

Proverbs: Skillful Living - Riches

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, church. Good morning. What would you do if all the riches of the world were made available to you?
- If God were willing to offer you anything you ask. What would you ask? This is the circumstance that a young king with immense power and authority, with the eyes of the nation on him, he was faced with this.
- This young king's heart encountered the challenge of a lifetime. And for this young king, he chose wisely. Literally, he chose wisdom.
- And his name was Solomon. The Lord says to Solomon, ask what I may give you. And I can't imagine what follows in his mind when the Lord asks him.
- How many things are flying through? What I could ask for this, I could ask for that. What if I asked for this? But here's what the scripture tells us. He asks for wisdom and knowledge to govern the people of God.
- [1 : 1 1] Wisdom. And here's the beautiful thing. What God summarizes as Solomon not asking for is the following. Because you did not ask for possessions, wealth, honor, vengeance on your enemies, or a long life.
- Here's the list of things Solomon didn't ask for. But instead asked for wisdom. But not only this, the Lord grants him the wisdom and knowledge he asked for.
- But also he grants him riches, possessions, and honor. Are we in the same basic circumstances Solomon today? I think it's two-fold.
- No. I am not a king. I am not ruling over the nation of Israel. I do not have a little offer of anything I want from God. But also I think there's a yes here.
- I do have the freedom to choose. To pursue the world, or to pursue wisdom. This morning we will see that the word of God has a lot to say about riches in this life.
- [2 : 2 5] The word of God, through the book of Proverbs, offers answers to questions that we've all asked before. We're probably asking in whatever season you're in, or you will ask in a season to come.
- But you will ask in a season to come. You will ask in a season to come. And these common life questions, they hit all of us and they pondered the heart. And they cause us to think outside of ourselves.
- And here's some of the questions that we're going to see today. How do we acquire riches? What riches have the highest value? Who is the ultimate source of riches?
- And then how are we to steward riches? How are we to steward riches? The Proverbs gives us answers that we will see together. So as we discover what the rich life looks like as Christians, and how our whole being is called into action, I want us to walk away this morning with this.
- The pursuing wisdom is the pathway to God's greatest riches. Pursuing wisdom is the pathway to God's greatest riches.

[3 : 39] Let's pray. Father, we love you. Let me recognize this morning that you are the ultimate source of all wisdom. That God, you stand alone above all other sources of wisdom.

You are the originator, the creator, and the provider of wisdom. And Lord, as we seek to be wise people that live in this day and age for your truth and your glory, would you empower us to live wise lives and in so doing, as we encounter the incredible blessings and riches that you have to offer us, would we see those riches in their right light as gifts from you?

You are the good giver. And that all that we have is yours. We love you, Lord. Amen. Would you please turn with me to Proverbs chapter 8? Proverbs chapter 8.

We're going to see a number of Proverbs this morning. We'll jump around a little bit because Proverbs is such a beautiful sweeping tapestry of ideas and topics. And so we're going to look at a lot of different things, but we're going to really anchor down in this section in Proverbs 8.

So we're going to look at Proverbs 8, 12 to 21. And what I love for us to do is we look at this passage just to see what is Proverbs teaching us about riches, but also about our hearts and what they have to do with riches.

[5 : 12] So let's read the whole section together, Proverbs 8, 12 to 21. I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.

The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil, pride and arrogance in the way of evil, and perverted speech I hate. I have counsel and sound wisdom. I have insight. I have strength.

By me, kings reign and rulers decree what is just. By me, princes rule all nobles who govern justly. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

Riches and honor are with me. Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver.

I walk in the way of righteousness in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me and filling their treasuries.

[6 : 15] We see right off the bat, verse 12. What we have here is a literary device called personification, and wisdom is said to have taken on a human form, mind, spirit, will.

It's as if wisdom has become a mind or a person, and it's speaking to the person that will listen. And the reason why personification is used is that it causes us to ask the question, if wisdom had a voice, what would it sound like?

If wisdom were literally speaking, what were the things it would say to us? What would it cause us to ponder? What would it say?

And so we have in verse 12, it says, I, wisdom, dwell with prudence. So wisdom is speaking to us to all who might listen. And the point of this personification is that you, here today, me, as we hear these words, we would hear from God's own voice himself, the originator of wisdom.

And then in verse 13 to 16, which you'll spend less time on, you see a practical application of those who would take the words of wisdom and say, I want it, I'll use it.

[7 : 28] And so what we see is that in 13 to 16, these verses reveal that wisdom is against certain things, namely, it's against arrogance, pride, and evil, and perverted speech.

But also that there are those who stand to benefit from wisdom, namely kings and princes and nobles and all who govern justly, that those who desire to rule listen to wisdom.

I want us to spend the bulk of our time this morning on verses 17 to 21, because in it we find words of life.

So read with me, verse 17 and 18, once more. Remember wisdom speaking. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. And this is the answer to our first question. This section is going to answer this. How do we acquire riches?

[8 : 35] Okay, so riches, an idea of some sort of accumulation of that which has value. And the question we have to answer is, ask is how do we acquire things of value?

And what I love in verse 17 is there's two operative mode of actions for those who would desire to listen to wisdom and to acquire riches. And what are they?

One, I love those who love me. And secondly, and those who seek me diligently find me. Two things that wisdom is asking of those that would seek to be wise in this life.

Love me, seek me. And notice in verse 18, that as someone finds wisdom, those who seek me diligently find me, what do they also find?

They find riches and honor that are with wisdom. As we go to wisdom, when we find where it dwells, we also find there's spoils where wisdom is that are ours to be blessed with in life.

[9 : 48] And those things are riches and honor and then enduring wealth and righteousness. And we have a tie here between the first two words in each sentence of verse 18, each clause.

So you have riches and honor and then wealth and righteousness. And we're meant to tie riches and wealth together. And we're also meant to tie honor and righteousness together. But this is really important. So we're talking about how do we acquire riches and wisdom is going to tell us love wisdom and seek wisdom and you will gain it, but you'll also gain these things, riches and wealth, the first riches and wealth.

Meaning that wisdom leads to financial treasure. Another proverb, proverb 10's 4 says this, a slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

There is a principle in proverbs that as we seek to live wise lives that are filled with meaning and work and things to do and advance in the world, there is a benefit, namely that diligence is rewarded with money or treasures of financial wealth.

And then the amount of financial treasure that you might get compensated from your job is going to vary, but the principle, you're going to remember, proverbs are not necessarily promises, but they're principles to live by that if we are diligent and we seek to live wise lives, which means we work hard, we honor people that we work with and that work is unto the Lord.

[11 : 23] There is a sort of wealth from riches that can and does follow. There is wisdom in working hard and excelling in your job, whatever it may be.

There's also wisdom in managing and investing money well. Financial wealth is a byproduct of hard work, principally.

If we live wisely and diligently, financial stability will find us. But not only this, I love in verse 18, there's also honor and then righteousness, which are meant to be tied.

So not only does wisdom lead to financial treasure, wisdom also leads to moral treasure. This is hugely important. When we talk about riches, we're not just talking about what's in your bank account.

We're talking about a holistic idea that to be rich in God's eyes, to be rich in God's economy, takes more into account than just dollars and cents.

[12 : 32] Things that I own, that have my name or my deed on. I just bought a car recently and the title just came in the mail yesterday and I opened it and said, wow, I really own the car now, right? Because I have a title.

It's not just the things that we own that we have our names on, but also riches and proverbs is going to imply something bigger than just money or finances. It's implying so much more and we see in this verse that honor and righteousness are also given to those who seek wisdom.

So Proverbs 22.1, another great cross-reference to this section, says this, a good name is to be chosen rather than great riches and favor is better than silver or gold.

It's a strong, strong proverb that our names, who people know us by and what they think of us and the favor that we have is better than money itself.

Honor and righteousness tied in verse 18. And favor here implies being well thought of by others. Favor with our fellow brothers and sisters is one of the greatest blessings you will ever have in life.

[13 : 54] Think for a moment how worthless all the money in the world would be without the favor and honor from others that you love. We just had Thanksgiving with my family and we had a great time, but as you can imagine, when you throw 20 people in the same house, there's a lot of tension that can arise.

And we had a great time, we loved our time, but there were a few times when little arguments would start or somebody would say something and somebody would get passive aggressor, somebody would get offended, and all of a sudden now there's a little rift in our family of 20 people with a bunch of, with seven toddlers running around.

And I can tell you that even though I love my family and we view each other with honor, I can imagine how horrible it would be if I was not viewed with favor with my loved ones or I did not view them with favor.

Tension in the house, tension in our relationships and wisdom seeks out knowledge, understanding, loves it, and it says honor, to be honored and cherished and to have righteousness and morality and conduct of life is a byproduct.

And when I think of the person that doesn't understand that a good name and favor is to be chosen over silver and gold, the image I get in my head of somebody that doesn't understand this is Scrooge McDuck.

[15 : 25] You remember the cartoon where he gets into his bank vault and he puts on his like one piece bathing suit and he does this little move and he jumps and he swims in his gold in the vault.

You remember what I'm talking about? I think this proverb was written for Scrooge McDuck. Not really. But the point being this, the person that doesn't see a good name, doesn't see honor, doesn't see righteousness, doesn't see right way of living favor with others and with God as more important than money will be Scrooge McDuck who will push others away, refused to live an honorable life and only have their money.

But to be rich is so much more than just money. Do we value honoring charitable relationships with one another?

Does our wise living make it easy for others to honor us and to have favor with us and with us with them? Do we have a culture in this church and in our families of honoring one another?

Is it normative or is it an exception to honor somebody? But not only this, favor with God is a great rich blessing.

[16 : 51] All the comfort of worldly accolade and opulence fades away when we experience the richness of God's love. This is why I find it so beautiful that our Lord Jesus spent so much meaningful time with every person, regardless of their socioeconomic status, that the same Lord Jesus shows His love and His honor and favor to a man like Zacchaeus, wealthy in all aspects.

But He also shows love, honor, and favor to a poor, hemorrhaging woman that has very little. Do we demonstrate favor and honor to all without prejudice towards someone's financial situation or what they have to offer?

For 17 and 18, I answer the question, how do we acquire riches? We love wisdom. We seek it, which means we go to God's worst, the ultimate well of wisdom that we can pull from.

But that also means that as we seek wisdom and we love it, we are going to one another. That as a young man who's 29 years old, I owe so much of who I am to men and women who have loved me and shared their faith with me and disciplined me in the faith.

And I know so many of us in this church, we could say the same thing about people sitting to the left or to the right. And I want, just encourage us, that to help one another seek and love wisdom will lead all of us collectively towards richer spiritual lives.

[18 : 35] And yes, even financial lives, as we learn how to be wise and diligent with our lives. Proverbs teaches this. But now we have to answer the second question, in verse 19, which is this.

What riches have the highest value? And this is the golden question. Look at verse 19. Wisdom is speaking.

My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold. In my yield, than choice silver.

What is amazing about this passage is that it would seem that the highest value treasures are not financial.

That the best riches in life transcend dollars and cents and make accounts. That the highest riches in life are those that are so rare and so valuable as a commodity that they actually point us to something that is so accessible, yet so rare at the same time.

[19 : 51] That wisdom is a rare and more valuable commodity than even dollar and cents. Proverbs 16, 16 says this, how much better to get wisdom than gold?

To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver. What a radical concept that if we in our heart and in our minds would really, truly believe this.

I know I don't believe this very often. Someone came to me and said, here's a million dollars or here's tons of wisdom that you could use the rest of your life. Which am I running to? Hit the proverb, it says wisdom.

Gaining wisdom is better than gold. So for all of you young adults in here, I was a young adult once, I struggled of I have no money, I need to work, now I need to pay for school, now I need to work, right?

That struggle or if you're in here and you're like, you know, I have struggled financially. I've had things happen. Again, Proverbs are principles, not promises. I've worked hard and yet still I feel as though financially, don't quite have enough.

[20 : 55] First, continue working, continue being diligent, the Lord will honor your work. But second, this proverb is teaching something. That is perhaps as advantageous for you as a human being, God has made to live wisely in the world, to meet with and grow in wisdom with someone who has experience and wisdom to share, as someone donating a thousand dollars.

Do we believe that? It's incredible truth. And I want us to see as we look at this proverb that it's not discounting the reality of money and our necessity to have in this life, but it is pointing us to something that's bigger, that gets to our heart and our mind and our soul, which is wisdom, is the richest of all.

I remember, I was a kid, we used to go to this gym all the time. And my dad would coach basketball there and there's the owner of the gymnasium, he had this little ice cream freezer, it was a little rectangular box.

Because remember those, you slide them open and all the ice creams are laid out, different flavors, and the prices are in the literal freezer. You pull one out, you go to the rickshaw store, he checks you out. I remember me and my friend were looking at this thing, like, wow, we don't have any money to buy this, but I want that one, if I can have that, I can have that one.

And my friend runs off, I'm standing there and the owner comes over and says, hey, you tell me which one of those is your favorite. Pick one out. He says, wow, it's going to give me one scratch.

[22 : 31] That one's my favorite, it was a Reese's ice cream bar, which is delicious. I remember like, Reese's ice cream bar, and here's what he said, okay, great, you can have any ice cream in here but that one.

What? He's giving me free ice cream, but I'm not happy about it. So I took some other ice cream and I ate it. My friend comes back and I'm like, oh, I'm running to my friends, I cut them off.

I said, dude, here's the system, I'm going to break this for us. You go to that ice cream, he's going to give you a free ice cream, but he's going to tell you to pick your favorite, but don't pick your favorite, pick your least favorite, and then you can choose your favorite.

Oh yeah, yeah, got it, got it. No, this is a true story. He goes up and this is the wisest man ever. And he goes, hey, you pick out what's your favorite ice cream, you pick anyone you want.

So he points at the nasty little health bar on the right. And guess what he said, you can have it. True story.

[23 : 35] My friend comes back so disappointed. Bro! But as I think back to that story, it just reminds me of something, that our hearts think that they know what they want, but they really don't.

When we pursue what we think we want, what we think is going to make us richer and happier and fuller, oftentimes our hearts lead us to something that leaves us disappointed.

That even what we think is our favorite ends up being not allowed. Or the things even worse that we look at and we say, well, there's a bunch of good stuff in here, but I'll take the bad one or the things that we get.

In other words, our hearts, our sinful hearts and minds, deceive us into exhausting our strength and energy to acquire earthly, temporary riches instead of heavenly, eternal riches.

By ourselves on our own, our hearts will lead us to choose that which is bankrupt and worth. And this is why we need a savior. And this is why we need a new heart.

[24 : 48] Which is why I'm so grateful that God identifies for us the true best choices in life. That we don't have to trust our own hearts and our own minds to choose what is best.

Because if that's the case, we're going to choose the health bar. No offense, anybody who likes health bars, set a ice cream. But I want the Reese's.

We're going to choose that which is lesser for that which might be better. But God has shown us already which is better. And what is better?

Better than gold, as the proverb says, are things like a godly spouse. I brag about my wife a lot because I love her and I think she's amazing.

But let me tell you, if I didn't have wisdom that other people disciplined me into see a godly woman and to see what a godly woman looks like, I don't think I want to choose Brooke.

[25 : 52] I'm thankful to men that have showed me what to look for in a spouse. By way of wisdom, I acquired a godly spouse that I love.

By way of wisdom, we can cultivate healthy, vibrant families that love one another and want to serve one another and lift one another up and care for one another. By the way of wisdom, we can obtain meaningful friendships to love, to serve, to care, to show interest, to share life with.

By the way of wisdom, we can enjoy overall life discernment that steers us away from trouble toward well-being. By the way of wisdom, a committed church family that covenants together to love and care for one another can be chosen by you and I.

I choose to love the church, to submit myself to the leadership that God has instilled over it and to serve, honor, protect, and hold accountable my brothers and sisters.

That is a choice of wisdom, friends. And as we choose these wise decisions, what we gain are what this proverb shows us as fruit that is better than gold, even fine gold.

[27 : 19] Godly spouse, healthy, vibrant family culture, meaningful friendships, and overall life discernment that steers us away from trouble and toward well-being. A committed church family that covenants together to love and care for one another.

These are just some of the fruits of wisdom that are far better than gold and silver. However, the question was, what is the highest value rich or treasure that we can obtain?

There is a certain treasure that comes still by way of wisdom that is far more valuable than even all those things.

By way of wisdom, you and I can have the treasure of knowing Jesus. Proverbs 11-4, these are remarkable proverbs.

Listen to what it says. Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

[28 : 38] At the judgment day, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, you name whatever millionaire or billionaire you want.

All of their earthly riches will matter zero percent before the Holy God.

If earthly riches don't profit in the day of wrath that is coming, but instead righteousness can deliver us from death, we can choose the way of wisdom, the way of righteousness.

Which is not, I will live righteous and perfectly that God may avert death from me, but instead here's what righteousness looks like. I choose to love and submit to and trust with all of my being, the God of the universe who created me, made me in his image, and has orchestrated all things that I might be found in Jesus Christ, in his righteousness.

That's the highest form of wisdom in this life. To choose someone else's loving, righteous life.

[30 : 01] To be pleaded on the judgment day. Choosing Jesus. There is no amount of money that could ward off the wrath of a Holy God.

The economy of God is such that only purity and uprightness can avoid wrathful judgment. And the economy of God is also that grace is free.

We just need to turn from the offerings of the world and go to God and redeem free gift of God's rich grace by faith. Christ is our richest possessing church.

There is nothing with higher value than the spilled blood of the Savior of the world. There is no greater possession than the loving embrace of a God who loves through good news of a coming Savior.

Which is why we again, we go back to our big point, our big idea here, which is pursuing wisdom is the pathway to God's greatest riches.

[31 : 10] I'm going to read real quickly Ephesians 3.7-10. Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus and he gets a point in his letter and talking about theology and who God is and who they are in Christ.

And here's what he says. In the work of this gospel, I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace has been given.

There's the language. It was given to me. I now possess it, riches, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Now the term unsearchable riches here means unsearchably fathomless, not able to be written down in any form.

That means to church that Christ who we have received is so rich of a treasure that no one in with all the time or energy in the world could write down how incredibly valuable Jesus is.

[32 : 21] It's impossible to track down or to write down in full. Yet, he's writing about Paul. He uses the term unsearchable riches. It could never be calculated and put down.

But what did he do in chapter 1 in Ephesians? He made a giant list of some of the riches of Christ. Ephesians chapter 1.

Here are some of the riches that we should marinate in, memorize and internalize for maximum Christian richness in life.

Here are some of those riches of Jesus. Chosen by God. Salvation, righteousness, adoption, lavish grace, favor, redemption, forgiveness, good, inherent hope, sealing by the Spirit, promise of the resurrection, being God's possession, knowledge of his will, and finally, how does he end this list of greatest riches and blessings?

Jesus Christ himself. Pursuing wisdom is the pathway to God's greatest riches. And the greatest wisdom, don't miss this. The greatest wisdom any person can demonstrate in this life is loving and seeking Jesus Christ.

[33 : 39] From which all of God's greatest riches flow. Next question, question number three, who is the ultimate source of riches?

We see in verse 20 and 21 that it says this, wisdom says, I walk in the way of righteousness and the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me and filling their treasuries.

I love this language. Wisdom personified is reflective of the very nature of God. In fact, in the next verse 22, wisdom says, I was with God at the beginning when he created all things.

When we read this personified wisdom, by some sense, we are supposed to, we are intended to think of God as the one speaking, because God is wisdom.

But not only God, Creator God. Who is the ultimate source of riches? Creator God. Because Creator God has made everything from the abundance of what he is and his love and his absolute brilliant creativity, the overflowing of his incredible nature.

[34 : 55] He creates all things for his pleasure and his glory, which means all things are his, which means anything that can be had is what? God's.

Which means all that we have comes from God. And this is backed up in other places in Scripture when James 1 uses the language of every good gift and every perfect gift. It's from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there's no variation or shifting shadow.

Psalms 84.11, for the Lord our God is the Son in the shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Again, God is the giver. And this is where we need to be resolute in our understanding of God's benevolence and God's provision.

Benevolence being a term for his goodness, his willingness to give good things to us, but also provision that he meets our needs, church. What does it mean to be rich?

[35 : 56] It means that God is the one who I trust to give me all that I need. So God displays His benevolence and His providence to those who seek Him with a full heart.

He is the Creator of all things. He is the giver of all things. And He is eager and ready to bless us as we call upon Him and ready ourselves for His spiritual blessings.

He also meets our material needs. Like He meets the needs of the lilies of the field and the sparrows of the sky. But notice the word treasuries in verse 21.

Treasuries is a term that denotes a storehouse of goods, often used to refer to Israel's literal gold treasury and temple storehouse, where all of the gold and possessions would be kept, a treasury.

But because of verse 19, it said, my fruit is better than gold. I see the filling of treasuries as, yes, a bank account perhaps, or maybe if you have a store room where all of your money is stored.

[37 : 01] But also a treasury could be more than that. It could be the filling of a storehouse of goods, of things like joy in our life, contentment, purpose, and life.

How are your storehouses of joy, contentment, purpose, and life? Jesus came through the love and the message of the gospel to fill up your storehouses of joy, contentment, purpose, and life.

Choosing to live our lives for the acquisition of only earthly treasures and only earthly riches is like loading up a freight train. We have a lot of trains here in Spokane. Loading up a freight train with all of the cargo cars and a caboose, and saying, I got all this stuff.

Look, it's great. I'm going to take me into the next phase of my life, into the future, but then forgetting about the most important car, the locomotive. We go nowhere. But instead, pursuing wisdom above all else is like putting all of your stock into getting that locomotive.

And trusting God to drive the engine of your filled life. God, I submit to you, and I recognize you are the giver of all things, and you've already given me so much through the gospel.

[38 : 17] I'm going to get on board and drive this train through the love and care and support that you have for me as I choose you over all things in my life. And watch as God drives your life through the locomotive of wisdom.

And slowly, the cargo builds up behind. This is why David in Psalm 23 starts the psalm off by saying, what? The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. He's solely focused on what? God. My shepherd. That's my focus. He's what I'm choosing.

Everything else will fall in place according to His mercy, provision, and benevolence. And then how does the psalm end? All the things that the shepherd does for the sheep, David, and us. But then how does the psalm end?

Surely what? Goodness and mercy will follow me. The order is this, I love and choose and serve and submit to God.

[39 : 18] And I trust Him to take care of the rest. So the last question is, how are we to steward riches? How are we to steward the riches that we've been given?

The greater the value of the riches, the greater the level of appreciation, and the greater the responsibility to do with it well. So we talk about riches. God already talked about generosity.

And obviously when we think about obtaining things that are rich in nature and value, we should be generous with them. No question. So we steward what God has been given to us, our bank accounts, our possessions, but also things like our time and our energy.

We have riches in more ways than one. We should take all of our riches and steward them. That which we've been given, we should freely give. So our money, our time, our resources, our best possessions, and our best attributes are all riches from God that we ought to give freely, that He might be glorified.

But not only this, I want to encourage this this morning with this, the greatest treasure we have been entrusted with to steward is the gospel.

[40 : 35] How do I steward the treasure of the gospel? This is where the idea of a testimony comes in. Every single Jesus follower in this room is equipped to share the story of the gospel, wherever you are, at any given moment.

Even if you don't feel equipped to speak about Jesus, I don't feel good at speaking, I get nervous, I don't have the right words, I don't have the right terms.

Here's what I would say to you. Every person is equipped to share the gospel at any moment because we all have a story of how the gospel reached us. We steward the greatest treasure, which is the gospel, by telling others of our gospel testimony.

So this week I want to encourage everyone in here to spend some time doing two things. First, become gospel literate. In other words, challenge yourself to verbalize or illustrate the gospel story in less than a minute.

That's a hard thing to do. But as I've dedicated time to trying to take the whole gospel, which is so incredibly broad and beautiful, but also simple at the same time, to take the richness of the gospel and to put it in a format that's easily accessible and easily digestible by others and ourselves, what we do is we simplify down to the main thing.

[42 : 09] So I want to encourage everyone here to spend some time doing this this week. Here's a couple ideas of how you could do this. Memorize these two pictures of the first one. Here's a gospel acrostic that is used by Greg Steyer and Dare to Share Ministries, which is a ministry that encourages youth and equips them to go out and share the gospel everywhere they go.

I love this one. You can do this under a minute if you memorize it. God created us to be with Him. G, O, our sins separated us from God. S, sins cannot be removed by good deeds. We're paying the price for sin. Jesus died and rose again.

E, everyone who trusts in Him alone has eternal life. And then this is my favorite, life, L. Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. There's the gospel in less than a minute.

Another one that we used a couple years ago at kids camp. We still use to this day in youth ministry and other places is the gospel hand. So this one is easy because it's right here on your hand.

You can do this in 30 seconds, less than 30 seconds. Jesus, it's all about Jesus. Somebody's done. Jesus lived perfectly, died sacrificially, rose victoriously, forgiving my sin if I repent and believe. Boom!

[43 : 21] There's the gospel in 30 seconds, 20 seconds. So we become more gospel literate. We understand what the gospel is and how I can communicate it clearly and faithfully. But then secondly, what we need to do is we need to hone our gospel testimony.

Merge your one minute gospel story with your salvation story in less than five minutes. I really believe that the best testimonies are the ones that can get to the heart of what happens with the gospel.

That our lives and our sin and in our disobedience from God are redeemed as we meet Jesus by His grace. So what He's done through the cross and the resurrection, His work, it changes us.

It regenerates our hearts by the faith that we place in Him. And now we are new creations in Christ to go and live for His glory in response to who He is and what He's done.

We can do that and associate it with our story. If you can do that in five minutes or less, you're equipped. You're ready.

[44 : 24] In fact, this is such a great method that Paul uses this method in essentially every single book he writes. In somewhere in every one of the books he writes about, I was a sinner, but God met me with His grace.

I was the least of all, but God was rich in mercy on and on and on. He does this. He communicates His witness or His testimony really quickly, really in pithy manner that people might see, oh, this is a guy who was a sinner just like me.

And now look where he is. That is appealing to people and it's a great way to steward what the gospel really is. So we hone our gospel testimony.

And as we do this, we are equipped to go out and share the love of Christ, to take the riches of the gospel and advance them in the world and in other people's lives who desperately need to have the riches of Christ for their own lives.

So I want to conclude with this. We began this morning reviewing the weighty decision that was laid before Solomon. Solomon chose wisdom and walked the pathway to God's greatest riches.

[45 : 32] And I want to conclude this morning by offering another weighty decision. This time for us. We can have the world and its riches, or we can have Christ in His riches and watch what happens.

Matthew 16. What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Profit and gains are accounting terms, referring to net loss or net gain.

First choice, gain the world, pursue the world, take all of the world in, the worldly riches, or the second option.

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. That option is the true option that leads to riches church.

I want us to become aware of a fellow brother who I've never met. I can say I'm united with in spirit as a follower of Jesus.

[47 : 03] This brother has chosen the riches of knowing Christ over the things of the world. Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot Ryan Kohur was wrongly and unjustly detained while on a supply delivery to an orphanage in Mozambique, where him and his family serves.

Ryan has been separated from his wife and two young boys for about a month. He's been transferred to the Machava Prison, a maximum security facility for the most dangerous prisoners in Mozambique.

The story popped up on my feed yesterday. We have Mission Aviation Fellowship pilots and partners in this very church here right now.

Here's a family that has chosen the richness of Christ over the world. And this husband has been taken from his family unjustly and put in a very dangerous prison.

He's been there for a month. He probably will not get to spend Christmas with this family. They are not actually aware of how he's actually doing right now.

[48 : 21] But prayers are going up. Posts are being shared. This was shared over Facebook, over a number of different places. So I felt confident putting up in front of you guys. This is someone who needs our prayer.

So I'm going to close our service with prayer for this Kohur family that God would deliver them. And he would use their witness. Even though I've never met this family, but man, he would use their witness to encourage us.

To choose Jesus. To choose Christ and the riches that he gives. Apart from even the consequences of the world hating Jesus.

This is our calling church. Walk the pathway to God's riches Jesus. Choose Christ. Lord, we pray this morning for our dear brother, Ryan.

We pray that whatever his condition is right now in that prison, he would strengthen him literally his body to endure and persevere through whatever physical trials he's facing.

[49 : 27] But God, would you strengthen his spirit? Encourage his heart? Remind him, Lord, of that Ephesian passage. Remind him of all the manifold, unsearchable riches of Jesus that he has at his disposal right now.

And Lord, we do pray for his family. That you'd encourage his wife. That you'd encourage Annabelle and the two boys and his extended family as they wait and pause with little certainty of the condition of their loving husband and father.

Strengthen them, Lord. And finally we ask by your great providence and your great benevolence and your sovereignty, Lord, would you deliver him?

And would you use his testimony, wherever he is right now, to faithfully proclaim Jesus regardless of circumstance? We love you, Lord, and we give you all things.

And we ask this in your incredibly powerful, majestic, rich name. Amen.