

Kings and Prophets 13-04-05b

Let's continue our study now. We're in the book of First Kings, looking at the fading glory of Solomon. And I mentioned in the first class tonight that it is important for us to try to learn from an example like this, and that there's a specific way to avoid deceiving ourselves and falling into this kind of failure.

And I mentioned three steps. Do you think that those steps are something I just made up, or do you think they would come from the word of God? They actually come from the word of God, and they come from something Solomon himself said. If you will turn with me to Second Chronicles chapter seven, Second Chronicles chapter seven, verse 12.

Now, if you look at the context here just real quickly, what's going on in chapter seven? What does your header say there? Solomon dedicates the temple. This is in his early days. This is in his days of accomplishment and obedience and fulfillment, right? This is when Hiram, king of Tyre, is his partner, and he's got Holy Spirit filled men that are assisting with the construction.

And he offers sacrifices to the Lord. He doesn't have a whole bevy of parasitic hangers on and foreign wives and so on. Solomon, in verse seven, consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the Lord.

He offered burnt offerings and the fat of peace offerings. The bronze altar Solomon made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat. Solomon kept the feast seven days, all Israel with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the brook of Egypt.

And on the eighth day, they held a sacred assembly, which had time to review what we've learned about the eighth day. When were young boys circumcised after birth? When was the cleansed leper restored to fellowship and shave off his eyebrows and become like a newborn child? Eighth day. We're looking at verse 11.

And thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house, and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the Lord and in his own house. Successfully accomplished. Now look at verse 12.

Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said to him, I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain or command the locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people. Now, stop right there.

Look up. Don't keep reading. What did God just say in verse 11? If I, the Lord God, send bad things on Israel, I shut up heaven and there's no rain.

That's as bad as it can get for an agricultural economy, right? Or I command the locusts to

devour the land. They eat it before it can even wither. Or I send pestilence among my people, a disease, a plague decimates people.

Why would God do this? See, just running out of stuff to do in heaven, tired of looking at the angels. Well, I think I'll throw a few pestilences and droughts and things. Why would God do this? Ask yourself.

Why would God on his people Israel send drought, locusts and pestilence? Why did he ever do it? Because they were disobedient, apathetic, wayward, stiff-necked, right? So God is saying a lot in this short verse, right? If you people get slouchy and lazy and distracted and you mess up and you're disobedient and it reaches the point where just withholding blessing is not enough to turn you and not enough to get your attention, then I have to actively create an adversary to send upon you because it's gotten to that point. Then we get to verse 14. Verse 14 is one should sound a little familiar to you, but look at it.

See if you see anything familiar in verse 14. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. Notice forgive their sin.

If there's any doubt about why God sent the pestilence and the locusts and the drought. Now, if you look, our three things are in verse 14. This is where the three things come from.

If my people who are called by my name will, number one, humble themselves. What was our step one? Stop, drop everything that you think is important and set aside some time to analyze and go before the Lord and figure out what's wrong. This is humbling ourselves.

If you're not humble, you'll never do this because your stuff's more important. Your plan is better. Your agenda is absolutely superior in every way.

Your path is the one that will lead to success. You don't need to seek God. You don't need to figure out if he's unhappy.

You don't need to decide if he's made an adversary or if he has sent any kind of pestilence. You've got it all figured out. You don't need to spend the time.

In order to spend the time, in order to decide to spend the time, we have to humble ourselves. Humility, God resists the proud. God sends locusts and pestilence and drought upon the proud.

Pride goeth before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction. Where does that fall and destruction come from? Is it just some abstract law of physics? God will actively produce the fall. God will actively bring on the destruction on the haughty.

God resists the proud. God sets up adversaries for the proud. And you say, well, I'm not haughty and arrogant and nose in the air and better than thou.

You know what pride is? Pride is saying my idea, my agenda, my plan is working just fine and

I'm not gonna second guess it or analyze it or see if maybe I'm out of line with God's plan and God's purpose and God's priorities. That's pride. Pride is not going before God and saying, Lord, show me my secret faults.

Show me, try me, see if there be any wicked way in me, purge me, cleanse me, renew a right spirit within me, create in me a clean heart, oh God. That's humility. It requires humility.

You can't get there without humility. If my people who are called by my name will number one, humble themselves. Number two, pray and seek my face.

What did we emphasize over and over again in step two? Pray, ask God for wisdom, ask him for insight, ask him for clarity and give him time to speak. Sit there undistracted, give God the Holy Spirit time to bring forward into our consciousness the word of God that we have learned, that we do know, but it takes time. You're not gonna do this driving someplace.

You're not gonna do this with your headphones on and your MP3s playing in your ear. You're not gonna do this while you're mopping the floor, folding the laundry, doing the dishes. You're not gonna get this on your lunch break at work.

You'll get this by yourself in a quiet place. How did the Lord Jesus do his prayers? Where did the disciples constantly have to go find him? He was off by himself, undistracted, praying. What did he do in the garden? There's no clearer picture than Gethsemane.

How did Jesus pray to his father? Even when he brought his trusted inner circle with him, he left them and said, pray for me, and he went on a space alone with God, concentrating on the things of God. Jesus did not own a pair of earbuds. Jesus did not text.

Jesus did not multitask. Hear me now. Jesus did not multitask when it came to his relationship with his father.

You cannot absorb the word of God doing two or three things at once. You can't. If you care about God, you'll give him your undivided attention.

Undivided attention. If he's semi-important, then you're gonna give him semi-attention. If he's sort of important, you'll sort of pay attention.

If he's occasionally important, you'll occasionally pay attention. You see the correlation? Direct correlation. Examine yourself.

See if you are in the faith. Judge yourself lest you be judged, right? Solomon did not do this. David, on the other hand, did as a pattern of life.

Had a few hiccups, as I think most of us can relate. But as a pattern of life, from his youth to his old age, David spent quality time with the Lord. David's the one that wrote these Psalms we're quoting because he knew these principles by heart.

Step one, humble themselves. Step two, pray and seek my face. What was step three? Do something about what you find out, right? If you figure out something that needs fixing, fix it.

Something needs eliminating, eliminate it. Jesus taught this lesson, if your hand offends you, cut it off. If your eye offends you, pluck it out.

If your tongue offends you, cut it out. It's better to enter into life without those things than to try to hang on to them and lose your entire inheritance. Be in the darkness which is outside.

Weep and wail, gnash your teeth as the fruit of your life goes up in flames. Turn from their wicked ways. Turn from their wicked ways.

Notice God did not say, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will turn and heal them, take away the plagues. Step three is an essential condition. All of the happy first John one-niners, I can do what I want and just fess up and I'm golden again, I'm in fellowship again, have not paid attention to passages like this.

God says, I will turn, I will heal, I will restore, I will bless when all three of these things are done pretty much in this order. Humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn. Change of mind, change of heart, change of ways.

This doesn't say turn from their wicked attitude, turn from their wicked ways. Behavior changes. That's when God will lift discipline and restore blessing.

So, the three steps are not Sam's overactive imagination, they are drawn directly from this verse. And it is applicable, it is pertinent. Ask yourself, which kind of Shlomo do you want to be? Which kind of Solomon do you want to be? Do you want to be Solomon at the beginning, building the temple, eradicating the enemies of the Lord and the enemies of his father David? Accomplishing something where God's glory can come down and fill it? How many men can say that they've done something that the Shekinah glory of God came down and filled? Shekinah glory is kind of redundant.

Shekinah is glory. Shekinah glory is like saying, flatline. I used to smile when I would hear somebody say flatline because flat, forward line of troops, so it's the forward line of troops line.

Well, it's redundant. Shekinah glory, if you hear anybody say Shekinah glory without apology, they haven't really thought about it. The Shekinah is the glory.

There's not like, well, there's Shekinah glory and then there's, you know, morning glory and there's, you know, there's several different kinds. No, there's just, the Shekinah is the glory. Solomon did a thing and the glory of God came down and filled it.

How many people can say that? Trick question. Solomon did something and the glory of God came down and filled it and shown forth from it. How many people can say that? Not that many in the Old Testament, but how many people in the church can say it? Potentially any of us.

We are given the wisdom of Solomon. We are given the opportunity of Solomon because the temple of God is in us and God's glory will come down and fill it. So do you want to be Solomon at the beginning or do you want to be Solomon at the end? Solomon at the beginning, Solomon at the end.

Humble, proud, one wife, 1,000 wives. Success, failure, giving something to the people of Israel that will be a heritage and a blessing and an opportunity and a reflection and a communication of the presence and the power of God or giving them high places for Chemosh and Ashdod and Baal. Building an enduring God glorifying legacy or sapping so much of the strength out of the kingdom that it's going to split as soon as he's off the scene.

When Solomon splits, so does the kingdom. What do you want to be? Do you want to be Solomon at the beginning or do you want to be Solomon at the end? We have essentially the same opportunity in a different venue and a different scale. So don't forget 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people who are called by my name, we don't claim a denominational label.

We don't claim a theological label. We don't say I'm a this or I'm a that. What is the name that we claim? We are Christians.

We claim the name of Christ in that name alone. We are called by the name of the God, man, Jesus Christ. We are Christians and nothing else is needed.

I don't need a denomination label. I don't need a theological persuasion label. I don't need an evangelical conservative fundamentalist label.

I only need one label, Christian in the true sense of the word. Called by my name, humble themselves, pray, seek my face, turn from their wicked ways. I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Back to 1 Kings 11. Solomon does not do this. What happens? We saw the prophet going to Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, and Ephraimite from Zeredah.

His mother's name is given. Got a lot of Z's there. This is what caused him to rebel against the king.

Solomon had built a mill and repaired the damage to the city of David. His father, the man of Jeroboam, was a mighty man of valor. Remember Saul was a mighty man of valor.

Fearlessly went out and fought in the early days. And we saw the prophet go and tear his garment that was on him and out of 12 pieces, he gives 10 to Jeroboam. He reserves two for Solomon's son.

There's a little bit more we could say about that. But look down at verse 38. The same promise is given.

It shall be if you heed all that I command you, walk in my ways, do what is right in my sight to

keep my statutes and my commandments as my servant David did, I will be with you. Jeroboam was not limited by his birth as an Ephraimite. He wasn't limited by his background.

He wasn't limited by anything other than his own will. God said, look, if you have the attitude of David, I will give you the blessings of David and you're not even in the line. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.

Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. How far has Solomon fallen? That God declares his will to make Jeroboam king and Solomon tries to kill him. What's the distance between God and Solomon at this point? He's basically following in the footsteps of Saul, not his father David.

So Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. The rest of the acts of Solomon we saw last time have disappeared because they were the equivalent of wood, hay and stubble. The period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was 40 years.

Solomon rested with his fathers, was buried in the city of David, his father. Rehoboam, his son reigned in his place. Rehoboam, you know, there's no chapter divisions in the original books.

Rehoboam went to Shechem. All Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. So what happened when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, heard he was still in Egypt, he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt.

You know, Egypt is the favorite place to go when somebody's after you. They sent and called him. Jeroboam came and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, your father made our yoke heavy.

Now, therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father. Notice that during the course of the 40 year reign of Solomon, people have become increasingly dissatisfied. What should have and could have united them as a people in the service of the Lord, now they say it's Solomon's yoke and it's heavy and we don't like it and we don't want to bear it anymore.

Solomon has put a heavy yoke upon us. Burdensome service. Lighten it and we will serve you.

So he said to them, go away for three days, come back to me. So the people departed. Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, said, how do you advise me to answer these people? They spoke to him saying, if you will be a servant to these people today and serve them and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.

This is the concept that they like to advertise today as servant leadership. But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him who stood before him. He said to them, what advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me saying, lighten the yoke which your father put upon us? The young men who had grown up with him spoke to him saying, notice that that's repeated, young

men who had grown up with him.

In other words, they don't have any more experience than he does. They haven't seen any more than he has seen. Thus, you should speak to this people who have spoken to you saying, your father made our yoke heavy, but you may make it lighter on us.

Say to them, my little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist. If you think my father was heavy, if you picked him up by the waist, you know, you pick somebody up by the waist, you're pretty much picking up all their weight. My little finger laid on you is gonna be heavier than my father's whole yoke, whole burden.

Now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scourges. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day as the king had directed saying, come back to me the third day.

How many times have we had the third day mentioned now? The king answered the people roughly, rejected the advice which the elders had given him. He spoke to them according to the advice of the young men. And that's repeated.

King did not listen to the people. The turn of events was from the Lord that he might fulfill his word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, people answered the king saying, what share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, oh Israel. Cedar your own house, oh David. And this is where the formal breach takes place.

And the kingdom is rent in twain. Israel departed to their tents. Now, we're gonna look at this event.

It is one of the signal, salient, pertinent, important events of Old Testament history. And there are some clues that we'll take a look at next time. But this idea that the old ways should be scrapped, should be rejected, whatever they are.

It doesn't matter what they are. But there is an attitude that says, we're young, we've got a fresh outlook and we're gonna do it our way. Is something that has reared its head in almost every generation.

Sometimes it takes hold. Other times it yields to maturity and better judgment or wartime. People grow up in wartime and realize that that stuff is just silly.

But I want to direct your attention to something. There aren't many books that I recommend, but I do recommend this book. If you don't want to read the whole thing, at least read the introductory chapter.

I made a couple of copies of it here that I'll leave behind. I've also got the PDF. It's a free book.

It's a free download. If you've got Kindle or Adobe Reader or a browser or text, this book is free on the web. If you've got any way to get to the web, just Google the title and you can download the whole thing.

And at least if you don't read anything else, skip the introduction by Saul Bellow, skip the whole rest of the book, but read the introductory chapter, which is called Our Virtue, Introduction, Our Virtue. This book is called The Closing of the American Mind. The Closing of the American Mind by Alan Bloom.

And in my remaining couple of minutes, I just want to read you a little bit of this so that you'll get the gist. The Closing of the American Mind, Alan Bloom, B-L-O-O-M. Just Google that, it'll pop up.

Free download, any format, ebook, anything your device can read, it can read it. This chapter, which is about 25 pages in after you get through the front matter, is called Introduction, Our Virtue. Let me just read you quickly a little bit of this.

This, by the way, is addressing the education and the educational system as it exists today and what it does to the young people who are fed into its gaping maw. That's M-A-W. There is one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of.

Almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative. Did you hear me? Very first line. The one thing a professor can be absolutely certain of.

Almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes, that truth is relative, not absolute. If this belief is put to the test, one can count on the student's reaction. They will be uncomprehending.

If you challenge that and say, no, there are absolutes, they won't get it. I'm gonna skip a little bit here. For them, the relativity of truth is not a theoretical insight, but a moral postulate.

Now think about this. This is meaty stuff. You get to slow down and think about these sentences.

The relativity of truth for these students, for the modern mind, for the modern academic mind, the relativity of truth, that truth is relative, that it floats, that it depends, is not a theoretical insight. It's not a theory. It's not a theoretical insight.

It's not a theory, but a moral postulate. That's critically important. Do you know why the arguments about gay marriage and contraception for preteens and everything else are all up for grabs? Because truth being relative has become a moral issue.

People's morals are built on a floating standard. Truth isn't absolute. You can't say something is absolutely right or absolutely wrong.

It's a moral postulate. It is the condition of a free society. If society is gonna grant freedom to

everyone, then you can't establish absolutes because absolutes are gonna step on somebody's freedom.

That's how they see it. They have been equipped with this framework early on, and it is the modern replacement for the inalienable natural rights that used to be the traditional American grounds for a free society. We used to say freedom is based on the fact that every man is granted by the creator with the inalienable right to freedom, privacy, and property.

The pursuit of happiness. Pursuit of happiness, not happiness. That's what we used to base it on, no more.

Now it's based on this floating idea that truth depends. It's become a moral postulate. It's a moral issue for students, and you can reveal it by their answer if they are challenged.

If you challenge that there ought to be an absolute right and wrong, you're met with disbelief and indignation. Are you an absolutist? That's the only alternative they know. If you challenge this belief, then you're some kind of a absolutist.

Are you a monarchist? Do you really believe in witches? The latter leads into the indignation. For someone who believes in witches might well be a witch hunter or a Salem judge. And they try to turn this around and put you on the defensive, and it's ad hominem.

You're on a witch hunt. If you try to say that there's real right and real wrong, you're a witch hunter. You've set yourself up as a judge.

The danger that they have been taught to fear from absolutism. This is the money quote. If there's nothing else you remember out of this first page, which is just the first page of the first chapter, which is just the first page and chapter in a great book, remember this, this single sentence ought to be on a sign, big sign, billboard.

The danger they have been taught to fear from absolutism. That's us, by the way. By biblical standards are absolute.

Modern youth, modern students have been taught to fear absolutism. The danger in it is not error. It's not that, well, your absolute might be wrong.

That's not the danger. The danger they have been taught to fear from absolutism is not error, but intolerance. As soon as they hear that there are absolutes, the alarm bell goes off, intolerance, intolerance, intolerance.

That's the danger. If there's ever a non-floating standard, if there's a fixed standard, well, that breeds intolerance. Relativism is necessary to open-mindedness, they think.

And this is the virtue, the only virtue, which all primary education for more than 50 years has dedicated itself to inculcating, open-mindedness. That's the only virtue. If you want to be virtuous, be open-minded.

Openness and the relativism that makes it the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and various ways of life and kinds of human beings, your variations and preferences. Openness is the great insight of our times. Open-mindedness is the great virtue of our times.

The true believer is the real danger. That's you, by the way. The true believer is the real danger.

The study of history and of culture teaches that all the world was mad in the past. Men always thought they were right and that led to wars, persecutions, slavery, xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism. And you could add now, this was written 25 years ago, you could add homophobia.

The point is not to correct the mistakes and really be right, rather, it is not to think you are right at all. The answer to the world's problems is not to figure out what's right and get rid of what's wrong. The answer is to decide nobody's right and therefore nothing should be fixed.

Students, of course, cannot defend their opinion. He's got a whole paragraph on their indoctrination. Every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs the curriculum.

It wants to produce a certain kind of human being. This intention is more or less explicit, more or less a result of reflection, but even the neutral subjects like reading and writing and arithmetic take their place in a vision of the educated person. In some nations, the goal was the pious person, in others, the warlike, in others, the industrious.

Always important is the political regime, which needs citizens who are in accord with its fundamental principle. Aristocracies want gentlemen, oligarchies, men who respect and pursue money, democracies, lovers of equality. Democratic education, whether admits it or not, wants and needs to produce men and women who have the tastes, knowledge, and character supportive of a democratic regime.

Over the history of our republic, there have obviously been changes of opinion as to what kind of man is best for our regime. And he goes and discusses that for a little bit. I'll give you one final little excerpt here.

The insatiable appetite for freedom, to live as one pleases, thrives on this aspect of modern democratic thought. In the end, it begins to appear that full freedom can be attained only when there is no such knowledge of right and wrong at all. The effective way to defang the oppressors is to persuade them that they are ignorant of the good.

The inflamed sensitivity induced by radicalized democratic theory finally experiences any limit as arbitrary and tyrannical. There are no absolutes. Freedom is absolute.

Of course, the result is that on the one hand, the argument justifying freedom disappears, and on the other, all beliefs begin to have the attenuated character that was initially supposed to be limited to religious belief. Well, there's a lot more in here that is really good, but I will commend it to your attention, recommend it to your spare time reading. That first chapter is called

Introduction, Our Virtue, and just read that, if nothing else.

You may not have time to read the whole book, but read that chapter. It will enlighten and inform your understanding of everything that is going on in the world around us right now today, especially kids in higher education, going to college, final years of high school. This will tell you why they are being told what they're being told, why they are being treated the way they are treated, why kids are acting the way they act and saying what they say and doing what they do.

It is all in this handful of pages, very succinctly and intelligently expressed. The upshot of that, the application of it, the reason I bring it up is this. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, there's no such thing as a wicked way.

You cannot do step three if you do not know what a wicked way is. These things are absolute. God is not open-minded about whether or not we are humble.

God is not open-minded about whether or not we seek his face or whether or not we pray. God is not open-minded about whether or not we turn from our wicked ways. Every single one of those steps that will make the lesson of Solomon pertinent and meaningful and have it make a difference in our lives, every single one of those is based on an absolute.

There is an absolute need. There is an absolute eternal future. There is an absolutist God in heaven who has an absolute standard of righteousness and will absolutely judge us, absolutely.

God is not open-minded on this point. God is not interested in granting everybody freedom to indulge the appetites of carnal flesh. He's not open to it.

He's not interested in it. He doesn't support it. He will not tolerate it because he is intolerant.

God is intolerant. Tolerance of evil is not a virtue. I will say again, everybody touts tolerance.

Tolerance has its place. We live and let live in many ways, but we do not tolerate evil. And that intolerance has to begin in our own soul.

We have no business being intolerant of evil lifestyles and evil people if we are tolerant of our own evils, our own lifestyle foibles and flaws and failures. This verse in 2 Chronicles 7.14 needs to inform every single day. Am I humbling myself? Am I actually seeking the face of God? Am I praying for insight and wisdom? Show me, try me, see if there is a wicked way in me.

And when we find it, when it's identified, when God answers our prayer and reveals it, turn, make a change, do whatever it takes. People that succeed in whatever they are shooting for, better skill, losing weight, greater endurance, whatever it might be, you succeed because you persevere, because you're dedicated, because you do not give up. Turn from those ways.

God says, I will turn. I will heal, I will restore, I will bless, I will lift up, I will make whole. That's

the basic foundation underneath our life as believers.

And if we could even glimpse the eternal weight of glory that rests on these seemingly insignificant daily decisions, we would be so motivated. And that's what the Word of God does. It gives us that glimpse.

It gives us that tangibility, that reality. And we have to have exposure to the Word of God that does that for us. Many, many, many good pastors, teachers, preachers, sources, find one, find two, find five, find as many as you can, but ensure that the Word of God is coming in brutal living contact with our souls.

We have to do that. If we're not motivated, we're not in touch with the Word of God. If you're a believer and you come in contact with the Word of God, that thing is living and powerful, and it's a sword.

It's going to do something. It's either going to flat side you on the rear end and say, get moving, or it's going to pierce to the dividing asunder. But we cannot stand still in the presence of the sword of the Spirit.

You cannot stand still. So it's a lesson. You look at Solomon and you think, what more could the man have been given than what he was given? What bigger opportunity could he have had? And look at the dismal, abysmal, catastrophic failure at the end of his life.

And as I said at the beginning of this lesson and the end of the previous one, it doesn't just affect him. He destroys the kingdom. One man's failure, the kingdom is destroyed.

One man's failure, families, brotherhoods, businesses are split, torn asunder. There is going to be bloodshed. There's going to be devastation.

There's going to be weakness. There's going to be incursion from the outside. And it's Solomon's fault.

If we fail in this, we devastate our families. We devastate those close to us. We hurt anything we're associated with.

We become a curse by association instead of a blessing. It's not just, well, let me do what I want to do. It's just me.

We are all interconnected. We are a body. And one squamous, malignant cancer cell isn't just going to sit there and not infect anything else.

That's why those have to be cut out. And that's why there is a sin unto death. Well, a little bit of a warning note at the end of this one, but you can't help it.

You can't look at Solomon and not be chastened and think, if a guy like that can squander his opportunities, what about me? We're all made out of the same clay. Let's close here in a word of

prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for these powerful examples that have been recorded for us to encourage us, to correct and instruct us, to give us insight and wisdom in the same way that you granted it to the men of old. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will use these things to grow in us that fruit of love and joy and peace, patience, endurance, our gentleness and goodness, our faith, our humility, and our self-control so that our lives will truly be pleasing in your sight, will grow to produce a hundredfold, and will equip us and make us ready to serve even in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name.