

Work in a Fallen World

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[0 : 00] My friend is receiving much needed help and support. But after I reflected on our conversation, I realized that although my friend is in need of help, my friend is in a position to help others.

You see, he was a hard worker. Some would call him a workaholic. He accumulated significant wealth, but as I listened to him, it became clear in my mind that he now views his wealth very differently, having attained it, than he did as he worked for it.

My friend indicated to me that he now realizes that there are more important things in life. I don't think he's at the end of his life, but he is certainly at the end of his working life.

And while he needs help, he is able to offer help because there are many people who are on a similar road that will lead to the road that he now finds himself.

They will find themselves at the end of the road where my friend finds himself. And the important lesson that my friend is learning is that there are more important things in life than work and accumulating wealth.

[1 : 24] And it struck me that as I reflected on our conversation, the words of my friend resonate with the words of the preacher in Ecclesiastes.

The preacher in Ecclesiastes undertook a serious effort to understand and to make sense of life. He explored wisdom and knowledge and foolishness and pleasure.

He undertook great works and amassed great wealth and possessions. All in an effort to understand the scope of human activity on the earth and how best human beings can engage themselves and use their time as they live their short lives on this earth.

And in the process, the preacher learned some hard but valuable lessons. Lessons that we can all benefit from if we take the time to listen.

I do pray that we have been listening. I pray that this morning we will listen. This morning I want us to consider yet another lesson from the preacher in Ecclesiastes. This lesson is about work.

[2 : 41] This lesson is about work in a fallen world. And it's found in Ecclesiastes chapter 2, starting in verse 18 and ending in verse 26.

Ecclesiastes chapter 2, starting in verse 18, concluding in verse 26. So please turn there with me if you have not yet done so.

The preacher writes, Yes, it says, in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool. Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun.

This also is vanity. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors. Under the sun. Because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it.

[4 : 03] This is also vanity and a great evil. What is a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun?

For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also I saw is from the hand of God.

For apart from him, who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him, God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy.

But to the sinner, he has given the business of gathering and collecting only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[5 : 17] Let's pray together. Father, we have gathered this morning. And Lord, I think we are all aware of how much we need to hear from you.

Lord, even those of us who may feel that we need something more, Lord, it is really just a mask and a distraction from what we really need.

But we need to hear from you this morning. And Father, we need to hear from you in particular because the preacher has written words that, once again, have located us right where we live, in a fallen world where we engage in work.

And so, Father, I pray you would speak to all of our hearts. I pray, Lord, that you would instruct us in the way that we should live and in the way that we should work and that all of these are to be lived under your gaze.

All of these are to be done under your gaze. Would you give us attentiveness of heart? Would you give us obedience of mind? Lord, cause us to sit under the authority of your word.

[6 : 43] I ask for special grace once again, Lord, to be faithful, to stay within the four corners of your word and that you would use this message this morning for the good of your people and for the building up of this local church.

Lord, hear us this morning and meet us now as we open your word. In Jesus' name. Amen. In the previous message in this series, which was based on verses 12 through 17 in this same chapter, we considered how the preacher came to the rude awakening that death comes to us all.

The preacher came to this rude awakening that whether one is wise or foolish, death is a common denominator that we will all face. And he realized that in the same way that the fool would be forgotten eventually, the wise person would be forgotten as well.

And in this section that we have come to this morning, the preacher is clearly still considering this reality about death and how inevitable death is for all of us.

And here's the lesson that is ever so clear from the preacher's words as he contemplates work in the light of death.

[8 : 13] The preacher sees that the ability to enjoy the fruit of our labors is a gift from God. the ability to truly enjoy the fruit of our labors is a gift from God.

And I think for many of us this morning this is so true. We are enjoying the fruit of our labors. But I really wonder to what extent many of us realize that this is a gift.

It is a gift from God when we are able to enjoy the fruit of our labors and truly enjoy our labors as well.

I'm sure that some of us perhaps think that it probably has more to do with our work ethic, the enjoyment of our work and the resources that we have accumulated we perhaps see as more connected to hard work and wise management.

But friends, it is so much more than that. The preacher says it is a gift from God. And in our remaining time this morning I want to consider how this is.

[9 : 30] No doubt there are some of you here this morning who see no enjoyment in work and you perhaps look forward to the day that you will retire.

Well, I believe the Lord has something to say to you as well through these words of the preacher and I pray that you will also listen. For those of us who are taking notes this morning I've organized the message under two headings and the first one is lamenting work.

That's what the preacher does in verses 18 through 23. He laments his work. He begins in verse 18 and it is clear that he is still contemplating the reality of death and the uncertainty that it brings.

And notice again what he says. He says I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun saying that I must leave it to the man who will come after me and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and use my wisdom under the sun.

This also is vanity. These are the words of the preacher but brothers and sisters these are also the words of the self-made man.

[10 : 54] They are the words of the man who would say as people often say I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps and I thought about that I mean that's just impossible to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps you fall down or something.

These are the words of the person who credits himself with hard work and smart work and that all that he has accomplished he has done it by smart work or by hard work.

And in the face of death and the reality that he must leave it all behind for that person worry sets in. He worries about who will inherit all that he has accomplished and he worries what those who inherit it will do with it.

And this is the preacher's dilemma that we see recounted in this difficult season of his life. We don't know at what stage the preacher was but perhaps the preacher himself was getting up in age and coming toward the end of his life and we see him wrestling with these real issues.

But for us to really appreciate the extent of the dilemma that the preacher found himself in let's remind ourselves once again of what the preacher accomplished as recorded in the earlier section of chapter 2 starting in verse 4.

[12 : 22] Just turn there or just look there with me for a moment. In verse 4 he says I made great works I built houses and planted vineyards for myself I made myself gardens and parks and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees I made myself pools from rich to water the forest of growing trees I bought male and female slaves and had slaves who were born in my house I had also great possessions of herds and flocks more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasures of kings and provinces I got singers both men and women and concubines the delight of the sons of man so I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem also my wisdom remained with me and whatever my eyes desired

I did not keep from them I kept my heart from no pleasure and my heart found pleasure in all my toil and this was my reward for all my toil that's what the preacher accomplished and I think what is helpful for us to notice as we consider what the preacher accomplished is the number of times he uses the singular pronoun I and my all that the preacher did the preacher did for himself every single thing that he did he did for himself now I think it is helpful for us to consider again and I shared this earlier because I know how I'm calling him the preacher which he calls himself and we see him doing these questionable things as it were and I just want to remind you that the preacher is recounting experiences in his life and these evidently were earlier experiences that the preacher had that he is now using in this message that he is preaching to instruct others so that they may learn from his own experiences and from his life and he is now seeking to communicate truth but it is not necessarily that this was really in a in close proximity in time

I think bearing that in mind will help us to appreciate the preacher recounting these experiences and then seeking to teach from it so in light of all that the preacher had accomplished the preacher now is contemplating his own death and he despairs he despises his hard work he says he hated it he despises the work that he engaged in to accomplish all that death will force him to leave behind and he begins to speculate about what will happen after his death as the preacher laments his work he describes three particular occurrences or three realities or three aspects of his contemplation he calls them vanity and remember when the preacher uses vanity in the book of ecclesiastes it literally means a vapor or a breath or a mist and sometimes the preacher uses this word vanity to describe endeavors and things that people accomplish that in the grand scheme of things they're really not worth anything when he evaluates what has been accomplished he says it's all vanity it really isn't worth anything it's like a vapor it's like a mist it's like a fleeting breath but the preacher also uses this word vanity to talk about realities in life things that he experienced in life things that he saw in life that just didn't make sense he couldn't comprehend it he couldn't understand why it existed they were hard to wrap your mind around and the preacher would say it's vanity meaning he called it a chasing after wind meaning if you can run after the wind and grasp it then you can really understand what is being contemplated so there are times when the preacher comes to particular realities in life and he says that's just vanity that's a breath it's a fleeting thing

I just can't grasp but I cannot understand it and the preacher in particular is using vanity in this latter sense in this section that we have come to this morning things that just don't make sense things that evade meaning things that you cannot apprehend and comprehend so the meaning is like a mist a vapor or a fleeting breath the preacher is saying you don't get full understanding of it so let's consider the first assessment of vanity that the preacher gives us it's found in verses 18 and 19 the preacher says I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun saying that I must leave it to the man who will come after me and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool yet he will be the master of all for which I toiled and use my wisdom under the sun this is also vanity here the preacher is concerned that what he has worked for he will die and leave behind and there's a real possibility that the person who is going to inherit it will be a fool and the fool will be master over everything that he had worked for and we know my father used to always say when he saw a person wasting money he would say well a fool and his money are so unparted and certainly the preacher recognized that if a fool comes behind me he's going to squander and he's going to waste everything that I've worked for and the preacher says this makes no sense this is vanity it escapes reason and part of the preacher's concern is that the legacy that he would have built and the resources that he would have accumulated will be left behind and he had no control over it and would be in uncertain hands and so the preacher despairs and in verse 20 he says so I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun and then in verse 21 he raises his concern from another angle and he gives us the second vanity he says sometimes a person who was toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not work for it and here the concern seems to be not so much whether the person is a fool or a wise person but the concern seems to be that the person who inherits does not have the same value and appreciation for what the person who went before him who created it all who left it for him the value that that person had on it who toiled for it and this is generally true of wealth the further removed the wealth becomes over generations the appreciation and value for the wealth seems to diminish those who created the wealth and developed the wealth in the early years tended to have a greater sense of value a greater sense of appreciation for what they accumulated they knew the work that brought it about and so they were not as inclined to waste it and I think we all have heard or perhaps even seen stories of people who inherit wealth and how they burn it and how they just plow through it in such a short period of time and they used it in ways that the owners those who accumulated it wouldn't even think to use it it is said that a lot of small businesses don't go beyond three generations because not small businesses but family businesses because

the first generation they start it the second generation they run it and they say the third generation ruins it and that is so true in many instances where those who come behind don't have an appreciation or value for what they have inherited and it is squandered and the preacher says not only does this not make sense he says this is grossly unfair he says it is a great evil not only unfair he says this is a great evil and in verse 22 the preacher then goes on and he asks another question that brings us to his third expression of vanity and he asks this question and the question is what is a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils under the sun and I'm sure that some of you would no doubt remember that this is not a new question this is an old question that the preacher asked and he in fact asked it at the beginning of this book in verse three of chapter one it is a question that is really the first question in the whole book of ecclesiastes and it really is the grand theme or it is the grand pursuit of the preacher to understand what is there to profit what is there to gain what is worth engaging and employing ourselves in in this life but here what we see in verse 22 of chapter 2 is that the preacher expands on the question a little bit in verse three of chapter one the preacher asks the question what does man gain by all his toil at which he toils under the sun but now in verse 22 of chapter two he asks what has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils under the sun notice that in the current question the preacher now indicates that work under the sun not only involves physical toil but it also includes emotional toil it includes a striving of heart and to that in verse 23 the preacher adds that life under the sun is full of sorrow and work is a vexation he says even at night when one should be resting when you're supposed to be sleeping he says there's no rest for the one who toils under the sun and so the preacher laments that the brutally hard life of work under the sun after it is all done when death comes there's a severing from the fruit of one's work and it is left in uncertain hands of someone who might be a fool or who might not appreciate and value what was left to him and brothers and sisters what we have before us this morning is a picture of work without reference to

[24 : 35] God we have a picture of work in a fallen world by fallen people who live their lives without any reference to God and as we have heard already in this series it was not always that way it was not always this way that work and life would be hard but the fall of Adam changed it all the fall of Adam affected everything including work God intended work to be an expression of our worship to him but work ceased to be worship because of the fall and instead of it being a God centered worship it became a man centered toil and the preacher as he considers it laments it and the reason he laments it more than others is that the preacher took time to think about it and often times those who do think about it they too lament and they realize the brutally hard nature of work under the sun and what is evident from all this work that is under the sun that the preacher recorded as we read earlier in chapter two is it is done for self not for

God it is done for self the one who labors under the sun without any reference to God makes his work his reason for being but in the face of death he laments it laments all the effort put into it and he sees the whole enterprise of working hard and trying to accumulate as a meaningless waste and in particular the uncertainty when we leave it behind and what can happen to it in a matter of time in a fraction of the time that it took to accumulate!

And that was the preacher's experience But God was merciful to this preacher and God helped him to see that the view that he had of work was not the only view of work under the sun there was another view there was a better way and instead of lamenting work the Lord enabled the preacher to see that work can also be enjoyed and this brings me to my second and final point this morning enjoying work after reading of the preacher's despair about his work in verses 18 through 23 we can only imagine the joy that must have come to his soul when he came to the realization that there is a better way and that work can actually be enjoyed and so the same person who hated his work in the earlier verses verses 18 23 he now is able to see that work can be enjoyed and look at what he says in verses 24 and 25 there is nothing better for a person than he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil this also

I saw is from the hand of God for apart from him who can eat or who can find who can have enjoyment brothers and sisters this morning it is so easy to read and rehearse these words of the preacher partially it is so easy to read and rehearse what the preacher said as that there is nothing better for a person to do than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil and then run off in pursuit of finding enjoyment in our work and what we accomplish through our work the ability to eat well and the ability to live well and truly enjoy what we do and all the difference that it makes it's so easy to hear that in the words of the preacher and if we do we miss totally what the preacher was saying and the reason is that's not all that the preacher says notice the rest of what he says in verse 25 he says for apart from him apart from

God who can eat or who can have enjoyment the preacher is saying that this ability to eat and drink and find enjoyment in our toil is a gift from God's hand and apart from him there can be no true enjoyment and this is a very important insight it's an important insight from the preacher and it helps us to see that earlier when the preacher was lamenting his work and he found no enjoyment in his work he was speaking from the experiences of being away from God he was speaking from the experience of not being connected to God and as a result he toiled as he did his work and he did his work for himself and God was nowhere in sight God was nowhere in view of his work and the preacher is like so many people today who are engaging in their work apart from God and away from

[30 : 06] God and so all that they do is not this enjoyment of work instead it ultimately is a lamenting of work there are many people who pursue their work and they have no enjoyment that really comes from God's hand now I want us to consider what the preacher is really saying because I think in some of our minds and somebody alluded to it earlier about how people can enjoy their work and how many people say they really enjoy their work the preacher says that to eat and drink and find enjoyment in one's toil is a gift from God's hand but I think we know this morning that there are countless number of people in our lives and on this island and in our country and around the world who have food and drink and many of them would tell us that they thoroughly!

enjoy their work that they you know! do as work and they have fun doing it and all is well and they have an abundance of many things and they would acknowledge some of them that they are not living for God that they do not do their work as unto the Lord and that God is not a motivating factor in how they live and why they live so what is the preacher saying here's what he's saying when the preacher in verse 24 talks about eating and drinking and finding enjoyment in his toil he is not talking about the circumstantial happiness that people experience when all is going well and he's certainly not talking about three separate things eating and drinking and enjoying your work and

I think that's why some would confuse what the preacher is saying and say well unbelievers have that as well no the preacher doesn't talk about three separate things notice again in verse 24 that the preacher refers to eating and drinking and enjoying work as a collective experience that's why the second sentence in that verse he refers to these three activities as this as a singular as a collective and by referring to the three of them as a collective what the preacher is doing is he's actually referring to something else he's referring to contentment he's referring to contentment not just this happenstance happiness that we get because all the bills are paid and and and we have a job that pays us well and we like what we do and somebody is talking about he is talking about contentment he says again let's look at it there's nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his

Torah this also I saw is from the hand of God his point is that true contentment as we work in a fallen world is a gift that comes from the hand of God and he further tells us in verse 26 that the ability to experience contentment in this fallen world comes through the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and joy that God gives to those who please him again notice how he says it in verse 26 for to the one who pleases God who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy and brothers and sisters the witness of scripture this morning is that none of us is able to please God in and of ourselves none of us our best falls short the bible says that our righteousness are like filthy rags in the sight of

God none of us is able to please God only those to whom God extends saving mercy and grace can truly live for him and truly please him to them God gives the gift of being able to enjoy their labors in this fallen world through the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and joy wisdom that is from on high knowledge that is from on high joy that is from on high that the world didn't give and that the world cannot take away but in the latter part of verse 26 the preacher says he goes on to say that in contrast to the sinner to the one who is living apart from God to the one who is making his own way in life and achieving and accumulating things for himself who puts his signature on what he does God gives him the business of gathering and collecting and in the end

[35 : 32] God will give it to the one who pleases God and this is the most profound statement and I believe that our natural tendency when we read these words is to quickly ask the question how does God do this how does God give to the sinner the business of gathering and collecting and then he gives it to the one who pleases him but I don't think we should move to that question so quickly I think instead we need to ponder these words and we need to allow the truth of these words to grip our hearts that the God who cannot lie says this is what he does I know for many of us we have the same vision that Asaph had about life in Psalm 73 when all we can see is the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering and there doesn't seem to be much transferring of what the righteous have to the wicked what the wicked has to the righteous doesn't seem like what the righteous are doing is benefiting from what the wicked are gathering and collecting and so only

God can enable us to believe that his word is true and that he indeed has given to sinners the unhappy business of gathering and collecting and then transferring what they have gathered and collected to those who please him Asaph was only able to see this as God enabled him to see it and it's one of us want to say to us that rather than engage ourselves and try to wonder and see in our lives how does God do this it is far more important for us to accept that God has many ways of and this is indeed what God does these words that we are considering this morning in verses 18 through 26 signal to us a turning point in this letter or really a turning point in this message that the preacher is preaching the preacher has now concluded recounting his attempts to understand life he has now concluded telling us all of his pursuits and his endeavors and how we try to make sense of life under the sun he is finished with it and he brings us face to face with the truth that we see repeated throughout scripture and that truth is that there are really only two groups of people in the world no matter how you slice it at the!

the day put all of our distinctives aside there are only two groups of people in the world put aside our nationality and our places of origin put aside the color of our skin and our sex and our social and economic status when we do that there are really only two groups of people in the world and every single person is in one group or the other every one of us this morning is in one group or the other and I pray that we are in the one group that really matters the preacher identifies these two groups in verse 26 those who live for God and please him and those who do not live for God and please themselves and he calls them this last group he calls sinners and he tells us that God has given to them God has given to sinners this business of gathering and collecting and what they gather and collect

God in his own time and in his own way will give to those who please him but here's what's interesting when we consider these words of the preacher in the opening section of the book in chapter 1 and verse 13 the preacher writes something that is slightly different from what he is now saying in this concluding part in verses 24 through 26 he writes something slightly different in verse 13 of chapter 1 if you would look there just for a moment!

he writes and I applied my heart to seek out and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven it is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with and then he goes on to say in verse 14 I have seen everything that is done under the sun and behold all is vanity and a striving after wind and I trust you're able to see the difference between verse 13 of chapter 1 and verse 26 of chapter 2 in verse 13 of chapter 1 we see only one group of people the children of man and they were all given the same unhappy business to be busy with all of them without exception because of the fall they all fell in that one group and God gave them this unhappy business under the sun of busying themselves with so many different things and so many different endeavors and the preacher assessed it and he said it's all vanity he said

[41 : 28] I've seen it all seen it all nothing new under the sun I've seen it all and it's all vanity there's all striving after wind the whole enterprise is a striving after wind but now over in chapter 2 and verse 26 the preacher now tells us that there are two groups and the preacher in particular tells us that the sinners are the ones who have this unhappy business of gathering and collecting but there are others who have the gracious gift of enjoying their lives and enjoying their labors in a fallen world and here brothers and sisters the result of God's salvation could not be clearer although everyone was born into this world and joined the rebellious race of

Adam this rebellious race of sinners who were living their lives in a fallen world without any reference to God and engaging in activities that were for themselves as the preacher rightly describes as vanity God mercifully redeems and saves some of them so that no longer is the preacher referring to all the children of men having this unhappy business but he distinguishes!

between the children of men and he says there's a group there are some who God allows to eat and drink and to enjoy their labors and he gives them the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and joy and he enables them to serve him and to be pleasing in his sight and although they engage in a variety of work God enables them to experience joyful contentment and their contentment is really not rooted in having an abundance their contentment is not rooted in always having all that they need sometimes we look at real needs in the face and the apostle Paul is a prime example of that and he would tell us that he knows how to have abundance and how to have lack but to this group of people whom

God in mercy extracts out of Adam's fallen race and enables them to live in this world with true contentment in their endeavors they sometimes face these needs they sometimes don't have ideal circumstances they live in this fallen world and life can be hard but the joy can be true because it is a gift from the hand of God and they can find true contentment in their lives and in their labors in a fallen world the preacher does not explicitly say this but as we read his words of the enjoyment and the contentment that these whom God is pleased with are able to find in their labors in a fallen world one of the realities behind this contentment is also the ability to trust

God with the future the ability to know that all that we have comes from God that all that we possess belongs to him the earth is his and the fullness thereof the world and all who dwell in it every good gift that we have comes from him but they have come to the place to be able to trust him to trust him with the inheritance issue to trust him that he is the one who is able to distribute in accordance with his sovereign will yes we're called to be wise stewards yes we are called to do our best to ensure that whatever legacy or inheritance we have is to be preserved and to be protected but ultimately we recognize that it is in the sovereign hands of God and again it belongs to him anyway so we need not worry or fret about who will come after us and what they will do with what we work so hard for it's all

[46 : 22] God's anyway and so we who belong to him we do our best to be good stewards in the face of death we wisely plan our estates but we don't worry and we trust God and this is also a part of contentment in life brothers and sisters we see more clearly this morning what the preacher saw dimly the preacher just saw two groups of people sinners and those who please God but we don't just see two groups of people and just pass it by we know that one group ceased!

to be sinners they ceased! to be living with their backs to God and ignoring God in God's world and it's only because of what Jesus Christ did to pluck them out of that group of sinners that group of rebellious people who were ignoring God in God's world using God's breath to live for themselves we see more clearly this morning what the preacher saw dimly because we're able to see that this transfer became possible through Jesus Christ the one who lived a perfect life and the one who died a substitutionary death on behalf of sinners and the one who enables sinners like you and me to please God in the preacher's day those who found themselves in that group of people who pleased the

Lord were looking forward in faith to the saving work that God would do through Jesus Christ and this morning we who by the grace of God among those who please God we look back in faith on God's saving work through Jesus Christ and through the salvation that Jesus offers the salvation that he brings we're able to know true and lasting contentment from all of our labors even though we live in a fallen world and you see if Jesus had not come if God did not make it possible for people to come out of that race of Adam the children of men who had this unhappy business of toiling aimlessly in the earth then all of life would still be as the preacher described it vanity and a striving after wind and so if you are here this morning and you do not know

Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior my appeal to you this morning is to believe the gospel my appeal to you this morning is to believe that you like others like the rest of us who put our trust in Jesus Christ can live a life that is pleasing to God engaging in labors that are not based on circumstantial happiness but based on the fact that there is a God who gives the gift of happiness to his people who gives the gift of true enjoyment and true contentment of our lot in life and our circumstances and the things that we do and what we accomplish and what we don't accomplish that is a gift from God in a fallen world and so

I appeal to you this morning to not be blinded by circumstantial happiness because all seems to be going well because I can assure you that if God in his providence allows you to just grow old and whether it is facing death or perhaps even retirement you'd have regrets when all the activity ceases and that which you made to be your life is no longer in existence then so will regret increase and set in and all the worries that so many people can testify to I came across I was just looking at I just felt to try to consider some of the last words of famous people who died and one that stood out in my mind that

[51 : 36] I read was Bob Marley and his last words as he laid in a hospital in Florida moments away from death he said to his son money can't buy life had all the money no doubt to avail himself of even better medical care if it was available but it wasn't he said to his son money can't buy life the preacher serves us this morning because he's at the end of this road he's at this place in his life where he he sees the end of it all God enables him as Moses did as it were to look into the promised land he sees it and he tells us this is it's all vanity it's all a striving after wind it is a!

where is some toil if you labor in this life without reference to God and not mindful that he is the one who gives these gifts to us to realized this morning that there would be some of us who would profess to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior but you would acknowledge that you're not finding contentment in your work you would acknowledge that you find yourself exhausted instead and you still find yourself concerned and perhaps even worried about the future and what will happen to your assets and what will happen to your children and I encourage you this morning to look to the Lord look to the one who is able to give this gift of enjoyment this gift of contentment from our laborers and one of the things I would say to us this morning and I say this to myself quickly first the Lord really just impresses on my heart taking seasons to rest seasons to worship and rest is an expression of faith in God when we don't what we're doing in a sense is we're cheating and I speak to myself this morning primarily it's like when the invigilator in the exam says put your pencil down you continue to write so but God says to us and he gives this to us in the beauty of creation we see the

Sabbath and although we don't as we see in the New Testament approach that with the kind of legalism and requirement that we see in the Old Testament in terms of a day and this specific set of hours but that principle continues and in a sense there needs to come up time in all of our weeks in all of our days when we say I'm going to put the pencil down and I'm going to trust God I'm not going to strive I'm not going to try to get ahead I'm not just going to try to make this thing happen on my own why because it's all a gift from him what we accomplish what we achieve these are gifts from God's hands and when we are able to in faith pause and step back and say I'm going to rest and I'm going to trust God we are in fact trusting God and we are in fact saying

Lord this is truly a gift from your hand and I don't need to spend myself in the way that I'm spending it so brothers and sisters let us take time to worship and rest our bodies because it is an expression of faith in God and I pray that God will grant all of us this morning the grace to trust him with our lives and trust him with our legacies and whatever assets we may accomplish in our lifetime in this fallen world let's pray to