

Why did the storm blow that tree over?

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[0:00] Thank you very much, Ben and John, for leading. I found that very refreshing and helpful.

! And you said, very grateful it didn't fall the other way.

Grateful it didn't fall on the house. And I thought we would, and Christopher, where's Christopher? Christopher said something like, why does God allow that to happen?

Or something like that. And I thought we could think about that together this evening. So I don't want to disappoint you. It's not a well-worked-out sermon. It's a discussional topic that we will look at together.

So really great if, by God's grace, you could do most of the work on this. We'll see. So what I've got on the screen, and you can see it, can't you?

[1:22] So there's Aaron's tree. Is that quite a good likeness, Aaron? There it is. There's a shed that it's going to fall on.

There's somebody saying, oh, please don't let it fall on me. There's it going crack like this. And it falls down. That is one example of something that happens in God's world and makes us ask those questions.

So let's ask God's help as we come to think about this. Lord, we come humbly before you. You are the sovereign Lord of all the earth. As we seek to delve into your purposes and your rule, help us to be humble and reverent.

Help us, too, to believe what is there to be believed and to trust you where we cannot understand any further.

We pray that the result of our meeting this evening would be godliness and holiness in our lives and the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.

[2:37] We ask it in his name. Amen. Amen. I've put some other questions down here which are not quite the same but not entirely different.

So we have a brother in the church called Martin who is in great pain. I think I'll be correct in saying he's had a couple of better days.

That's what he texted this morning. But it's very distressing for him and it's very distressing for us, actually, to have somebody in great pain. And we prayed.

Chris and I went over and anointed him with oil and prayed, as it says in the Bible. But not much seemed to happen, certainly not very quickly.

And so that question, why is God allowing that? What is God saying through it? Is it just happening by itself? If God is in control, what is to be understood in that sort of thing?

[3:39] You could enlarge that question in all sorts of ways. You could say, let's get that square out of the way. Let's get this square out of the way. What happens when there's a famine?

So we're not talking about trees falling over or personal pain, but we're talking about a famine when there isn't enough food. What are we to make of that? Or when there is enough food, what are we to make of that when there is a harvest?

And for example, tomorrow morning, we get our dustbins collected. I don't know what day you get your dustbins collected. But on such and such a day, you will take a bag full of stuff that you don't need.

Maybe it was cakes that went off. Maybe it was, you know, extra, I don't know, CDs that you're not using anymore or clothes that you're not using anymore.

And you're going to put those in the rubbish. And what are you to make of that? Is there any spiritual significance to us having so much stuff that some of it we throw away?

[4:55] Let me try and get these things out of the way. If I were to press the delete key, that would disappear. And that would too. I've got some other questions here which are somewhat similar.

So there's a dear friend who's passed away now. She used to live up the road here and came along to our church from time to time. She generally attended a Pentecostal church.

And one time she said to me, Pastor Phil, I want to tell you that somebody in our church has been healed. This week. And it shows that God is still in business.

And that's an interesting comment. So is God only in business when somebody is healed? Is he not in business any other time? Well, there are all sorts of questions that arise to do with the way God runs the world.

So Stefano and Katia might be thinking, What is God doing? We have property in Italy. The prices have gone down.

[6:03] We're losing money. We can't afford to buy property here in Brighton. And probably other people are not alone in thinking that. There's all sorts of things that are going on. Where is God in all this?

How is he running the world? What is his plan? Or is it just random? Okay, am I setting that out? Is that too many questions? Okay, let's try and see if I can get an answer to that.

So I'm going to ask. I've put a load of questions on there. Do you think they are questions worth answering? Do they make sense as questions? Yes.

Okay, good, right. So what I thought we would do is look into the Bible. Come on, little screen. And we'll apply some Bible texts to this world in which these things are happening.

And let me just say what's happening in this world. I'd like a red pen. That will do. So the sun shines.

[7:11] Does it only shine on good people? No. In fact, Jesus says the sun shines on good and bad people. God, there's rain. Does it only rain on good people?

It rains on good people and bad people. Trees grow. Does that just happen? Don't answer that question.

We're going to answer it. But the question is, does that just happen? Or what? Nice things happen in the world. But here's a couple just about to get engaged. Isn't that lovely? So nice things happen in this world.

Here's somebody being mugged and attacked. Bad things happen in this world. Here's the tower which is just about to fall over. So all sorts of things happening to good people and bad people.

What does the Bible say? And how much of this is God in control of? I suppose that would be the fundamental. Is he just in control of, say, the tree growing?

[8:17] And he has nothing to do with good things. Does his control include bad things? Does his control include natural events?

How far along should I draw that line if this is the line which includes all the things that God controls? Does that make sense as a... Even Jerome's looking mystified by that.

Okay, good, right. I just need the encouragement of... So let's look at some texts together. Genesis 50, verse 20.

So we're going to have a number of texts.

Would anybody volunteer to be our... Who can read nice and clearly? Does anybody like to volunteer to be our reader? Oh, right.

[9:16] Jerome, could you pass the microphone to my dear wife? Jerome's very relieved because it was going to be him otherwise. Right.

Okay, everybody. So we're going to look at a number of texts in the Bible. And we're going to see what they say on the sort of subjects that we have been looking at. So Genesis 50. Could you read from verse 18 to verse 21?

Okay. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. We are your slaves, they said. But Joseph said to them, don't be afraid.

Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. Okay, thank you very much.

[10:24] So that's one verse at the end of the story of Joseph and his amazing Technicolor dream coat, that Joseph. And he's saying, don't be afraid.

He's saying this to his brothers. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

So this is what he's saying to his brothers. He's referring back to the rest of the story, isn't he? And in the previous story, previous part of this narrative, Joseph, as a young man, his brothers have been very jealous of him.

They ganged up on him, chucked him into a pit. They were going to kill him, but in the end they decided to sell him off as a slave. And off he went.

[11:22] And when they got home, they lied to their dad about what had happened to him. And they never expected to see him again, but lo and behold, here he was. He ended up being the prime minister of Egypt or something like that.

And he's saying, don't be afraid, because they're thinking, Joseph will now get even with us. Now he's got the chance. We tried to virtually really to kill him, so he'll get even with us.

And so they're trembling at that thought. Yeah, that's the story. What would anybody like to tell us what this says about God's control of this situation?

We ought to let you have the microphone. Could you pass it across? I think it tells us that God will use sinful people, horrible situations, to fulfill his purposes without being contaminated or implicated in the sin.

So, for example, he... Don't give too many examples, because you might be spoiling the rest of my... No. Well, with the brothers, I guess, it wasn't for that moment in time God was out of control.

[12:45] He allowed that to happen. Yeah. Because he had a greater purpose in mind. Okay. Let's see if we can spell some of this back. So, if I put that line is God's purpose.

God and his purpose. So, if we thought of the text in particular, what could we say about the purpose? Could we put another...

Because you said greater purpose. Would you like to... Anybody like to tease out what the... Pardon? I'm not getting that word. Restoration.

Restoration. Restoration. Restoration. Okay. Restoration. Yeah. Anybody like to give another word as well? So, I put restoring. Well, that's what it...

It actually says the saving of life, doesn't it? So, I think that's a very positive purpose, saving life. And God's control of this situation, it included bad things done by bad people.

[13:53] Am I correct? Is that what it says? You intended it. Does it say you intended it to work out well, but God agreed with you? What does it say? You intended it for harm.

You intended it to harm me, but God intended it for good. So, this is like this situation here, with a bad thing being done, with a bad intention, by the person doing it, but God uses it for a good purpose.

Is that a fair treatment of that text? Now, let me ask, that being the case, does it make the bad any less bad because God had a purpose in it?

No. No, it doesn't, does it? Because it's still evil. And does the fact that God had a purpose in it mean that God is somewhat to blame for the bad thing?

No. No. Okay. It's just a little bit in the story. It's just a sentence, but it actually says a great deal about the way God works, doesn't it?

[15:07] Am I right? I think it does anyway. Let's look at another text. So, now we're going to go to Job chapter 2, verses 1 to 10. So, who's got the microphone?

Why don't you read this one? So, Job chapter 2, verses 1 to 10. This is another, this is a narrative, a story, Old Testament, about Job.

You might know the proverb, the patience of Job. Well, this is the Job that that proverb refers to.

Okay, Jerome, thank you. On another day, the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.

And the Lord said to Satan, where have you come from? Satan answered the Lord from roaming through the earth and going to and fro in it. Then the Lord said to Satan, have you considered my servant Job?

There is no one on earth like him. He is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.

[16:30] Skin for skin, Satan replied, a man will give all he has for his own life. But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.

The Lord said to Satan, very well then, he is in your hands, but you must spare his life. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, are you still holding on to your integrity?

Curse God and die. He replied, you are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble? In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Thank you very much. It's a very unusual little episode there, because we're shown dialogue that doesn't simply take place between human beings on earth, but dialogue that takes place in the place where God is in terms of spiritual negotiations, if I put it like that.

[17:44] I don't think we are intended to assume everything here is to be taken with exact literalism, but I think it is telling us something true about the spiritual dimensions of life.

So let me ask you a question. Who are the main actors in this piece of dialogue? Who are the main people taking part in it?

Thank you. The Lord and Satan. Yeah. And what outcome does this have on earth?

What's the outcome of it? Correct. Job did not sin. Yeah. What situation did Job find himself in?

A lot of trouble. Yeah. Job found himself in a lot of trouble. Verse 7. He was afflicted with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

[18:56] So I haven't even got room in this diagram for something like this, because there's a spiritual, I don't know, suppose I don't even know how to do this. Suppose I put a sort of flame here to show that there's, it isn't just human agencies that are involved, there's spiritual agencies as well.

And it says that the source of Job's trouble was Satan. That's what it says, isn't it? So, in terms of thinking about how this happened, would we say that this was evil spirit attacking a good person, and this is just out of control, or what?

Absolutely right. Thank you, Ben.

Yes, it's not out of control because Satan needed permission to do this, and God gave him permission. Is that correct? What it says?

He is in your hands, but you must spare his life. In other words, you can go so far with him, but you only get permission to go that far, you can't go any further. Is that correct?

[20:16] Yeah. So, I don't think I know how to put that on this diagram, but it's, let's just put here God's permission.

So, there's such a thing as permission in God's plan and will for things.

So, which is the verse you're thinking of, Katie?

Well, I'll tell you what. Chapter 9, verse 10 says, He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much. I think he's won twice.

The teacher says that. Okay. Thank you. I think that's part of the integrity that he has, isn't it? He still trusts God and still has good things to say about God, even though he is suffering so awfully.

[21:32] Let me ask you this question. Do you think that Job knew what this negotiation in heaven had said?

No. No. We know because we're reading the story. The writer tells us this. But for Job, he would just have been really puzzled. Why is this happening to me? And, I mean, the question of whether he gets an answer, it's a good question.

Even right through to the end of the book, I don't think he gets a sort of answer which says, this is the specific reason why this is happening. He simply does what Katie pointed out.

He trusts God and says good things about God, even though he didn't understand the ins and outs of it. And we're told in the story that God had a purpose to say, to show, as it were, to Satan that Job wasn't just saying good things about God because he only ever got good things from God. It wasn't on that sort of rather selfish level. Okay. Well, I think that helps us, again, to think about some of the ways that things happen in this world.

[22:54] Sometimes bad things happen by God's permission for purposes that we won't particularly fathom. Does that make sense?

Let's look at Psalm 104. And perhaps the microphone could come over to Maria again, seeing as she kindly volunteered. Thank you.

Psalm 124, verses... It's a lovely psalm. It would really be nice to read the whole thing, but I think time would not help us in that.

Psalm 104, verses 27 to 30. This is a psalm about looking at the world and, as it were, looking beyond the surface of it to what's happening underneath.

A little bit like if you looked at a glove with a hand in it. The glove is moved by the hand, but you never see the hand.

[24:00] You just see the glove. You just see what's on the surface. Does that make sense? So I think this is how he's looking at the world. In Psalm 104, please, could you read us 27 to 30? All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

When you give it to them, they gather it up. When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified.

When you take away their breath, they die and return to dust. When you send your spirit, they are created and you renew the face of the ground.

Please, could you also read us verses 33 to the end? That would be helpful too. I will sing to the Lord all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

May my meditation be pleasing to him as I rejoice in the Lord. But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the Lord, my soul.

[25:09] Praise the Lord. Thank you very much. The psalm ends with two possible responses to its subject matter. And the two responses are that you can sing or you can sin.

That's the two responses, isn't it? The writer says, I will sing to the Lord all my life, but may sinners vanish from the earth. Two responses, you can sing or you can sin.

Let's see how we get to those two responses. So verses 27 to 30 are talking about what we would call the ecosystem of food chain, animals eating plants, and presumably, because in other words it refers to the lions, animals eating each other.

I presume that's what's included. But what does it say is the origin of this sustenance in verses 27 to 30?

What does it say is the origin of this sustenance? God is the provider. Which verse were you thinking of, Mark?

[26:33] Mark? Yep. Thank you. Yes. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

And the you is God. So you are feeding them. I realise there are going to be some other questions that come up, but just take what the text says.

It's looking out in this world with swarms and swarms of animals, living beings all over the place, the sea full of fishes, the land full of animals, and the strange thing that this particular earth that God has made, in any spot where life can exist, life teems into it.

Fascinating that. If you compare it with, now let's just think, where were they last sending a probe? Was it Mars? And they were really trying ever so hard in all the area they surveyed to find any little bit where there was any slight sign that there might possibly have been an inkling of life, and they were hard-pressed to find that.

And how different this earth that God has given us is. It just teems with life, doesn't it? Just teems with it. And the writer looks at this and he says, What's going on here?

[28:05] Well, he says, God is doing this. Admittedly, it's a fallen world, so it doesn't reflect this as beautifully, perhaps, and as innocently as in an unfallen world, but nevertheless, even in this fallen world, it is just full of, well, full of God caring, God giving, God providing.

And it's just full of that. So verse 10, He makes springs pour water into the ravines. The birds of the air nest by the waters.

He waters the mountains from his upper chambers. The earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

Verse 14, He makes grass grow for the cattle. He brings forth food from the earth.

And what he says is, you know, like that glove with the hand inside it, well, on the surface of things, you see just so much life and provision, and just life is just rushing and teeming everywhere.

And, you know, spring is springing, and buds are budding, and bees are buzzing, and whatever. All this sort of thing is happening. He says, okay, that's the glove. What's the hand underneath it? This is God's hand.

[29:27] And he's just filling this world with care and love and provision. So the reason I was saying that was on this diagram.

Here's a tree growing. And we might very well be tempted to think the way the BBC thinks, to say it just happens by itself.

Well, it does happen, but it doesn't just happen by itself, because what we're seeing, let's not just look at the glove, let's look at the hand inside the glove. God makes it happen.

And so when we see our wonderful nature programs about, you know, whales, and all, you know, I can't think of a single example now, but all this stuff, we shouldn't just be following what, which Attenborough is it?

Is it David Attenborough? The squirrel finds its way up the tree. Yeah, I shouldn't go down. We shouldn't follow his explanation of that, because he says it just happens by itself, or evolution did it.

[30:42] We should be saying God did that. This is testimony to the caring, beauty, imminent, you know, that God is absolutely packing this world with himself.

So that was why I put the tree there. Okay. Okay. I think that helps, again, in just helping us to look at the world through the right spectacles.

Let me make that thought. So I think it's a helpful thought. So my spectacles, if I don't look through them, I can just see, instead of seeing all your lovely faces in extreme detail, I can just see a blur.

I'm not even sure whether Angela isn't sticking her tongue out at me. No, she isn't. But I couldn't tell that without my glasses on, but with my glasses on, it all becomes clear.

And here we have Scripture. The Bible is functioning as spectacles for us. Without them, we think, oh, perhaps it all happens by itself.

[31:45] Perhaps it's all rather random. But when we put on the spectacles of Scripture, we can see clearly what's actually happening. This is God showing how good he is, how real he is, how close he is, how busy he is, just filling this world with goodness.

And no wonder the psalmist sings. He says, just look, put your spectacles on, see what sort of world we are. Oh, Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with splendor and majesty. He makes the clouds his chariot. He rides on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds his messengers.

He set the earth on its foundations. You covered it with the deep as with a garment. He makes the springs pour water into the ravines. I will sing praise to the Lord all my life.

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. That's the way he looks at it. Amen. Let's look at Ephesians 1, verse 11. Now, I think I do.

[32:50] Yes, I do mean that. Ephesians 1, verse 11. So, this is again on the subject of how much under control this world is and what God means by it.

So, who's got the microphone this time? Maria, could you read us Ephesians 1, verse 11? In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

In him we were also chosen. So, the him is Jesus Christ. The we is we, the writer, and his friends.

We were also chosen. Having been predestined, so this is to do with God's choosing, but I'm not going to focus on that bit.

But according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. So, just thinking about what that says about God's rule and how far this line of God's control should extend.

[34:20] So, should I, should this line be sort of dotted because there's some things that God doesn't control or should the line go from beginning to end?

What does the text tell us about that? How many things does God control and how many things does he not control? All things he doesn't? All things he does, yes.

That's what it says, isn't it? He works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. Now, I know that you always have to be careful in the Bible because there might be other texts that ask a certain text to be relativized, but just taking that sentence at face value, which I think is the right way to take that, it says everything.

So, there isn't, so let me do this line again. Here it comes. So, it doesn't say God controls everything except what good people do, or God controls everything but bad people are outside his control, or God controls everything except human beings who make free choices and he just doesn't interfere with that at all, doesn't control that.

The answer is no, he includes everything in his will. He includes everything. And that everything is a great mystery. I wouldn't like anybody to think, oh, he made it ever so simple this evening, we're all robots.

[35:50] That's not what it's saying. It is, the text does not say that evil is no longer evil because God actually works everything according to his own will.

And the text doesn't say that good, oh, it's just you're forced to do good. No, good is praised by God. But still, underneath all that, God works everything in conformity to his will.

I believe that's what that text is saying. And could we add to that verse, I put verse 27, chapter 1, verse 27. I obviously had a very special Bible when I said that, didn't I?

Let's just think, I think, I think I meant 22 and 23. Chapter 1, verse 22 and 23. Please, Maria. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Thank you very much. God placed all things under his feet, the him is Jesus Christ, and gave him to be head over everything for the church.

[37:08] So again, taking that sentence at face value, what is Christ head over? How much is he head over everything? And is there a purpose in his being head over everything?

Is this for a particular advantage of any sort to anybody? For, is that what it says in your Bible?

Does it say that? For the church? Yes. It's not a trick question, I'm just checking.

I mean, that statement also, it puts the line over the top, doesn't it? It says over, head over everything. And it says he's head over everything for his people, for the church.

So, when good things happen to good people, when bad things happen to good people, when good things happen to bad people, Jesus Christ is working that all for his church.

[38:17] And he might have other purposes as well, but this is the one we're told about here, for his church. Does that make sense? Okay. So that might have something to do with the tree falling, mightn't it?

Because that would be included, if Christ is head over everything, for the church. That would include the tree falling over in Aaron's garden.

And I might say, now how does that advantage the church? How does that move the church forward in any sense? Yes. Well, there's no...

Yes. Yes. Yes. Because it so sparked me off that I'm preaching about it. Yeah. Yeah. That's part of it, isn't it? Sorry? Sorry? We can respond to suffering in a way that glorifies God.

Is that what you just said? Yes. Yes. We can. I mean, I don't say the tree was particularly a suffering thing, but...

[39:29] You didn't have to pray for him. No. No. I mean, if we go back to Martin, dear brother Martin, I'm sure he wouldn't mind me referencing him

because we prayed for him.

So, how... What effect that has, that this dear brother has been experiencing such pain, and how Christ is head over that for the church?

That's quite a searching question, isn't it? I mean, one very positive thing is that it's made us pray. And one other very positive thing is it made us realise how precious Martin is and how much we care for him. And so that's... Those are good things. I think for Martin himself, it's been a really difficult...

and continues to be a really difficult thing. It's a little bit like Job, isn't it? Because Martin has not been told by God, this is the reason I'm doing it. I've worked this out upstairs here.

[40:43] It's all landing on you. He hasn't been told what happened upstairs. But... But to respond to God's heavy hand with faith is a precious thing, isn't it?

And to be able to say, like... Whatever it was that... What was the quote again? He... Yes. Yes. But to be able to say that, even in suffering, is a very... If I might put it this way, it's a very precious fruit of the Spirit to be found here on earth, isn't it?

And in a way, God would only... I'm just trying to say this the right way. God would only entrust that challenge to very precious saints of very high quality that they would respond in that sort of way. It's not saying we don't need to pray for anybody that's suffering. We do. But I think it brings us into the territory of Job, in a sense. Is that the sort of thing that you were thinking?

[42:06] Or did I completely misunderstand what you meant? Let's go back here. Let's look at Luke 13, 1-5, which is what Ben read.

This is actually something falling over. So, Maria, please could you read us Luke 13, verses 4 and 5.

Or those 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them.

Do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you no, but unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Okay, this apparently was a tower that fell down. I don't know. Maybe they were constructing it and the scaffolding wasn't very good or the foundations weren't very good or something like that.

[43:18] So, I put it under the heading of some sort of industrial accident that they were all talking about. 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them. Now, let's think about this. Do you think that those 18 people were innocent of all sin and perfect people?

No. Any particular reason why not? Because we're all sinners. Yes. Okay. They received something bad happening to them.

Could we say that because that bad thing happened to them, we know they were worse sinners than anybody else in that city? No.

How do we know that we can't say that? Because Jesus tells us. Yes. He says specifically, doesn't he? Those 18 who died, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you no. So, we're not allowed to look at God's providence and when bad things happen, to say, well, that must be God particularly pointing out how evil those particular people are.

[44:32] We can't make that deduction. What lesson does Jesus draw from this falling of the tower?

Okay. So, he talks about repenting, doesn't he?

He says that the people who saw this happen or who are thinking about this happening, the correct response is for them to repent.

Now, let me just explain what repentance is. It is, I'm tempted to say, a 360 degree turn but 360 degrees takes you back exactly where you were before.

What I actually mean is a 180 degree turn. So, repentance is when you're going in one direction, away from God, with God behind you and you repent by turning around so that you are moving towards God and engaging with God.

[45:46] Turning away from sin and godlessness and all that that might be towards God. And he says, this is the lesson you should draw from the falling of this tower.

that you should see when things like that happen, this is saying, repent. Did you know, what will happen to the people if they don't repent?

What does Jesus say? Perish. Perish. Perish. Because this is the serious side of Christianity. It's not just about comfort and encouragement.

It's saying that if you turn away from God and Jesus Christ, the alternative is that you're choosing destruction, terrible consequences, things that hardly bear thinking about.

He uses the word perish. perish. And did you notice there's one other word in there as well, which is the word two.

[46:58] T-O-O- two. You too will perish. You could translate it likewise. And so what he's saying is there's a likeness between this bad thing happening here on earth now and the perishing that will happen in the future.

In other words, that this tower falling is a little echo of the big judgment that is coming.

Does that make sense? That's the likewise you see. Unless you repent, you likewise will all perish. It's like the tower but bigger and more awful.

So that would be another lesson from the tree, wouldn't it? It would be another lesson from the tree to say we're thankful it didn't fall that way but we should hear a message from God.

There are bad things like that happening in this world to warn us that a judgment is coming and to tell us to repent.

[48:23] Is that fair enough? That's what the text says, isn't it? Okay, let's move on because time is moving. Let's look at Matthew chapter 6 25 to 34 and let's look at Matthew chapter 10 verse 28.

Matthew 6 25 to 34 and then it's going to be chapter 10 verse 28.

That ought to be 28 to 31.

So Maria, please could you read us Matthew 6 verses 25 to 34. Therefore, therefore I tell you do not worry about your life what you will eat or drink or about your body what you will wear.

Is life, is not life more than food and the body more than clothes. Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or store away in barns yet your heavenly father feeds them.

[49:37] Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes?

See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire. Will he not much more clothe you you of little faith?

So do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear? for the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. So my question is what aspect of God's operations is he referring to in most of this passage?

[50:56] What aspect of God's operations is he referring to? Okay his providence and what aspect of his providence because his providence includes all sorts of things like trees falling over and provision thank you so the providing aspect of his providingness is providence yes provision and who does he provide for in these paragraphs sorry us us yes us us his people thank you very much what aspect of

God's being or his character is referenced in his providing for us what aspect of his being or character is referenced in his providing for us care yep is reverse that you would particularly no care fatherhood thank you that includes the care doesn't it so he in verse 26 he says look at the birds of the air they do not sow or reap or store away in barns your heavenly father feeds them so that references his fatherhood and then verse 32 the pagans run after these things but your heavenly father knows that you need them so his fatherhood and so he's saying so here's another sort of set of spectacles to look on the world through we can look and say oh what am

I going to wear where am I going to live how am I going to manage and he says you should put on the spectacles which show that God is a caring father and then what he references an aspect of our response which is a key part of this anybody dare to say what what he says should be the key

response which enables us to function regarding the heavenly father I'll tell you I was thinking in verse 30 actually faith am I right verse 30 he says your problem is when you get worried about it the problem is that you are not engaging with God in faith he is your heavenly father just look he provides for birds and animals and you're much more valuable to him than they are so if you would just realize that and trust him then you wouldn't be worrying about tomorrow and all these other things does that make sense so here another it's another way of looking at this whole matter of this world so let's put in his fatherly care as another part and the fatherly care is particularly for his children so let's look at this last text in chapter 10 verses 28 to 31 and while you're finding that I just point out how immensely helpful the texts like Matthew 6 are immensely helpful because it says every day rather than being frantic and worried and stressed and all those things that we so often are Jesus says it's really very simple if you could just clock the fact that the God who runs everything is your heavenly father that would actually solve so many problems about the way you get all tangled up with everything do you really think that your all-powerful caring heavenly father is going to leave you in the lurch because that's not what fathers do does that that's what he's saying isn't it I think that's ever so helpful Matthew 10 verses 28 to 31 please Maria do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell are not two sparrows sold for a penny yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your father's care and even the very hairs of your head are all numbered so don't be afraid you are worth more than many sparrows what does that text say about the exactness of God's rule over things does it say anything about how precise his rule is every hair on your head is numbered it's an interesting thought isn't it it's a very precise computation of course in some cases it's an easier computation than others but it's still a very precise computation and these sparrows presumably he's thinking of sparrows because they're you know well they're two of penny they are two of penny but

God cares for them well it actually says not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your translation said the care of your heavenly father and NIV says the will but perhaps it just means with the father he is watching to that degree and what argumentation does Jesus employ with us on that subject God cares about sparrows he numbers the hairs on your head so don't be afraid don't be afraid you're worth more than many sparrows so that's telling us something about the care and the preciseness of it so I think we'll draw to a conclusion Revelation 920 is about repenting so we've already covered that well

[58:05] I haven't answered the question have I but I didn't think I would what are we to make of it when trees fall over well I suppose there's all sorts of things that we could think if you were talking to Aaron's neighbour and Aaron's neighbour said I gather you're a Christian what do you make of the fact that that tree fell over into our garden what would you say to him or her what I'm going to suggest we do in this next no what am I going to suggest I think time's pretty much gone actually hasn't it yeah just turn to your next door neighbour and see if your next door neighbour has got a good answer to that question in one sentence and while you're doing that we'll get ready to sing our closing song ending

Thank you.