

Sorrow is Better Than Laughter

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Date: 12 June 2022

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[0 : 00] come thou fount prone to wander oh Lord I feel it prone to wander the God I love tune my heart take out your Bibles with me please and turn to Ecclesiastes chapter 6 the very end of 6 and the first half of 7 we're going to look at this morning we are halfway through Ecclesiastes this point marks the second part of Ecclesiastes I know you didn't know there's two parts doesn't it just kind of go on and on there's actually two parts to it as you look at it and read it carefully the first part, first six chapters are about the quest about the pursuit of fulfillment trying to find meaning, satisfaction, fulfillment in life his conclusion over and over again is that apart from God there is nothing fulfilling under the sun so part two begins now chapter 6 verse 10 which is now not a pursuit but now a conclusion an application now it's kind of there's the pursuit so what do we do about it?

how do we live wisely now? so this second section is on wisdom and he's going to begin with a couple of questions and then pursue to answer those questions according to his great, great wisdom and remember the author of this book is claiming to be Solomon or a Solomon-like person and if it is Solomon it is Solomon at his end it is Solomon when he has fallen away from the Lord it is Solomon in 1 Kings 11 when he has committed apostasy and not found fulfillment in God but seeks for it in other things so that's believable that it's that kind of Solomon who is no longer looking to God as his fulfillment so by the way next week so since we're halfway we want to take a review next week so we're going to do that right?

look forward to that so we've been kind of going through this strange wisdom of Ecclesiastes we're going to take a break and kind of connect some dots kind of put it together what have we learned so far?

what questions do we have? what answers do we have? where do we find Jesus in this book? because that's the most important question so okay, let us read first let's read Ecclesiastes chapter 6 beginning of verse 10 through chapter 7 verse 14 this is his first attempt to answer the question what is good?

so if you're able please stand as I read from Ecclesiastes 6 verse 10 whatever has come to be has already been named and it is known what man is and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he the more words the more vanity and what is the advantage to man?

[3 : 27] for who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow for who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?

answer a good name is better than precious ointment and the day of death than the day of birth it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting for this is the end of all mankind and the living will lay it to heart sorrow is better than laughter for by sadness of face the heart is made glad the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth it is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools for as the crackling of thorns under a pot so is the laughter of the fools this is also vanity surely oppression drives the wise into madness and a bribe corrupts the heart better is the end of a thing than its beginning and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit so be not quick in your spirit to become angry for anger lodges in the bosom of fools say not why were the former days better than these for it is not from wisdom that you ask this wisdom is good with an inheritance an advantage to those who will see the sun why for the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves or revives the life of him who has it conclusion consider the work of God who can make straight what he has made crooked in the day of prosperity be joyful and in the day of adversity consider

God has made the one as well as the other so that man may not find out anything that will be after him so reads the word let us pray that we might understand father open our eyes open our ears particularly soften our hearts that we might hear some things that we don't naturally want to hear how hard stuff is good for us help us to consider the wisdom in this and help us Lord to see Jesus as well who backs up this wisdom in his own teaching we pray this in Christ's name amen please be seated anybody remember Naomi Naomi she is one of my very favorite characters in the

Bible because she is as real as you get she is as genuine as you get she's not a poser not a faker not a something else her story is in the book of Ruth the book of Ruth is called the book of Ruth because Ruth is the one that shines out as that wonderful wonderful person extraordinary person in this book but really the story the book of Ruth is about Naomi she's really the central character she suffers greatly she experiences the hard things she experiences the death of her husband and then after a while then the death of one son and the death of her other son and then she's bereaved of all family she becomes bitter and angry and impatient she blames

God because her dreams are shattered she didn't have big dreams husband family grandkids that's all she wanted God took it all away so let me read you her words so you don't take it from me in Ruth chapter 1 verse 19 it describes her coming back from a famine coming back to the land of Israel to the promised land she's coming back not alone but with this woman called Ruth this gift of God that she doesn't see as a gift yet so the two of them Naomi and Ruth went on until they came to Bethlehem Bethlehem what's special about Bethlehem interesting huh and when they come to Bethlehem the whole town is stirred because of them and the women of Bethlehem say is this Naomi Naomi's here Naomi said to them don't call me Naomi which means pleasant call me

[9 : 14] Marah bitter bitter why for the almighty has dealt bitterly with me I went away full the lord has brought me back empty why call me Naomi when the lord has testified against me and the almighty has brought calamity upon me this is an angry woman this is a bitter woman this is a hurting woman and she blames it on God it's a bit shocking language isn't it it's quite not proper is it to speak such but Naomi is not a pretender she doesn't avoid her pain she lives in it she gives full vent at her anger and bitterness at the sovereign almighty God himself he has done this she is a believing Jewish woman she knows her

God and the only reason Ruth is coming with her by the way is not because of Naomi's pleasant disposition because Ruth has heard about this God so Naomi is a person who faces her reality and at the end of the book it starts with ruin and bitterness at the end of the book she sees the blessing of God God has shattered her dreams at the beginning but at the end she sees a whole different dream that she never would have imagined that God has now given her that is bigger than her so Naomi is a the reason I read that is because she is a living example of Ecclesiastes chapter 7 she is facing the very things our author is talking about in this book in this section what is good for men hard stuff or easy stuff unpleasant things or amusing stuff now he is not talking about what is easier what would we prefer he is talking about what is good for us what is better for us so she has learned the hard way

Naomi learned the hard way how adversity facing adversity dealing with reality is better than avoiding it then pushing it down then finding some escape she deals with death with mourning with sorrow with rebuke and this waiting for God and in the end discovers good a different good a bigger good an unimaginable good that was bigger than her so ecclesiastes brings us to see some wisdom now we're in part two we're dealing with wisdom he begins in chapter six verse ten by asking some questions he again repeats in verse ten you know what's whatever has come to be has already been except notice that he puts it in a little bit different phrasing this time he's not just saying nothing changes now he says whatever has come to be has already been named determined called who's the one that names everything by the way who makes everything and names everything

God right that's light that's darkness that's day that's night this is land this is sea etc etc he names everything which means he creates it and he owns it by the way he also named Adam Adam got to name Eve called her whoo that's the Hebrew woe man woe man okay so technically it's isha isha but woe man sounds better doesn't and then obviously has man name all the other things because man is the king over that creation he names it means he is responsible for it but so whatever has been come to be has already been named God's already set it all in order God's already named it and it is known what man is actually the word for man is Adam it is known what

Adam is and that he is not able to dispute with the one stronger than him who's the one stronger than Adam God not able why did you!

[14 : 12] me this way well you're asking me you're talking to me the Job asked that question right who are you well I'm sorry were you there at creation I'm sorry who are you Dust Mr.

Dust who are you okay so that's where he's beginning with the thesis now for the second part of the book right so then he's going to ask some questions verse 11 the more words the more vanity on and on and on so let's get to something what is the advantage to man verse 12 here's the question he's got two questions he's going to begin with one verse 12 who knows what is good for man not saying who knows what's good but who knows what's good for man what is beneficial for man what is best what is better than anything else for man right so that's the first question that's going to be the focus of chapter 7 and 8 and then the second question he asks at the end of chapter 6 for who can tell what will be after him under the sun who knows the future who knows what's going to happen later well that's going to be his focus in chapters 9 through 11 so that's where he's going he's setting us up for where he's going so in these opening verses he's raising the questions now as often in wisdom literature he connects his text together by phrases so in the end of chapter 6 10 to 12 there's several phrases that are repeated at the end of our text in chapter 7 10 through 14 so he's kind of tying it together for instance chapter 6 verse 10 he's going to say man is not able to dispute with

God and then in chapter 7 verse 13 he's going to say man is not able to straighten what God has bent okay so one it's more general man can't argue with God and then the conclusion in chapter 7 13 is whatever God has bent man is not able to straighten what God has done and God has done he is God and you are not it's a little bit of a fear of God factor then in chapter 6 verse 11 he's going to ask the question what's the prophet what's the advantage what do we get from all this nothing nothing nothing and he's going to ask the same question in chapter 7 verse 11 what's the prophet chapter 6 verse 12 he's going to talk about a shadow he says our life is vain our life is short our life is fleeting it's empty it's a vapor right and it's like a shadow it's just you know it's not all it's just kind of goes and then he's going to use that phrase shadow again in chapter 7 verse 12 except we don't see it in our translations because we think what's he says it talks about the prophet or the protection of wisdom protection of wisdom it's literally the shadow of wisdom we're going to translate it that way because we're going what's the shadow of wisdom we're talking about shadow of wisdom shadow or shade or shelter of wisdom so thus protection right our

God is a mighty shelter a refuge shade shadow and then again the last question in chapter 6 verse 12 he talks about who can know what's after him right what's after him and then again 7 14 it's again that man may not know what's after him God has done things that we can't change so that we might not know what is after us he's God you're not you trust kind of the point tell me okay so that's that's the setup so chapter 7 verses 1 through 14 that's where we're going to focus we're going to look at this theme that he brings out not only is he doing part two now changing his focus but chapter 7 these 14 verses in chapter 7 are actually a reflection of the first 15 verses in chapter 3 now chapter 3 is the most famous section of ecclesiastes for everything there is a time right

God has made everything beautiful in its time we love that because it's just and then he puts these contracts there's a time to be born and a time to die there's a time to weep and a time to laugh time for good time for heart right so he's using those words again better is death than birth better is sorrow than laughter so he's going to use so before he said God made time for all that and makes it beautiful makes it good now he's going to comment on it now he's going to answer that that was just an observation now he's going to say okay which is better death or birth which is better for man sorrow or laughter oh we say laughter of course it's easier It's funner it's more easy right what's wrong with laughter nothing nothing scripture even tells us it's good for us it's medicine it's healing but not always and it's not always what's best right so that's where he's going so which is better what's good for man that's our question so here now comes his answers and he tells a number of proverbs you know this is better than that this is better than that this is better than et something like eight or nine parables

[20 : 17] I think nine parables in these 14 not parables proverbs sorry proverbs wise advice sayings contrast comparisons what's better so what I did is to try to break it down I don't want to have nine points just wanted to have two I always like to have two why I don't know why I always have to have two it fits on my outline that way and helps me I need it simple and just one two so and it does usually the text breaks into two parts I try not to read into it that way but it sees it so verses one through four in chapter seven seem to deal with one big general issue facing reality facing the hardship is fruitful for us not easy for us but facing reality facing the hard stuff honestly!

then we will see good fruit rather than avoiding reality avoiding the hard stuff escaping from the reality we won't benefit from okay that's the point and then the second part verses five through fourteen it gets a little bit more personal a little bit more pointed where it's general at first now verses five he talks about my rebuke do I accept a rebuke me personally how do I deal with so it's better to hear a rebuke from a wise person than to what the song of fools something like that yeah to hear the song of fools so one's going to benefit me the other one's not going to benefit me okay so there we go so let's look at reason one verses one through four those who face reality the hardship of reality the hard things in life the sorrow the death the mourning those kind of things those who face reality honestly will see good fruit from it in contrast with those who avoid it and escape it will not profit at all in fact they will find more ruin in their pain they will find more pain in their pain because they never deal with their pain right so that's what we naturally we want to push down we don't want to look at it that's too hard okay but that the other thing

I need to say about this facing reality honestly notice in the life of! Naomi it was! it Job same kind of thing right Job everything's great everything falls apart God did it shall we accept good from God and not evil right who caused the devil to ruin Job's life what the devil made him do right no devil came before God and God said hey hey have you seen Job well yeah you got a hedge around him you know he's protecting him all right go go for it hedge is gone just don't take his life God started that okay let's be honest before a sovereign God you don't need to protect God from that okay he's big okay so when that happens how do he deal with that was a!

process for Job took 40 chapters for him right I mean he started out pretty good you know I did not sin with my lips but my soul was a whole other place we find out right and then everybody gets put in their place in the end right by God who says excuse me who are you what do you know okay so what's better verse one he starts easy a good name is better than precious ointment okay good name a good reputation is better than than all the expensive luxurious ointment you could gather okay get it that's valuable that's more valuable a good reputation is more valuable and then he goes to something hard then he surprises the day of death the day of death is better than the day of birth what are you getting at what's better we think well birth is better that's joyous that's good that's life that's positive the day of death that's hard how can that be better why would you say that well he expands on it verse two it's better to go to the house of mourning that's where death is thought about better to go to the funeral parlor rather than to go to the house of feasting to the wedding celebration or to the birth celebration how is that better well he gives this answer the end of verse two four see that little word for four those are really important words in scripture especially if you read

Paul if you want to understand what he's saying look for the fours why'd you say that for for explain for why here's the reason for this is the end of man what's the end of man death death is the end and okay what's the prophet what does he say for this is the end of all mankind literally this is the end of Adam for and the living those who are still alive will lay it to heart those who go to the funeral who go to the death and sit there now it's not our favorite thing to do I'd rather go to the house of feasting but if I go to the house of mourning!

[26 : 29] I don't want to do that I don't want to think about death I don't want to think about my fleeting days I don't want to but it's good for me it helps me take stock it helps me reevaluate my life in numerous ways you could number that yourself give it to heart to think see the house of mourning makes me think the house of mirth or the house of feasting I don't have to think I just enjoy right give me some more of them ribs okay facing reality facing reality there's nothing wrong with feasting he's not saying feasting is bad he's not saying laughter is bad okay not at all what's better for us what profits us more well it's the harder things no pain no gain well the pain but let me take something to numb the pain then I don't have to think about the pain that's our society it was this society too because they drink a lot of wine whatever makes the pain go away avoid escape don't want to think because that's hard okay wise and fool so what's better sorrow or laughter verse three sorrow is better than laughter now it's just a line by itself like nah laughter

I need some laughter yeah that good laughter is good not saying it's bad it's just saying sorrow really facing hardness in life is better than just let me go laugh and not think about anything let me turn on whatever comedy you want to watch and just laugh away and sometimes we do that don't we we take some of our comedies on vacation we just want to laugh not because we're avoiding something it's just I want to laugh that's okay that's okay but to do that all the time no!

not good not good not to avoid to seek so sorrow by the way this word sorrow Hebrew it's a little more elastic of a word it's bigger than just sorrow it's also has in it agitation vex and anger so I look at Naomi sorrow for Naomi was mad angry bitter upset right she was dealing with it you might think that was unhealthy of her it wasn't unhealthy because she was dealing with it honestly okay now she was she wrong she's not wrong about the source of her pain was it her best response it was an honest response it led to a better response it's a process remember process it's like we read the first two chapters of

Job and he's like he doesn't you know his wife's going nuts right his wife's like would you just curse God and die he's no we accept good and I don't think he said it like that I think he said it like shall we accept good from God and not evil I think that was because the later chapters kind of reveal another side of Job I didn't deserve this so sorrow better than laughter why reason verse three because by sadness of heart or sadness of face interesting sadness of face in other words I show it I don't hide it not a pretender not a poser I'm real in life sadness of face I show it remember Nehemiah went before the king and he went with sadness of face that was a death sentence for Nehemiah he took the risk right the king knows why is your face sad this is not sickness

Nehemiah came honest! so Naomi sadness of face so sadness of face will make the heart glad facing reality will bring joy later not fake not that oh praise God I'm suffering everything not that kind of it's like no come on later I can praise him when I see better right so Jesus said the same thing Diane pointed it out thank you you're right on track stop stop stop you're fine I know Holy Spirit I'm with you oh goodness try to see Diane is my friend don't worry so Jesus says right he's the same kind of thinker blessed are the poor in spirit spiritually poor the bankrupt the broken the one who can't fix himself blessed are those people the

[32 : 19] Pharisees are going what are you talking about that's the righteous person no the broken person the one who can't fix himself the one who knows he can't do better that's the blessed one because he's on the right road blessed are those who mourn and that word he used comes from the Psalms it means that taking what's in here and getting it out call it Naomi icing Job getting it out Psalms are full of that David vents in the Psalms he vents he pours out his soul all those feelings come out they don't look good they don't look very pious they don't look very godly they don't look they're just fooled they got all kinds of stuff they got anger bitterness sorrow in they got all kinds of stuff in there getting it out Jesus said blessed are those who mourn and get it all out why for they shall!

comforted the one who keeps it in no! the they vent and they find some breathing room and they find some perspective right wait till we read Jeremiah a little bit later okay so so so what's the point verse four here's the point wisdom versus folly what's better wisdom folly well wisdom the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning the wise person chooses the harder road the heart of the wise not just not the soul of the wise it's the heart of the wise and when the scripture talks about heart it means the thoughts and intentions the thoughts and intentions the heart we think of the heart as our feelings right in Hebrew and in the scripture it's the soul that's those feelings that's that's what you don't trust the soul the heart is about your intention about your so facing it the heart of the wise the thinking thoughts of the wise is in the house of mourning so he's facing the reality honestly the heart of the fool on the other hand the thoughts and intentions of the foolish person are in the house of mirth where they can just be amused and they can avoid and they can escape reality that's the contrast so question how do we bring

Jesus into this how do we get the gospel out of this we already saw Jesus agrees in terms of blessed are those who mourn they shall be comforted but how can suffering and pain be good for us we know it is but remind me right I know it is but remind me don't just tell me that tell me why that!

is right so how is consider him talking about Jesus consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself why think about Jesus so that you may not grow weary or faint hearted he's talking to people who are weary and faint hearted how do you recover when you're depressed and you're discouraged and you're down and you've got no energy you've got nothing left where do you get your energy for that well you in your struggle against sin see this is the issue of adversity in your struggle against sin see here's the good news God has not just saved you but he's still saving you from sin we have been saved from sin the penalty of sin but still as we walk day to day by he is still saving us and he still saves us in the same way by grace through faith in

Christ alone by the way we're getting some more of these there's five of them we got in Christ alone we're getting some more we got we got sola deo gloria we got gloria to God sorry but it's still in Christ alone it's not in my strength it's by grace through my faith in God in what Christ has already accomplished so he's still doing that so in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted the point of shedding your blood and you have not but what you have done is you have forgotten the exudation that's addressed to you as sons quoting from Proverbs my son do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord but I don't like discipline from the Lord I don't I really don't hold that in high esteem yeah that's because you're a fool!

[37 : 23] you're responding from the natural person you're responding like Adam right so don't regard it lightly value the discipline of the Lord nor be weary when reprov'd by him oh come on Lord why for the Lord disciplines the one he loves he's not mad at you he's not disappointed in you he's disciplining you because you're his child and he loves you thanks Lord right I wish you wouldn't love me that much right he's treating you as sons for what son is there that whom his father does not discipline it if you are left without discipline which all have in which all have participated then you are illegitimate children and not sons besides this we have earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for that for they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them they didn't always get it right right

Zach they didn't always get it right but it seemed best to them we respect that we know that's for our good but he right shall shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits who doesn't get it wrong shall we not much more embrace it not fight it but embrace it for they are earthly fathers oh got that right discipline in short time has seen best them but he disciplines us for our good what's our good that we may share his holiness!

see he's still saving us from sin we're still in a process of being saved from sin that we might become more holy that we might be more like him that we might be more conformed to the image of his son is that worth it yes here's the realistic statement the understatement of the passage for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant right yeah got that one right yeah it's painful not pleasant yes got it but later but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to who to those who have been trained by it not to those who fight it but those who have been trained by it which means it's good for us if we're trained by it which means we embrace it rather than fight it we embrace it as a child does from his father we may not like it it doesn't mean we smile and have a false face it means yeah it is painful it's not pleasant but it's good and it will produce fruit right if you fight it remember his wisdom in chapter 6 verse 10 we're not able to dispute with the one who's stronger than us so if you fight with

God if you bring stuff into your life that you don't like are you going to win? is it going to get better if I fight God on this no when I got healed from my depression not totally healed but relieved from my depression when it became I could feel that relief again it it was doing that it was letting go it was completely accepting that depression and all that came with it as a gift from God to correct my perspective not easy process process okay so part two verse five through fourteen those who humble themselves those with humble patience before God they hear rebuke from the wise and they are patient not proud those with humble patience before God are revived by wisdom which he will talk about in verse twelve so again comparisons wise or fool verse five says it's better to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools contrast between wisdom and foolishness hearing the rebuke from wise is better now how many really like to be rebuked anybody oh thank you

Diane by the way we don't like that don't point out my fault come on give me a break iron sharpens iron right the the the the hurts from a friend are better than the kisses of my enemy right so it's better it hurts it's hard it it makes me be humble right versus proud hearing the rebuke from the wise even though it's harder is better for me than to listen to the song of fools what's the song of fools verse six he gives this interesting little analogy that just as the crackling of thorns under a pot so is the laughter of the fools what's the crackling of thorns under a pot anybody ever burned thorns?

[43 : 01] ever burn thorns? how do they burn? hot short not a good heat source according to what I've read I've never tried to burn thorns but apparently that's the idea of the parable it's just makes a lot of noise it's done and it really is not profitable at all it's just loud noise and short that's the laughter of a fool it's just irritating and empty that's that's so it's the laughter of a fool well instead of hearing the rebuke so what's our foolish answer to rebuke something like that just stupid then verse six so then verse seven what's the consequence seven's a little bit of an odd verse it could be positive or negative surely oppression drives the wise man into madness and the bribe corrupts the heart so the wise man could be the one who's rebuking somebody else for their oppression for their bribe and the fool doesn't listen so it drives him nuts could mean that could be the other way could be the wise man unfortunately like Solomon getting tempted and falling into oppression and bribes could go either way let's move on verse eight patient or proud what's better what's more profitable patience or pride okay

I know pride no patience I mean so he starts easy again verse eight the end is better than the beginning the end is better than beginning the beginning I don't know everything at the end I know more I've got perspective I can see Joseph at the beginning sees right he's thrown into a pit he's sold into slavery he goes into prison he knows the beginning for Joseph was not good well he got a coat but you know he lost that but the end at the end he could see you meant it for evil God meant it for good now I see what God was doing so perspective but then he goes to the next part patience and pride patience and spirit is better than proud spirit literally in Hebrew it's the long spirit long spirit is better than tall spirit long spirit come in many moon no sorry my Indian long spirit tall spirit so long spirit long suffering long tall spirit like I'm too big for you he's arrogant so long faith is better than tall faith so the person who's patient and therefore why is that well verse 9 here comes some wisdom don't be quick in your spirit don't be the short spirit to become angry for anger lodges in the bosom of the fool so now back to fools again so

James chapter 1 same thing right be quick to hear slow to speak slow to anger same wisdom so don't be quick to anger he's not saying don't be angry just don't be quick to it and the problem is if you're quick to it without thinking then it lodges in the bosom right so what does Paul say in Ephesians right that be angry but do not sin right so deal with anger rightly and don't right go to sleep angry because what that that gives the devil a foothold gives him a place gives him so that breeds bitterness and grudging and I forgave that person really have you really let it go I don't think so and it's really good for you look at all that grudge is doing for you good for you you're having a lot of fruit no we all know what's easier grudge what's harder patience you are you guys enjoying this so far a lot of fun same thing verse 10 so here's another kind of impatient thing do not say why were the former days better than these it's always easier to look back on the past say oh it was better then we selectively forget the other stuff it's like oh oh the beginning of

America was certainly better than now right wasn't it I mean they never argued they were in one spirit right there was no lying and nothing right yeah read George Washington read Hamilton read oh my gosh from the get it's the same we're just better at it now it's just more prolific and never mind but we can say oh it was better then make America great again what was great yeah there were great things there are still great things it's not wise to talk about the past is better than the present that means I'm impatient about the present and he says not wise to ask that so verse 11 wisdom is good wisdom is good wisdom is better than foolishness wisdom with inheritance is good it's an advantage it's a profitable to those who are under the sun why is wisdom an advantage why is it profitable verse 12 for here's another reason for the protection literally the shadow of wisdom is like the shadow of money the protection the refuge of wisdom is like the refuge of money it helps it's an advantage of knowledge is that here's his point the advantage of knowledge and wisdom is that wisdom preserves the life it doesn't ruin the life in fact if you look up the word behind preserve there it's the word revive revive!

Wisdom revives the life wisdom gives me perspective to move on wisdom revives what's the right way to see things wisdom revives me from wallowing in my pain that's depression it just needs to get deeper wisdom helps me look out what helped Naomi recover from her bitterness she started to notice things Ruth and it was all Ruth where'd you go gleaning today oh I just happened to go to this field it was the nicest man she didn't talk like that and Naomi hears the word Boaz and she's like oh you didn't just so happen dearly darling oh my gosh

[50 : 46] God is still working and she starts seeing starts seeing God's working right in the end she ends up with this little baby Naomi has a baby Naomi has a baby we'll read that later I love that story so what's the application verse 13 and 14 here's this conclusion consider the work of God not just think about your life consider the work of God think about God and what he's doing in that relates to your life so you have prosperity rejoice he says right verse 14 in the day of prosperity be joyful in the day of adversity consider think think why what so consider the work of God verse 13 why what what kind of work are we talking about who can make straight what he has made crooked that's a strong statement wait a minute

God makes things crooked why did you make me like this Lord I don't like the way I am I think I'll change it who can straighten what God has made crooked God made you that way God made everyone the way they are with the handicaps with their gifts and their handicaps some are harder than others to deal with I don't have very many oh sorry okay yeah I do I have some really really annoying handicaps that I've been born with really annoying would love to straighten those bent things even

Jesus struggled with this huh before the cross oh take this cup please take this cup I don't want this cup but not what I want it only took him one prayer right to resolve that no no man our dear precious Lord he struggled with that he was real with that I don't want that crooked cup no humanity needs you to take that cup everyone's soul depends on you taking that cup he didn't go in just say praise Jesus I'll take that cup no he didn't say praise himself praise Abba all right so what's better consider

God's work in good rejoice in bad see his work consider see look think why because consider why because God has made one as well as the!

other God made the day of prosperity for you and God made the day of adversity how's Joel going to preach this text I wonder I was wondering you know J.O.

[54 : 28] Joel Osteen you know your best life now which he mostly gets it from the Old Testament he can't get it from this one he can't get it from Jesus so day of adversity consider God has made one as well as the other from God not from your negative thoughts not from whatever psychologists would say it is it's from God and it's meant to change you it's meant to conform you to make him more like him so okay so that's the lesson so see the good right it's a process how do you do that how do you see good in the adversity how do you see it in the middle I get it I get the concept it's good for me right God is God and I am not how do I do that so let me give you the illustration or the example the living example of a man named

Jeremiah Jeremiah was a prophet of God he didn't have a best life now he did not have a happy life let me read what he says it's in the book of laments he wrote the book of laments which are named after his many laments his many weepings and sorrows and hardships okay this is a man who faced reality he faced his enormous affliction with humble patience although it didn't sound like it sometimes so here's what he says laments three I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath not man's God's wrath he God has driven and brought me into darkness without any light surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long he has made my flesh!

and my skin waste away he's broken my bones he's besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago he has walled me about so that I cannot escape stuck he has made my chains heavy though I call and cry for help get this though I call and cry for help he shuts out my prayer he's blocked my ways with blocks of stones he has made my paths crooked!

he is a bear lying in wait for me a lion in hiding he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces he has made me desolate he bent his bow and sent me as a target for his arrow he drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver I have become the laughing stock of all people the object of their taunts all day!

long he has filled he has sated me with wormwood he has made my teeth grind on gravel he has made me cower in ashes my soul is be wrapped up peace I have forgotten what happiness is so I say my endurance has perished and so has my hope from the Lord please remember my affliction and my wanderings the wormwood and the gall because my soul certainly continually remembers it and it's bowed down within me say love see love pause wait change next verse but all that bad all that venting all that facing of the reality all that mourning getting it out before

[58 : 49] God now he speaks wisdom but this I call to mind this I consider this I refocus and therefore I have hope what what changes everything the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases okay man he's got a twisted view of God's love God's given him bitterness and all that you know that's love discipline the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases his mercies what I don't deserve never come to an end they are new every morning great is your faithfulness and then the phrase that turns it all what's his motivation okay he remembers

God's love and his mercy his faithfulness but what's the motivation in his life what does he want most where is he banking everything the Lord is my portion the Lord is my portion says my soul therefore I will hope in him the Lord is good to those who wait for him not for good he is good for those who wait for him to the soul who seeks him it is good it is better it is best that one should wait quietly ouch for the salvation of the Lord waiting is humble patience for the Lord that will bring revival all right anyone have it worse than

Jeremiah anybody anybody I bet every one of you could relate to some of the things that he said have felt that is it okay to say that out loud would you feel like that yeah God already knows what you think okay okay you're not going to shock him or surprise him not going to offend him tell him the truth yet in the end he can call something to the mind in the end he can he can consider and reflect with all of that bad in his life all that complaint all that mourning all that sorrow all that pain he can say but I can remember this I can call this to mind I can make my mind be renewed!

what's it really all about? the Lord is my portion not pleasure pleasure is not my portion not ease ease is not my portion that's not what I live for it's I'm not finding fulfillment in possessions or power or a big name my portion my dream is him that's it him however I can get him because this life is a shadow as Paul says when I compare the fleeting pains of this life with the eternal weight of glory and there's no argument there's no debate right that's all I want all I want is him all I seek is him so I will wait for him now that's not easy because when's he gonna come when's he gonna lift me up so let me close with the end or the rest of the story of

Naomi here's the end of the story so the ladies spoke the women of Bethlehem spoke at the beginning of the story it's Naomi don't call me Naomi into the story the ladies speak again this is cool because the ladies speak at the beginning they speak they're interpreting the story for us so chapter 4 verse 13 Boaz took Ruth you missed the whole romance there's romance going on in between Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife and he went into her and the Lord gave her the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son then the women said to Naomi blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer remember when she came to town he's left me he's abandoned me I went away full I came back empty and he did that women are reminding her

[64 : 06] Naomi look look look what he got look look look you're not empty he has not left you without a redeemer a remedy oh gosh this is good and may the name be renowned in Israel he this child shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age for your daughter remember she lost two sons right your daughter in law this ruth woman this incredible person your daughter in law who loves you who is more to you than two sons three sons four sons five no seven sons more to you than seven sons talk about a reward lost two got seven remember seven in the Bible is perfect yeah you have a

Christ in the flesh in this Ruth Christ like person then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse mine mine mine mine stay away Ruth mine mine mine no no no and the women of the neighborhood gave him a name saying a son has been born to should say Ruth right to Naomi this is for Naomi and they named him Obed good name good name good name Obed and what's the point of all this he was the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of some guy some guy the runt of Jesse's son David and all sudden we read this story and at the very end we get the punch line and we get oh this little

Naomi person this little Ruth person it wasn't just about them it's about David because then David is really about Israel and David has a descendant who is you know the really big answer and Naomi gets to be part of that of course she didn't know where all that went she does now she got to watch and hang oh oh oh oh bed you little boy you good boy all right so Naomi's story starts with sorrow ends in joy starts with bitterness ends with blessing starts with anger ends with acceptance she faced reality head on she would not avoid it she did not try to escape it she faced the full brunt of her adversity she confronted it before

God and through the process she found God's goodness let's pray father we thank you for this word we thank you we don't like hard stuff Lord as the book of Hebrews says it's it's really not pleasant it's painful but we recognize you bring it about to for our good that we might become more like you so so so work in our soul and our heart and our mind that we might want to be more like you we pray in Christ's name amen amen!