

01-03-18b Ecclesiastes

Let's continue our study in Ecclesiastes chapter 2, where we have noted, and we spent a lot of time in our scripture reading over in Proverbs chapter 13, but we have a choice between being foolish and wise, between being righteous or wicked, but is there a point to that beyond the moment, as we face that decision, and we think, well, am I going to cheat on my taxes or be honest, or am I going to lie or tell the truth, and we think in terms of sin and evil, but really, day by day, as we travel through the encounters and the circumstances and the conversations and fulfilling our tasks and responsibilities, we are so used to living life that it just kind of, it's the normal thing, we stop. This is a syndrome for us as believers, especially some of us that grew up in church, we're fortunate enough to come to take for granted the existence of God, the fact that we're believers, the need to know the Bible and follow the Bible and know your verses and be able to go to God when the chips are down and so forth, but see if this sounds familiar to you. This is the thing that I have noticed.

I see it in myself, I see it in others, I see it, I thought about it when I was visiting a church that had a building and a parking lot and a steeple and the whole bit. We get into a routine where we go to church and we hear the teaching of the Word of God, and many times it's good teaching from the Word of God, it is true, it convicts us, we assent, we nod our heads, we say, boy, that really hits home, and everything is as it should be. We've been instructed and rebuked and corrected in righteousness, but you get in the car to go back and resume the rest of your life and it all kinds of, it's almost like putting it in a little cardboard box to be taken out the next time you go to church, and you get back in, well, this is my house, these are my chores, this is my life, this is what I have to do the rest of today, I've got to get my lawn mowed this afternoon while the sun is shining, I've got preparation to make for various things, I've got a little bit to do before work tomorrow, got to check on this, check on that, try to make sure I use the rest of the time in my weekend wisely, and some kind of way we don't get an integration of what we hear and what we agree with and what we understand with our actual daily existence.

It doesn't seem to blend. You know whether you're baking a cake or mixing up concrete, I was reading how to mix concrete and how to mix a special kind of concrete that has vermiculite in it, one thing or another. One of the things they always say any time you're mixing something is you've got to be sure that it's mixed well, because if you don't, and I actually made a cake a couple of times, I made a pie once, I made one that nobody would eat because I didn't know that when it said add egg whites that you were supposed to beat them first, and so it came out with sort of this slimy consistency and I'd eat the whole thing myself, nobody else would even try it.

But I know from my own experience, and something as simple as chocolate milk, you get out your Nestle's real quick or your Ovaltine or whatever it is, or when you're making gravy or anything like that, when you're supposed to mix things, if you don't do it right, it doesn't mix. And I think everybody has gotten out the Nestle's and put a couple of three spoonfuls or more into a glass of milk and stirred it up with a teaspoon and you're drinking away, drinking away and then you get down to the bottom and you find this big chunk of the powder that's sort of hung together and it's like a bubble, except it's a bubble of chocolate powder that didn't get, it used to kind of like that, you get down to the bottom of that and get that and you get a little shot of chocolate right at the end. But it's not so good if you're making a cake or biscuits or something and somebody goes to cut into it and you find this big unmixed lump of flour or

worse if it's baking powder or some other thing, that's not good, get into the cornbread and find a lump of something that didn't get integrated in, it's not so good.

Gravy, you know, people always talk about lumpy gravy, all those little lumps of flour, that's not good. I haven't seen any lumpy gravy any time recently but I have heard that such a thing exists. So the idea is you sometimes want it, if you're going to mix something, you want it mixed well.

Well, it seems to me, and you can check and see if your observation is the same, whether personally or as you look at it at the church at large, that a lot of times even though we rightly divide the word of truth, even though we see the truth, we acknowledge it, at the moment that we're thinking about it we think, boy, you know, that really hits home, I need to do something different.

But something happens. It's like the thing gets encapsulated in the milk and it doesn't actually get mixed in, and we don't think at the odd times during the day or the next time a circumstance comes up where that needs to be applied, boy, I really need to do something different.

Because it doesn't exist anywhere in this immediate periphery, I'm going to use this example, and trust me, this is not a problem in our group, but I have seen it other places in my earlier existence at large, where you can have sound teaching from the pulpit, you can have isagogic, categorical, exegetical, profound, from the original languages, banging away, getting into the meat of the word, and people sit and take notes and hear it and everything is great.

And yet, if you happen to be around those people later on, there can be some of the worst gossip and maligning and people unhappy with other people because something happened. I was in an environment where there was a church and a private school and a seminary and everything all coordinated, and I was working at the school and I was attending the seminary and I was attending the church. The seminary students were supposed to be there at the Bible classes every time the doors were open, and so I just lived down there, I spent more time in that building than I did in my own house.

This is one of the first times that I really, I thought, boy, I've gotten out of the Marine Corps, off of the seamy underside of the world, I'm here among believers, this is going to be as close as you can get to heaven on earth, and come to find out, even though you have this good teaching, even though people are hearing the sound of the word, Rebuke, Correction, Instruction, Righteousness, Be Approved, Thoroughly Furnished, people are just as ugly and just as nasty and just as sinful, and you think, now what about that lesson, and probably people over there thinking that about me, saying he was in that lesson, why didn't he, you know, we're all guilty of this, but the point is, this exercise in which we are now engaged, of studying the word of God, of trying to understand what it means and what it says, has to result in a change. If we are not different people this week than we were last week and the week before, and last month and last year, if we're not actually growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, not at the academic level, well now I can tell you all kinds of things about the first twelve chapters of Luke that I couldn't tell you before, but am I qualitatively, quantitatively, as I make my decisions, as I interact with people, as I set priorities and perform my functions, am I different than I was a year ago this time? Something to think about other than just New Year's Day or New Year's Eve, because we're wasting our time if we're just going in and having sort of a cathartic experience, we come in weary from the world, we hear the great things about God and His plan and His purpose and His grace, and we hear some good things and yeah, we have a sense of conviction,

and then we go back out and we're exactly the same person we were before. That is not bearing eternal fruit.

This section of Ecclesiastes, this book of Ecclesiastes is about escaping that kind of syndrome. This is what Solomon is feeling. He says, you know, you can be wiser, you can be a fool, you can be righteous, you can be wicked, but if the same thing happens to you all, if you get to the end of life and there's really no difference ultimately other than just your experience, a wise man is going to have happier experiences.

He's going to be walking in the light, he's not going to bark his shins. Have you ever done this? Stuff moved around. We had a TV that had a problem.

Big, heavy, 150 pound TV. It's got a wood case. We didn't buy it, it was given to us, it was broken, I fixed it, but very big, heavy TV.

Well, it broke and I had to move it and I set it in the floor of the bedroom and put a rinky dink TV up in its place until I could figure out how to fix it. You go to sleep at night and when you wake up, you don't remember that the layout of the room has changed. When you're trying to get from point A to point B and your shin bone encounters this immovable 150 pound solid wood feeling cabinet, that's walking in darkness.

It's painful, it hurts. You can avoid that if you turn on a light first. Well, obviously, this is what is being spoken of toward the end of Ecclesiastes chapter 2. Yes, I considered wisdom and madness and folly and in verse 13, I saw that wisdom excels folly like light excels darkness.

Light is good, darkness is bad, you will have a happier experience of life. Solomon is not saying I wasted my time building the buildings and getting the servants and the riches and all. It wasn't a waste of time, it wasn't futile, it wasn't vain.

It was great, he enjoyed it. Wisdom excels folly, just like light excels darkness. But, I perceived at the end of verse 14 that at the end, you end up in the same place.

You're just as dead as a wise man as you are as a fool. You are absolutely totally just as cold, just as lifeless, just as non-existent on this earthly plane as the fool. And he said in his heart in verse 15, the thing that happens to the fool happens to me.

Why was I then more wise? What's he doing? He's shifting his perspective. While you're in it and you're enjoying it and it feels great, you say well yeah this wisdom is a great thing, look at what I'm accomplishing, look at all that I'm doing. I'm in my tasks, checking off my list.

But Solomon moves to the end of it and he says at the end, he says at the end of the day, the same thing happens to the fool. Not in process, the fool gets robbed, he loses his stuff, his belly is soon empty again, a fool and his money are soon parted. Obviously, light excels darkness, wisdom excels folly.

But at the end, the same event happens to them all. Why was I then more wise? I said in my heart, this also is Havel. This is that thing that disappears when you try to grab a hold of it.

This is that ethereal vapor that doesn't have any lasting substance. Why? Verse 16, there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool unto the ages. Laolam, in the long view.

Now we say Solomon is remembered, even secular people know about the wisdom of Solomon, the sword and the baby story and all that. He's well known, there's a remembrance of him. What is he talking about? He's beyond the rising and the setting of the sun now.

He's looking at it from an eternal perspective. He says, you can be wise, you can be a fool in this life, but where is the eternal? Where is the everlasting? Where is the forever substance that ought to be a part of life? Solomon isn't seeing it. He says, there's no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come.

All of this will be forgotten. You think about all of the labor, all of the decisions, all of the wisdom that Solomon exercised, and even within the confines of the word of God, how much of that is actually remembered? A tiny, tiny percentage, less than 1%, less than a half, less than a tenth of a percent of what Solomon thought and did is in the pages of scripture. You can say that about virtually any biblical character, even those that have chapters devoted to them, like Abram.

How long did Abram live? How old was he when he finally passed away? Well into his 100s, wasn't he? He lived to be up to 100, it's terrible, I taught Genesis and I forgot how old Abraham was when he died, but he was up there, he was past 150, I think he was up around 180. But out of all of those years, we've got these few episodes that summarize his life. Out of Solomon, all of his judgment, all of his wisdom, all of his buildings, they can't even find, archaeologically, what Solomon built.

They found a building and they said, oh this is Solomon's stables. Well now they've decided it's not the stables, they don't know what it is. All of the commerce and the trade and the treaties and the contracts and the things that he secured with his many marriages, and the gardens and the singers and the treasures and all of that, it's all gone.

And we just have a very, if it wasn't for the word of God that lives and abides forever, there'd be no remembrance whatsoever. The only reason people know about the wisdom of Solomon is we have the Bible. Outside of the scriptures, there would be no remembrance of Solomon.

There might be a legend floating around somewhere. So what's he saying? Verse 16, there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, from an eternal perspective. Something that lasts and abides.

Since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come, how does a wise man die? Just like the fool. He's just as cold, just as dead, just as unable to hang on to and carry forward anything from his life. Was he happy or was he sad? I mentioned before, I thought about this when our cat passed away.

You have a cat that has a real plush, soft, happy life, has a family that loves him and so forth. You've got another cat that's out there fending for himself, getting stuff thrown at him. We've got a cat that lives outside the back of our house here.

About every month or so, something gets a hold of him and it just uses him like a rag toy. He comes in, he's all beat up, he's got fur missing. He's got a game leg to begin with that was broken and not set.

He's crooked and he's kind of a pathetic looking cat. Patty puts stuff out for him and he considers this his home away from home, I guess. But when that cat dies and he's had all these bad experiences and he keeps getting his game leg chewed on.

He came up the other day and just a big ring around his bad leg. Something got a hold of him and he wouldn't let go. He was limping around and sometimes he's just out there crying this mournful cry and you don't know why.

Well, you've got one cat that's inside living the plush life. You've got this other cat right on the other side of the sliding door that's having this really strenuous life, let's say. Well, when they both die and you look back on it and you say, well, to them it was meaningful, but now with the cats dead, what's left over? One of them was happy, one of them was stressed, but it's all gone now.

Their little brains have disintegrated and the memories that they had of all of their woes and all of their successes and did they catch the mouse or not, did they win the fight or not, did they always have a bowl of chow every day? When they perish, it's all moot. When the people who remember those cats perish. I don't know if my great granddad had a dog, probably did.

Dog may have had a good life, may have had a bad life, nobody knows now. Well, this is what Solomon is saying. When you get to the end of the day, maybe your experience was good or bad, but after you perish, it's all over, it's gone.

Therefore, verse 17, I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is Havel and trying to grab hold of the wind. Now, didn't he just get through saying up above that he had joy in his work? Verse 10, I didn't keep anything from my eyes, I didn't withhold from my heart any pleasure, my heart rejoiced in all my labor. This was my reward.

But he looked at it, decided in verse 11 that it was Havel and grasping for the wind, no profit. So now, all this work that had been done, so in verse 18, instead of verse 10, my heart rejoiced in all my labor, now in verse 18, I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun. Why? Not that I didn't enjoy the doing of it or that it wasn't worthwhile, it's what's going to happen to it after I'm gone.

I can't take it with me. I must leave it to the man who will come after me. Who's literally the man that comes after Solomon on the throne of Israel? Rehoboam? What kind of a numbskull was he? Who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Well, when Solomon penned these words, he may not have known, but we know Rehoboam was a class A, grade number one, top of the class fool.

He will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This is Havel. You wonder if maybe Solomon didn't have an inkling that Rehoboam wasn't the brightest bulb in the string and that, you know, he wasn't going to be able to hold together what Solomon had done.

He didn't have a tenth of the wisdom or judgment and he says, boy, you know, I've got this. And you see this even in the modern day. People build up a business.

Whether you're a guy in a local town or you're a Rockefeller, you build up a big empire. You've got the Hearst publishing empire. You've got the Heinz people and all these others that build up a big thing.

What do you think is going to happen to the Trump empire when Donald Trump checks out? He doesn't have, you know, Trump Jr. floating around any place. And if he did have, if, you know, you look at some of the people he's been married to and consorted with and you think they're not going to be the business genius that Donald Trump was, well, what's the point? Who knows? Who can say whether he will be wise or a fool? This who knows is used several times here in Ecclesiastes. It's also used elsewhere in the Hebrew Old Testament.

Almost every place you find this, the idea is, well, we really have no way of knowing. But it seems to have kind of a pessimistic cast here. You know, he's probably not going to be wise.

When Solomon says, who knows, here in Ecclesiastes, he's basically saying, I kind of doubt that he's going to be very sharp. But he's going to rule over all my labor, which I taught. And this is Havo.

You get the idea if he said, well, I've got a wise son who's going to pick it up and carry on, it wouldn't be Havo. But when he says the issue is in doubt, he's, you know, this is why they say Kohelet is such a pessimist because he says, well, because I don't know if it's going to be. But what is he saying? He might be wise, but it really doesn't matter because it's all Havo anyway.

Verse 20. Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled. So one time back here in verse 10, he says, my heart rejoiced in my labor.

But even in the next verse, he says, I looked on my labor. It was Havo and grasping the wind. There was no profit, no lasting yitrone.

And so now every time he looks at his work, he gets into this despair mode. There is a man, verse 21, whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge and skill, but he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This is Havo.

And instead of a chasing after the wind, it's a great rah. It's a great bad answer. It's a great source of misery and distress.

He's not saying it's a great moral evil, is he? He's saying it's misery inducing. It's not a pleasant thing. What does a man have for all of his labor and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled in his son? This is not just routine labor.

This is stuff he did with a passion. This is his altruistic, I'll build this public garden. I'll put in this library.

I'll improve the schools, all of his public works that he did on behalf of others. It's a passion. It's in his heart.

Something he's striving for. He feels like it's got some intrinsic worth. What do you have for it? Days are sorrowful.

The work is burdensome, even in the night. He's got a restless heart. Verse 23, this is Havo.

Then in verse 24, it's translated here, nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This I saw was from the hand of God. Who can eat or who can have enjoyment more than I? For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy

to a man who is good in his sight, but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and collecting that he may give to who is good before God.

This also is Havo and grasping the wind. Now wait a minute. He introduced God here and says God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy, and he says this is Havo.

This is vapor. This is transient and impermanent. This is not the lasting thing I was looking for.

Well, this bears some scrutiny. You can see that on a superficial reading, this is why people say, well, Kohelet, this is his human viewpoint. He's out of fellowship, quote unquote.

Well, we need to straighten some things out here in the translation. First of all, what I'd like to do is go back because in this chapter, we have Havo used 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 times. Pretty much the pinnacle of use of Havo in Ecclesiastes.

You find it sprinkled through the other chapters, but 8 times in chapter 2. So he's really got this uppermost in his mind here. Well, what is it that is Havo? We explored the meaning of this word when we introduced the book and when we got to the first statement in 1, 2 where he says, Havel, Havelim, translated vanity of vanities or vapor of vapors. It's the ultimate vapor.

Well, he's really getting into the description and explaining what that statement meant. We went back and spent some time looking at Havel and we, I think, established in a satisfactory manner that it does not mean futile. It does not mean vain.

It means as it's metaphorical, you know, it's literal meaning is vapor, puff, but it's, it's a metaphorical, it's, it's figurative use is that which doesn't last. Well, where in the Bible, we established that as sort of the lexical definition and our working definition in our study of Ecclesiastes. And we looked at places where it was applied to idols and it was applied to other things in scripture.

But now what I want to do is come back and revisit that term with a view toward establishing what in the Bible is described as Havel. What are the things that are impermanent and that don't last? And what is the attitude the scripture takes about them? Is it always bad to be impermanent? Is it okay to be impermanent? Is it, what, what is that concept associated with? And we find that, that with a couple of exceptions, and I have my doubts there, there's one use of Havel in Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32, 21, but it is in a passage where you have some parallelism, a parallelism between the two. I'll just describe this to you very briefly, give you another idea of some of the challenges of working in the Hebrew.

When you get to Deuteronomy 32, 21, God is talking about his people, the children of Israel, and he says, their sons in whom is no faithfulness, they have made me jealous with what is not God. They have provoked me to anger with their idols, it says, in the, I'm looking at it here in the New American Standard. So God says, well, they've made me jealous with what is not God, they've provoked me to anger with their Havelim, and that's the word translated idols, Havel.

Well, he says, so I am going to make, he says, they've made me jealous with what is not God, so I'm going to make them jealous with those who are not a people, and I will provoke them to anger with, and you would think, well, I'll provoke them to anger with an idol, or with Havelim, because you have jealousy parallel to jealousy, you have anger parallel to anger, you have that which is not God, that which is not a people, so you have this Havelim in the first part of the

verse, so you would expect, I will provoke them to anger with something that is Havel, but it's not Havel in the second part of the verse, it is Nabal.

Instead of H-B-L, you have N-B-L, changes the first letter, from Haval to Nabal, and the question arises, if you go back in the earliest copies of this, because everything else is parallel, why does it go from Haval to Nabal, why is it that although Nabal is used all through the Pentateuch, this is the only place in all of the books of Moses where Haval is used, other than the name of Abel, back in Genesis chapter 4, but for the entire five books of Moses, this is the only use of Haval, or Havel, or Hevel, H-B-L, that root, in the whole Pentateuch, and the parallelism strongly suggests that this might be, it's either a word play, suggesting foolishness, or it is actually supposed to be Nabal, and that's where you get into text criticism.

But just to show you that there is a lot of work to be done when you start looking at these words, a place where it is used, where you actually have Havel, and it is a legitimate parallel, is going to be sometime closer to the time of Solomon. This is what we want to look at.

What did it mean? What did it connote? How else was the word being used in the days of Solomon? So a logical place to look would be in the Psalms of David. If we find Havel being used in the Psalms, here's Solomon's father, the one who taught him wisdom, who taught him a view of life. This would be a great place to explore the use of Havel and find out what its connotation is, as well as its denotation.

So let's look in the Psalms. Let's take a look at Psalm 31. Psalm 31.

Our word is going to occur in verse 6. In the Hebrew, this is verse 7, because the superscription that you have in a lot of the Psalms is numbered as verse 1 in the Hebrew text and not in the English. So the Hebrew verse 2 winds up being the English verse 1, and you get off a little bit. So in the English, this is Psalm 31.6. But let's look at the entire Psalm.

He says, In thee, O Lord, I have taken refuge. Let me never be ashamed. In thy righteousness deliver me.

Incline thine ear to me. Rescue me quickly. Be thou to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me.

Without my rock, my fortress, for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me and guide me. Thou wilt pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me. Without my strength, into thy hand I commit my spirit.

Thou hast ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth. A little bit of a familiar ring to verse 5 there, isn't there? Verse 6. I hate those who regard, what does your new King James say? Vain idols. The word there, if you look at the text note, is empty vanities.

And the actual Hebrew there is Havle Shav. Havle Shav. Havel combined with Shav.

Shav is the word I mentioned to you way back in the introduction that is the perfectly good Hebrew word for futility, vanity. When you want to say something is futile and vain, Shav is the word you use. S-H-A-V or W. It ends in a wow.

And this is the two combined. And they say, well, the Havel in later Hebrew usage down in the time of the prophets, they use Havel as a synonym for idols and idolatry. And so they're saying, well, David is talking about idolatry here.

I hate those who regard vain idols. Let me ask you something. Where in Israel in the time of Samuel and in the time of Saul and in the time of David, do you have idolatry in Israel? You don't.

You don't have idolatry. You had idolatry in the time of the judges. You had idolatry in the time of the sojourn and the conquest of the land where they came in and they started getting involved in that.

But when David comes in, when Saul comes in, the idolatry is not the problem. You don't have the word of God indicting Israel for idolatry in those early days of the monarchy in Israel. It's not until the latter days of Solomon where he brings in his wives and they bring in their idols and he tolerates that.

And really, unfortunately, Solomon is responsible. David drove the enemies out of the land. David was a monotheist.

You don't see David tolerating any high places or any Asherah poles or any Baalim. David is the hacker and slayer. The place is running with blood getting rid of all of that stuff in David's day.

And you can say, well, see here, he doesn't tolerate those who regard vain idols. But in the context of Psalm 31, he's not talking about idolatry, is he? It seems kind of out of place here. What is he talking about? He's talking about refuge in the solid rock.

You're going to pull me out of the place where I'm vulnerable. You are my refuge. You're going to deliver me.

You're going to rescue me. You're my rock of strength. You're my stronghold.

You're my rock of my fortress. You're my strength. You have ransomed me.

You're the God of truth. I hate those who regard futile, havel, transient things, things that have no substance, the vapor, futile vapors. This is in contrast to what he's just said in the Psalm.

The Psalm is about God, the rock of refuge, God, the tower of strength. What is going to be the contrast to that? These people who spread out a net to try to trap him in secret? He says, I despise, I hate those who think these things up, these futile and vain vapors, these impermanent things that are just as far across the scale from God, the rock, and the refuge as you can get, because I trust in the Lord. I will rejoice and be glad in your loving kindness because you have seen my affliction.

You've known the troubles of my soul and you have not given me over to the hand of the enemy. You've set my feet in a large place. Be gracious to me, O Lord.

I'm in distress. My eye is wasted from grief. My soul and body, my life is spent.

My ears are sighing. My strength has failed because of my iniquity. My body is wasted away because of my adversaries.

I've become a reproach even to my neighbors, an object of dread. You have got some foreshadowing of Christ in his passion, Christ on the cross here. They took counsel together against me.

They scheme to take away my life. As for me, I trust in God. I trust in thee, O Lord.

You are my God. My times are in thy hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, from those who persecute me.

Make your face to shine upon your servants. Save me in your loving kindness. Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I call upon thee.

Let the wicked be put to shame. Let them be silent in Sheol. Let the lying lips be dumb, which speak arrogantly against the righteous with pride and contempt.

All of those contrasts that we saw this morning in our scripture reading in Proverbs. How great is your goodness, which you've stored up for those who fear you, which you have wrought for those who take refuge in thee before the sons of men. You hide them in the secret place of your presence from the conspiracies of man.

These little plots and schemes and maneuverings and, well, I'll undermine him. I'll go talk about him behind his back. I'll help him straighten out his life.

I'll go talk to the people with whom he's dealing. I'll do this, that, and the other. David says, you keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues.

Havel here is used for all of this puff, this futile puffing that goes on with people who are laying snares and using the strife of tongues and their little conspiracies and so forth to try to trip up and to shelter and to snare and to snag and to overturn and to undermine and to cause to stumble. So I would suggest to you that even though Havel is used some places in the Bible for idolatry, that's not David's meaning here. And I don't think that it really is in the connotation of the word in David's day and in Solomon's day.

You find it in times where idolatry is rife in Israel. And you can see the connection because idolatry is nabal and it is havel. It is foolish and it is empty.

It has no permanence. Well, let's take a look at another Davidic passage. David looked with me at Psalm 39 and verse 6. You know the first 50 Psalms are all attributed to David.

And verse 6 in Hebrew is going to be verse 5 in English. So let's go back up and start at the beginning of Psalm 39. I said, I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue.

I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle while the wicked are in my presence. This is the time when you really need to guard your tongues when the wicked are in your presence, isn't it? Because you can rationalize and justify using your tongue when you shouldn't in the presence of the wicked. There are wicked drivers out on the road and I am sorely tempted to use my tongue.

He says in verse 2, I was dumb and silent. I refrained even from good and my sorrow grew worse. You know, sometimes when the chips are down, all is not going well and you just kind of withdraw.

And you say, well, I don't want to say something bad. I am not going to say anything at all. I don't want to do anything bad.

I am not going to do anything at all. And you just become the hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil monkey. And you wind up just kind of putting yourself inside a shell and you just say, I am going to float along inside my barrel here going over Niagara Falls until I hear that the roar has subsided.

Then I will open the hatch and see if it is all clear. David says, my sorrow grew worse. My heart was hot within me while I was musing the fire burned.

And then I spoke with my tongue. The problem with withdrawing inside the shell is all of the heat is trapped in there. And sooner or later, you are just going to boil over.

But he says, when I spoke with my tongue, I said, Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days. Let me know how transient I am. Behold, you have made my days as handbreadths and my lifetime as nothing in your sight.

Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Well, you have Havel used in verse 5 twice when he says, behold, you have made my days like handbreadths and my lifetime as nothing in your sight. Surely every man, and when they say every man, what does it say in the New King James there? Same thing that it says in the New American Standard that I am reading from.

Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. But this is based on the use of each here. When they say man at his best, and the New American Standard has a little text note there that says every man standing firm, and that is really more at what is being expressed here.

And it says he is a mere breath. It says he is altogether Havel. So the man, the Ish, standing firm, doing his best to be rock solid and permanent, he is like a puff.

He is like a vapor. And then you have Selah at the end of that statement. Then in verse 6 where he says, surely every man walks about like a shadow or a phantom.

Surely they make an uproar for nothing. Well, once again, you have Havel. Like a phantom, every Ish walks around.

Surely to Havel or for Havel there they make an uproar. All of this sound and fury that Shakespeare talked about, strutting and fretting your hour on the stage, sound and fury signifying nothing. It's like the fog when you speak on a cold day.

It's there for a moment and then it's gone. So not only do we have the idea of impermanence that we established in some detail when we first looked at this word, but we also see that it is tied to the actions and the existence of mankind. We talked on Friday night about, in what's been called the Lord's Prayer, where he says Father, hallowed be your name.

And about the eternality of God. And that in the first few words of that prayer, you have the existence of God, the character of God, and the plan of God, all of these rationales that are developed so fully elsewhere to sustain our faith and give us something to latch onto and to think about when we're under pressure. Well, look at the contrast with man.

Man's existence is but for a moment. His character, whether he's wise or for a fool, is but for a moment. And his plans and purposes, his uproar, all of his strutting and fretting, it's all havel.

God is eternal. Man is like the grass that withers and the flower that fades. So this idea is not only impermanent, but you see the looking and the direction of futility.

But when they're talking about futility, we've got a perfectly good word, like we saw in our previous passage. But this is a Davidic use of havel. This is in the Psalms.

We've seen it in Psalm 31, Psalm 39, 6 and 7. You can go down a few more verses in verse 11 of Psalm 39 and find another use. So it's used three times. With reproofs you chasten a man for iniquity.

You consume as a moth what is precious to him. Surely every man is havel. There's just your straight existence that is short term.

So we basically have to look at our lives and decide, are we going to let this condition remain? Are we going to stop where Solomon is and say, all of this work is futile? Or are we going to redeem the time? We have got to let the Word of God make a difference in our hours and in our days. We have to stop and think and rescue the time so that it doesn't end up being havel. Because even when we're wise, even when we agree, if we don't examine ourselves and make sure that we're in the faith and bearing righteousness by faith, it's all going to be dust in the wind.

Let's close in a word of prayer. We thank you, Father, that you have given us the wherewithal and the means to redeem the time, to have our lives and our efforts and our thoughts and intents count in an eternal way. We pray to God the Holy Spirit will remind us, convict us and enable us so that we can redeem the time, so that we can reflect your glory both now and in the age to come.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.