of options will set take it to heart verse 3 better aggravation than laughter for in distress of the face the heart is made good or made better the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning but the heart of fools is in the house of gladness it is better to listen to the rebuke of the wise verse 5 then for a man to listen to the song of fools this is another place where we have a word play because the song here the song of fools is sheer and this is usually a literal song they sometimes people think well this is the praise of fools they're singing your song of praise but this is the word that is used for a a literal song it's not just praise and flattery or compliments it's used of literal songs over 70 times in the Old Testament so are you going to be you know got your headphones on listening to music or are you going to be listening to the rebuke of the wise and do you want to receive instruction I think of this sometimes when I'm on a long trip in the car I have two kinds of tapes with me I have Bible classes from people whose scholarship and work in the Word of God I respect and I have music well I have a choice I can pop in the music or I can pop in something that will lead me into the Word of God where I will be instructed and rebuked and corrected well a better use of time is to listen to the Word of God it doesn't mean we can never listen to music but you know if you never listen to the rebuke of the wise and all you do is listen to the songs of fools you're not going to be taking advantage of the time now verse 6 and this is another one that has word plays almost each each of these tends to have word plays in it and verse 6 is no exception it says in the New King James for like the crackling of thorns under a pot so is the laughter of the

fool this also is vapor to try to catch the word play here someone smarter than me has translated this way for like the sound of nettles under the kettle thus the laughter of the fool like the sound of nettles under the kettle I mentioned this earlier thorns make a very spectacular and noisy fire for a few seconds but they quickly burn out you can't really cook anything over a fire of thorns doesn't actually even mention thorns does it it just says they're under the pot they're under the kettle but obviously if they're under there they're on fire we don't just set pots on top of piles of thorns and wait for something to happen so these are obviously on fire and what the sound of them the coal the voice of them under the kettles is going to be this popping noise it's going to produce sparks and noise for a brief time and then it's gone and there's no real benefit it doesn't even get the water warm because it's such a quick fire this is compared to the laughter of the fool people who live for humor you know some people you can't ever get a straight answer you can't carry on a serious conversation because they just joke all the time when they're talking to you all they do is chuckle and laugh and go from one light-hearted moment to the next and you don't ever seem to get down to the the grist well the laughter of the fool is just vapor it doesn't there's no substance there's no benefit to it verse 7 says surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason and a bribe debases the heart this is an interesting verse to try to translate from Hebrew Oshek ha Oshek is the word for oppression here and it is very similar to the word for laughter which is shakak so you have Oshek and shakak and there's a connection sort of a wordplay going on there and one is tempted to think that there might even be a textual corruption here where laughter destroys a wise man's reason but Oshek is an attested word in the Old Testament it is found a number of places and it is used in Ecclesiastes we've seen it already so how would oppression destroy a wise man's reason well the word for destroy the reason and literally I think that what they're using as a translation here is this Hebrew verb is halal h-a-l-l-a-l halal well halal is where we get hallelujah it is the verb that means to praise and this is yeholel and it is the intensive form of that verb and it is usually translated to praise or to to give praise hundreds of times in the Old Testament it is used for giving praise well here and in a few other places halal has the sense of going too far in that direction it has the idea of arrogance of of boasting that goes beyond almost into the realm of being crazy this is the verb that was used of David when he went to Gath and feigned madness and he let the spittle run down his beard well halal is used there and you think well now how did we get to madness but this is the noun form of this is the same thing that we saw when Solomon said I set my heart to know wisdom and madness and folly well what kind of madness is this is just raving lunacy how does and how does oppression create this problem well what kind of madness would David be presenting well someone what happened when he went to Gath people recognize him and say hey wait a minute I mean he went to Goliath's hometown for crying out loud and the Philistines are there and he's fleeing from Saul and he goes there and they somebody recognized him and said hey aren't you the one that slew Goliath and they're starting to give him a hard look and so he just starts drooling and saying oh yes I am the great David and he started strutting around and acting as though he's slinging a stone and strutting and playing the fool playing the madman that he's lost his mind and of course in the ancient world and even in some cultures down to the present day people were superstitious

about the insane and thought that they were in the grip of spirits and if you did something to a crazy person you would offend the gods or you would offend the spirits and so people gave him a wide berth and just left them alone and David gets it has his life spared at least his way of sparing his own life God would have kept him alive but his method of keeping himself alive is to just abandon his dignity and let the spittle run down his beard and just play crazy well how does this come from the verb halal which means to praise or to boast well this is boasting carried to such an extreme that you're just a nut it is completely unwarranted arrogance so this is madness but it's madness of a particular kind what would David do I mean he wouldn't just start you know shoveling dirt on his head and eating leaves and doing nutty things how would he convince the Gathites the Philistines that he's a nutcase well he's just going to strut and do a bunch of arrogant boasting that and with this crazy look on his face they're going to think well the guy it all went through his head he was a hero once but now he's just a pathetic has-been so oppression does something to the wise so the next question is is this the wise man being oppressed or is this the wise man who perpetrates oppression and how does this flow from the context oppression destroys a wise man's reason or makes mad the wise makes arrogant the wise makes foolishly boastful the wise it's going to undermine skillfulness and wisdom another way of looking at this is to get closer to the root of the verb where makes boastful the wise oppression makes makes arrogant the wise what is oppression when you take advantage of someone in an unwarranted fashion and so you're wise and you're doing well but now you begin to take things that don't belong to you you begin to take advantage of people you begin to commit abuse against others to finish your scheme you succeed at the expense of others and this will undermine your wisdom it's going to turn your wisdom into foolishness and into boasting and into madness the second half of the verse a bribe debases the heart this is literally a gift so in each of these verses there is a sober realistic view of life as brief and it's important to accomplish something that lasts that establishes your name what is the danger what is the threat to that it is being distracted and deflected by various things laughter and celebration can distract ambition and the pursuit of goals at the expense of your wisdom can sacrifice your good name sacrifice the worth of your life make it impossible to have a profit and that of course is the theme of this book when we come back from our break we're going to enumerate these dangers that can keep us from having something in our hands something to show for this life let's pause here and take our break