

Proverbs 22-08-31b

Let's pick up our study now in Proverbs chapter 1 and we have seen the appeal that God's wisdom makes publicly, creating a point of choice, offering an option. There are those who choose it and there are those who disregard it. Disregarding it is literally fatal, it is fatal.

I will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your terror comes. You can put a marker here in Proverbs 1 or you know about where it is if you want to return to it.

But turn back a book to Psalm 2. This is perhaps the most famous occurrence of this verb. And the word means to celebrate, to rejoice, to be entertained or satisfied at the outcome of something. And in Psalm 2, why do the nation's rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.

Not enough emphasis is given to this phase of the Psalm before you get to verse 4. Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. This is the Lord and His anointed. We want Him gone.

We want His influence to vanish. This is the Pharisees plotting to kill the Lord Jesus after He has demonstrated that He is the Lord of life by raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11. The response of the leadership in and around Jerusalem is this guy can raise the dead.

Let's kill him and the guy he raised from the dead. This is the attitude. It is intransigent.

It is rebellious. It is unyielding, unbending, unrepentant. It does not respond to rebuke.

It scoffs, mocks and derides God and His anointed, His wisdom, His way, His plan, His purpose, His character. There are people who understand God's character and despise it. Satan himself.

Do you think Satan doesn't know the character of God? And he hates him, hates him. Will never repent, never reconcile, never humble himself. He is utterly and totally dedicated to opposing himself against anything related to God.

Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. This is our verb.

The Lord shall hold them in derision. When it says hold them in derision, this is the same word we find in Proverbs 1, 26. Laugh and mock when your terror comes.

These are the same two words to mock, to hold in derision. And who mocked first, who derided first, who was insensitive and oppositional and hostile first. God didn't decide to

hate these people.

God sent His wisdom into the open square. The choice came before the fate. The choice to laugh at God and mock and deride and reject and rebel came first.

God's judgment is in response to that choice. And a part of that judgment is to return on their own heads the attitude that they sent out. It's a boomerang.

It is a result of human choice. This is God's policy. You laugh at me when I am trying to save you.

I extend my hand. I extend my grace. I offer the life of my son on your behalf, my anointed.

I make the beneficent rule of David in the day that this was written available. You can enter into a peaceable and happy relationship with God's people. You can be Hiram, king of Tyre.

You can be a friend to the people. You can be those who were close to David and stuck with him. You remember the Philistines that stuck with him even in the Absalom rebellion? His personal bodyguard stuck with him the whole time.

They made a choice. They recognized that David was associated with God. They accepted God and the David who worshiped God.

Others had the exact opposite response. And you have to understand the cause to not think that God is just an ogre, as so many people do today. They think the God of the Old Testament is just a self-centered, egregious, worship-demanding ogre.

And anybody that doesn't bend to his will, he mocks and laughs and squashes them. That can't be the real God. That can't be the creator.

It can't be the God that Jesus came and represented on this earth. Therefore, the Old Testament is fables, fairies, feeble human attempts to try to describe a God they didn't understand. And we can throw it out.

Sorry, no. Psalm 2, 4. Turn to Psalm 52. I'm just giving a sample.

These are just representative. If we went to every passage, we'd be here till tomorrow. Psalm 52, and we're looking for verse 6. Why do you boast in evil? This is Psalm 52, 1. Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually.

Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah.

Just reflect on that for a minute. Think about examples that you observe in your

experience. You love all devouring words, O deceitful tongue.

God shall likewise destroy you forever. See the likewise there? That's the boomerang. That is the returning of the consequences of that choice.

He shall take you away and pluck you out of your dwelling place and uproot you from the land of the living. Selah. You look at the first part, someone makes a choice.

They're working that deceitful, razor sharp tongue and delighting in it, loving evil more than good, making a choice that becomes a pattern, that becomes a lifestyle, that becomes entrenched. God is going to respond. Think about that for a while.

The righteous also shall see and fear and shall laugh at this wicked man, saying, here is a man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in his wickedness. But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.

I will praise you forever because you have done it. And in the presence of your saints, I will wait on your name for it is good. You want to know where Solomon learned the wisdom contained in this chapter of Proverbs from his father, David, who wrote many of these Psalms.

David wrote Psalm 2 for sure. And this is a contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul and said, David has gone to the house of Ahimelech. You remember the result of that? The evil that resulted when the priests were wiped out to all but the last man.

That's why the righteous will laugh when judgment comes upon these destructive, malignant, metastasizing, cancerous individuals who oppose themselves against God and everything God represents, stands for, and is accomplishing in his plan and purpose. Turn a few pages forward to Psalm 59, verse 8. Don't get any of the rest of these down. Be sure and get Psalm 59.

This is another miktam of David in response to circumstance, just like 52. This is when Saul sent men and watched the house in order to kill him. Deliver me from my enemies, O my God, defend me from those who rise up against me, deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloodthirsty men, for look, they lie in wait for my life.

Remember the admonition that the father and the mother gave earlier in Proverbs 1, my son, when sinners entice thee, consent thou not, they lie in wait. Surely the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird, so they hide themselves, they use subterfuge and deceit, and they fool people. They lie in wait for my life, the mighty gather against me, not for my transgression or for my sin, O Lord, they run and prepare themselves through no fault of mine.

They hate knowledge, knowledge of the truth. They hate God and anyone who reminds them of him. Awake to help me and behold, you, therefore, O Lord, God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to punish all the nations, do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors, does it seem harsh? Not if you observe the cause and the repeated rejection of God's grace, God's truth, those who speak it, those who live it, those who are anxious for others to share in it, are victimized, trampled, oppressed, persecuted, hounded.

At evening, they return, they growl like a dog, verse six, all go around the city. They belch with their mouth, swords are in their lips. They say, who hears? There is no retributive justice.

There is no God who is going to come back on me. I am free to do what I wish, but you, O Lord, shall laugh at them. You shall have all the nations in derision.

Same words we saw in Psalm 2, 4, the same words that are found in our Proverbs passage, you will laugh. You will hold them in derision and they deserve it. They have brought this down on their own heads.

Remember the people in the crowd when Pilate was trying to set Jesus free and they, they said, Pilate washed his hands and said, I don't want this guy's blood on my hands, this is where we get the phrase. And the people said, let his blood be on us and on our children. Because they didn't think that meant anything.

They didn't actually believe that they would be accountable for an innocent man's blood when they said this. Who sees, who hears? The wicked take God not into account at all. If they did, they would turn at his rebuke.

They would get with the program. They would get on the right side of God's character and enjoy his manifold grace, the expression of his love. He loved the world enough to send his son to die.

There is no greater love. And to mock it, to spurn it, to make fun of it, to go your own way, to join in the attitude of Satan and the fallen angels, there is nothing worse that you can do. So is God going to laugh at your puny notions of your own power and your own rightness? God's going to mock that.

He is going to laugh at that. Who do you think you are? Do you really think this is going to end well? How foolish, how simple are you? And how long are you going to be in love with your own simplicity? Turn at my rebuke. Repeated opportunities, no turning.

God shuts the door of the ark and the flood starts coming. People who in desperation start knocking on the sides and on the door. God's going to say, where were you? And he's going to laugh.

Why would someone laugh? And again, laugh is a little bit harsh. This word laugh means

to celebrate. Remember when the people sat down to eat and rose up to play? It's the same word.

When Samson was grinding in his blindness and his hair grew back out and they said, bring Samson so that we can be entertained. It's the same word. And think about being a Philistine.

You had this strong man under the power of God who made a mockery of them, tying fox's tails together with firebrands and burning their fields and defeating all of their attempts to overcome him. They enjoyed a temporary success. They captured him.

They cut his hair. Delilah cut his hair and they captured him and they bound him and then they had him grinding. And so in their mind, this is vindication.

We were right and he is wrong. Bring him out so that we can be confirmed in our belief. This justifies and vindicates, we knew we were right all along this, this Samson thought he was something, but he's nothing.

Bring him out so that we can see our version of the truth. That's what laugh means. It's used in the passage.

Bring Samson forth that we may be entertained, that we may laugh, that we may be confirmed in our version of the truth. There's nothing wrong with being confirmed in your version of the truth. If your version is God's version, what's sad is when you have made up a truth that doesn't comport with God's truth.

And if you're laughing in that, God is going to laugh back. And those who are righteous and who partake of God's truth are going to also feel a sense of vindication and satisfaction that the scales are righted. When the oppressors who have inflicted such pain on the helpless are now themselves receiving the fruit of that, there is a sense of vindication.

Remember the souls under the altar in Revelation? How long, O Lord, are these who oppressed us and took our lives going to walk the earth, you know, flowery beds of ease? And when God brings forth judgment on them, there is vindication. There is satisfaction. There is a sense that God's truth really is God's truth.

God's promises really are solid. His justice really is going to prevail. And that satisfaction is what is in view.

It's not satisfaction in someone else's pain. It is satisfaction in the implementation of righteousness and justice that appeals to someone who is righteous. It appeals to God to not allow sin to go unrestrained, unopposed and unjudged.

The pleasures of sin can be enjoyed for a season, but there is satisfaction when the

world is put right, when justice is implemented and evil, this heinous form of evil is stopped in its tracks and forced to face the consequences of its folly. If you can inject all of that into the word laugh, it is satisfaction that what you believe to be right is demonstrated as true. Think of the Philistines believing their truth about Samson until they hear creaking noises in the rafters.

That was a short-lived celebration. Do you think Samson was smiling when the roof came down? That's the last laugh. Vindication.

Justification. That's what's in view here. Other passages, if you flip backward to Job chapter 41, you remember the 40s is when God appears and in Job 41, can you draw out Leviathan with a hook or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Can you put a reed through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? Will he make many supplications to you? Will he speak softly to you? Will he make a covenant with you? Will you take him as a servant forever? Will you play with him as with a bird or will you leash him for your maidens? Are you going to make a pet for your kids out of Leviathan? When it says, will you play with him? That's our word.

Will you entertain yourself? Will you feel like all is right and all is well when this overwhelmingly powerful, untameable beast, you know, do you think you're going to make a plaything out of him? Do you think that you're just going to be calm with him in your house and your little four-year-old daughters leading around on a leash? You really think that's going to work? That word play, that's our word. As we get back toward Proverbs, turn to Proverbs chapter 8 and verse 30. It's tough to get our mind around some of these ancient Hebrew words unless you see them used in their context.

Proverbs 8, the Lord possessed wisdom at the beginning of his way. And there's a description beginning in verse 22 of creation. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, wisdom was brought forth in verse 25, as yet he had not made the earth or the fields or the primal dust of the world, when he prepared the heavens, verse 27 of Proverbs 8, when God prepared the heavens, I was there.

When he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit so that the waters would not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him as a master craftsman and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in his inhabited world. And my delight was with the sons of men. Our word laugh is right there, laughing always before him, rejoicing in the rightness and the fulfillment of God's character, God's plan, God's purpose.

Wisdom is laughing, not at the subjugation or the judging of others. Wisdom laughs and those who partake of wisdom, the righteous, laugh when they see the fulfillment and implementation of God's character, God's power, God's plan, and God's purpose, that's where the joy comes from. God has handled it.

God has contained it. God will eventually eliminate this evil and this recalcitrant, unrepentant, unresponsive, unappreciative, ungrateful. This is where we get the word ingrate.

You ingrate, the core of evil is often ingratitude and wisdom revels. That is actually a pretty good translation of this word to revel in something. And in this case, it is legitimate to revel in the putting right of what has been egregiously wrong.

So that's our word. Wisdom will laugh when what happens? Calamity and terror. Calamity and terror.

What is this? This is a total loss of confidence. This is a complete eradication of former arrogance. When people suffer a calamity, you don't see them prancing.

You don't see them being arrogant and dismissive and looking down their nose at others when they lose everything they have. It's pretty hard to strut and lord it over others when you've lost it all. Think the rich man and Lazarus.

When he had his sumptuous house, he could ignore Lazarus. But when he's down there in the flame, he's ready for Lazarus to come and touch his tongue with a wet finger, right? One drop of water to cool my tongue. He is no longer insensitive, dismissive, self-centered, calamity, and terror.

This word for terror is literally, it means that something has crashed into ruins, something that crashes into ruins. Remember Matthew chapter seven, the man who builds his house on the rock and the man who builds his house on the sand. It's Matthew 7, 26 and 27.

A foolish man built his house on the sand. And when calamity came, when the storm came, the whirlwind came, that house crashed into ruins and great was the fall of it. But it's vindication.

You shouldn't build your house on sand. And in recent weeks and months, I've been thinking about people who want to granularize the rock of God's word. They want to break up the rock of salvation, which is Christ.

They want to break it into smaller pieces and just choose the pieces that they like. If you break up a rock into little pieces, it's sand. You're building your house on sand.

If you build it on the rock, you got to find what, you know, very few rocks are perfectly flat. Most of them are uneven. You've got to adapt your house, you know, prop up this corner, extend this one, find a way to adapt the shape of your house to the rock, then it's going to stand.

But if you decide you're going to adapt the rock to your house and you granularize it,

you just made sand. Anyway, this calamity and disaster comes, and that is the point at which and notice it is inevitable that it will come. There are those, there are none who escape.

There are those who think, you know, nothing bad's ever going to happen to me. She doesn't say if it comes, she says when it comes. It is going to come.

The storm will come. Your house is going to be dashed into pieces and flinders. It is going to crash into ruins.

When it comes, your terror comes like a storm and your destruction comes like a whirlwind. When distress and anguish come upon you, then they will call on me, but I will not answer. Very same word.

I called on them and they did not answer. They disregarded. They did not turn in my rebuke.

They disregarded my outstretched hand. So guess what? What does the Bible say about this kind of thing? First Samuel chapter 18 verse 8. First Samuel 18 verse 8. You will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves. Remember, give us a king.

Samuel said, speaking for God, I thought I was your king. No, we want to be like the nations. Give us a king.

And he said, this is what your king is going to do. And you will cry out after he taxes you and he conscripts you and he oppresses you and he impoverishes you. You will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves.

And the Lord will not hear you in that day. You didn't listen when you started agitating for a king. You didn't listen to the wisdom of God.

God says, fine. I'll give you a king. But the day is going to come when you wish you didn't have that king.

And when you call out to me, I will not listen. Job 27 verse 9. You have to look for the context on this. But there is a time when someone will cry out to God.

Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? The answer is no. You disregard God in the time of opportunity. When trouble comes, God will not listen.

Now, this is harsh. And if we're going to enter into the thinking of God, you have to firm up a little bit. If you do not respect the way God has set up the world and when people make bad choices and then you try to jump in there and stop the consequences, you do not allow natural consequences, divine consequences.

You're trying to run interference. You're trying to, oh, my son got drunk and did all kinds of heinous things and got locked up. I will go down and bail him out.

My beloved X, Y, or Z person did this. Consequences are on their head. I've got to go fix that.

I've got to prevent consequences. There are examples in public life today where you can look at a father and son combination where somebody does heinous things and they are protected. They are shielded.

The consequences are ameliorated. Dozens of examples. Look all around the world.

Look in the Word of God. Now, look at the wicked kings in Judah and in Israel where fathers look at David's own family. David did not implement consequences for his sons like he should have.

And evil did not depart from his house by God's command. Absalom as the prominent example there. Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? If God does not respond to the call of those who bring destruction down on their own heads.

Do you really want to think differently than God? Do you want to act differently than God? Do you want to try to thwart the cause and effect that God has built into the world? I mentioned that there are two things in the first session that are evident in this passage. One is when wisdom extends her hand. This is the grace of God.

The proactive intervention of God in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He didn't have to die. God didn't have to do anything.

He could have left us wallowing in the mire. God proactively sent a positive deliverance to us. Well, here's the second thing.

God proactively withholds deliverance from those who reject it when it has been on offer over and over and over again. When people harden their hearts and then they're crying out because they want the pain to stop. That is not the same as recognizing that I made a mistake when I rejected God, his word, his will, his wisdom, his salvation, his anointed.

They're not repenting of that. Remember Pharaoh? Moses, Moses, appeal to your God. Make this darkness stop.

Make these flies go away. Stop the lice. Stop the boils.

Stop the plagues. Did Pharaoh then turn and say there truly is a God in Israel? I want to worship him. Let me destroy all of these idols and Horus and On and Isis and all the rest of this stuff we've got.

Oh no, I want the God of Israel. He appealed just long enough to make the pain stop. But

he had not changed.

He had already hardened his heart toward God. And God sent all of the plagues and ultimately destroyed Pharaoh and his army and the entire nation's economy on behalf of his people. If Israel had gone in and said, oh, let's stay here.

We'll be slaves and help you rebuild your judged nation. You think that was the will of God? It was God's will that they be judged and his people be separated. They will call on me, but I will not answer.

Job 35 verse 12. There they cry out, but he does not answer because of the pride of evil men. If their pride is not broken, if they do not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, you are an accessory after the fact.

You are an enabler to evil. You are an enabler to sin. When you help someone who is suffering the consequences of rejecting God, his word, his will, his way, and you intervene.

You have put yourself on the opposite side of the field. You're in the enemy's camp. You're in the opponent's locker room.

You've gone over to the stands. Now in the Army-Navy game, the president will come and sit on the Navy side for one half and the Army side for the other half so that he's supposedly being objective. I always thought that was funny when Jimmy Carter did it because he was a Naval Academy graduate.

Can you imagine he's actually going to be rooting for West Point? I don't think so. Whatever else you want to say about Jimmy, he's loyal to the Academy. But to actively go over to the other side, you know, we have a name for this in the real world.

It's called treason. When you betray, this is Judas behavior. When you go over to the other side, you help the opposition.

If you don't understand the consequences that God has built in and if someone is ever going to turn, they have to be turned by the hard knock of these consequences. This is God's last effort. God not only built grace and salvation and the extended hand into the world.

He also built the dire, calamitous consequences of rejecting him. And there are people who do not turn until they slam against the granite of God's justice and it suddenly wakes them up. Others don't, but there are some who do.

But if you throw a cushion under them just before they hit the granite, you're interfering in the perfection of God's way and God's plan. You're slowing the process down and you're actually hindering and muddying the water over and over again. Psalm 1841, they

cry out, but there is none to save even to the Lord.

But he did not answer them. There's a reason God does not answer when people call out because they're not calling out for the right reason. We're not smart enough to know when someone's heart has actually changed.

We will know when God knows and when they change their mind about God and they have a genuine interest when they are ready to reach out and grab wisdom's hand. You'll know if they're just calling out for deliverance because of pain. Anything you do to ameliorate that, you are helping.

What do they call that? You're enabling. There's another word for it. It's not exactly codependent, but you're facilitating and you are actually an accessory to the pain and the evil and the hardship that that person represents over.

And I mean, Scripture doesn't just say this a few times. Isaiah 115, when you spread out your hands, God says, I will hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear.

Why? Your hands are full of blood. Why didn't you wash your hands? There is a fountain for cleansing. God provided a way for those hands to be clean.

They're calling out to God and he's not answering. Why? Your hands are full of blood. You didn't wash your hands, even if you are guilty of shedding blood before you come to God.

You've got to say this blood is wrong. And if you're holding out bloody hands to God, you're saying, I want you to accept me as I am in my unrepentant state. You're just Pharaoh.

Make the pain stop, God. But I don't see anything wrong with this blood on my hands. That's Isaiah 115, Jeremiah 11, 11.

Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them, which they will not be able to escape. And though they cry out to me, I will not listen to them. You got to look at the context to find out why God is bringing that judgment.

But it's consistent with everything else we've seen. Jeremiah 14, 12, When they fast, I will not hear their cry. When they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them.

I will consume them by the sword, by the famine and by the pestilence. There is a time of no further mercy because any turning is shallow. It is superficial.

It is for the wrong reasons. It is just to stop the pain, not a genuine interest in God and the things of God. Ezekiel 8, verse 18.

God says, and you got to read the context, I will act in fury. My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity. And though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.

Micah, chapter three, verse four. They will cry to the Lord, but he will not hear them. He will even hide his face from them at that time.

Why? Because they have been evil in their deeds. Unrepentant evil. Evil people will cry out for relief.

And God will not hear them. Zachariah, chapter seven, verse 13. Therefore, it happened that just as he proclaimed and they would not hear this.

This is the bookend for our Proverbs passage. It happened just as God proclaimed and they would not hear. So they called out and I would not listen, says the Lord of hosts.

You don't listen to me. In the day of opportunity, the day of grace, I will not listen to you. So it seems harsh, it seems insensitive, it seems uncaring.

God front loaded his love and his care by sending his anointed, by sending his only begotten son to die for the sins of the world, he sent his grace to Israel in the Old Testament in the form of a means of reconciliation, a means of redemption, a means of cleansing, a means to have your sins covered, a means of understanding the creator God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to enter into a relationship with him. God provided it all. People snapped their fingers and went about their own business.

And then when the inevitable consequences that God also built into the universe occur, oh, now they're ready for the pain to stop, but they are not genuinely turning in almost all cases. And this is why when they cry out, God turns a deaf ear. And they call it in that day, I will not hear.

This is the God of heaven. This is the standard of righteousness, which we need to understand and respect. There is a time to extend mercy, to do good to those who hate us, to pray for those who spitefully use us, but we have to have discernment.

It is not always time to lend a helping hand to someone who has brought the righteous judgment of God down on their own heads with an unrepentant, unheeding heart. How do you know when that's the case? Are they looking for God? Are they asking and seeking and knocking? Are they amenable to his truth? They're ready for your help, but do they still hate knowledge? If they hate knowledge, if they're uninterested in understanding why this happened, if they are not willing to turn and start listening to knowledge, your help is making you an enemy of God and an opposition player. Look closely at attitude toward God, unless their heart has turned in the direction of God and his wisdom, unless they are reaching for that hand.

If you interfere, you are going to share that judgment. It will come down on you just like

it comes down on them. Touch not the unclean thing, hate the garment spotted by the flesh, come out from among them and be ye separate.

What fellowship has light with darkness? The only time we have fellowship is if someone is looking for the light and that light of God is reflecting off of us and we can be a means, we can speak the truth and love, we can be a means of God's mercy. But to whom does God extend his mercy? Not to anyone in pain, not to anyone under judgment, not to anyone suffering consequences. And if we are indiscriminate, we don't have God's truth either.

And we're going to share in their judgment and we'll come into some of our own because we're not listening to wisdom and we're not responding to the truth of God's word and the prompting of God's spirit for which we are accountable in this age as never before. So sober words, something to reflect on. Selah.

We'll pick up our study at the end of the chapter. We got everything except verse 33. The turning away of the simple will slay them and the complacency of fools will destroy them.

It is a fatal mistake to be apathetic and indifferent to God. But whoever listens to me will dwell safely and will be secure. I've got a whole list of passages that also affirm this positive truth.

I was hoping to finish on a high note, but I ran myself out of time. So we'll look at it first thing next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the insight and the perspective that transcends this world, transcends the shortcomings of our nature, our perceptions, our human ideas of how things are and how they should be. We pray that as we reflect that your Holy Spirit will give us that understanding that will guide our actions, guide our words, and enable us to be true beacons of light to those who are looking for it, who are willing to turn toward it, and that you can use us to be instruments of that salvation that comes fully and truly through the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name.

Amen.