

Exod 04-08-29a

29th of August, 2004, Sunday morning. We continue our study in the book of Exodus. Moses is in the breach between God and the errant, shall we say, people of Israel.

As we begin our worship, continue our worship, we want to take a moment before our Bible study portion to ensure that we are susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. Shall we pray? Father, thank you for your grace, your faithfulness toward us. Thank you that despite our frailties and the fact that we are essentially made of dust, you understand our condition, you have made provision for it.

You are long-suffering and merciful toward us. You continually, time and again, renew us and cleanse us when we come before your throne, acknowledging our faults, our failures, our disobedience. We thank you that because of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have that privilege.

We rest in him with a salvation that is sure and steadfast and guaranteed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We thank you that we have the gift of your word, that we are not left without guidance or without instruction, but through the truth of your word, our lives can have meaning, can become a part of your purpose. We thank you for the country in which we live.

We pray for our president. We pray for those who think along the lines of the principles of your word when it comes to government and governing and the place of our nation in the world. We pray that you'll be with all of those who are in decision-making positions of responsibility, who have the opportunity to, in some way, reflect your glory in the policies and the actions that they implement.

We pray for ourselves. We ask your blessing on those who study with us by whatever means. We pray that the study of your word will plant seeds in our souls that will grow and bear fruit and reflect your glory, both now and in the age to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Our scripture reading this morning comes from Proverbs 3. The whole introductory section of Proverbs, before it, in some ways, disintegrates into bits and pieces of advice and wisdom sayings that don't always, at least to our mind, seem to hang together.

There's very coherent and integrated thinking in the first several chapters of Proverbs. They are not collections. They are arguments.

They are propositional truths that are presented in sequential form. Proverbs 3 is right in the heart of this section. We look at this as being collected by Solomon.

It does not mean that he is the first-person speaker. I imagine, and I could be wrong, but I imagine that these are from Solomon's notebooks as a young man growing up with his father David, seeking to impart and inculcate the truth of God to his son, and that these are more or

less the, perhaps, teenage notes that Solomon took at his father's side as his father instructed him with the great knowledge and wisdom and biblical truth that he had gleaned over the course of his life. You could well see Solomon trying to pass it on to his own sons, although much less successfully.

But, of course, David had his own son problems as well, between Adonijah and Absalom, etc. But, this particular section is related to our study. What you want to watch for is the concept of life.

A big part of our study this morning has to do with life. The children of Israel are in a life and death situation. Moses is about to lay his own life on the line before God on behalf of those people.

What does the Bible say about life? What kind of life is it? What sustains it? It is a lot more than just is there brainwave activity and is there a pulse and respiration. My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands. For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.

Let not mercy and truth forsake you. Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths.

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones.

Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first fruits of all your increase. So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord nor detest his correction.

For whom the Lord loves he corrects. Just as a father the son in whom he delights. Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.

For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand.

In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her.

And happy are all who retain her. The Lord by wisdom founded the earth. By understanding he established the heavens.

By his knowledge the depths were broken up and the clouds dropped down to dew. My son, let them not depart from your eyes. Keep sound wisdom and discretion so they will be life to your

soul and grace to your neck.

Then you will walk safely in your way and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down you will not be afraid. Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes. For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in the power of your hand to do so.

Do not say to your neighbor, go and come back. Tomorrow I will give it when you have it with you. Do not devise evil against your neighbor for he dwells by you for safety's sake.

Do not strive with a man without cause if he has done you no harm. Do not envy the oppressor. Never choose none of his ways for the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord, but his secret counsel is with the upright.

The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the just. Surely he scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble. The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Well, you could just preach a series on this collection of sayings all by itself. But I want to point out though, and I hope you saw repeatedly, the theme of life connected to wisdom. This of course is not just wisdom as the world defines it, but wisdom as God defines it.

Looking at life from an eternal perspective, that is the essence of wisdom. Wisdom embodies and contains within it hope, faith, and love. And you see all three of those reflected here.

How many times does the Bible say, my son, do not forget? Many of us have come from a background or a strand of Christianity that places high priority on the study of God's word. We ourselves place a very high priority on the study of God's word. We assemble ourselves three times a week for a double session, which is by many people's standards something of a heroic undertaking, to shuffle our schedule and to assemble and to make that level of priority out of the study of God's word.

And that is a wonderful thing. And it is essential. However, if that is all we do, we are going to end up being of all men most miserable, because it is not the study, it is not the learning of it, it is the not forgetting of it.

The exhorter here doesn't say, my son, be sure and learn. My son, be sure and learn. Don't fail to learn.

Don't fail to learn. He says, don't forget. He says, you've heard it, you've learned it, don't forget it.

And if you look at the number of times in the Proverbs, even in the Psalms, David tells his own soul, soul, forget not the Lord's mercy. Soul, forget not his promises. Forget not, forget not.

What is the problem with the Israelites at the base of Mount Sinai? Short term memory loss. That's their problem. Early onset senility.

Something. Because they can't remember. Remember, these are the people that walked across the Red Sea dryshod.

These are the people each day that go out and collect the manna. These are the people who can look up and see the smoke cloud and hear the thunder and see the lightning on Mount Sinai. As they are talking to Aaron, they have to wait between thunderclaps to say, Aaron, boom.

Can you make us? Boom, boom. A golden? Boom. You talk about people who can't remember who they are and why they're here.

My son, do not forget my law. It would be better for us to meet once a month and remember and apply the things that we learned than to meet three times a week for six classes and walk out the door and forget what we learned. I know people that I think have been far more spiritually fruitful who are in a mediocre teaching church, but the things that they glean, the one good nugget out of the big plate full of pablum, they take it, they ingest it, they digest it, they remember it, and they apply it as though there were no tomorrow, as though the Lord was coming back tonight.

And that is the key. Better to have been given the one talent and to make it into two than to have been given five talents and bury them all in the ground. Can you imagine how the parable would go? The servant with one doubled it.

The servant with five wrapped them all in his sweatband and did nothing with them. Of how much sore punishment do you think he will be thought worthy who has been given so much of the grace of Christ and does nothing with it? My son, do not forget my law. Let your heart keep my commandments.

Length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Everyone is on a quest for peace. Oprah would be out of business.

Dr. Phil would plummet to bottom in the ratings if everybody had peace. People would not watch talk shows. In fact, people would probably not watch much television at all if they really had peace.

A lot of the interest in what is going on in the world is a substitution. It is a sublimation because people have problems and what they want to do is get their mind off their problems. They want to get away from their turbulence and their lack of peace by getting deeply immersed in something else.

This is why some people have an overwhelming and unnatural interest in entertainment. This is why a lot of teenagers do nothing but play video games all the time. They are uncomfortable in

the real world and they want to go into some other world where they have control, where they can measure their success against an absolute standard.

Here is my score. Here is my achievement. I have gotten to level such and such.

There are people who play online games, who play video games, who get into groups and compare how they are doing in video games. There is nothing wrong, by the way, with any of these things. Inherently, it is why you do what you do.

If you are doing these things as an escape, as a sublimation, as a let me numb my mind, let me get the sweet bubble gum from my brain and try to get out of my real life, that is a problem. It is a temporary substitute. Like Ray Stevens used to ask, as your chewing gum lost its flavor, all of these things do not last very long and they do not nourish.

They do not strengthen. It is a temporary sensation and then you have to move on to the next. Long life, length of days, peace will be added to you.

This is a statement of declarative fact by the God of the universe. If you do not forget God's law, if you let your heart keep His commands, this is remembering and applying, right? You do not forget it. You remember what it says, what the principles are, who am I, why am I here, what am I being measured by.

I am being measured by the thoughts and intents of my heart. Keep the commands. Once you know what it is you are supposed to do, then do it.

Do not let yourself get distracted. Most of the disobedience that you see in otherwise good children is not from rebellion. It is not from intentional malice of forethought.

I know what they said, but I am going to do this other. Most of the time with reasonably normal children, it is forgetfulness. Most of the people who get caught speeding in the school zone, for example, a group for which I can speak, are not doing it intentionally.

They just were not paying attention. They did not stop and analyze the environment, did not happen to see that they had turned into the middle of the school zone and not passed a sign, and here is the guy with his gun. But it is unintentional.

It is lack of attention. There actually was a sign for me in the midst of like 12 other signs, and if you pull onto the street and then do nothing except read all of the signs before you continue, you would know you were in the middle of the school zone with no flashing light. I feel better having gotten that out of, you know, made my apologia there.

Because let me tell you, speeding in a school zone in Dallas is expensive, as it should be. But a lot of people's disobedience is not from willful malice of forethought rebellion. It is sins of omission, sins of distraction, and this is what we cannot afford to let happen.

We cannot let ourselves be distracted. Forget not my law. Let your heart keep my commands.

You have to first of all remember something to keep it. It has to be in your mind. And then when you know that, you have to implement it.

The result, the reward, length of days, long life, and peace. Do not let mercy and truth forsake you. Bind them around your neck.

Write them on the tablet of your heart. Notice, God gives these things as a gift to us, doesn't he? We have to take action, overt action, conscious, willful action, so that they do not desert us. We have to bind them.

We have to let them not forsake us. We have to write them on the tablet of our own heart. I cannot write the truth of God's word on the tablet of your heart.

I can try to present it skillfully. I can try to present it carefully. I can try to present it accurately.

I can try to make the content of our Bible studies as truth-rich as possible, with a minimum of pablum, with a minimum of secular additions. But only you can write the truth of God on your heart. Only I can write the truth of God on my heart.

If we do, we find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. A very popular memory verse here, Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. You'll see your New King James footnote there. He will make your path straight.

I think as much as I enjoyed the Old King James idea of God directing our path, this smacks of I am the puppet, He pulls the strings. There's a little bit of a Calvinist element there. If you acknowledge God, He will just steer you as you should go.

We are not RPVs. We are not remotely piloted vehicles. We have the wheel in our hands.

God will make the path straight. It's up to us to keep the vehicle on the straight path. A lot of people, when they get that Old King James idea, He shall direct thy paths, well, let go and let God.

If I ever see that bumper sticker on anything that I have control over, I would scrape it off. There is no such thing as let go and let God. It's more like grab hold and obey God.

Grab hold. We have the steering wheel. We are at the helm.

You don't just turn loose and drop all the sheets and halyards and let go of the wheel and say, Lord, blow my ship in the right direction. It's not going to happen. We are sentient.

God's got the beasts of the field that He can order around and put the bear in the right place to eat the children who make fun of the prophet and so on. He can give voice to the dumb donkey underneath Balaam. God's got a whole world of animals who can mindlessly obey His will.

We are asked. We are commanded. We have to step up to the plate, remember what He says, and then make the choice to do it.

This is our responsibility. This is the standard by which we will be measured. Not the bank account.

Not the check marks on our to-do list. Not giving. Not notoriety.

Not hail fellow well met. How many people do I know who say good things about me? None of that. We will stand before the judgment, and when the books are open, it's going to be, What were you thinking? And there are ways you can ask that question, right? Somebody pulls off an amazing feat, and you say, What were you thinking? You know, they ask the Olympic gold medal gymnasts and things this.

What was going through your mind as you pulled off this triple twisting, one and a half dismount, and stuck the landing? What was going through your mind? They ask them this. And when at the judgment, God asks faithful believers, like the Apostle Paul on Mars Hill, Now Paul, tell us what was going through your mind. And he says, Well, you know, I remember the Old Testament scriptures that Israel would be a light to the Gentiles, and as I stood there in the midst of the Gentiles, and we're going to get God glorifying, glory reflecting answers.

God will say, What were you thinking? Which promises and principles and doctrines did you claim? How did you make application in that particular instance? And God will be glorified, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be vindicated and dying for us. Other times, God's going to say, What were you thinking? What were you thinking? It's all in how you ask the question, and what the answer is, right? Write them on the tablet of your heart, so you will find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. Acknowledge Him in all your ways.

He will make your path straight. It's a lot easier to steer in a straight line. You find this out when you're rowing.

You know, you are facing the stern, your boat heading toward a destination. When you're rowing by yourself, you've got an oar in each hand, you take a fix on something fixed on the shore, and you keep that relatively stable with regard to the stern of the boat. You have two fixed points.

You've got the boat and this tree or this tower or this barn or whatever it is. And then as you row, you pull a little harder with the left or pull a little harder with the right, so that you steer a straight course. Now, somebody said, I would like you to steer a radius.

You know, I want you to steer a gentle curve around. That's much more difficult. If you've got a twisty, turny road, like in Arkansas at night, it's much more difficult to follow all the curves as you go up and down.

God says, look, I'll make you a nice straight path. All you have to do is rightly divide the word of

truth, lay a straight course of bricks, and you go down the straight road. The narrow road is a straight road.

It doesn't have a lot of twists and turns and, oh, now what do I do? You will make your path straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. What do we call this in a single word? If someone is not wise in their own eyes, what are they? Humble.

They have humility. If you're wise in your own eyes, your strength tends to go off in whatever you see fit. I'm going to do this.

I'm going to put my energy in that because I'm right and that's the best. To not be wise in our own eyes keeps our strength under control because we say, I've got to rein myself in and be sure I'm staying on that straight path. Do not be wise in your own eyes.

Fear the Lord. Depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh.

That word flesh there is literally your belly button. That doesn't have the euphonious Biblical sound to it. They didn't want to put belly button in the Bible.

I don't think the word occurs anywhere in our English translation, but it occurs in the Hebrew. It will be health to your navel. What on earth is health to your navel? Is there such a thing as an unhealthy navel? It will be health to your navel and strength to your bones.

Refreshment to your bones. The navel, in the ancient world, people understood what the umbilical cord did. People were much more intimately involved.

You didn't hire a doctor. You were there. You had midwives.

Everybody was very well acquainted. They were an agrarian society. There were animals, goats and sheep and cattle and so on that were being born all the time.

When it came to human birth, and you have the cord there, it goes into the navel. It is as though life has gone through that cord into this new creature. The life of the mother has flowed into the child.

Of course, that is literally true. Your navel becomes symbolic of the place where life enters you. This is the entrance point for health, for nourishment.

They recognize that. Even long after you are born, this is the symbol. Health to your navel means you are going to get a great start.

You are going to have this infusion of life and energy. Some people just seem to be born with a lot of physical strength and energy and ability and so on. Spiritually, wouldn't it be great to just be sinewy and with bulging muscles and capable of everything that comes your way? Health to your navel and refreshment to your bones.

Your bones are the structure that holds you up. The girls had a disc with books on it. There was a thing called the body.

Something happened and its bones all went away. I think Ray Bradbury wrote a story about the same thing where this thing would get in and get your bones and then your entire body was just missing the bones. Of course, you are just this oozing mass.

You can't do much. You can't exert any strength. You can't move a muscle without your bones, at least to any good effect.

Refreshment to your bones. Refreshment to your bones. Your solidity, your stability, your ability to do meaningful things depends on the structure inside you and then do you have the energy to use that capability.

Honor the Lord with your possessions, the first fruits of all your increase, so your barns will be filled with plenty, your vats will overflow with new wine. What are our resources? This is a favorite verse when somebody's got a building campaign going or the church is having trouble paying the utility bills or whatever. Honor the Lord.

Of course, honoring the Lord means honoring the assembly, honoring the church budget. Let's pass the plate. We put stuff in the box or whatever.

What are our possessions? What is the first fruit of our increase? What is our most valuable possession? It's our time. The time on this earth is precious. It is incalculably valuable.

These minutes and seconds that we have will never come again. God, in all of his creative power, cannot and will not give us back the time that we have right now. It's a one-time deal.

It's just like the beer commercial. Grab for the gusto because you only go around once. And our possession, our increase, is whatever we have that is a resource.

Our time is one of the most valuable, one of the most plentiful, and all of us are equally rich. All of us have 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, 7 days in a week. All of us have exactly the same amount.

We are equally blessed. We are equally rich. But we are very unequal in the way we invest that resource, in the way we spend it and use it.

And I am going to be horrified when God adds up all of the time, all of the minutes and hours that I have wasted, wasted, wasted. Don Henley wrote a song with the Eagles called Wasted Time. And that song is all about wasted time.

But, of course, we have other things. And God matches opportunities to our resources. We might have the resource.

We might have the ability to do someone a good turn, to help them through a tough spot, to be

a blessing in some way. It has very little to do with money. It has a lot to do with what do we have on hand and being a blessing as unto the Lord, doing what we do as unto the Lord.

The people involved may or may not be particularly worthy from a human point of view. But we do what we do as unto the Lord. If the Lord Jesus waited for worthy people to die on the cross, He would have never gotten there.

If we honor the Lord with our possessions, if we honor the Lord with the firstfruits of our increase. Why the firstfruits? Why was that whole principle of firstfruits given to Israel? Because as soon as a good thing happens, when an influx arrives, what should our first thought be? Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights. I don't care what the intermediate means is.

I don't care if it's a tax refund. I don't care if it's an inheritance. I don't care if it is a monopoly, bank mistake in your favor, collect \$200, whatever it may be, it is from God.

God put the circumstances together. God has arranged the pieces of the puzzle so that suddenly here is this benefit, here is this value added. And our first thought as believers, going down that narrow path, keeping the law of God written on our hearts, ought to be, this is from God.

Thank you God. Thank you for this day. Thank you for this time.

Thank you that my slate has been wiped clean yet again through your grace. You've purged me with hyssop and made me clean. You've washed me.

I'm whiter than snow. And I've got a day ahead of me. I've got a part of a day ahead of me.

I've got time. I've got opportunity. I have a resource here.

Thank you God. First fruits. The first thought.

The recognition. Every good and perfect gift comes from above. Doing that, your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

These are both temporal and time related. And it may not be that you're going to make the Forbes list of the 500 richest. But what it does mean is when it comes to the things that count, you're going to have plenty.

Things that make for peace. Things that make for prosperity of the soul. Things that make for contentment.

Things that make for greater opportunity. What's so great about having barns filled with plenty and vats overflowing with new wine? Why is that a good thing? You have confidence in the future, right? Even if there's a famine. I've got full barns.

I've got vats of wine. Wine keeps. It doesn't go stale.

It doesn't go bad if you take reasonable care. It provides for your future, doesn't it? And it also is potential. You have opportunity.

You can sell to others. You can manipulate. You can maneuver what you have into more.

The old adage, it takes money to make money. And to him who has, more can be given. You can multiply.

You can invest when you have plenty. So it's a combination of greater potential and security in the future. And that's exactly what God gives those who remember him.

Honoring the Lord with the first preach. Your barns are filled. Your vats overflow.

Overflow means you've got it to give away. You've got it to sell. You've got it to spare.

Same idea at the end of Psalm 23. My cup runneth over. Normally, this is not a good thing, is it? If your kids are pouring your stuff at supper, you don't want your cup to run over.

Why would somebody want a cup that runs over? Because not only do you have everything that you need, but there is excess. And the excess, things can be done with it. Do not despise the chasing of the Lord.

Do not detest his correction. Whom the Lord loves, he corrects. Just as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

Sometimes we are hardest on those who have the most potential, who do the best. Because we know what they are capable of and we want to push them to their full potential. And we shouldn't be discouraged because it is good attention.

It is that which takes what is good and makes it better. It takes what is better and makes it best. Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.

Her proceeds are better than the profits of silver. Her gain is better than fine gold. How can anything be better than silver and gold? Silver and gold do not last.

You can't keep them. J. Paul Getty, who was the guy that made his riches in the fur trade back in J.P. Morgan? All of those guys? They have not got a red cent now. Not a penny.

I have no idea about the salvation status of J.P. Morgan, but I'll tell you one thing. He is flat broke at this moment. He doesn't have a thing.

Howard Hughes has not got a cent to his name now and never will again. He is going to get resurrected. He is going to stand before God and he can't make a call to the bank.

He has nothing. He spent all of his time thinking about, worrying about, investing, doing this,

that, and the other, making the spruce goose and all that. It's meaningless.

Empty. Pointless and useless because he is impoverished now. The understanding and wisdom that comes from God, the proceeds of it, are eternal.

You keep them. They stick in your soul. You possess them.

You carry them to the judgment. You carry them past the judgment seat. You carry them into the millennial kingdom.

You carry them into the eternal kingdom of the Father. It is the one portable commodity in this life. Her gain is better than fine gold, more precious than rubies.

All the things you may desire cannot compare with her. That's why it's worth it to shove things aside, to make the effort to not only spend time to come and learn the Word of God, but to shove aside and make time in our schedule to think about the Word of God, to remember it, to make sure it's written on our hearts, to make sure it is seasoning all of our thoughts and all of our actions. That time is the most valuable time we can spend because that's what has eternal consequence.

That goes into the eternal bank account. All the things you may desire do not compare. Length of days is in her right hand.

In her left hand, riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her.

How many people have thought about the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life and thought about, wouldn't it be great to reach out and grab that fruit and take a big healthy bite out of the fruit of the Tree of Life? Every time we focus our attention and aim the faith mechanism of our soul at God's Word, we are taking a bite out of the Tree of Life. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her. A tree can be standing there, laden, branches bent down under the load of the weight of the fruit of life, and people walk right by.

Oh, look at that tree. It looks pleasing to the eye and desirable to make one wise. Let me go over here.

You go to some other tree, probably the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Walk right by the Tree of Life and pull some fruit that turns to ashes in the mouth, that brings all of the antitheses of what is in this chapter. Wisdom is a tree of life to those who take hold of her.

Happy are all who retain her. It isn't just getting it once. It isn't just recognizing it once.

Tasting of the good Word of God and the power of the age to come, as it says. It is retaining, keeping, maintaining. It isn't how you start, it's how you finish.

Happy are all who retain her. It talks about the fact that this is the power by which God

constructed the universe and established the heavens and put the great forces of nature in place. My son, verse 21, let them not depart from your eyes.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion. They will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. You will walk safely.

Your foot will not stumble. You won't be afraid. Your sleep will be sweet.

You won't be afraid of sudden terror nor of trouble from the wicked. The Lord will be your confidence. Your foot will not be caught.

If you have all of this going, you are ready to express love. You have faith. You have hope for the eternal future.

Now you're ready to express love. You will not withhold good from those to whom it is due. It will be in your power.

Don't say to your neighbor... This is just sort of showing that you have the option. You know how people are, they get a little bit of power and they want to show people that they have the power? So you have something sitting right there and somebody comes and asks you for it and you say, I'll tell you what, come back tomorrow. Just being manipulative because you've got some leverage, because you have something that someone needs.

This is the pettiness and the wickedness that is a part of the unregenerate human soul. Do not devise evil against your neighbor. He dwells by you for safety's sake.

This is the fabric of society. It's important that we maintain what has been called the laws of divine establishment, free choice, marriage, family, the structure of the nation. This is preserved by not abusing freedom, not abusing those who live next to us.

Community provides safety. There is safety in numbers. There is safety in community.

It is security. It's God-ordained and we are not to abuse it. Do not strive with a man without cause.

We saw the frivolous lawsuit idea Friday night. Do not envy the oppressor. Do not choose any of his ways.

You see people getting over by human strength? Don't follow that path. The perverse person is an abomination to the Lord. God's secret counsel is with the upright.

You have the same idea in the hidden manna promise to the overcomers. The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the just. Blessing by association.

You can have one righteous person in the household and the whole household gets blessed. God blesses the home of the just. You can be a blessing to those who have no eligibility for

blessing.

God scorns the scornful but gives grace to the humble. This, of course, is quoted over in James. The wise shall inherit glory.

Shame will be the legacy of fools. This speaks of the judgment. Our inheritance, our eternal future.

We can't even conceive of how long eternity is. But our eternal legacy, our eternal inheritance hinges on whether or not we pay attention to this. You think about Israel at the foot of the mountain.

And the legend emblazoned on that picture is how soon we forget. How soon we forget. We cannot afford to forget who we are and why we're here.

We cannot afford to forget that this truth of God's word that we look at and try to remind ourselves of frequently during the week is the most important commodity on the earth. God values His word above His name. And those who possess it are going to be honored and blessed by God.

He hinges the judgment. He hinges the apportionment of inheritance on it. It has to be infiltrating our thinking all the time.

Well, the particular reason that we are looking at this idea of life and where life comes from is based on the chapter we are in in Exodus where Moses is standing between the disobedient children of Israel and God. And when you look at chapter 33, verse 12, Moses said to the Lord, You say to me, Bring up this people, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, I know you by name.

You have also found grace in my sight. Now therefore I pray, if I have found grace in your sight, show me now your way that I may know you and that I may find grace in your sight. And consider that this nation is your people.

You get the idea that Moses understands that principle of Proverbs chapter 3. And he says, Lord, it is your presence. Show me your way. I want to know you.

I want to find grace in your sight. So God says, My presence will go with you and I will give you rest. Moses says, If your presence does not go up with us, do not bring us up from here.

How then will it be known that your people and I have found grace in your sight except you go with us? So we shall be separate, your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth. This idea is so important to Moses that he says to the Lord, If your presence does not go with us, we are not going. If your presence does not go with us, then it is not worth doing.

How do we look at the events of our life? Are they worth doing if the Lord is not involved? If we

are not doing them in the light of his word, it may seem like a big accomplishment. It may seem like an important priority. But if God is not in it, there is no point in going up.

It just is not worth doing. We are going to see that Moses is going to actually place his life on the line in this regard and say, Blot me out of your book. If you are not going to accomplish your purpose in us, just blot me out of your book.

Well, that is what we will look at when we come back from the break.