

Proverbs 23-11-08b

We're ready now to pick up our study here, and I want to emphasize what the passage emphasizes, and it's not immediately evident. You might've missed it when we read it at the beginning of the first session, but there is a key here in this passage that distinguishes this wisdom, these words, from what you hear out on the economy. So if you take, for example, somebody that posts aphorisms on Facebook, and I'm gonna pick on somebody here.

If you put yourself on Facebook and just start posting aphorisms left and right, then I feel like it's okay to quote you for that. So this is a guy named Benjamin Cramer, C-R-E-M-E-R. He's a nice guy.

He's a believer. I think he means extremely well, and he's got a prolific Facebook stream, but it is an example that if it isn't balanced, could be problematic in my view. And I'm just picking on him because he is a guy that posts a lot of what I would call aphoristic or quotable quote, refrigerator magnet, air freshener on your mirror, kinds of little sayings.

And I don't mean to be disrespectful or unfair to him, but I just found in his feed or whatever you call it, a lot of examples of what I'm talking about. So this is the kind of thing, as an example, this was posted six hours ago. Christianity should sound like, quote, the world is full of neighbors to be loved, not quote, the world is full of enemies to be conquered.

Okay. Christianity should sound like, the world is full of neighbors to be loved, not the world is full of enemies to be conquered. Okay, this I think is probably true, right? And so you put that out there and our Christian faith should embrace love and not opposition and conflict and conquest.

He quotes Algeus Huxley, not the world's most noted Christian philosopher, but Algeus Huxley, the purpose of propaganda is to make one set of people forget that other sets of people are human. Okay. Benjamin Kramer put a little thing together.

Jesus said, peacemakers would be known as the children of God, not the fear mongers, not the authoritarians, not the gatekeepers, not those who see their religion as a war against the world. He said, blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God. Wherever there is peace being made, there are the children of God at work.

The moment we Christians start looking for an authoritarian structure, a strong man to lead us is the moment we stopped looking for the one who leads us by washing feet, who rides a donkey instead of a war horse, and who tells his followers to put away their swords and take up their crosses instead. These are brief examples. There is a proliferation.

There is a cornucopia. There is a vast exponentially increasing shrub field of these sayings and aphorisms and pithy quotes. And you can say, well, isn't that true though? Shouldn't there be love? Shouldn't Christians be known, Jesus say? Here's the problem.

In these examples I just read, and I could scroll down here and read you 15 or 20 more, you have what I would call the ought to be's. Christianity ought to be known as a religion that looks for neighbors to be loved and not enemies to be conquered. We ought to be looking to the one who leads us, the Lord Jesus, rather than an authoritarian strongman.

What he's indirectly referring to is political. The evangelical vote for Mr. Trump is caricatured by people of a different persuasion as being you're looking to this candidate to be the savior of the culture, savior of the nation, savior of the economy, savior of our foreign policy, whatever else it might be. And this is a gentle nudge without naming names that believers ought to be looking for the path of humility and non-confrontation and non-violence and therefore voting for people who talk about, peace and safety right before destruction comes upon them or whatever.

But here's my point. Anywhere you look, if you read Facebook very long, you will start finding these strings of quotes from everybody from Mother Teresa to Martin Luther King to name your source of quotes. And some of them are Christian professors and authors and A.W. Tozer or N.T. Wright are virtual minds from which quotes are brought out by the truckload.

Fine, you can take those for whatever their value is, but what I have noticed about these quotes is something that is present in our Proverbs 12 passage and absent in these and in many other exhortational presentations by people. These people are speaking, right? They're communicating, they are vexed, they are angered in some cases, they are annoyed, they are made sorrowful by looking at the world around them and saying, it ought not to be so. It ought to be this way, it ought not to be the way it is.

So I call these the ought to be observations, the ought to be quotes. We ought to be living by the Sermon on the Mount, right? We ought to be following the Jesus who rides a donkey. This last one I read you, we are looking for an authoritarian strongman and the moment we Christians start looking for this authoritarian strongman to lead us, that is the moment we stop looking for the one, capital O, who leads by washing feet, riding a donkey instead of a war horse and tells his followers to put away their swords and take up their crosses instead.

Okay, we ought to be looking to the humility and the nonviolence and the taking up the cross instead of trying to crucify somebody else. Fine, here's my question. When somebody hits you with an ought to be, my question is, and our question should be, how do you propose to bring this about? Are you relying on simply pointing out the problem and people saying, oh, yeah, I think that's true.

I think it ought to be that way. Let's all get together and make that happen. Always ask the question, how? How do I do this? These things that you see, authoritarianism and selfishness and violence and scrapping and conflict and greed and oppression and whatever else you wanna say, where do those come from? Well, it isn't inherent in a governmental structure.

It's the people who inhabit that structure, right? Whether it's the Caesar or the King or the office holders in a quote, unquote, democratic form of government. And where in those people do these things come from? Whence cometh strife and division? Whence cometh selfishness and partisanship? And I'm in this camp and you're in that camp. You go read 1 Corinthians.

These are problems in the human heart, right? And so you make an appeal with these ought to be's and you say, you ought to be different. People ought to be different. I call for ceasefire now.

I call for humanitarian pause now. I call for release of the hostages now. I call for a cessation of hostilities and violence and attack and conflict and bombing and shooting and little children dying and hospitals being incinerated and turned to gravel and so on.

I call for a halt now. We'll all get out in the street and we'll do it in crowds. We'll wave signs.

We'll yell through bullhorns. Did you see, by the way, where somebody yelling through a bullhorn about the plight of the Palestinians and how they are victims of violence and it's unfair and unjust? Saw a 70-year-old man waving an Israeli flag, went over and bashed him in the head with his megaphone and killed him. Killed him in the name of ending violence, in the name of speaking up for those who want to live from the river to the sea and they feel the only way they can do that is by violence.

And I'm siding with them and saying, stop the violence against these who want to violently end the people they're opposed to. And so he comes over and smashes the guy in the head with his megaphone, his speaking device and killed him. He died on the spot with his Israeli flag in his hand.

Speech. If things ought to be different, how? Where is the power to make them different? Where is the power to change human hearts? Well, guess what? I don't have the power to change a single human heart regardless of whether I agree with them or not, whether we are politically aligned or politically opposed, whether we are socially the same or socially different, whether we are ethnically or morally on the same page or quite different. I only have the ability to effect change in one human heart and that is my own.

And I don't have the power to change my own human heart. I do not have the power to bridle my own tongue. I do not have the power to be the Arum instead of the Awil, to be

the wise, the shrewd, the prudent, instead of the fool, the disappoints and causes harm.

I don't have the power to turn myself from a fool into a wise man, but we have access. We have been granted access to that power and we can have that power act on us and change us. There is a way.

We've seen it in our Sunday study in 1 Timothy. Where does self-control come from? Where does love come from? What the world needs now is love, love, love. Dionne Warwick sang that back in the 60s.

John Lennon sang, all you need is love. Sitting in the bed with Yoko, all you need is love. Give peace a chance.

I think that's actually what he was singing in the bed. I think the Beatles put out, all you need is love. Great, fine, let's do that.

What's the next step? Everybody just decide to love, decide and will to overcome a fallen, corrupt, sinful, selfish nature? You can't do it. It's impossible. I can't change my own heart, much less change anybody else's.

Well, but what if I post a bunch of pithy aphorisms? What if I point out the problem? What if I effectively draw the contrast and say it shouldn't be this way, it ought to be this way? Fine, great. How do you make that happen? Well, you've got to be a peacemaker. Jesus said, blessed are the peacemakers, so let's all be peacemakers.

Okay, how? Am I just going to walk out there and say, you know, get in the middle of a cat fight and I'm going to resolve it and the cats are not going to just scratch me to ribbons and keep right on going? I'll just cast my pearls out there and the swine will turn into silk purses and love each other. No, they will turn and tear me to pieces. Why? I cannot change their hearts by throwing pearls of wisdom at them.

If they are running in the other way, if they have made themselves into vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, swine heading away, remember the picture, they are leaving and you are throwing pearls beyond them, saying, look at these pearls, come back to the source of the pearls. They turn, they were leaving. But you threw the pearls and now they will turn and tear you to pieces.

You didn't try to feed them the pearls and they didn't like the taste, they were leaving. Let them go. You can't change them.

You cannot alter them. I have a hard enough time with my own heart and Christians in general, believers seeking to live a life that pleases God ought to know that we've got to focus and concentrate on getting this heart inside this ribcage, this soul, this mind changed. God has the power to change it, nobody else does.

I need to get myself changed. That is why when you read this passage, look again at Proverbs 12, the fool's wrath is known immediately in the day at once. And this wrath is a destructive vexation.

His vexation identifies him as a fool. It spills out immediately. It is a prudent man that covers shame, ignominy, embarrassment, personal degradation, personal loss of face, personal loss of reputation and prestige.

How much effect can you have as salt and light if you ruin your personal reputation by foolish vexation? If you strut and fret your hour on the stage, if you are sound and fury, if you are pronouncing judgment on others and how dare they and how can they and look at the injustice, look at the awfulness of this that's going on in the act of expressing this vociferous criticism of others and fault finding of others, you are the fool. That vexation in the day causes shame, self-restraint, self-control. This is a general principle that you can find all kinds of applications for.

You are an employee and a policy comes down that is patently ridiculous. You're in the military and the colonel or the brigadier general comes out with this mindless, goofy, expensive, horrific waste of time, puts an onerous, enormous burden on the enlisted guys and the junior officers have got to make this folly, take place and happen. It's wasteful, it's dangerous, it's stupid, it's expensive.

This guy's going for his meritorious service medal. He wants to be able to have somebody put him in and say, well, General so-and-so or Colonel so-and-so launched this initiative that all of the trash cans would be painted green unless they're for recyclables and then they're gonna be painted pink and there's 2,750 trash cans scattered across an entire region, but this guy's gonna get them painted a particular color because it's gonna help the environment or some numbskull thing. It makes no sense at all.

Well, are you going to open your mouth and point out how stupid that is? Are you going to talk to others? One of the laws of the Navy is take heed what you say of your seniors, be your words spoken softly or plain, lest a bird of the air tell the matter and so shall you hear it again. You will be called up on the carpet. You were overheard, you were quoted, you were seen, you put something in a social media post and it's gonna rain all kinds of fertilizer down on you and on the basis of this, you get a bad fitness report, you're overlooked for promotion and what good did it do? Your criticism did precisely nothing to improve the situation.

So what does the crafty, the shrewd, the prudent man do? He conceals, he covers. This is the same word that is used for covering sin, that an atoning sacrifice covers sin. The idea that it's no longer gonna be made an issue of, it's no longer gonna be an obstacle and a source of division and contention.

Well, what is the other side of this bracket? Remember, we looked at 16 and 17 and then

we looked at 22 and 23. So are you revealing or concealing? Look down at verse 23. A prudent man conceals what he knows, but the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.

What is just inside that? Verse 17, you can speak truth and declare righteousness. A false witness is gonna proclaim deceit. Remember that word for deceit? This is malicious prejudicial action.

This is treacherous. This is subversive. It isn't just, I told a little white lie.

This is harmful. This is from the word Ramah, to throw something in attack mode. Well, what is the inside of that in verse 22? Lying lips are an abomination to whom? To the Lord.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Those who deal truthfully are his delight. The difference between aphorisms and ought to be's, as true as they might be to the superficial gaze, oh, wouldn't it be great? All you need is love, peace.

Let's stop the fighting. Let's release the hostages. Can't we all just sit down and talk? Ignoring the fact that those to whom you are trying to talk are militantly dedicated unto death to the destruction of people they hate.

There's hatred in their heart and no amount of talking, no amount of amelioration or compromise or offering concessions or compromises is never going to sate this intense to the bone hatred of those on the other side. It is a visceral, instinctive, irreconcilable, irreversible, incurable hatred. And you say, oh, let's just sit down.

There is no talking to the swine. All they will do is turn and tear you to pieces. You're trying to give these pearls of peacemaking and these pearls of compromise and policy.

And well, can't we work something out here? This starry-eyed, idealistic notion is fundamentally rooted in the belief that all people are basically good and it's just circumstances that make some act bad. If we could just change the circumstances, these people would just be like you and me. They'd be happy to just have love and joy and peace and all get along.

Somebody has been unjust and unkind and violent to them and they're just responding, they're reacting. This has ever been the case that if we build the peaceable kingdom, everybody that is in it will be peaceable. God himself puts the lie to that by showing what happens during the millennium.

He enforces a peaceable kingdom for 10 centuries and there is an enormous horde of people that can't wait to get out from under it and destroy the camp of the saints and Jerusalem and the kings who dwell in it. Satan is released and that's your Gog Magog rebellion against 10 centuries of perfect government, perfect justice, equitable distribution, provision for all. They're not having it.

The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. It is not just a damaged thing that if you can take away the source of damage, it will heal up and be great. This is the human view of the heart.

It is not God's view. Jeremiah 17, nine is God's view. So here in our passage, the solution to the problem is given.

It is in this package. And once you consider and acknowledge, wouldn't it be great if I was wise and not a fool? Wouldn't it be great if I had self-control and the ability to bridle my tongue instead of letting my foolishness eke out as soon as I get vexed? Wouldn't that be great? Ought it not to be that way? I ought to be wise. I ought to be self-controlled.

I ought to be looking ahead and seeing the outcome of these things and the harm and the damage and the loss of face and the embarrassment and the shame that could result if I can't contain myself well and good. But how? Well, in this package, in the closing section is the answer. And it is the Lord.

And you find this over and over again in these sections of Proverbs. You seldom find a section, these tightly woven and constructed things that don't ultimately take you back to the Lord. Now in the Old Testament, the specifics of His enablement and His strength were not revealed the way they are to us.

We know that this is the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus revealed that in Old Testament days, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit, talking in the Old Testament days, to those who ask Him. Good things to those who ask Him.

Is self-control a good thing? Is love and joy and peace and patience, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, humility, and self-control, are those not good things? The Lord will give good things to those who ask Him. They were available upon request in the Old Testament day. We have the open threshold.

The door has swung wide. The veil has been rent in twain. And with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we have that exponentially more available to us.

How much more responsible are we to avail ourselves of it? But that's what you see here. So in verse 22, these lying lips, this deceit that is maramah, mere ma, from a desire to attack and hurt and push against others, treachery, guile, self-interested harm to others. That's what this word is.

Well, the lips that express this, the heart that harbors this, is an abomination to the Lord, an abomination to the Lord. There is a judgment on this. It isn't just, we've got to hem this in.

We've got to find a human solution to these mere ma people, these treacherous, self-interested, harmful people. We've got to find a way to, let's make peace with them. Let's be peacemakers.

We'll take Jesus' word, blessed are the peacemakers. Let's go make peace with the mere ma types. It's insane.

It is delusional to think that will ever happen. And you can post all the aphorisms you want to Facebook. That situation will not change.

If and only if the power of God gets into my heart, can I be changed and be potentially an agent of change? Because when that light of God's transforming power shines out of me, when the light of God's transforming power shines out of us, those who are seeking change for themselves will be drawn to that light. I need the kind of change that I see has happened in you. Look at how patient you are with injustice, with ingratitude, with dumb policy and dumb instructions and an environment that we have to function within that we can't control.

But look at you. You seem to have not only peace, but even joy. You have a sense of humor and you don't seem too invested in these circumstances.

You don't seem to be worried about the injustice and the wrongness of this. You seem to be able to rise above it. Where does this come from? Where does your inner strength and your inner peace and this abiding joy, where does it come from? They're asking you a reason for the hope that is in you.

That's why we're here. To be salt and light is to be present so that we can have an effect on what we touch. Light has to strike something before you see it, right? There's light traveling through the universe.

There's starlight coming from all different directions. We don't see it until it hits a retina. We don't see the light in this room until it is reflected in some fashion off of the objects in the room.

We are to be light and that light is reflected in how we deal with circumstances, how we handle personal struggle, personal challenge, personal suffering, personal oppression. There is always injustice and unfairness in the world. There is always mistreatment by those who are mirmah and it seems as though they're gonna prevail.

They've got the power. They sit in the authority structure. They are in a position to manipulate and to constrict and to oppress.

And yet somehow you don't seem to be constricted and oppressed. How is that? That's your light. That's your salt.

You're the salt of the earth. You gotta stay salty. You're the light of the world.

You've got to stay lit. Something has to be shining and we don't generate light on our own. We receive light and life from God.

Remember John 1, that life was the light of men. The life that the Lord Jesus lived is the light. And when we live as he lived, our light shines.

They see the good in us and they turn to glorify God because he is the source of that light. That's in the passage. This is the Old Testament and here's the Lord.

How can we have the power? One is the knowledge we know that God sees and God will deal with these unjust people. These lying lips, they're lying. They're taking credit for work I did.

They are ignoring information I gave them and creating danger and creating loss of revenue and creating injustice and oppression. They're lying. They're misrepresenting.

There's no more frustrating thing than having your work appropriated by others and they take credit for it. This is why we have laws against copyright violations and such. But it's hugely frustrating.

It's vexing. But we stopper that vexation and go to God and let him deal with it. And that is why we can say lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.

Do you think the Lord is going to abide abomination for very long? He sees it. He knows it. It is an abomination in his sight and in his time, in his way and at the appropriate judgment, he is going to deal with it.

And I don't want to be standing anywhere near it when he does. I want to be Noah in the ark when the flood comes. I want to be Israel in Goshen when the plagues come.

I want to be in the cleft of the rock covered with his hand when his justice and vengeance deals with the abominations of this world. I want to ensure that I do not qualify for any part of that judgment, that I have no part or party to that abomination and that abominable behavior. So I do not want to have lying lips.

Those who deal truthfully are his delight. This is what I hug to my chest in the face of hard circumstances. I'm going to deal truthfully.

And to do that, I've got to take a beat when I hear of something, I am told something, I am exposed to something, I am suddenly encountering this in my environment. I'm going to not express the vexation in the day. I'm going to stop and consider.

It's such an amazing thing. When Gabriel comes to the Virgin Mary and says, you're going to have a child and he's going to be the son of God. And a sword is going to pierce

through you.

At a future point, what does it say? Mary pondered these things in her heart. That's one of the reasons she was chosen to be the mother of the humanity of the Lord is she was the kind of person that didn't run around blabbing to the neighbors. I just saw an angel and guess what? I'm going to be the mother of the Messiah and there's going to be swords and judgment.

And she pondered, she took her time. And then she composes that wonderful hymn that we have recorded for us. The Magnificat it's called.

And we've done a very interesting study, I thought of the comparison between the song of Hannah, when she found out that she was going to be the mother of Samuel and Mary, when she found out she was going to be the mother of Yeshua, Mashiach. And they took time. They brought together these thoughts and observations and truths and reflected, meditated and arrived at these wonderful hymnic conclusions.

So this is the difference between a litany of refrigerator magnet aphorisms and the Proverbs. We have the power to enter into the positive side of each of these contrasts. The positive comes first in the odd numbered verses.

The positive comes second in the even numbered verses. Do you want to be a party to deceit, to mirmah? Do you want to be a fool and be exposed and shamed? Or do you want to be prudent? And whatever ignominy is involved, whether it is our own or others, you cover it, you conceal it. So you get to verse 17 here, the first part section here, the contrast between truth and deceit.

He who speaks truth declares righteousness. Well, you would think, obviously, if I'm going to speak truth, I'm going to, truth and righteousness are just going to go hand in hand, right? Well, this is a hyphial stem in Hebrew. Hyphial is the causative stem.

You could just be speaking or talking and it would just be Kel. You know, he communicates, he gives the word, it's dabar and he's just going to speak a truth. But this is a causative.

And the word that is used here is one that means to breathe or to blow. This is a very unusual word. And it is, has the idea cause to be breathed out, cause it to emanate.

It emanates like a breath. It moves across the landscape like a wind. It blows and breathes.

This isn't just testimony on a stand. What he's saying here is the one who emanates truth, breathes it, their presence is like a refreshing, cool breeze of truth. This truth blows and breathes out from you.

When that is the case, you are declaring righteousness. This word for declare is to demonstrate, to make known. This is a report, it's an announcement.

And there is righteousness. There is something that is intrinsically, inherently right. This is God's righteousness.

This is what God declares to be right and true. And it is an inspiration that becomes known. All scripture is given is God breathed, given by inspiration of God.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit in John three is like the wind that blows where it wills. You don't know where it comes from and you don't know where it goes. It's just present.

You see its effect. That's what's going on here. Does this still sound like a shallow tautology? The one who speaks truth declares righteousness.

The one who is a causeway for the wind of truth, the breath of truth, the truth in the hands of the Holy Spirit, as we would understand it from our perspective. We live it, we represent it. We, it blows forth from our lives.

And this is caused to happen. It's a hypheal. It's not just a simple declarative here.

The one who causes truth to blow like a wind. It has effects over here and over here. Might blow these papers off the table.

Might flutter these curtains. Might cause these leaves to fall. This truth is ubiquitous and it is effective.

When something blows like a wind, when you breathe, it has an effect and it's twofold. To breathe, you get the benefit of the truth. You're inspiring, you're inhaling and exhaling the truth.

You're breathing it. And you cause this because you consciously choose to breathe the truth as opposed to, remember the description of Saul, breathing threats and accusations against the Jewish Christians when he went on the road to Damascus. Breathing threats and violence against the Christians.

Breathing it, he's just, he's living it. His whole efforts are bent in that direction. Everything about him, he's known to the authorities.

He thinks about it himself. He's known to his victims. You think Saul, you think he's a threat to the Christians.

He's coming after the Christians. He'll go to far off cities to find and punish these Christians, these threats. Breathing, exuding, personifying.

We'll hear the one who breathes, breathes in and exhales and causes to blow like a wind,

the truth. Now you say, well, can't I put it in little posts and stick it out on Facebook and blow the truth? It doesn't say the truth blows like a wind. He who, this is the difference between somebody who is asking and seeking, knocking about salvation.

Would you hand him a tract or say, go to my Facebook feed? I put a really great post about salvation out there. He who, it's the individual presence. It is you personally, you in contact like salt, you shining like a light and being seen and reflecting the glory of God.

It is the person who causes the truth. This person declares righteousness, not the wind doesn't declare the righteous, the person who breathes in and out and blows this truth around declares. It is the individual, not the post.

This is why I think it's such a threat to sanity and to proper thinking that young people over these last many years have begun to have relationships that are entirely online and are involved by text and by memes and tropes and little funny pictures and TikTok videos and such. And people are known by these little snippets. You're not with the person.

You can't be Daniel Boone with the knife on the apron to see how Rebecca is going to act and it's one-on-one. You're in the presence. It's separated by distance, separated by filtering, separated by the limitations of language and of vocabulary, especially today where people's vocabulary is so limited to begin with.

But notice it is he who causes. He is the one who declares. It is our person.

What a privilege to be the repository of God's truth to breathe it in, to breathe it out, and to cause it to blow like a cool, refreshing breeze in our periphery. We can be used by God as salt and light, but it is God who does the work. It is God's power, not just embracing the concept that honesty and peace would be great, that nobility instead of shame would be wonderful.

Embracing those ideas has no power. The power comes from God and God alone. And to separate and distinguish the effect and the benefit and the blessing and the outcome from its source and its power is to pluck the rose from the plant.

How long is it gonna last? You've separated it from the source of life. This is true of humanity itself. Separated from God, how long can we last? Not long.

The grass withers and the flower fades. It is the word of our God that abides forever. It is his truth and his righteousness that we must embody and represent personally and individually.

We do this in our day by cultivating the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and cultivating and refreshing our minds in the oasis of God's truth, his word. That's what

we're doing tonight. That's what we do on Sundays.

And we think, well, I should do this. I know it's the right thing to do. We need to appreciate the essential nature.

Our life is a waste of time if we are not those who breathe the truth and by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit cause it to blow like a wind in our personal individual periphery, who manifest and evidence the fruit of the Spirit in the circumstances that others observe. Notice the declaration. You declare, you communicate, and that declaration is the one that counts.

This is what can bring others to faith and eternal life, relationship with God, to themselves become those who breathe and manifest the truth. There is no other reasonable outcome of our life. You build something, it's gonna get bulldozed down in 30, 40 years.

You create a monument, it's gonna erode and fade. Try reading gravestones from the early 1800s in a cemetery. This person lived and died.

They had hopes and dreams and passions and offspring, and they did work. They built, they strutted and fretted their hour on the stage. Where is the effect now? Does anybody remember their acts of kindness or their acts of indictiveness? Does anybody, can they look on what they built or what they accumulated? It's all gone, it's blown away in the wind.

The grass withers, the flower fades. We can invest and redeem the time every day in eternity by taking this very essential set of proverbial wisdom statements to heart. But we have to know where the power is.

And that's why it is included right at the end. It is the Lord. He is either gonna treat something as an abomination to be cut out and destroyed and eliminated, or it is gonna be His delight.

And the delight of the Lord moves us into the eternal realms of glory and light and love. If you really want love, you really want joy, and you really want peace in the world, it starts with me making my decisions. I have total sovereignty over what happens in and with my soul and heart.

And if I let God do His work in me, and I begin to breathe truth and righteousness, that is going to have the salt and light effect. And God will figure out where to sprinkle me and where to shine me. All I have to do is stay salty.

What a great privilege, what a great opportunity. It's so simple, and yet it is the power of God in the simplest things. Well, much more to say about this.

We'll pick up our study in Proverbs 12 next time. We'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the privilege we have of not just being related to you as your people, not just having the opportunities that we see reflected in Proverbs, but to be uniquely positioned as representatives of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in this age and in this day, where the conflict is more intense, the provision and the resources have been made more intense, and we have the presence and power of your spirit.

We have such tremendous access to the truth of your word, from Genesis to Revelation, in its original forms with all of the tools to excavate it, to mine its truths, to enter into them and to have them absorb into our souls, to be used by the Holy Spirit and make us effective witnesses to the truth and to righteousness. We pray that as we reflect on this passage of scripture that the Holy Spirit will impress it on our hearts, remind us of who we are and why we're here, and enable us, hour by hour and day by day, to not be the fool who is a model of vexation, but to be the wise who breathes and blows the effect of your truth, your righteousness into our circumstances and into the lives of those around us. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.