

02-05-12b Ecclesiastes

Let's resume our study in Ecclesiastes chapter 11, where, once again, our first few verses, the words of Solomon are, send out your bread upon the face of the waters, for in many days you will discover it. Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for you do not know what will be evil upon the earth, or what evil will be upon the earth. Well, the New King James tells us essentially the same, in maybe slightly different words, cast your bread upon the waters, but the verb here is shalak, and shalak means to send forth.

It doesn't mean to throw or to cast. It's not the word used where the sailors cast Jonah into the sea. Shalak means to send forth, and this is a measured sending forth.

With many contexts, it's a sending forth with the expectation of return. You find it of kings who say, send and tell so and so that I want something done. You send it, and it is a cause that should produce a result, is the idea.

You're not just flinging bread out like you're feeding the ducks. This is a sending forth of lechem, and it is your bread, lechma, or lechmecha actually, upon the face of the waters. This is alpey hamayim, upon the surface of the waters.

You're not throwing it into the water. It's not sinking, but what exactly does this mean? You have people who are in an agricultural economy, and you would expect that if they have bread that goes beyond what they need to eat, they might be like truck farmers. Here in Texas, all over the state, you have FM 620 and FM 7175.

What does FM stand for? Does anybody know? Farm to Market Road. FM is Farm to Market Road. Why is that? Because this state started out largely agricultural.

People had goods to take to market, and so the state came in and made these roads so the farmers could get their goods to market, farm to market. Well, this doesn't say take it to the market. We had a verse not long ago where he was talking about someone who didn't know how to go to the city to find somebody with the skills that they needed.

We just saw in our review about the people who have sagging rafters and leech in their house, and they have silver to solve that problem. Where are they going to go to find a craftsman who's going to come out there and fix their farmhouse? They'll go to the city. They've got to recognize where their skills are limited and end.

I am a guy that fixes computers. I've done it for better than half my life, and I know that's one thing, one of the few things I can say with confidence, I know how to do that. I can take an Intel-based PC, and I can figure out what's the matter with it, and I can make it go by hook or by crook.

I can make the thing work. Well, there are people who have skills in certain areas, and there are

other people who may own a PC just like they own a car, but if you look under the hood of either one of them, they would be completely helpless. They wouldn't know a stick of RAM from a stick of gum, and they wouldn't know the power supply fan from the CPU cooling fan from a baseball fan.

I mean, they just have no concept of what goes on under the hood. There are other people that do. Well, you go to the city to find somebody that has the skills that you need.

You might take your goods, your produce, to the city to find a market and find buyers for it. That's not what's in view here. He doesn't say take your bread to the city.

He doesn't say send forth your bread upon a wagon to the city. He says send forth your bread upon the waters, upon the face of the waters. Well, what is it that travels on the face of the waters? Lechem, or bread in the literal sense, stands for food or foodstuffs.

And what is food? I mean, we're obviously in a metaphorical mode here. We're not all going to grab a sack of Wonder Bread and go down to the creek and throw it in. What's he talking about? Bread is a manufactured item.

You grow the grain. You sow the seed. You reap.

You thresh. You store up. You grind.

You mix. You cook. And the end product is bread.

It's kind of like the people who make Blue Bell ice cream. We eat all we want and sell the rest. That's how they did it with bread.

And it's a great picture in the Bible of the concept of charity that the law of Moses from God for Israel does not say distribute bread to the poor, does it? What does it say? Leave the corners of your field uncleaned for the poor. This is the difference between handing the poor a finished product that all they have to do is tear it and eat it versus giving them the opportunity to reap, thresh, grind, mix, bake, and provide themselves with that which sustains their life. So bread is the culmination of a long process.

It's a finished product that comes from a lot of previous effort in planting and sowing and so on. So to take a product like this, because obviously you're not going to say, well, I've got three loaves of bread left. I think I'll put them all on the waters and then I'll sit here and stare at my table and wait for God to take me home.

You provide for your own needs and then you have this bread over and above. That's the implication. This is not your necessary bread.

This does not give us our daily bread. This is product that goes beyond. If you watch the 1883

program, you know that people in the frontier days, and even if you didn't watch the program, you know this anyway, they would toil and hunt and plant and sow and store, gather for their own needs, and then when they had surplus, this became the means of trade and getting things that you couldn't grow or you couldn't make or you couldn't provide yourself with.

So you care for your own needs and then what's over and above, you engage in commerce, and that is the picture here. But this is not local commerce. This is what you might term international commerce.

This goes beyond your neighbors. This is not trading with the guy down the road. When you send forth your bread, your foodstuffs, your produce upon the face of the waters, they're talking about putting it in a ship and sending it up to Tyre or Sidon or up to Phoenicia or up to Crete or over to Rome, down to Egypt.

This is to send a cargo of manufactured goods away, out of sight. And what is the difference? Why would we have this picture instead of the neighbors or even the city? Because if you truck your farm-to-market produce to the neighbor or to the city, if you get worried about it, you can just walk down there and check. Hey, Uzzah, I sent you a cartload of bread yesterday, and you were supposed to send me an ox back.

I haven't seen the ox. Where is he? Or you send your stuff in the hands of servants or a son or something to the city. You say, hey, Philemon, I sent you down there to the city with that cartload of produce.

Where's my shekels? And you can check on it. It's nearby. It's local.

As soon as you send something forth on the face of the waters, and it's going to a far-off destination, you can't track it. You can't follow it. You are exercising faith that whoever you entrusted it to is going to do their business.

This is like the New Testament parables of the master who entrusts his servants with the talents or with some other goods, and then he goes away. He leaves them in charge of his vineyard or he leaves them in charge of his household. He's away where he cannot check on it.

He has entrusted. He has given a stewardship to someone, and then he has to let them go. He can't follow it.

As soon as you get it on a ship and send it away, the whole idea here is it's out of your hands. It's out of your observation. You can no longer see it.

Well, there are people who will not do that. There are people who will not entrust. In business, they're called micromanagers.

They won't hand you a task and let you give it your best shot and come back and report the

results. They've got to be there. They've got to be looking over the shoulder.

They've got to be hounding and checking and observing and so on. There are people this way with their investments in the stock market. Now, you can do your research and you say, here's a fine little company.

It's got a great prospect of growth and production here. I want to buy some of their stock, and I'm going to invest in them. I believe in them.

I'm going to put my money in them, and I'm going to leave it there and let them see what they do. There are people who can't do that. And so every day, they're checking the ticker and the stock symbol and the little runner at the bottom of the screen and wondering, well, the first sign of a shadow flickering across the face of this company.

I'm going to yank my money right out of there because, well, that's not sending forth on the waters and entrusting your goods to someone. So, bringing this back to what Kohelet is up to here, what Solomon is telling us. We've just come out of this thing where he says, Tend to your own knitting.

Don't be concerned about the opinions of people who say your rafters are sagging, and don't you be guilty of the same. Lest a lord of wings... And it's interesting to me that there are three or four different words that Solomon could have used to refer to a bird. But a baal of wings here, a lord of wings, forces you to think of larger... What do we think of when we think of somebody who is a master of wings or an owner of wings? It's the angelic messengers, right? So, do not think that you can get away with cursing the king or cursing your neighbor or cursing the rich without God knowing.

The picture, of course, in the Old Testament especially, God's omnipresence and God's omniscience were not always in the forefront where people would say, well, instantly, if I think something, God knows it. God was pictured on His throne on high. And how did God find out about things? And God sort of encourages this conceit or this view when you go back to the story of the building of the Tower of Babel.

It has come up to my attention. I have heard the report. I will go down and see for myself.

How did that news reach God in this figure? The lords of wings went up there and said, Lord, this is what's going on down on planet Earth. He says, I believe I have to go down there and take a look. The sin and corruption in Sodom and Gomorrah and the other three cities around the southern edge of the Dead Sea, which wasn't dead at that time, came up to God's notice.

It was reported to God. And He said, I'm going to come see for myself. What does He tell Abraham after he stops under the tree and has the meal that's hastily prepared? And then He says, I will not hide from Abraham what I'm about to do.

I'm on my way down. I want to see for myself what's going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. He's pictured as being present in one place and I've heard a report of wanting to go see for himself.

Messengers, lords of the wing, will tell the matter. And it impresses itself on our mind in a more graphic fashion, doesn't it? That God is going to know. That's the point.

You can pitch it in terms of omniscience. You can pitch it in terms of omnipresence, any way you like. But God is anxious to impress upon us that the thoughts and intents of our hearts are known.

It doesn't matter if you go into your closet, in the inner room, in the inner chamber, of the inner house, of the inner court, of the larger place, how many layers you bury yourself in. The Baal of wings, the master of wings, is going to report it. So just don't waste your time doing it.

Well, from that, now we've moved into a different area because we're talking about how you evaluate and how you judge and how people will take one set of facts and interpret it for good or for ill. They'll cast it in a positive light or a negative light. Well, people become sensitive to criticism and people don't want to look bad.

People don't want to be reported as having failed or as having taken a risk and not succeeded. And people become very conservative, hyper-conservative, to where they won't do anything, they won't trust anything that they haven't seen, they won't put their faith in anything that they can't touch, they won't venture the old adage. I was reading this morning, talking about in our modern day how the use of Proverbs to teach children has kind of gone out of fashion, gone out of style.

In olden days, when society did not change so rapidly, there would be these truths. They've come to be known as truisms, although that's actually a little bit of a misnomer. But we had adages, we had sayings, stitch in time saves nine, one in the hand is worth two in the bush.

And these were a means of transmitting the experience of the previous generation to the next. It was encapsulating in pithy sayings, time-tested words of wisdom. And they were remarking, and I hadn't really stopped to think about it, but that's sort of gone out of style.

You don't hear people quoting those so often anymore. And these adages that encapsulate truth. Well, people want the evidence of their own senses, they don't want to take the word of somebody else, they don't want to trust the experience of someone else that has gone down this road.

They say, you know, I want to see it for myself, it's this living in the moment type of thing. Well, you have throughout the Bible encapsulations of wisdom that you can't just take out of context and say are going to apply in every case, but they are short and memorable expressions of truth. People often today want what they can see, want what they can substantiate.

I want a report. Many as the employee in a company who has ground at the mill late hours trying

to generate reports and slice and dice data and get information out so that people who are managing can verify what they think may be happening or what they hope is not happening. Why is Arthur Anderson in so much trouble? Accountability, reporting, presenting facts in a false light, in a deceptive light.

Well, so people say now, see, if they had had the facts, they wouldn't have gone down the wrong trail here, so I'm not doing anything that I can't document, I'm not doing anything I can't see and touch and verify. Here's Solomon saying, look, send it out, put it on the ship, entrust it to a faithful servant and rest your mind. Don't put a homing beacon on it and track its progress on your giant satellite map.

You've got to operate in faith. You have to exercise faith. You have to trust in this life without being able to verify.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things you cannot see. And how can you claim faith in the spiritual realm when you never exercise faith in your daily walk? Because they're really one and the same. That's what he's going to be getting at.

He says, look, send forth your produce, that from which you hope to make a profit. What's the theme of this book? Where's the profit in life? Well, guess what? You're going to have to entrust your means of making a profit. This is the bread above and beyond what you eat, right? You're going to use it in trade.

You're going to send it forth. You're hoping to get a return back greater than your investment in the bread. Otherwise, it's not worth doing.

You're hoping for a profit when you send this forth. And you're hoping. It's hope.

It is the substance of things hoped for. You've got to entrust it. And he says, you will find it after many days.

And this word for find is a word that also means to discover. You will come across it. It will be found after many days.

And the trick is, what do you do during the many days? You know, there are people who are just drumming their fingers on the table saying, well, you know, I sent that out. I wonder when it's going to come back. I wonder how long it's going to take.

And consuming their thoughts. The whole idea here is you take a calculated risk, if you will. It's a calculated investment that might fail.

But there's no point in worrying about it. Trust that generally speaking, when you send this off, it's going to come back and it's going to make a profit. You've sent it forth on the waters.

And he says, you will discover it after many days. Discover what? The same bread? No, the purpose for which you sent it. The sending forth of the bread upon the waters.

You will get a return on that. You will find the recompense for that after many days. But remember, it's many days.

So don't tie yourself up in knots in the meantime. Parents have to do this in child training. Train up a child in the way that he should go.

And after many days, when he is old, he will not depart from it. You can't be always analyzing and saying, well, now, did that little lesson that I taught there, and did that training that I tried to give, is it bearing its fruit right now? We have to relax. We have to have faith that if we do what we're supposed to do, we are sending forth our bread, our profit, the fruit of our experience, into the hearts and minds of our little charges here.

And the Bible says, people say, oh, what does it mean when he is old? How old does he have to be? Can he have a great period of profligacy in his younger days? And then, how old is old? How long is it going to be before all of that is going to... Relax. Do what you're supposed to do. Send the ship out of the harbor with the bread on board.

And relax. God says that there is a profit that you will see, and that you will discover. It will be after many days.

Does people want that to be in concrete terms? Oh, the child is going to be a model of morality and spirituality, and be another Billy Graham, and another Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and they're going to do this, and they're going to be that, and they're going to care for me in my old age, and they're going to be a shining beacon of humanity. That's not what the Bible says. It says, when he's old, he will not depart from that way in which he should go.

Well, you may not be able to see that. You may be looking at the outside of the house with the sagging rafters and the holes, and you may be thinking, they're just sitting in there, eating and drinking and being merry. There's no good that can... I trained... What happened to you? How could you live this way? How could you do this? Remember, what you can see is not everything there is.

God has promised... What's more real to you? What you see when you look at the sagging rafters of your... I know people who... All of us, our children are fairly young, but I know people whose children are grown, and they're just tragically disappointed. They do nothing but bemoan what went wrong, and they agonize and twist and turn and tie themselves in knots over it. What's more real to you? What you can see of your child's life? You're still looking at time.

If they're a believer, you've got a thousand years in the millennium, you've got all eternity after that. What did God say? How old is old? Well, you either believe what God said, or you can look

at the evidence of your senses and say, I must not have trained and have all of these doubts, and that causes us to lose our focus. We are starting to get invested in and try to measure profit under the sun.

Solomon says, don't do that. You have got to have faith. You've got to send the ship out of the harbor with all of that precious bread on board and trust that after many days, the profit from that investment is going to come back.

What about storms? What about pirates? What about graft and corruption in the process of the buying and the selling? Relax. That's the message of this verse. He says, look, be reasonably prudent.

Verse 2 is a call for prudence. It's a call to hedge your bets, if you will. It says, give a serving, give a portion, to seven and also to eight.

For you do not know what will be evil or what evil will be. It kind of works both ways. Upon the earth.

Now, we just had upon the waters, right? We had al-pnei ha'mayim, upon the face of the waters. Now, he says, and it's significant, you do not know what will be evil, al-ha'aretz. You had upon the face of the waters, now you've got upon the earth.

So this is not just what might happen to the ship as it's going up there to Tyre or Sidon or beyond to Cyprus or wherever it might be going. He says, give a portion to seven and also to eight. Now, what do we know about numbers without getting into a big discourse on numbers? What does the number seven represent? It's completion.

It's fulfillment. I could tell you fascinating things about the number seven. Let me just suggest a few to you in the time that we have.

Seven is the number of completion. It's the first week of human history. Six days God made the heavens and the earth and the seventh he rested in.

The seven rounds off and completes. God looked at everything on that day and saw that it was good. He rested on the seventh day.

7,000-year pattern of human history. Why seven? Well, what is the number of God? Three, right? You've got the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit. You have the number three associated with God in a lot of different ways.

The number of man happens to be four. You've got 4,000 years of human history from Adam to Christ showing man his sinfulness, the dispensation of the power of man, if you will, where the power of Christ had not yet defeated the power of sin on the cross. I can take you to passage after passage and show you how the number four relates to man.

Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is the God-man. He's perfect. You add three plus four and you get seven.

The age of Christ that began at the cross. You have the church age where his body and bride are being formed. You have the millennial reign where he fulfills all the Old Testament promises.

The last 3,000 years of human history are all about God's power manifest in Christ. The first 4,000 years are all about man's power and how it results in corruption and sin and death. But when you add it all together, you get perfection.

You have the complete unfolding of the revelation of God. Seven is the number of perfection. People who are interested in music, how many full tones are there in a scale? We call it an octave, but you're actually repeating the last note.

It's seven. There are seven tones. There are seven steps in music that takes you to the next one.

By the time you get up to the next C above middle C, that's the eighth note. You've got, you know, that's seven notes. The musical scale reflects the perfection of God's plan.

There are many, many places. But here, what do you have? Give a serving to seven and also to eight. Now, you remember over in Proverbs, these six things that the Lord hates, yea, seven, are an abomination to him.

And it covers the full spectrum of the things that are an abomination to God. Six, you know, you have this X comma X plus one pattern so many times. Well, here, we already have perfection in seven or completeness, and then we're adding an additional one.

This is not give a portion to six, yea, to seven. This is give a portion to seven and also to eight. What does that mean? Insurance.

You're distributing, you're in the physical realm, in the first meaning here before we get to the metaphor and what it means. This is a business metaphor talking about spiritual things. You've got to be willing to take a risk.

You've got to have faith that even if you let something out of your sight, a profit will eventually come in business. What is the spiritual analogy? We invest in our lives in faith. We do the things that God asks us to do even though we don't see a return.

The wife may be witnessing silently to her husband without a word for years and never see a return. That's sending the ship out of the harbor not knowing if and when it's going to return, but trusting God says there will be a profit. You bear the fruit of the Spirit.

You are loving. You are joyful. You are peaceful.

You are patient. You suffer long. You exercise self-control and you don't see any difference.

Your bank account doesn't swell. You don't become more popular and handsome and beautiful and people don't take your picture to put on the cover of magazines. Your life seems to go on as before.

What are you doing? You're sending your ship, you're sending forth your bread on the water knowing that after many days that is going to come around. God is just. God is in His heaven.

God sees. God knows. What does it say? In the New Testament, I think it's in Hebrews, God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and your labor of love.

It takes faith to believe that even though this has gone unnoticed and makes no ripple in the water of your daily life, God sees. God knows. God is keeping an account.

There are books in heaven in which these things are written. And after many days... But you've got to have... He's picturing it in concrete terms like a businessman who's willing to risk an overseas investment. Yes, there are hazards.

Yes, many things could happen. You do not know what evil may take place. You're going to send it out on the ship and even if the storms and the pirates don't get it and it makes it to the far harbor, it gets up there to Larnaca in Cyprus or it gets up there to Tyre or Sidon or some far off place.

Once it gets to land, what's going to happen? Somebody could seize that and do any number of things with it. They could sell it and take the profit for themselves and never return. Your trusted servant could turn out to be untrustworthy.

You don't know what evil is going to befall. So he says, look, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Distribute a portion.

And we're still talking about the bread, the manufactured goods. In the business world, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Don't invest your entire retirements in Enron stock.

Don't put all of your money in one place so that a single event can wipe it out. This is business wisdom. Diversify.

Have a portfolio, he says. Now this isn't a business. Now is the Bible just telling us how to be successful in business? No, it's not.

It says look at the analogy between business wisdom and spiritual wisdom. There are people who have a single spiritual claim to fame. My father was a famous pastor.

My ministry is known around the world. My church is a big church in Dallas. My family goes back

into the dark recesses of the ancient past as pastors and missionaries.

My mother was a missionary. I was a missionary. I did this.

I did that. There will be one mast of righteousness that we as believers will lash ourselves to and say, you know what? Whatever else may have gone wrong in my life, this is one thing I've done right. I studied the Word of God.

Look at the stack of my notebooks. Look at the boxes full of my tapes. Look at the size and extent and number of hours that I've spent in church or in Bible study or in acts of righteousness.

I've slaved away doing this or that or the other. I've been a faithful wife and mother. I've been a faithful husband and father.

Whatever else, the winds that blow, the storms that come and go, this is one thing. By way of spiritual analogy to diversification, don't pin your hopes in your life and in your daily operation on a single thing. Don't think that just because you hear a tape every day you are laying up treasure for yourself in heaven and that there's going to be a profit in your hand.

Don't think that because you have found the one true light of how to understand Scripture, don't think that because you can tell anybody what any passage means, that you have it made. There are a number of areas. Just like in a business, they will diversify.

The company I just came from where I no longer work, they're diversifying. They're moving out of video conferencing and back into system integration and putting in networks and computers and things. Why? So that if video conferencing dries up on the vine, they've got something else to stand on.

That's what he's saying here. Give a portion. Don't put all of the bread in one ship.

Send out several ships. Let's say there is a storm or pirates do attack. It's unlikely that they're all going to get wiped out.

Make sure that as we live our lives, this is the spiritual application, that we are pursuing the will of God and the plan of God and the purpose of God in all of the different areas of our life. It's not just our study life. It's not just our worship life.

It's not just our ministry life. It's not just our relationship with people. It's not just how we raise our kids or how we operate our business or how we do whatever it is we do.

We need to be diversifying our efforts at growth and righteousness by faith in many different areas of life. We can become so one-dimensional. This is how Christians can have a spiritual life that's just one shoebox on the shelf.

Well, I take it out on Sundays and Wednesday nights and then I put it away and go live the rest of

my life. Diversify. Make sure that should you end up failing in one area of life, you were a lousy husband.

You were a terrible caretaker of your wife. But, here are some other areas where you did a little better. You never did conquer the sins of the tongue.

You never did get over your mental attitude sins. But, you tried to apply the Word of God and receive the ministry of the Spirit and grow in grace and knowledge of the Savior in many different areas. It's not all just one thing.

This is what we have to remember. Remember what we just reviewed? When you look at somebody, don't just judge them by the sagging of their rafters. Don't just judge them because you see a hole in the wall.

There are many things going on. Do you have joy at your dinner table? Are you drinking the wine in merriment and enjoying fellowship? Or, are you just a one-note song? You say, well, if your rafters are straight, you're in. If your rafters are sagging, you're out.

Diversification. Give a portion to seven and also to eight. Insurance.

Send out an extra ship beyond the complete number. You could make practical application from this. This is one of the reasons we do insure our cars and insure our health.

It's prudent. It's wise. Send out something extra against a possible loss.

That's what he's saying. Send out eight so if you lose one, you've still got seven more. Send out something extra.

Eight means go above and beyond what is full and complete. For you don't know what evil will be on the earth. And this is a double and even a triple entendre here because in the first sentence, he said, you send it out by sea, but it's going to hit the land eventually.

They don't have, unless you're in Venice, they don't have the marketplace at sea. The marketplace is on the land. And you don't know what's going to happen once it gets to market.

Maybe there will have been a glut and everybody else brought ten times as much bread as you. You can't sell it for anything. Maybe it's going to get wet and mold on the way.

You don't know what evil will befall on the earth. So, diversify. Send other ships to other places.

Make sure, and what should we do? We need to be, as we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith, look at all of the different aspects and areas of our life. Not just our home life, not just our professional life, not just our relationships, not just our pursuit of understanding of the word of God, but every area so that we can be a complete man. Remember Ephesians chapter 4, till we

all come to the stature of a complete man.

It says perfect in the Greek. The fullness of maturity. There are deformities where people have some parts of their body that grow and other parts that don't from childhood to adulthood.

Wouldn't we look strange if our legs were adult and our arms were those of a child? Or our head was that of an adult and our body was that of a child? That is not growth. You've got to grow in every area. Everything has to be proportional and can come up together.

Give a serving to seven and also to eight for you do not know what evil will be on the earth, or a portion. Now, if the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth, it says in the New King James. Upon the earth they will pour forth, is what the verb means.

Pour forth, and of course, if something is pouring forth, it has the idea of being emptied. And if a tree falls in the south or in the north, from the place which the tree will fall, there it will be. You have two images here, clouds and wind.

Clouds have an effect, winds have an effect. This whole thing about the falling of the tree has to do with wind. We pick this up by parallelism as we go forward.

We're still in the agricultural motif, we're still in the production motif here. Clouds that are filled with rain are going to rain. Can you do anything about that? No, you can't.

Can you say, you know, last year I planted my crops, and when I got ready to harvest it rained, and they molded, and they got ruined, and I couldn't bring in a harvest, so I'm just not going to plant this year, because I had a bad experience. You know, people have made that decision in churches. They said, well, we had a choir, and there was all kinds of insurrection and gossip in the choir, there was a rebellion in the choir, there was a faction and a split in the church because of the choir, so we're just not going to have a choir anymore.

You can't say that. If the clouds are full of rain, they're going to pour forth on the earth. If and when they get full, wherever they are at the time, the rain is going to drop.

You can't control it, you can't necessarily plan around it. It's an uncontrollable factor. Get over it.

You've still got to plant your crop, and trust that over time, regardless of the disasters, you're going to reap more grain than you lose. The wind is going to blow. It may blow from the south, it may blow from the north, and a tree that falls at any given point gets blown down by the wind.

If it's a south wind blowing, the tree is going to fall to the north. If it's a north wind that's blowing, it's going to blow the tree southward when it falls. You can't stand there and hold the tree up and wait for a favorable wind.

When the tree falls, it's going to fall the way it's going to fall. If it's a big tree, that's pretty much

where it's going to lie. You can't push it back up and tip it over the other way and say, I really wanted this tree to fall that way.

I wanted it to fall on my neighbor's fence and not on mine. Whatever way the wind is blowing when the tree falls, that's the way the tree is going to fall. Get over it.

There are certain givens in life that you cannot control, you cannot change, you cannot plan for. So just get over it. Don't sit and worry.

He says in verse 4, the one who is observing the wind will never sow. If you're waiting for a favorable wind, trying to figure out which way the trees are going to fall, you'll never sow your seed. You say, well, you know, it's too windy.

If I sow the seed, it's going to blow away and scatter, so I'll wait for a more favorable wind. Well, you're going to miss the planting time and your seed is never going to get sown. This is talking about worry.

This is talking about excessive fretting. Should you observe and should you plan, should you try to be wise? Yes. But if you are a wind watcher and all you do is watch the wind, all you do is watch the stock ticker crawling across the bottom of the screen, all you do is get on the computer and check and see, well, is it up a half a point? Is it down a half a point? How's my portfolio looking today? You're never going to get any meaningful work done.

It's your job to sow. But if you're watching conditions and paying attention to conditions, you're too busy to get your work done. The same thing, if you're watching the clouds, saying, well, I wonder if it's going to rain.

Let me go down and get the next forecast and I'm going to wet a rag and see how quick it evaporates and check the relative humidity. If you're busy being a weatherman, you're not going to be a gatherer of crops. What are you? Are you a reaper or are you a weatherman? Are you a sower or are you a weatherman? Are you so busy worrying over what might happen that you never send your ship out of the harbor? You never send your eight ships out of the harbor because you're too busy watching the wind, wondering which way it's going to fall.

That's why it says in verse 5, Accordingly, or according as, there is no knowing for you. You're not going to know. There is not for you a knowing, is what it literally says, what the way of the wind will be.

It's like bones in the womb of the pregnant woman. It doesn't have the word for woman. This is just the feminine adjective for fullness.

One who is full. And if anybody that's ever been pregnant or seen anybody pregnant, that's a pretty accurate description. Somebody that is full.

There are bones being knit together in the womb. How does that happen? Are they going together properly? There's no way of knowing until the birth. You're not going to know if it's a girl or a boy.

What is being knit together in there? The word, interestingly for bones, is etzmim. Etz is the word for tree. Etzmim is the word for bone.

You can see how that comes out because the branches, it's like the poem that Lori and I had to learn when we were midshipmen. How long have you been in the Navy? All me blooming life, sir. My mother was a mermaid.

My father was King Neptune. I was born on the crest of a wave rocked in the cradle of the deep. Seaweed and barnacles are me clothes.

Every hair on me head is hemp. And every bone in me body is a spar. What's a spar? It's a big straight tree trunk that they've whittled down and made into a mast or a yard arm.

Every bone in me body is a spar. Well, the word in Hebrew is derived from the same thing. Etz is tree and etzmim are bones.

These are the bones. And you've already got the tree falling and there's a word play there. These spars that are being knit together, the bones, the framework, the structure in the womb.

You don't know how that's going together. You don't find out until the birth. So you will not know the work of God who is making everything.

This is actually an imperfect. This is who will make everything. And so you have to interpret.

Is the imperfect translated as a present or as a future? You just have to use context because it's used for both. But the idea here is God is going to make everything happen in its own good time. You go back to chapter 3. There is a time.

There is a season. Sometimes things are being gathered up. Sometimes they're being scattered.

Sometimes your ship is going to make it to the far harbor in circumstances. Other times it's not. We sow in hope.

We plow. We plant in hope. Paul talks about this in terms of preaching the gospel in the New Testament.

Every farmer should sow in hope. In expectation. And that's how we should live our lives.

Don't let outcomes in this life get you down. Remember that this life is a vapor. Remember that there are outcomes and there are reconciliations.

There are balancing of scales that will take place later. Send your ship out. Don't worry if some of them sink.

Just send out a few extra next time. Hedge your bets. Try to make sure that your business achieves a profit.

Do what it takes. What is the message of this business metaphor? This agricultural business metaphor? You do what you need to do. It's a calculated risk.

There are going to be failures. There are going to be evils that happen on the earth. In some cases, we're going to spoil our own cargo.

But keep at it. Look for the profit. That's what this book is all about.

Get thrown. Something in your hand at the end of the day. We're going to have our ups and downs.

We're going to have good days and bad days. We're going to have failures. But keep sending out the ships.

Keep investing in the future. Hope. Because God will make everything.

He is going to asah. He is going to manufacture good for those who love Him. Well, we'll resume here.

But you can read the rest of that and it falls in that same vein about sowing the seed. That's what it's talking about. So, can we look at our lives? God has given us the capital.

The spiritual capital for investment to redeem the time. Take advantage of the experience that we see in the Word of God of people in whom God invested and they did not take that. And take the five talents and make five more.

Take the three talents and make three more. Just because you have a failure. Remember the judgment on the one talent man? I knew you were a hard man and you reap where you have not sown.

So on. So I just buried it in the ground. God has invested spiritual capital in us and we have to look at every area of our life and try to make sure that we are multiplying that investment so that there will be a throne when our life is over.

We're going to see some fascinating references to time and to the opportunities that we have in these verses ahead. And that's where we'll pick up next time. Father, we thank You for the privilege You've given us of living in this life, of being equipped and having the potential to produce every good work.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts day by day so that we will live in a way that's pleasing in Your sight and glorifying to our Savior. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.