

02-05-05b Ecclesiastes

Let's take up our study now in Ecclesiastes chapter 10. We've come up through chapter 10, verse 10 and 11. We saw the situations of life for which people are often unprepared if they are not walking in wisdom.

And in thinking about the larger themes of the book and that even skill and wisdom are ultimately fruitless if they don't result in a eutron or a prophet that is held in the hand after life is over. And yet there is a wisdom that is evidenced or manifested in life and it's easy to get fooled into thinking that you have done something worthwhile and we take satisfaction in what we do and we think, well, I've really accomplished something. I've really made a mark here.

I've gotten something big done. I got my children raised or I got my retirement in place or I achieved a successful career. I've worked my way up to a pinnacle of success in some area.

And that fools us because we look at it and we think that we have an accomplishment and yet when the sun sets and we wake up in judgment we may discover that we have nothing that survived this life. Everything turned out to have been time-bound and temporal rather than something of eternal value. Well, when we get to chapter 10 and it talks about the contrast between wisdom and foolishness, he says you've got to have a working knowledge of how to get along in life.

He talks about if the spirit of the ruler rises up against you you've got to hold your ground. You've got to stick to what you know to be right and your ability to pull together a soft answer that turns away wrath, pacifies great offenses. This is sort of a time-related skill, right? I mean, there were rulers who rose up in indignation against the prophets and had them executed and yet Solomon here says that the policy is don't match evil for evil, don't rise up in anger.

He says there is an evil I've seen under the sun in verse 5, an error that proceeds from the ruler when folly is set in great dignity and the rich sit in a lowly place. I've seen servants on horses. This always reminds me of that little nursery rhyme.

If wishes were horses, beggars would ride. If turnips were watches, I'd wear one by my side. Folly is set in great dignity while the rich sit in a lowly place.

I've seen servants on horses while princes walk on the ground like servants. Then he talks about the pit that you can fall into, the wall that you break down and you can be bitten by a serpent, quarrying the stones and splitting the wood to do construction and having an accident as you do it. And in verse 10, the axe is dull and one does not sharpen its edge, then he must use more strength, but wisdom brings success, it says in the New King James.

A more woodenly literal perhaps translation is if the iron has been seriously dulled and has no faces sharpened and for reference you can go here to Ezekiel 21-26 where the term is used in a

similar manner. But if the iron has been seriously dulled and has no faces sharpened, one must increase his efforts. If you're using a dull axe, you've got to work harder is the idea.

But, and literally it says, the profit of skill is wisdom. The profit of skill and the word skill is sometimes translated advantage because someone who is skillful has an advantage in what they do because they have the knack, they've got the touch, they know how to make something work, they know how to do it. You often embark on a project that involves some sort of skill that you haven't had in the past and you say, boy, I wish I knew somebody that knew how to lay tile or put in a pool or fix electronic components or whatever it might be and you go in unskilled and you can often break things or mess things up because of your lack of knowledge.

You just don't know, you don't have the experience and the education, the training or the tutoring in some sort of an apprenticeship situation to be able to take advantage of that. So, you have to look around and try to find somebody that does have it. That's why they have classes at Home Depot.

One must increase his efforts, but the profit, and this is the word *Yitron*, the profit of skill, the profit of this having a knack is wisdom. Well, this is one of those situations where you ask yourself the John 1 question. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and in Greek it says, God was the Word, that's the word order.

That's how the Mormons or the Jehovah's Witnesses that have their own Bible and translate that backwards, the JWs, they have their translation of the New Testament, they say God was the Word and there's a big theological implication of that. And if you go by the word order in Greek, that's what it says. *Theos* comes first and then *halagos* comes afterward, but it's not translated God was the Word, it's that word order is something for emphasis, but you have a switching of the subject and the predicate nominative there.

And the same idea here may be that when it says the profit of skill is wisdom or wisdom is the profit of skill. In other words, if you have a skill and if you employ the skill, that's wisdom. Wisdom lets you profit from your skill.

It's one thing to have a skill, it's something else to use it in a way that results in advantage or profit. But the word there is *eutron*. And so you can either seek to prevail by force or by wisdom.

It puts us in mind, in fact I think somebody actually mentioned the idea, the related idea when Jesus talked about the Kingdom of God and he said from the time of the prophets until John, the Kingdom has been preached and men are forcing their way into it, men are trying to enter it by force. And we've talked before about how Jacob wrestled with the angel until morning and he said, I will not let you go until you bless me. Well, does the Word of God teach us that blessing comes by tackling an angel? You look around in the modern day and you would think that was the case because people, it's kind of waning now, but there was a big fad there for several years of preoccupation with angels and praying to angels and putting pictures of angels and talking

about your guardian angel and being touched by an angel and so forth.

The whole idea that angels are the immediate emissaries of God sort of tapped into the same kind of thinking that people who get preoccupied with saints and with Mary do in the Catholic Church. Well, God is so remote and far off, I need a mediator, so I'll use this saint, whoever, who's the guy that they always put on the dashboard, Saint Christopher and these different ones, and Mary, well, God won't listen to me but Mary will and God will listen to Mary, so I'll talk to Mary, Mary will talk to God, God will listen to Mary and I'll get what I want. Well, you have this angelic idea and Jacob says, I will not let you go unless you bless me and he does get a preview of what his new name is going to be.

He says, you're going to be Israel, which means Prince of God and when you see it in Hebrew, Yitzra, and that T-S-R infix there is the word we've had several times in Ecclesiastes, T-S-A-R, Tsar or Tsarim has been translated as Prince and Princess, we're going to see it again in our passage this morning, but that's right in the middle of Yitzrael. Tsar is the word Prince and Prince of God is the name that is given on that occasion to Jacob and he said, you'll no longer be Jacob, you'll be Yitzrael, Prince of God, but that's really not a blessing, that is a promise of blessing or a prediction of blessing, but that in and of itself was not a blessing and you don't get blessing by force, yet that's been Israel's problem ever since their namesake wrestled with the angel, trying to achieve God's blessing by works, by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, you don't get blessing and favor from God by what you do, it's what God does in you and through you, that's the whole mustard seed of faith principle, God does the work, it's divine power that accomplishes the divine plan, human power does not accomplish the divine plan ever, human strength does not accomplish God's plan and God blesses within the confines of His plan, so if you are blessed it's not because you're exerting your own effort, you're just swinging the dull axe and you're working harder and harder trying to chop the wood, I think of drill bits, I was trying to work on something, the gate out here, our gate latch, for some bizarre reason whoever designs gate latches, you know the kind I'm talking about, it's a flat piece of black metal and it has a screw that goes to the middle and one side is kind of blunt and then it has an opening in the underside for the bar of the gate and it's supposed to flip up and then flop back down on it and gravity should hold it down, but they've got a longish handle that sticks to the other side of the gate and it's almost perfectly balanced, so if it flips up and it doesn't have a spring on it, it just stays that way and it doesn't latch, and I've been suffering along with this gate for six years now and so I got a spring and I wanted to put the spring on it so that when you close the gate it would flop down on there, but who designs these things, why not move the pivot so that the weight of the thing will always close the latch, but they don't, so I had to put a spring on, well to put the spring on I had to drill a hole in that flat piece of metal, so I got my drill, got my bit, went out there and started drilling and I thought boy this is some really hard metal here and I thought it just got to be pot metal, but I leaned harder and harder, my drill was and it wasn't going through and so I stopped and I looked at my drill bit and I thought maybe this is not the sharpest bit in the drawer and so I went back, maybe I am not either, and so after messing with it for a couple of minutes I went back out to the

bench and got another bit the same size I put in there and zing it went right through because it was just pot metal, I was working and making my drill work and I had a dull bit, well that's what he's talking about, if the iron has been seriously dulled and has no faces sharpened one must increase his efforts and anybody that's ever used a dull saw, have you ever used a dull hand saw, this happens, it happened to me anyway, I got this wonderful little saw that would just cut through anything, it was really really sharp and I used to use it in rockwell all the time, one day I was sawing through a board and it didn't want to go through and I sawed harder and harder, well come to find out there was a big old 16 penny galvanized nail, cup head nail in the board that I hadn't seen and I dulled my saw, it cut through that nail but it wasn't like one of those ginseng knives where it kept its edge after cutting through metal and ever since then that saw, I still have it because I can't bear to throw it out, but it takes three times as long to saw through a board because it got dull, well wisdom is your sharp sword, the word of God is sharper than a two edged sword, when you're employing the word of God, when you're living by the word of God, you're not exerting your own effort, the prophet of skill is wisdom, wisdom and your knowledge avails, your skillfulness in living life doesn't stop in this life, there are many people who get by, Donald Trump is a whiz at making money and building businesses and doing a lot of things, but I seriously doubt that it's going to avail himself anything after his life is over, because I don't think he's a believer with any interest in the things of God, but you can have wisdom even in the small things of life, you can be wise and prudent and it avails, it has your throne attached to it and that's what we're looking for, that's why verse 11 says, you may know how to charm a snake, you may know how to hypnotize him and lift the lid off the basket and he's up there weaving back and forth with his hood, but he doesn't bite because you've mesmerized him, you've charmed him, but if the serpent bites when there is no charm, then there's no prophet to the Lord of the tongue, and that's the literal translation of 10.11, if the serpent bites when there is no charm, then there is no prophet, no Yitron, same word as in verse 10, to the Baal, the Lord of the tongue, who is the Lord of the tongue? Well, this is like the horse whisperer, that can tame a horse and break a horse without having to do all the bronco busting that the old cowboys did, he's mastered the language of the horse, if you ever watch the horse whisperer, they turn around and they use body language and they walk away, and they look at it and they don't look at it, and they sidle up and they walk away, and they watch the responses of the horse, and they whisper this horse into submission, and they can put a bridle and a saddle on and ride him away. Well, men have figured out this same thing with snakes, there's no magic to it, but snakes have a body language and they have things that they respond to, and this whole playing the flute thing and having them come up out of the basket, there really is something to that, and people have mastered that skill, and they can pacify a snake and keep it from striking, by employing a combination of sound and motions, that either confuse or, it's like taking a crocodile and rubbing him on his belly, they'll lay there, I forget if it's an alligator, that would be handy to know if it's an alligator or a crocodile, try the wrong animal and get your arm bit off and be like Amos Moses, but they figured out this skill with pacifying a serpent, but there is no profit, there is no benefit if you know how to charm a snake, but he bites you before you ever got around to charming him, because you were careless, you

didn't use your skill for profit.

So he uses these analogies, and he starts talking about principles in verse 12, Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, the word here is chen, but the lips of the fool will swallow him, and the idea of the lips of the fool swallowing him, puts us in mind of the one who was trying to dig the pit, and he fell into it. He elaborates on this in verse 13, the beginning of the words of his mouth, this is the fool, the beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the result or the end, you got kind of the beginning and the end, but this is not Rosh, or you have Roshit at Genesis 1.1, in the beginning, but this is a different word for beginning, and it means when you start something, at the outset, so at the outset the words of his mouth are foolishness, but what comes behind, literally means what follows, what follows from his mouth is, holot ra'ah, holot is from halal, we have seen that before, the word to praise, but when you put it in the pial, the intensive stem, it means to rant, and ra'ah means evil, the result, he starts out talking foolishly, and he ends up in evil ranting, verse 14 says, but the fool multiplies words, he doesn't seem to figure this out, words from the mouth of the wise are full of grace, they are gracious, but the lips of the fool will swallow them, the beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, the result, what follows from his mouth is evil ranting, but the fool multiplies words, the man does not know that which will be, now this says ha'adam, and in most translations it says, no one knows, or mankind does not know, but in this context, it has a singular verb, and I think it's talking about the fool, the fool multiplies words, the man does not know that which will be, and that which will result from him, and once again you have ahre, A-C-H-R-I, or E-Y, I'm not sure how you would transliterate that, but A-C-H-R in Hebrew means, what comes behind, what follows, what is afterward, you can't tell a fool that he's wasting his time, that his ranting is not going to accomplish anything, he starts out talking foolishly, he ends up in evil ranting, and no matter how he multiplies his words, he doesn't see what's coming, he doesn't see that it's just going to end up in disaster, he thinks that his talking and his ranting is going to produce an effect, and what is going to come after, which is the evil ranting of the previous verse, who can tell it to him? You can't educate a fool, how many of us have tried to talk someone out of their foolishness, to no avail, you can't inject wisdom into a fool from the outside, you cannot impress wisdom on someone who is bound and determined to be a fool, who woke up this morning as a fool and will go to bed tonight as a fool, you cannot cast your pearls before that particular swine, don't try it, who can tell it to him? You can see what's going to happen, you can hear the foolishness and how he's starting out, you can see the evil incoherence of where he's going to end up, but don't waste your time, Matthew chapter 7, that which will result from him, from his words and actions, who can tell it to him? Verse 15 says, the labor of fools wearies him that does not know to go to the city. We have to change the translation here a little bit, people have tried to accommodate this to what they think the verse is saying, and they've done an injustice to the Hebrew here, because in verse 15, like the New King James says, the labor of fools wearies them, for they do not know how to go to the city, but there is no them in the verse, it's him, and he does not know, there's a singular suffix on the word for being wearied, and there's a singular verb for going to the city, and yet fools is plural, the labor of fools wearies him that does not know to go to the city, now what on

earth does that mean? The labor of fools wearies him that does not know to go to the city, well, what does it mean to go to the city? Well, if you're going to the city, you're not in the city, so you're out in the country, there are some things they have in the city, again, if you saw the 1883 program, or you think about life on the frontier, 10 miles to the nearest general store, we used to live 13 miles outside of Claremont, my folks still live out there, and going to town is a big deal, it's an investment of a couple of hours to go to town, to go to the city, because there are things in the city that you need, that you can't get out in the country, there are the services of other people, there are merchants who sell goods in the city, the synagogue or the temple is in the city, not out in the country, there are a lot of things that can only be found in the city, that cannot be found in the country, that you cannot provide for yourself, in other words, things you can't do for yourself, things you can't grow for yourself, or build for yourself, are available in the city, the labor of fools, wearies him that does not know to go to the city, you have to know when you don't have something, when you can't do something, you have to know when it's time to ask for help, this is the first principle of step programs, this is the first principle of the big book, in Alcoholics Anonymous, you have to admit that you are insufficient, this is the first principle in salvation, you have to admit that you have a problem that you can't solve for yourself, that you are out of relationship with God and you can't fix it in your own strength, you have to go to God and be the recipient of His grace, that you have to be saved by grace through faith, as believers we have to live everyday recognizing that we are insufficient, we don't have the strength, we don't have the ability to live the life to which we are called, we have to go to where that aid is available, we have to essentially go to the city, if we keep working and trying to do it ourselves, we are engaging in the labor of fools, the labor of fools wearies him, this is talking about a man, he doesn't have to be a fool, but he is engaging in the labor of fools, they talk about a fool's errand, well he's gone off on a fool's errand, he's trying something that has no hope of success, well, if you don't realize that you need to go to the city, you need to go to somebody or some place that has what you need, outside of your own land, outside of your own house, outside of your own abilities, you are engaging in the labor of fools, that's what this verse is saying, the fool just multiplies words, he keeps talking, nobody can tell him the end result, and he's going to weary himself, the man that engages in this is going to weary himself in the labor of fools, because he doesn't know that he's got to go to an outside source to get what he needs, he's got to go get his axe sharpened, he's got to go find some iron that's got a sharp edge, he needs a sharp pry bar to knock down that wall, he's got to stand at a distance from the wall and use the pry bar so he doesn't get bit by a serpent, well, now when you get to verse 16, 17 and following, you think, well now this just seems like a non sequitur, it says, woe to you land because your king is a youth and your princes are eating in the morning, blessed are you oh land whose king is of nobility or is the son of nobles and your princes feast at the proper time for strength and not for drunkenness, well we look at this as it stands, say in the New King James, we say well, I guess, poor land, their king, whom they did not elect by the way, is a child and the princes are wastrels who spend all their time feasting and consuming the profit of the land, and the land is blessed when the king is the son of nobles and your princes feast at the proper time, so I guess you're lucky if you have a noble

young king and the princes are doing the right thing and you're out of luck if you've got a, by implication, a foolish young king and the princes are not controlled by him and they just go off and don't do right, because of laziness the building decays and through idleness of hands the house leaks, a feast is made for laughter and wine makes merry but money answers everything, well, I don't know about you, but the thread of thought that wins its way through those verses completely escapes me looking at it here, let's give you a little bit different translation and I think you'll see how this all follows, and don't despair, yes, I am about to give you a printed copy of the translation, I am so sorry that I don't have it for you this morning, the much promised and often desired hard copy of the translation is forthcoming, but for now you'll just have to try to transcribe, verse 16, woe to you land, this is Eretz, it doesn't say O land, so I didn't put O in there, woe to you land, because your king is a youth and your princes are eating in the morning, woe to you land, because your king is a youth and your princes are eating in the morning, this is Akal, A-K-A-L, which just means to eat, doesn't necessarily mean to feast, I have a whole different word for feast, verse 17 says, blessings to you, literally, blessings to you land, because your king is the son of nobles and your princes eat at that time because of strength and not because of drunkenness, blessings to you land, because your king is the son of nobles and your princes eat at that time because of strength and not because of drunkenness, now, what I want to offer you as a suggestion here is these two verses address the very same situation, there is a young king and there are princes eating in the morning, one guy comes up and says, woe to you O land, he looks at this and he says, our king is just a youth, and look at these lazy princes, it was a sign of dissipation to be feasting in the morning, to have stayed up all night in revelry and to be eating in the morning after a night of carousing, in fact this still happens, I can remember my days in the Marine Corps watching, of course I was not a participant, a mere observer, people who stayed out all night engaging in all sorts of frivolity and then in the morning would say, boy, I'm starving, let's go try to get something to eat and it was out of time, banqueting, the big meal of the day was near sundown in ancient Near Eastern times, so if they were having the big feast in the morning, this means that they are reveling and carousing, so somebody looks and says, look, the king is young, the prince is eating in the morning, this is a curse on the land, woe to the land, bad things are coming, somebody else looks at the same situation and says, hey, the land is blessed, because this young king, the reason he is the king and he is young is because he is the son of nobility, he's been raised, he's qualified to be king because he's been raised to be king, he's come from a noble household, he's of royal blood, he's been born to this, he's grown up from his infancy to come to the kingdom for such a time as this and he can rule as a young king because he's the son of nobles and the princes are eating at that time, the word is *et*, the same word we had in chapter 3, verse 1, for everything there is a time, for everything there is a season and a time to every purpose, *et*, for every purpose, the word *et* is used here, and I put that in italics because I have to add that word to make good sense in English, but it literally says, your princes eat at time, and it's at the time that was mentioned in the previous verse, they are eating at that time, in the morning, i.e., because of strength and not because of drunkenness.

You know how it is, you see an event happen and you've got the liberals and the conservatives or

you've got the republicans and the democrats or you've got the naysayers and the yaysayers, look at the same thing and interpret it two different ways. It's all in how you look at it. One person looks at it and says, oh, this is the end of the world.

Somebody else says, no, that's not necessarily bad. How do you discern if it is a woe or if it is a blessing? Well, you've got to know why something is done. In the first verse, they say, woe to the land, the king is young and the princes are eating in the morning.

This has just got to be bad. The next guy says, well, let's look at this more closely. The king is a youth, but he's a youth from a noble family.

He's been trained in supervision. He's supervised. He's had experience.

He's had observation of this from his infancy. And yes, the princes are eating in the morning, but why? Not because of drunkenness, not because they've been out carousing. It's because, you remember how they tell us today, breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

You break your fast. You've been fasting all night long. You break the fast.

You eat food and it gives you strength for the day. That's the fuel you run on. Wheaties, breakfast of champions.

They're wise to eat in the morning and fortify themselves for the rigors of the challenges that will come to them that day. So there's a difference between a superficial glance, judging the king and judging the princes. I judge that king, woe to the land, because the king is young.

I judge those princes, woe to the land, because they're eating in the morning. But the one with discernment doesn't just draw a snap judgment. He looks and says, yeah, the king is young, but hey, look at the family that he comes from.

You can get away with a young king when he's been trained from his youth. And these princes are not eating in the morning because of dissipation. It's because they are strengthening themselves for the coming day.

You have a similar two sides of the coin thing in the next few verses. Verse 18, in the New King James says, because of laziness the building decays, and through idleness of hands the house leaks. And then in verse 19, a feast is made for laughter, and wine makes merry, but money answers everything.

Well, believe it or not, these are another, it's just like the previous two observations. Somebody looks at the house and they say, look, look at this guy's rafters are sagging. His house is bowing.

It literally says because of laziness the rafters sag. They look at your house and they say, the rafters are sagging. It's because he's lazy.

He doesn't want to work. And because of idleness of hands, the house leaks. Verse 19 says, you know what, for pleasure, the literal word here is laughter, but this word for laughter is often used in the sense of joy or pleasure.

For pleasure, they are making bread. You have the word make, *asah*, and the word *lechem*, like *bet lechem*, *bet lehem*. For pleasure, they are making bread.

And *yayan*, or wine, makes life merry. For pleasure, they are making bread. Wine makes life merry.

And silver, this is the same word we had back when the silver is found in the shadow, sometimes translated money, but the literal word is silver. Silver will answer it all. That word answer, you notice even the New King James translates it answer here at the end of verse 19, is *ya-ah-neh*.

You have a Y, an N, and an H there with an I-N in there, but that, you remember *inyan*, that they translate the task, it is evil task that God has given men to be tasked with back in chapter 1, *inyan*, Y, N, and H, this is the same root. And here, they translate it correctly as answer. Money answers everything.

Ya-ah-neh is from the verb from which you get the noun *inyan*. So what's the idea here? One person looks and says, these people are just, they're feasting, they're eating bread, you know, a loaf of bread, a jug of wine and dhal, they're in here partying and look at their rafters are sagging and their house is leaking. What's the matter with these people? They're lazy, they're indolent, they have idle hands, kind of reminds me of that 1883 thing, they're looking down the road saying, oh, those people aren't working like us, they're just going to trade and get the things they need, they don't just want to be diligent, guys are just sitting around.

But verse 19 says, you know what, they're joyous as they're making their bread, they're making bread inside that leaky house with the sagging rafters and they're enjoying their bread and their wine and you know what, they can pay a guy to fix the rafters, they can pay somebody to plug the leaks, they've got the silver. What's the implication here? People may look at your life and say, you know, you're not squared away, you haven't fixed your sagging rafters, you haven't plugged your leaky house, you're just sitting there eating your bread and drinking your wine and making merry. But if you have the silver to go to the city and hire the guy to come out, you don't have to work.

Wisdom says, I've got the silver and I can enjoy my life and I can enjoy the provision that I have. I can enjoy the simple things, a loaf of bread and a jug of wine and thou. In my house, it doesn't look that great.

It has a leak here and there. But I've got silver. I have that which is hard to obtain and I can go to the city.

I'm not like the fool who spends all his time looking over the fence, commenting with multiple words and ranting endlessly and evilly about my rafters and my leaky house. He doesn't have to live here. I like my sagging rafter, leaky house because I have bread, I have wine, I make my bread in pleasure, I drink my wine in joy and I've got silver that will answer all of these needs because I looked in the shadow and I found it.

Then finally in verse 20, it says, what's the point here? What's the culminating thought for this whole section? Even in your thought, do not curse the king. And in your bedrooms, do not curse the rich. Don't be like the fool looking over there criticizing the sagging rafters.

For a bird of the heavens will carry your voice and a lord of the wings will cause the matter to be told. I'm sure the same thought has crossed Laurie's mind, has crossed mine. The laws of the Navy, Admiral Hopwood in the Royal Navy wrote this poem that we had to memorize as plebs.

Now these are the laws of the Navy, unwritten, varied they be, and he who is wise will observe them going down in his ship to the sea. For as naught may outrun the destroyer, so it is with the law and its grip. For the strength of the ship is the service and the strength of the service is the ship.

And the third law of the Navy there is take heed what you say of your seniors, be your words spoken softly or plain, lest a bird of the air tell the matter and so shall you hear it again. Admiral Hopwood had read Ecclesiastes chapter 10. That's where that verse comes from.

Lest a bird of the air tell the matter because you spoke ill of your seniors. Even in your thought don't curse the king. In your bedroom do not curse the rich.

For a bird of the heavens will carry your voice and it literally says a Baal of wings, a lord of wings, a master of wings. And you know what this is referring to? You want to talk about angels? God has his minions throughout the world and the picture, especially in the Old Testament, is that God has messenger angels who come and report to him. Remember the news of the corruption of mankind came up to God and God said I'm going to have to go down and see for myself because he had gotten a report from the watcher angels from those who had not fallen, had not intermarried with mankind.

They came up and said Lord, got some problems down there. He says I need to go down and see for myself. That's the picture that is presented.

Obviously God is omniscient. But the point here is think about Matthew chapter 7. Judge not. Don't worry about the speck in someone else's eye.

Concentrate on getting the advantage out of your skill. Concentrate on wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Concentrate on where we stand before God. Can we live this day today heartily as under the Lord and not under men? Don't worry yourself about the affairs of others. Don't bear a grudge.

Don't sharpshoot. Don't be critical of spirit. Even in your thought do not curse the king.

And in your bedrooms do not curse the rich. You don't know what's going on there. Don't worry about the guy with the sagging rafters.

Concentrate on laying hold of that silver that allows you to enjoy whatever you have from God regardless of whether your rafters are sagging or not. Well, there's great food for thought there. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your word. We thank you for its renewing and restorative power in our souls. We thank you that you have enabled us to fulfill your calling and your purpose for our lives.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will remind us constantly of our responsibility in that area. We pray that our lives will reflect your glory and the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in his name.

Amen.