

01-11-11a Ecclesiastes

Let's continue our worship this morning by turning for our scripture reading to Psalm 41. Psalm 41. Anytime you are in the Psalms numbered 50 and below, you can count on it being a Psalm of David.

This one is specifically labeled as such. It's dedicated to the chief musician. I've speculated in my own mind from time to time these that have a little dedication at the front.

It says to the chief musician. It always reminds me of, I wonder if he was thinking of a human being or if he was thinking heavenward. And he says, well, I'm a musician and I'm making music, but I want to dedicate this to the chief musician.

I don't know that if it was a human being, he wouldn't have just used their name or something and said, well, this is for, you know, Ben Cora or someone. But we'll have to ask David and find out. But this is a great Psalm.

It addresses several of the themes that are prominent, not only in our Ecclesiastes study, but also in our study of the gospel of Luke. That seems particularly apropos. David says in Psalm 41, blessed is he who considers the poor.

The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive. And he will be blessed on the earth.

You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness. You will sustain him on his sick bed.

I said, Lord, be merciful to me. Heal my soul for I have sinned against you. My enemies speak evil of me.

When will he die in his name perish? And if he comes to see me, he speaks lies. His heart gathers iniquity to itself. When he goes out, he tells it all who hate me, whisper together against me, against me.

They devise my hurt and evil disease. They say clings to him. And now that he lies down, he will rise up no more.

Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. But you, O Lord, be merciful to me and raise me up that I may repay them. By this I know that you are well pleased with me because my enemy does not triumph over me.

As for me, you uphold me in my integrity and set me before your face forever. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and amen." You'll notice, of course, a familiar quote there applied to the Lord Jesus in verse nine, specifically in the incident of Judas' betrayal.

I was talking again recently with someone who was still struggling with the idea that Judas could be a believer. And when you look at the application of this verse over in the New Testament to the incident of Judas betraying the Lord, when he says, even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, what kind of friends do you think David would make as a healthy and growing believer? A familiar friend in whom David trusts would not be from the ranks of the

unbelievers. And so it's another piece of evidence, at least, that the familiar friend in whom Jesus placed trust, he was the accountant and the treasurer for the group of disciples.

And who, of course, eating bread, as we've seen in our study of Luke, sitting down at table with someone is a symbol and a mark of fellowship and of close intimacy, personal intimacy. And it is a doubly egregious fault for someone who enjoys that intimacy and that trust to betray it. But there's also a fascinating link in the first three verses between someone who is looking out for the interests of others because he honors the Lord and personal well-being.

He says, blessed is he who considers the poor. The Lord will do several things for him. What will he do for someone who is considerate of the poor? And the poor, it doesn't mean you've got to go find someone and check their bank balance and see where they stand financially.

The poor are going to be those who are in a tight spot of any kind, someone who doesn't have the wherewithal. They are helpless in some fashion. They're in a situation from which they don't have the means to extricate themselves.

They're in a position to be helped. And we as believers, and we know this, that we should be alert for opportunities to express love that is based on who and what we are, not necessarily on who and what the object may be. If we have the means and the motive and the opportunity to help someone, and this is not either necessarily the man with the cardboard sign on the corner, when I say means and motive and opportunity, the motive has to be sound.

Who does God help? What is the example that he gives? Well, that's what we're looking at in this passage. It's not just everyone that God helps. God could easily help and sustain the starving refugees in Afghanistan or in Pakistan or in many other underprivileged areas.

God has the power to prevent young children from starving. This causes many people a lot of confusion and even questioning whether there is a God. Well, if there is a God, how can he allow these precious children to die of disease and starvation when he has the power to deliver them? Well, we might ask ourselves the same question.

How can we drive by the one-legged guy with the cardboard sign at the corner of Skillman and LBJ when we have the means to give him money or provide some other form of assistance? Well, it goes to motivation. Why do we do what we do? It is not always the right thing to assist someone who comes up to you and says, I have a need. We have to exercise discernment, and it is a responsibility.

We are stewards of God's resources. Everything that we have has been given to us by God, and it belongs to him. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills.

It is his treasures that supply our needs, and we are custodians and caretakers of what God gives us. Like a faithful servant, we don't squander or misuse—at least we should not misuse—what God has given us. So anytime we expend resources, it needs to be done with care.

This will prevent us from being heedless in providing ourselves with luxuries that we don't require. It also prevents us from misguided charity. God, although he has the power, doesn't help everyone, and neither should we.

But here, David says, the one who considers the helpless, the ones who are in need of aid of some sort, the one who considers them is going to be blessed. And it does require consideration. This isn't something that we do thoughtlessly.

The man who does so will be a recipient of several benefits. He will be delivered in time of trouble. You have looked at someone else in their time of trouble, have considered them, and if it's the appropriate thing to do, you have helped them.

Well, God is going to do the same thing in our time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed on the earth. This is a promise for deliverance in time.

This doesn't say—this is not one of those promises that talks about, great will your reward be in heaven or in the kingdom. God will requite this particular type of faith and faithfulness in time. And then you notice the person changes in the last part of verse 2. It says, you will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.

And this seems to be a quote from somewhere else perhaps. And you have a text note there for Psalm 27.12 that says, do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me and such as breathe out violence. This psalm has arisen in the case of unjustified persecution.

David doesn't begin by saying, oh Lord, deliver me from my unjust persecution. He—and we've talked about this before in terms of prayer—he builds the foundation. He establishes the basis for the requests that he is going to make later in the psalm, which is a form of a prayer.

And he rehearses in his mind. He says, you know, there is a basis for claiming God's deliverance here. You will not deliver the one who is considering the poor, who has looked out for the ones less fortunate, where the means and the motive and the opportunity has presented itself.

You have promised to deliver him in time of trouble. You've promised to preserve him. You've promised to keep him alive.

You've promised to bless him in the earth. David says, you know, I've got a problem here in the earth. I need not just the hope of reward in the future, but I have the need for deliverance myself.

And I know that God blesses those who look out for the ones who cannot help themselves. Well, the situation has gone up one step. Now I am the one who cannot help myself, and God is the one that has means and motive and opportunity to help me, and he has promised to do so.

But it's interesting to see that David doesn't just leap right into the request phase of his prayer. He says, there is a basis for this. I have grounds for a claim on the mercy of God.

It's God's promise. It's God's policy. It's the way that God himself thinks.

The one who considers the helpless will be delivered, be preserved, be kept alive and be blessed on the earth and not delivered to the will of his enemies. The Lord will not only do that, but in verse three, it says he will strengthen him on his bed of illness and he will be sustained on his sickbed or restored, brought back from the downward trend of his physical illness. So, keeping in mind the time and the dispensation in which these statements are made, there is still the

strong implication here that there is physical well-being associated with those who look out for the physical well-being of others.

Then in verse four he says, Lord, be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. Again, having read this psalm, we know that he is facing persecution. He is facing enemies who are whispering and conspiring and seeking to do him harm.

But David has stopped long enough to order his thinking and order his priorities. First of all, he thinks about God and his relationship to God and he says in the same way that in the past I have had the power to be a blessing and a benefit to those who are helpless. God is in that position for me and has promised to do so.

The second thing he does is before addressing his actual circumstances in life, he addresses his spiritual status before God. And he claims God's mercy first not for the situation that he is in but for cleansing from sin. David is the one who said elsewhere, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. In the case of Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba and all of that complex of problems, David says, against thee have I sinned. And he recognizes that it is necessary in claiming the available grace of God to be qualified, to have first of all claimed God's grace in the spiritual arena.

Lord be merciful to me, heal my soul for I have sinned against you. Before he starts talking about the crimes of others against him, he says, I want to acknowledge my known sins. Having done that in verse 5, he gets to the heart of the matter.

My enemies are speaking evil of me. When will he die and his name perish? We want him out of the way, not only him but the memory of him. We want him out of the way, we want his reputation, his name, his legacy to disappear.

And we were talking about this the other night. It is not uncommon in the world of human beings and in the world of work and so on to have had responsibility for something and to have tried to organize it and work on it and get it to a certain place. And then you see this particularly in the military where there's a change of command or there's a transfer or something.

Some of us have gone back. We might have worked with a unit or something. I used to work in the gunnery department.

I would go back to Fort Sill and think, well, I wonder what's happened to the enlisted instruction branch that I was in charge of for such a period of time. And we worked really hard to get things refined down and working in a certain way that was efficient. We went through the school of hard knocks.

We trial and error and taking the best ideas and people who knew a lot about it. We got it to where it was really working well. We had all the cogs and wheels greased and it was working great.

You come back and it seems like in the military it's just classic that within weeks and certainly within months you come back and people were completely unable to see the value of all of this hard-won organization and refinement and basically blew it all away and started from scratch

and the same old mistakes that you've already been through. I used to often think that there's a reason why they rotate you after two years or after three years in a job because I extended at Fort Sill for an extra year and then when I got recalled to active duty I spent almost another year in the same environment. And if you stay too long and everybody else rotates and you don't, it's just too frustrating because the wheel is being reinvented and you think, you know, I've already been there and done that.

I've been through all of this before. And it seems as though your counsel and your experience are not a factor and people just have to learn it the hard way. So sometimes it's not conducive to your peace of mind to stay too long.

But here, when will he die and when will his name perish? We don't want to hear about him. We don't want to know what he, you know. There was another thing at Fort Sill where back then everybody, all of the Army guys at Fort Sill as an Army post, they would all go to Germany.

And they would all go to Grafenwoehr. And every Army guy, I think they just, it's like a rule of the universe that every Army artillery guy had to go to Grafenwoehr. And I got so sick of hearing any time you would say anything about anything.

Well, back when we were in Grafenwoehr we did this. Well, back in Grafenwoehr we did that. Back in Grafenwoehr.

And I forbade the mention of Grafenwoehr in my fire direction center. I just made it a rule. I was the senior officer present afloat and I said the word Grafenwoehr will not be spoken in my fire direction center.

I don't want to hear it. When will he die? When will his name perish? I just don't even want to hear about him. I don't want to hear about what he did.

I don't want his legacy. I don't want his after effects. I don't want to see his children just make it all go away.

This is what the enemies of David are saying. They just want him gone. And it doesn't stop there.

When they do come to see him, he's still a factor. He's not gone yet. Not only his name, but he himself is present.

So when they do come in, they don't deal honestly. They don't come and speak with integrity. They don't represent themselves with truth.

It's a game. They're playing a game. It's politics.

When they come to see him, they speak lies. They speak deception. They misrepresent the truth.

His heart gathers iniquity to itself. And when he goes out, he tells it. And if you ever had this happen to you where you have a conversation with someone and you're trying to be forthright, you're trying to compromise, you're trying to take things into consideration and work with someone and you say things trying to get along and trying to make things work.

And the person just stores this up. It's like Jesus at the Pharisees' house that we've been seeing in Luke. They just store up what you say and then they go out and they just twist it all and they use it against you.

And they say, well, he said this before and now he's saying this now. And you have nothing but good intentions in trying to do this. And it's just all used against you.

The verse here when it says he speaks words of emptiness and his heart gathers iniquity to itself and when he goes out, then he tells it. And in verse 7, this sparks conversations and meetings at which you are not present. And agreements are made and stuff is discussed and you're not there.

All who hate me whisper together against me. And this is, you know, conversations over here to which you're not a party. It's a whisper.

And against me they devise my hurt. Or your text note there says they plot. They come up with a solution that is going to leave you worse off.

And evil disease, they say, clings to him. And this is literally a word of Belial in Hebrew, a Debar Belial. Debar, we've talked about that in Ecclesiastes, means a word or a matter.

And a son of Belial is a bad guy. So this is something that has stained your reputation. It's either a word or some matter, some issue that is being used against you to bring you down.

It's not so much an evil disease as it is a word of Belial. It clings to him. Now that he lies down, he will rise up no more.

He's over the hill. He's past it. He might have been good in his day, but we don't want him or his name hanging around.

He's history. He's got no more usefulness. Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

If you've ever been in an organization, if you've ever seen politics played, and who hasn't, you'll recognize this. And of course, it's not the case. But look at David's mind.

David looks at all of these things, and a lot of us stop right there, and we just keep going back. We go back to verse 5, and we go down to verse 9, and then our mind just loops back to verse 5, and it goes down to verse 9, and we just get in a rut. All we can think about is how unjust and unfair, how people are twisting and misrepresenting our motives, misrepresenting our actions, misrepresenting our words, saying one thing and doing another.

They're ganging up on us. They're conspiring against us. It's all just game playing in politics, and we just get in this death spiral mentally, where we can't seem to shake ourselves loose.

But look at the solution that David uses to escape this, because we don't really have the human ability to free ourselves of the... it's almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we dwell on what people are doing, we make it come true. We will become paranoid.

We will become obsequious. We will become self-defending. We will become over-explanatory of everything that we do.

We will be on the defensive, and we will start doing what we do to please people instead of doing what we do to please the Lord. And it's almost impossible in human esteem to shake loose of this unless you just have a really perverse streak. And perversity is really not the way to be delivered from this, because you just compound the problem.

But notice what brackets this problem, before and after it. In verse 4, David says, Lord, be merciful to me and heal my soul where I have sinned against you. And in verse 10, he says, Lord, be merciful to me and raise me up that I may requite them.

And this is not... verse 10 is not that I can get even with them, that I can play tit-for-tat, that I can get vengeance. This is that I may deal with them, that I can function in their presence. This has more the idea of returning good for evil, functioning with integrity regardless of what the others are doing.

This is not vengeful. It's not, let me cut the rug under them and chop them off at the knees and show them who's really in the right, and so on. When he says that I may repay them, he says that I may respond in an appropriate way to them.

Obviously, if David is vengeful or is seeking someone's hurt, he's not going to be able to say what he says in verse 11. By this I know that you are well pleased with me, because my enemy does not triumph over me. David is basically praying, Lord, don't let what my enemy is doing cause me to be defeated, cause me to fail.

The battle is the Lord's battle. It's a spiritual struggle. And David says, don't let my enemy triumph.

Don't let this be a defeat in the spiritual realm for me. As for me in verse 12, uphold me in my integrity and set me before your face forever. I don't want to be upheld in circumstances.

I don't want to be vindicated in the eyes of people. I want to be upheld in integrity. I want to be set before God's face forever.

This is a prayer for producing eternal fruit in a situation that generally produces nothing but sin and evil. What a great prayer. And what does he close with? Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.

This is an opportunity to reflect the glory of God, to bless his name, to function in faith and claim his mercy, his grace in a very tough situation. Well, it's a great passage. And as I said, you'll recognize many of the themes that we have as we return now to our passage in Ecclesiastes chapter 7. This chapter has a couple of problems in Hebrew which I have been working through.

Let me give you a refresher. It's been a little bit of time since we've been here on the first six verses. A name is better than goodly ointment and the day of death than the day of birth.

Better to walk to the house of mourning than to walk to the house of feasting in which itself is the end of all mankind and the living will lay it upon his heart, will set it upon his heart. Better aggravation than laughter for in distress of the face the heart is made good. You might say in facing distress the heart is made good.

We've just had a great example of that in Psalm 41. You can face distress and it is a challenge to be lifted up in integrity before God's face. We face distress and it can be a purifying experience of the heart.

Perhaps we have been dealing too much in the world and there's nothing like politics going sour to make you swear off politics altogether. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning but the heart of fools is in the house of gladness. It is better to listen to the rebuke of the wise than for a man to listen to the song of fools.

You can have people who are not looking at what's important saying that everything is going great. You can hear someone wise saying yes but are the things that are really important being attended to? We often think that because things on the surface are not distressful and we're not in the midst of a challenge and a test that everything is great and the voice of wisdom may speak and say well but are you really passing the prosperity test? Are you really focusing on the things that are important even though things seem to be going well? It is better to listen to the rebuke of the wise than for a man to listen to the song of fools. When are fools singing? Well, what's going to happen in the tribulation period? People are all going to be singing the song of peace and safety and destruction is going to come upon them quickly because it's a false sense of security.

People are going to believe the covenant that the antichrist makes for three and a half years and it's going to come back and haunt them. Verse six, like the sound of nettles under the kettle thus the laughter of the fool and this also is vapor. It is transient.

It isn't going to last long like a fire made of thorn branches. It catches quickly, makes a big noise, lots of sparks but it doesn't last. It is the laughter of the fool that accompanies the song of the fool.

The fool thinks everything is great. He's celebrating. He's happy.

He thinks all is well. It won't last. Then as we start our section beginning in verse seven there seems to be sort of a non-sequitur here because it says for ill-gotten gain will make foolish the wise and what is given or a gift, a bribe in some translations, makes a ruin of the heart.

Well how did we get from the nettles under the kettle and the laughter of the fool being transient and temporary to ill-gotten gain? I think the English translations, many of them say oppression but I'll tell you why this is ill-gotten gain. But it just does not follow and there does seem to be a disruption in the Hebrew text here. There is a fragment of Kohelet that was found in cave four at Qumran and this particular section is present in that fragment and at the end of verse six there is a gap before verse seven and it seems to indicate that something has been lost there.

This is another crux that commentators have worked on for centuries going all the way back to the time of the Septuagint. It's difficult to see the connection. I don't see a connection there either.

Driver of Brown, Driver and Briggs fame and several other commentators have assumed that a proverb is missing here, a two-line statement such as can be found over in Proverbs that talks about ill-gotten riches not being good and then the first seven would be the last half of that proverb. But we take the text as it stands and in any case we seem to be starting a new type of

thought where before we're talking about the contrast between wisdom and foolishness. Here we are talking about how you can lose your wisdom and move from the category of wise into the category of foolish.

What is one of the things that causes that to happen? Well, illicit or ill-gotten gains and in verse seven here the word we have is ha-o-shek and this is a word that is generally translated oppression, to abuse someone, to take advantage of your power over them in some way. But in this context and there are other contexts where because this has the article with it ha-o-shek it makes it even more of a noun and it's not so much the abstract idea of oppression as it is something substantial that is a result of oppression or the result of pressure or taking advantage in some way and it has the idea of unfair or illicit advantage. You gain an advantage, you get something, some form of gain because someone is in a tight spot.

I sort of felt this way, this is probably not a good example but the house that we're in here I think could probably have sold for more than we paid for it. The reason we got what I thought was a really good deal on our house is because the previous couple that lived here before us were in the midst of a very nasty divorce and neither one of them wanted anything to do with the house. It had bad memories for them, they wanted to get rid of it, they wanted to split their stuff and go their separate ways and they didn't want to go through a long drawn-out process of selling the house or haggling over the price and they advertised it at a good price.

We brought them down from that price substantially and then as a condition of the sale we said, well you know your double-pane windows here have leaked and they've got vapor inside, we'd like you to replace a lot of these windows. They said, okay fine, whatever. They just wanted to sell the house and get as far away from each other.

In fact, down at the office where you signed the contract, the title company, they made a big point out of making sure that they arrived at different times to sign the paperwork so that they wouldn't see each other. That's how much they disliked each other and I felt like this is sort of a case of that where you gain because someone else is in a tight spot. Now we didn't really have anything to do with that but if you saw someone that was in a tight spot, you've seen movie plots and things where and story plots where someone is in a really tight, this is what pawn shops do, you've got grandma's brooch that's worth two thousand dollars but you're down on your luck and when you try to cash that in to help yourself, people will only give you a fraction of what it's worth because they know you have to get rid of it and this is illicit gain.

This is the idea behind HaOshek. Well, what if you're wise, you're on the path, you're a believer, you're growing, you're trying to live to please God, you are Hakam, you are wise. What is one of the ways that your wisdom can be undermined, that you can lose it, that it can no longer be a benefit to you? Well, one of the things that comes up in this world, we constantly rub elbows and rub shoulders with people who are in a bind, in a tight spot, who are having to go in a direction or in a status that they don't like and don't want to be in and it's an easy thing to see, boy, you know, I can kind of get over in this situation, I can gain here and your wisdom can be set aside, you can lose the benefit of it and Solomon says that an advantage or a gain in a case where someone is under pressure, if you take that to yourself, it will take a wise person and make them foolish.

You can be converted from Hakam, which is wise, to being made foolish.

Now this is not the word for fool, the Kaseel, the Kaseelim are the foolish, this is from Hallel, this is a verbal form that says you will be. It's a very unusual construction. This is Yaholel and the O-E-N-F-I-X means that it's a P-A-L-E, imperfect, and the P-A-L-E of Halal is the word that means to praise, Hallelu-Yah, praise Yahweh.

Halal's root meaning is to shine, and it comes to mean when you praise someone they shine. You're glorifying them, you're shining them, causing them to shine. And of course Halal is used over and over again. Praise God; I mean in the Psalms it's all over the place.

But in the P-A-L, in the intensive, it means that this glorifying has been taken to some form of extreme. And as I've mentioned to you before, this sense is found in various passages in the Old Testament that tells us that it's legitimate. Probably one of the more notable ones is in 1 Samuel 21:14, and you'll remember the case where David finds himself in the presence of Achish and he's gone to Gath.

Well, Gath is Goliath's hometown, Goliath the Gittite, he's from Gath, and David, fleeing from Saul, goes to the worst possible place. I mean he's the hero of the battle of Goliath and here he is, who doesn't know who David is. And you want to talk about somebody having their wisdom made foolish. David, under pressure, decides that he's going to seek refuge in an illicit way. He's going to go to Gath. He's going to fall under the protection of the Philistines to get away from Saul the king of Israel.

You already know what happens to the priests of Nob when he goes there and takes the bread and takes the sword of Goliath and all that and then runs on away. Well, now he's in Gath. And so in verse 13 of 1 Samuel 21 it says, in the New American Standard, it says he disguised his sanity before them, but he played crazy. He scribbled on the doors of the gate and let his saliva run down into his beard and acted like he was a nutcase.

Well, the word that's used here when it says he disguised his sanity, it's halal, and it's the idea that he played the fool. He acted as though his reason had left him. So what is it that makes your wisdom leave you? And of course this is an acting out of what had already taken place, and that is taking an illicit advantage because of pressure or because of circumstances can cause your wisdom to desert you.

And what is given, or a bribe — this is the word that is often translated gift in Hebrew — makes a ruin of the heart. And this verb abad means, it can mean to destroy, but it doesn't mean to destroy in the sense of annihilate. We have a great word in Greek for annihilate. It means to make it completely go away. Abad means to send something into rack and ruin. You look at it and you see heaps and rubble and the after effects are still there to be seen and it stands as a monument to destruction.

And I translate here: gift in English always has the idea of something positive — birthday gift, wedding gift. Any time you see the word gift you say it has a real positive connotation. But in Hebrew matana, or the noun form from the verb natan, which means to give, just means what is given, that which is given, and it's kind of neutral. It can be a good thing or a bad thing.

We saw this in chapter one. The answer that is given by God is an evil answer. It's a calamitous answer. It's unsatisfactory. It causes consternation and misery, and it's supposed to. So I

translate this: what is given makes a ruin of the heart. Ill-gotten gain will make foolish the wise, and what is given makes a ruin of the heart.

The thing that you think you're gaining, this illicit advantage, this kind of getting over — you see a loophole here, there's a pressure situation and you're getting over through it — this is why people loot. You know, I saw the Watts riots on TV back in the late '60s, and recently with the, you know, you have an earthquake, there's been looting in New York City after the events of 9-11. And you think, my goodness, with the disaster and all of the heartache that that event caused, there are people looting.

This is like the people going and picking the wristwatches off of the guys that have been killed in combat and that kind of thing. You think, my goodness. But in a lesser sense and in a spiritual sense, we are susceptible to this. We do this. We'll take advantage of a loophole. But it can make a ruin of our heart. It can cause our wisdom to desert us.

Well, think about Psalm 41, in a case of pressure, in a case of adversity, in a case of opposition from others, we have a choice, we can either grab a hold of some ill-gotten gain, we can try to play the game and we see that there's a slick move we can make, we can pull the rug out from under someone else, we can get over in some way to try to even the scales, but it will make our wisdom desert us, we'll be like David in Gath, and whatever we get is going to make a ruin out of our heart and it's just not worth it. David learned that lesson, you read Psalm 41 and he says, you know what I'm going to do, I'm going to go to the Lord and I'm going to start by acknowledging His grace and His mercy, I'm going to make sure that my sins have been acknowledged, that I've claimed His grace for forgiveness and cleansing, and then I'm going to remind Him of His promises for preservation, I have tried to walk in integrity, I have tried to help the helpless and now I am the helpless and I'm going to ask God to help me. We have a very distinct choice as believers in how we approach situations in this life and there's no clearer contrast than what we see in Psalm 41 and what we see in Ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 7. Well, it's great food for thought, let's pause here and take our break, when we come back we'll pick up with verse 7 and move on in, I'm hoping to get quite a ways along in chapter 7 this morning, so let's pause and take our break.