

# Woe To the Lone Wolf

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[ 0 : 00 ] I used to think that those were strange words to sing something like, let all the moons and the stars in the universe sing praises to the living God.

What is that? And then you read Psalm 19, it says, the heavens declare the majesty of God. God made creation to declare his glory, and it's only blind men that cannot see this.

And if we stop praising the rocks of Christ. That's right. That's right. Amen, brother. Take your Bibles out with me and turn to Ecclesiastes chapter 4.

You will find Ecclesiastes after Psalms. Psalms is pretty easy to find. The biggest book in the Bible right in the middle, and just go to the right and you'll have Ecclesiastes.

And go over a couple of chapters to chapter 4. We've been looking at, as the theme of Ecclesiastes is, a wrestling with hard questions.

[ 1 : 07 ] Difficult issues of life. Is there under the sun anything satisfying, fulfilling, meaningful? Is there anything?

And the time that we're given is fleeting. What can we do with it? So, we come this time to another issue.

Being alone or working alone. Is there any benefit to that? Any good to that? And how does that relate to things like singleness and widowhood?

So, how do those things factor into this? So, let's read the text. Then we'll pray for the Lord to speak to us. And then we'll dig in. So, if you're able, please stand.

As I read from Ecclesiastes chapter 4. Beginning at verse 7. Verse 7. Again. Again.

[ 2 : 12 ] So, that's his introduction to a new subject. Again. I saw vanity under the sun. One person who has no other.

Either son or brother. Yet, there is no end to all his toil. And his eyes are never satisfied with riches. So, that he never asks. For whom am I toiling? And depriving myself of pleasure. This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

Two are better than one. Because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls.

And has not another to lift him up. Again. If two lie together, they keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone.

[ 3 : 18 ] Two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken. Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king.

Who no longer knew how to take advice. For he, speaking back of the youth. For he went from prison to the throne.

Though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. I saw all the living who move about under the sun. Along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place.

There was no end of all the people. All of whom he led. Yet, those who come later will not rejoice in him.

Surely this also is vanity. And striving after wind. Amen. Let's pray. Father, guide us today.

[ 4 : 24 ] Instruct us. Enlighten us. Some of what we read sounds sensible. Some of what we read is a bit obscure.

So grant us eyes to see and thoughts to understand. But particularly, Father, we pray that you would show us Jesus in this.

As Jesus said, all the scriptures speak of me. Show us how this speaks of Jesus. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. So do you ever prefer to work alone?

You know, you're doing a project, right? You're doing a project. And it's just kind of like, yeah, just let me do it. It'll be faster, more efficient. If I got to bring you up to speed, it'll take forever.

[ 5 : 25 ] So just let me do it. You ever do that? You like that? Yeah? It's not a bad thing. It's just, you know, you prefer that. Well, my dad was like that.

I love my dad. My dad could do pretty much anything with his hands. He was a carpenter. He was an electrician. He was a plumber.

He was a mechanic. He worked with livestock. You name it, he did it. Right? And he was really good at it. So when I needed help with a car, you could fix it.

When I, we got a house, he said, oh, we got things to fix. Dad, can you help us fix it? Yeah. So he could fix it. And it got to the point where, hey, Dad, could you let me help?

I want to learn. And, you know, it's just easier if I do it. It's quicker. Yeah, but it's not productive.

What about the day when you're not here?

[ 6 : 31 ] Oh, don't worry about that. So I gradually talked him into some help where, okay, you can go up in the attic. Yeah, yeah, you could do that. Drag the wire.

Oh, you could go under the house. In California, that's like this. It's, it's, it's, it's what Jesus called the narrow gate, which is literally the groaning gate because you groan to go through that.

He said, yeah, you could do that. All right. Thanks, Dad. I love my dad. So that's one thing. This text talks about an individualist.

A independent, lone wolf, solitary person. Not just prefers to be alone, but will only work alone.

Doesn't mean he doesn't have other relationships. Doesn't mean he doesn't work with others. But he's the top dog and he's the one that runs everything because it's quicker and it's more efficient.

[ 7 : 42 ] And I don't have to get it through anybody else. And I can just do the way I want. The lone wolf. I thought that phrase matched this.

And then I looked up what a lone wolf is, where that phrase come from. You know, wolves live in packs. They're family. Ding, ding, ding. I got it right. And a lone wolf is unique.

It's not normal. There are various things that can cause a wolf to go on its own. Either be kicked out of the, you know, out of the pack or just leave solitary.

Or maybe he's the old alpha wolf that no longer is the alpha and he has to go. So whatever. But then they're on their own and it's not what they're bred for.

It's what they're made for. But they go alone. They're out solitary. So let me ask a question to kind of bring this into biblical realm.

[ 8 : 48 ] So God gave the Israelites ten commandments. Right? Why did they need that? Why did they need ten commandments?

Not just ten, but why did they need commands? What is the purpose? We find out in the New Testament, the purpose of the law. When you read the Old Testament, you think the purpose of the law is, well, I have to keep that to be blessed.

Which is true. Under the Old Covenant, if you keep it, then you will be blessed. You will be rich. You will be prosperous. You will be fruitful. You will. You. It's a covenant.

If you obey, you will be blessed. But if you disobey, that's the part we avoid. If you disobey, you will be cursed.

You will be poor. You will be, I will not protect you, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Which was where, that was the end that Israel was on the whole time. They could never keep it. And that's the point.

[ 9 : 51 ] The real purpose of the law is to show we can't. It's to show our sin. It's to reveal our sin. And it's to drive us to brokenness.

To, as David did, cry out for mercy. That's the point. So why do they need it? They need it because naturally they will do the opposite.

Which is what they usually did. Even David. A man after God's own heart. A man after God's own heart.

One afternoon. Boom. He's a different man. He's just as normal. Or, eh, eh, eh.

Right? He goes, he, yeah, okay. Different sermon. But we get it. Right? Even our best. Filthy racks.

[ 10 : 55 ] Filthy racks. So, so, okay, that's Israel. Yeah, Israel needed the law. But Christians, you know, we're under a new covenant. Well, Jesus gave us a command too.

He gave us a new one. He gave us just one. One. One. One. If you do that, you're good.

Right? What's the new command? You shall love one another. Not as yourself.

That's the old one. As I loved you. That's a whole different. Whole different ball of whack. Whole different high standard. Then they'll know you're my disciples.

Then you, you, you know, you know the truth. Truth set you free. You, you, you're good. If you do that. If you love one another as I have loved you. You say, well, what about loving God?

[11:54] Well, the one who loves God will do that. It takes care of that. You only have one thing. You only have one job. Just love one another as I've loved you.

That's all you got to worry about. So why do we need that? Why did he give it? Because he fulfilled the law. Why did he tell us that?

Because naturally we will do the opposite. Naturally left to ourselves if we're not abiding in Christ. If we're not thinking intentionally about faith. If I'm just reacting to a situation. I will not love my neighbor or my brother. Even my brother James.

As Jesus loved me. And James is easy to love. Just asking. To me.

[12:56] To me is my brother. That's why we need. So just thinking of that.

Why do we need those things? Because we are naturally selfish. Oh dear, I bring up little Max. So Brent and Sarah have this little Max.

This little precious little boy. And are you going to teach him about obedience? And right?

Honor. Now why do you need to do that? Right? So we don't have to teach a child. How to disobey. You ever thought about that? You don't? It comes natural. Even in a precious little innocent bundle like that. And we're like, where did they get that?

[13:57] Back to Genesis 3. Right? Back to me. Okay? So we. Because we're naturally selfish. We all have a natural selfish tendency.

To be self-reliant. Self-sufficient. Self-protecting. Self-promoting. Self-whatever you want to fill in the phrase. And that leads to pitfalls.

And that's what our. That's how we come to Ecclesiastes 4. Ecclesiastes 4 shows us two pitfalls.

Two hindrances. Two barriers.

For the self-reliant person. The lone wolf. The one who prefers and even wants to do it on their own. And for themselves.

So before we get into the text. I want to show you a couple of things. Because you read this text. You read verses 7 through 12. It talks about, you know, two are better than one.

[14:59] Okay, that's the whole section. And then in verse 13 he gets into something else. It's different. It's another better than. But it's a different subject. So it doesn't seem like it relates.

But they do. So I want to show you some connections in these verses. Verse 7 through 16. There are connections between these two proverbs. The proverb each begins.

Better is this than that. Okay, so we have two proverbs. So in verse 8 he says. Where is it?

Oh, so here's the vanity. One person is with no other. Either son or brother. Yet there is no end to all his toil. Yet there's no end to all his toil. Then we go down to verse 16.

And in the other situation with the king you have. There was no end to all the people. Same phrase. Same kind of burden. No end to all the work for this guy.

[15:55] No end to all the people for this guy. Okay, a different kind of burden. But similar. Parallel. Then verse 9 we have the better than. Verse 9. Two are better than one. Okay. That's one parable.

Excuse me. Proverb. And then verse 13 we have a second one. Better was poor than wise. Okay, so it's a different proverb. But showing a different connection.

So. So better two than one. It's better to have two than one. The other is better to be wise than a fool. They're similar in that there's a comparison there.

But both of them are addressing the lone wolf. Both of them are addressing the one who does it by themselves. So you have the one alone driven to succeed by himself.

And you have the other one who's a king. But he's a foolish king who wants to do it alone. He doesn't want any wisdom. He doesn't want any advice. He doesn't want to listen to anybody.

[16:58] He's a lone wolf king. Got it? Okay. That's the similarity. One more thing that connected it. Which was odd. In fact it almost sounds awkward.

In fact it's so awkward that the translators don't translate the word. Okay. But in the original you'll see the connection. It's the word second. Second. We have the word two.

Two are better than one. Right. And actually literally verse 12. So verse 12 we have. Though a man might prevail against one who is alone.

Two will withstand him. Literally what he says is. The second will withstand him. Not just two. But the extra one. The second one will withstand him.

Okay. So it's not just two. But the second. The added one. And then in verse 15 we have the second again. But it's not translated. Verse 15 says. I saw all the living who move about under the sun.

[18:00] Along with that youth. Anybody in their Bible have a little asterisk there? A little one. A little. You know. Check that. Check the. You know. We forgot to put this word in there. That second youth.

Yeah. I left it out. The second youth. No. See that's awkward. That's why the translators left it out. It's awkward. Just say that youth. No.

The writer said the second one. Because he's relating to the previous parable. A proverb. Where it talks about the second is important. And here now the second is important.

In a different way. Just wanted you to know. There's these parallels. Which actually connect these two proverbs. That seem different. That's all I wanted to point out.

That they go together. There's a structure to there. And as well. There's a linguistic structure. That goes to this. It starts with. You know. In verse 7.

[18:58] He's going to talk about. The vanity way. The futile way. And then he's. And then in verse 9. He's going to talk about. The better way. So he's going to compare. So there's a futile way.

Which is you know. All alone. Then there's the better way. Which is two better than one. And then verse 13. He's starting another proverb. But he's starting with the better way first.

Starts with the better way first. And then verse 15 and 16. He gets to the futile way. Okay. So it's just kind of a. He kind of goes backwards. Starts with futile.

Then goes to better. Then in the second way. He goes from better. Then to the. The futile way. So that's how we're going to look at it. Though they're different. They have the same point.

The same point in both of them. Is that there are pitfalls. In pursuing fulfillment. For the lone wolf. There are pitfalls.

[19:52] There are snares. There are hindrances. There are barriers. There are traps. For those. Who pursue. Fulfillment. For themselves.

By themselves. So how does a lone wolf's pursuit. Hinder any lasting satisfaction. How is it they never find fulfillment. They never find great meaning.

In their life. Because there are two. Snares here. Two barriers. So in verses 7 through 12. This. This first lone wolf. Is. Is the. The driven independent. The driven individualist. Okay. This is. This is the. This is the go-getter.

This is the driven. Individualist. The lone wolf. Seeking. Achievement. And then in verses 13 to 16.

[20:48] We have a king situation. We have. A young. A young wise. Person. And an old foolish king. So here we have. Power. Power. Represented. In this. Second one.

Those who have power. Those who are leading. Those who are. Who are. Governing. Others. Okay. So the second one.

Applies to those in power. First one applies to the driven individuals. Second one applies to those in power. So let's look at the first one. Verses 7 to 12. Here's the first scenario.

Here's how I'd summarize it. The driven individualist. The lone wolf. Will never find satisfying achievement. The driven individualist will never find satisfying achievement.

It says that right there in verse 8. Right. He never. His eyes never satisfied with riches. Okay. So he breaks it down in two ways.

[21:50] He talks about the futile way. The better way. And then I want to add a best way. Okay. Because he leaves that out. So. Futile way. Verse 7. Again he says. Here's the perspective.

I saw vanity under the sun. So again. That's his perspective. This is under the sun. This is simply an earthly secular. Worldview. Kind of perspective. This is not above the sun.

This is not a heavenly view. This is just an under the sun view. And it's. And it's accurate. I saw under the sun. What? Verse 8. Verse 8 is the problem. Here's the vanity.

One person who has no other. Not even a son or a brother. So he's not talking about married person. He just has nobody. Not even a son or a brother.

Yet. There's no end to all his toil. And his eyes are never satisfied with riches. So the vanity is. He's one who's toiling all alone. And there's no end to his toil.

[ 22 : 48 ] And more importantly. He's never satisfied. His eyes are never satisfied. With riches. He's getting rich. But it's not enough. It's like Solomon.

Right? At the end. Right? Didn't have enough. Loved women. Had to have more women. Apparently. 700 and 300 weren't enough.

I don't know. Never could have enough. David had the same problem. Not as big of a problem. You know. Why do you need Bathsheba? I don't know.

Gotta have her. So that's. You know. He's not just physically drained. The toil's never ending. He's a workaholic. He's just driven. Right?

He's physically drained. But internally. He's empty. His eyes are never satisfied. He's never fulfilled. He's driven. For more. But he never. Can get it.

[ 23 : 43 ] So it's unfulfilling. So that's the futile way. Now he urges a better way. In verse 9. What's better. What's better. Is two. Than one. It's better. That there's a second person.

Besides the first person. That's better. And then he gives reasons. Because they have a good. Reward for their toil. There is advantages. To. Two.

Instead of one. Now in our world. I don't know if that works. Right? We were talking about that in class. If you add one. Two. If you add another person.

Then. Then you disagree. Then you don't get anywhere. Right? If you add a board. Then they have to approve it. And you can't move on. Right? So. So. You can see where this. This rugged individual.

It's like. Just let me. Just. I just want to run it. I know what I'm doing. Right? So it's more efficient. And faster. And all that. But. He's saying. Wisdom says. It's better to have two.

[ 24 : 37 ] And here's why. Not because it's faster. But because. Verse 10. Here's the first reason. For if they fall. One will lift up his fellow.

But woe to him who is alone when he falls. And he doesn't have anyone else to pick him up. So. So one. It's important because it's support. You have support.

Because there are times when you may fall. So. This proverb writer. This Solomon person. Is probably talking about making a trip.

And you made a trip in the old days. Before. You know. Cars. For. Stuff. You made a trip. And it was dangerous. You could fall. Into a pit.

In the dark. And if you fall into a deep enough pit. And you're all alone. You. You're toast. But if you have somebody else there. They can get you out. That's kind of what he's saying. You got support.

[ 25 : 33 ] Somebody else can lift you up. If you fall. You have support. Then he says a second one. Verse 11. Again. If two lie together. They keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? He's just simply saying.

If you're traveling. And it's a cold night. If you're by yourself. You. You. You may freeze. But if there's somebody else there. At least you'll keep warm. So that's better. There's comfort.

In having a second person. Okay. Might not be faster. But there's comfort. There's aid. And then finally. Verse 12. And though a man might prevail. Against one who's alone.

The second. Will withstand. Then if you had a third one. Oh. Safety in numbers.

Strength in numbers. I won't mention the warriors. Whoops. Just did. Sorry. Inside joke. That was for James. All right.

[ 26 : 35 ] I think it has something to do with basketball. Yeah. No. No. No. Don't bring it up. Don't. No. Don't bring it up. So advantages. There's advantage to support.

There's advantage to comfort. There's advantage to safety. The second makes you safer. Makes you stronger. And the fact that he mentions a third one.

A threefold cord is not quickly broken in terms of its strength. He's not talking about a mate here. He's not talking about marriage. He's talking about an individualist who's driven.

He's not saying marriage is better than singleness. Because what about Jesus? What about Paul? What about Naomi? What about the widows? Right? He's not saying that. Although that's where a lot of people go with this. Because that's what it kind of sounds like.

[ 27 : 36 ] First reading. He's talking about a threefold cord. Threefold cord. All right. So that's. So the feudal way.

Get it. Right? All alone. You're never satisfied. That's not good. Better way. Yeah. Better. Two are better than one. It's better to have the support and the comfort and the safety and the strength.

That's better. But is that it? It's all he's got. Right? It's all he's got. If you've got a choice, you know, it's better to have two. Three. Okay.

I got a problem with that. Is that it? That's the best you can offer? Under the sun, that's the best you can offer. If you just live in this world, that's the best you can offer. Two are better.

Right? That's it. But what about. And I don't think this passage is about marriage. It's not about marriage is better than singleness. It's about the driven individual.

[ 28 : 37 ] It's about life under the sun. Two are better than all the toil doing it alone. There's advantages to working together. But what's the best?

And Jesus said, all these scriptures in the Old Testament speak of him. How does this speak to us about Jesus? How does Jesus enter into this?

Right? That's what we. Jesus taught us. That's how we're to read the Old Testament. That's not how his disciples read it. That's not how the religious leaders of their day read it. But he tells us in the upper room in Luke 24.

The scriptures were speaking about me. And you didn't believe them. Because you didn't see it. So he's teaching us to look. Where's Jesus in this?

He's in the way that's not mentioned. There's the futile way. There's the better way. Then there's the Jesus way. So what's that? What's the Jesus way?

[ 29 : 41 ] See? What is it that he does that just a simple mate can't do? A mate. Ouch. A mate can make it better for me.

He can make it better for me. Right? Numbers can make it better. God put us in a body that's better for us, of course. But how does adding Jesus, and maybe that's the third chord, right?

That's the third chord. How does that make it better? How does that make it best? Okay. So let me go to Paul. Paul has a whole different perspective on this than Solomon.

Solomon. What's better? What's best? He talks about marriage and singleness, and it's really quite striking what he has to say. So in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says, I think.

Now, he's going to say, this is my opinion. This is not God speaking. This is not a command. This is my opinion. It's a good opinion, he says, because I'm God's servant. But please understand, I'm not given a command here.

[ 30 : 43 ] I'm just giving you my wisdom. Okay? So here's what he says. I think, in view of the present distress, it is good for a person to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife?

Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned. And if a betrothed woman marries, she has not sinned.

This is not a right or wrong. I just want to tell you something that's better. Not everybody can do this. That is this.

That is this. That those who marry will have worldly troubles. Huh. You wonder what he means by that, huh?

And I would spare you that. This is what I mean, brothers. The appointed time has grown very short. In other words, Paul, absolutely, the Lord's coming any moment.

[ 31 : 47 ] The Lord's coming soon. And these are the final days. And we live in the same final days, by the way. Don't we? Revelation is a happening in front of our eyes. Okay? It could be any moment.

So, Paul says, the time has grown very short. From now on, let all those who have wives live as though they had none. And those who mourn as though they were not mourning. And those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing.

And those who buy as though they had no goods. And those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with the world. In other words, those things are not as important. For the present form of this world is passing away.

So, all the temporal things are not as important. I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man, listen to this.

The unmarried man is anxious. About what? About the things of the Lord. How to please Him. That's a good anxiety.

[ 32 : 49 ] In fact, that's the best. But the married man is anxious about worldly things. Not in a bad way. How to please His wife.

Why? Because that's his duty. That's his God-given loyalty. Loyalty. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife.

She now has all the loyalty. Right? So, trying to spare you from that. And the unmarried or unbetrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord.

How to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things. How to please her husband. That's what she should do. I say this for your own benefit. Not to lay any restraint upon you.

Again, he's emphasizing. I'm not trying to tell you what to do. I'm not trying to tell you this is right or wrong. Okay? This is not a command. This is just, if you can do this.

[ 33 : 56 ] Singleness. Not everybody has a gift. I think singleness is a gift from God. Recognize it as so. Most need to marry.

Okay? You hearing me? So, again, he's saying, I'm not putting a restraint on you. I just want what's best.

If you can. The best life for you is to promote good order and secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

That's what Paul could do. That's what Jesus could do. Peter couldn't do that. You know that? John couldn't do that.

They were devoted to the Lord as anybody else, but James had a wife. Peter had a wife. Which is why his counsel is really good in 1 Peter 3 about marriage.

[ 34 : 59 ] Right? Yeah. It's really good. It's really good. Right? It's really good. Because he's been married. He gets it. Paul's best is, here's the best.

The feudal way, all alone, driving for achievement and you will never get it. The better way, have somebody that supports you and comforts you and gives you strength.

The best way, undivided devotion to the Lord, but not everybody can do. So, when I, I learned this in seminary, thank God.

I, I, I, we went through this passage in seminary and it just struck me. And I'm already married, so it's like I got no choice. It struck me.

The best I can give to the church as a full-time pastor is divided devotion. And I've said that to each church I've gone.

[ 36 : 02 ] Best I can do. I can't give you every night. Don't ask me to give you every night. In fact, that's what got me in trouble in Illinois. They wanted more nights. I said, nope. Told you.

Don't care. I want you to give. Ain't gonna happen, boys. I told you. I have a commitment before God here. I can't. In fact, that commitment was, was before that commitment.

Had a, had a, a guy who was coming to our church for a little while. He, he was, felt he was called to the mission field. Really wanted to go. That's great. It's great. What does your wife say? My wife doesn't want to go.

I said, oh. What are you doing about that? I'm going. I said, you're wrong. He says, oh no, God's called me. Well, I said, if God's called you, he'd call your wife too.

Because you two are together. And you made that commitment before you made that commitment. And God already knows that. So this isn't from God then.

[ 37 : 07 ] Oh no, I'm gone. I said. Okay. You are outrightly wrong. And there are people encouraging him.

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's God. Dude, sit down and look at this. All right. So. Kind of what Paul's saying here. You're, if you want the very best.

But we can't all do that. So does that mean that's it? You know, if I'm married, that's it. I don't have the best. No, you got the best. Because God chose that for you.

And together. Right? There's the third strand. There's the together with the Lord. Yeah. That's what he designed you for. Don't, don't. But I wanted to speak to those who are single.

And those who are widows. And those who, you know, are. God has brought into a different situation. To understand. You're good. In fact, maybe you're even better.

[ 38 : 09 ] For. Yeah. Let's just. All right. Second. Second lone wolf. So. The driven individuals will never find satisfying achievement.

There's a second snare. There's a different kind of lone wolf. It's those in power. Those who. Who govern others. Those who lead others. Our. Our. Our. Wording here is a king. Right?

There's an old foolish king. And then there's a young. Wise person who replaces him. And becomes king. And so it's really about. A king. What a king's experience might be.

So. We apply that. We don't have kings today. But we have people. Who have power. You have power. If you're in government. You have power. If you're leading others. Right? So you can apply it in that way. So here. Here's the snare. For those with power.

[ 39 : 12 ] They will never find last. Find lasting appreciation. Under the sun. That's just something to recognize. Those in power.

Those in government. Those in leadership. Will never find lasting appreciation. Here. Okay? So. Again. He's going to give a proverb. He's going to talk about the better way.

Then he's going to talk about the futile way. And then we'll talk about the best way. So first of all. Better way. Verse 13. Another parable. Excuse me. Proverb. Proverb's different than a parable. Proverb is giving a. An advice. A better than. Kind of situation. So. Verse 13. Better was a poor. Poor. And wise. And wise. Youth.

Than an old. And foolish. King. Who no longer knew how to take advice. Now that's kind of backward from how we expect it. We expect the old king to be the wise person. Because older people are supposed to be wiser.

[ 40 : 09 ] Right? And yet. He's the older person. But he's not wise. He's foolish. And we expect the young person. To not be wise yet. Right? They're still. To be.

They're still expected to be foolish. But here we have a different scenario. Here we have the young person. Who's wise? So it's better to be wise.

Than foolish. Obviously. And the king is foolish. Why? Because he doesn't take advice. He doesn't listen. He's. Just. Leave me alone. We think of.

You know. When Solomon handed the kingdom over to his son. Rehoboam. That's the first act that he does. He gets advice from the stupid young guys.

His pals. He takes that advice. And the old. Wise men. He. Neglects their wisdom. And what happens? Kingdom splits.

[ 41 : 05 ] Just because he's. Stubborn. You got a lot. There's lots of Israelite kings like that. You had. Saul was like that. Asa was like that. David.

For a time. Was like that. Solomon didn't seem to take his own advice. In the end. So. So.

Here's the young man. Who. Though he's young and poor. He's still better. Because he's wise. It gets him out of prison. Gets him out of poverty. We think of somebody like Joseph.

Fit that mold. Joseph was wise. Young. Poor. He was also in prison. Thanks. To the brothers. Well. He was sold by brothers. And then. Thanks to. Potiphar's wife. He ends up in prison. Unjustly. But he's in prison. So. But it's his wisdom. And obviously. God behind that.

[ 42 : 04 ] That brings him. Right. From the bottom. To the top. Now. He's not king. But. Basically. Do whatever. Joseph says.

Right. So. It kind of fits him. Interesting. So. So. That's better. That's a better way. Wisdom better than foolishness. Yeah. Obviously. That's better. There's advantages to wisdom. Verse 15.

But then. Here's the feudal way. Interesting. He's going backwards now. Instead of going from feudal to better. He's going from better to feudal. Verse 15. I saw. So. Here's the observation thing again.

I saw all the living who move about under the sun. Along with that second youth. Along with the second one. The youth. The second one. Who was to stand in the king's place.

Okay. So. It's not just. This isn't about just the foolish king. Who. Comes to ruin. Right. Who lives a vain life. Now. He's talking about the wise youth.

[ 43 : 04 ] The wise youth. Who takes over for the king. Even though that wisdom is better than foolishness. What's the outcome? Verse 16. Well.

Even for that king. Even when he replaced the foolish king. There was no end to all the people.

Okay. So he's burdened. He's exhausted. There's no end. All of whom he led.

Yet. Here comes the bat. Here comes the other shoe. Right. Yet. Those who come later. Will not rejoice in him. He will not be appreciated.

He will be forgotten. He will not be renowned. For all the good that he did. So even a wise king. Who does many good things. In the end. Forgotten. Forgotten. Oh yeah. Maybe. Maybe you get a face on Mount Rushmore.

[ 44 : 04 ] And maybe you deserve it. Maybe you don't. That's another man. But you know.

There's people going up there going. Who's that? Oh. I'm sorry. I won't go there. I'm sorry. Prayed that God would withstand my stupid woman.

All right. All right. So in the end. Not remembered. All the good that he's done. Is soon forgotten.

The success is temporary. The joy ends.

So the better way is. Wiser better than fools. But in the end. You're not remembered. So is that it? Is it useless? Is even the wise leader.

The best governor. Is that even useless? Good question to be asking. What is. What's worthwhile? So let me ask this question.

[ 45 : 06 ] This is very relevant. Is all power and government ultimately meaningless and futile? Now you get the foolish king in there.

We're going. Yeah. It's pretty futile. But if we have a wise governor. If we have a wise leader. Are they meaningless? No.

No. No. We need wise leaders. God has appointed government. To do his service.

Right. They serve. Good. Does it last? Are they remembered? No. So. It's only meaningless.

If your power. If your leadership. Is for selfish purposes. If it's just for you. It'll be meaningless. If it's for God. It's for serving God.

[ 46 : 01 ] If it's for helping other people. If it's doing good things. Absolutely. It's meaningful. Is it not? But if it's for selfish. It's just about getting my fame.

Just about getting fulfillment. Just about being recognized. Appreciated. Yeah. Yeah. Forget about it. That'll be temporary. We've had many good leaders.

David was a good leader. Solomon pretty much was a good leader. Daniel was a great leader. Nehemiah was an awesome leader. Even if he had to pull people's hair out. He got things done. Joseph.

Joseph. Was a great leader. Let's look at Joseph as an example of this story. He was the wise youth who rose to power from prison.

He was poor. He was young. But because God was with him. He rose. Right. He's treated on.

[ 47 : 00 ] But by Exodus 1. So Joseph's story ends in Genesis 50. Right. The very next chapter. In fact you only go about eight verses into Exodus 1. It says. Who's Joseph?

There's a new king in the land. Never heard of Joseph. Who's Joseph? He saved your whole picking country man. Don't know who he is. All right.

So. So here's. But I want you to hear Joseph's perspective. Okay. At the end of his life. At the beginning of his life when he was a young guy.

And he's wearing all the fancy clothes. Right. Daddy's clothes. Right. And getting the brothers a little bit. You know. Oh by the way. You're going to bow down to me. I don't.

I don't. Sorry Joseph. I'm sure you didn't talk like that. That's how they took it. Woo. I'm sorry. Knock it off.

[ 47 : 55 ] All right. So. So. Joseph's. Remember this brother sold him. Because they were annoyed with the guy. Get rid of the guy. They sold him. He ends up in prison. He ends up right.

He didn't deserve that. They did evil to him. So later when Joseph rise to power. And they come before him. And remember he hid himself for a while.

And he played with them. Which I think you know. He was giving them back a little bit. Before he got broken. Because remember he was in. He had full power of the whole world.

For seven years. And didn't once reach out to daddy. Or brothers. That tells me he had some issues. Okay. So when they finally come to him.

Plays a little game with him. Right. And then when finally when Judah came forward. Judah.

Interesting. Judah comes. And offers to be the substitute.

[ 48 : 51 ] For little Benny. That's when Joseph broke down. That's when he broke. That's when he changed.

And he revealed himself to them. So anyway. So this is at the end. So chapter 50. So that's the story. Brothers are still full of guilt. They know he's going to get back at him. Right. They did evil to him.

He's going to get us. So. What does it say? Genesis 50. 15. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead.

Okay. Oh boy. They said it may be. That Joseph will hate us. And pay us back. For all the evil that we did to him. So they sent a message to Joseph.

Saying. By the way. Dad said. Your father gave this command before he died. Say to Joseph. Please forgive the transgression of your brothers. And their sin.

[ 49 : 46 ] Because they did evil to you. They owned up totally. Whether daddy really said that or not. We don't know. But. Got to make the effort. Right. And now please forgive the transgression of your servants.

Of the God of your father. Next two words. Speak a lot. Joseph wept. Joseph wept. He's broken. Now.

He wept. When they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him. And said. Behold we are your servants. By the way. That's the fulfillment of the dream that Joseph had when he was a kid.

Right. They all bowed down. Joseph said to them. Do not fear. Do not fear. Do not fear. For am I in the place of God. As for you.

You meant evil against me. I get it. You intended it. You hated me. You did this. You did this intentionally. But God. Also did something intentionally.

[ 50 : 47 ] God didn't just allow it to happen. God didn't. Wasn't passive in this. God. Meant it. Intended it. Planned it. For good. To bring it about.

That many people should be kept alive. As they are. Today. See if you never sold me to the Midianites. And they never brought you to Egypt. I'd have never been. In prison in Egypt. And then. God intended it. God planned it. I mean. God intended for Joseph to go through all the suffering. Yeah. That's part of the plan. God intended for his son to go through all the suffering too. Yes. He knew exactly what that meant. Yes. So don't talk about God allowed something. We have a sovereign God. Okay.

We don't have a passive God. Don't be embarrassed about that. Meant he intended hard bad things to happen. Yeah. He's sovereign. I know.

[ 51 : 47 ] It's hard. Huh? Let God be God. Let God be God. He knows what he's doing. You may not get it. Why do I go through hard stuff?

Well. He's got a good reason. Okay. So. So. This. Speaks so much. Why did he do it? He meant it for good.

What was good about all of it? To bring about that many people should be kept alive. As they are today. He saved millions of lives. Through this. Including his own people.

By the way. Who brought the famine? Okay. So do not fear. I will provide for you and your little ones. Again. Joseph to his brothers. I'll provide for you and your little ones.

I got you. Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. They didn't deserve it. But he did. So Joseph remained in Egypt.

[ 52 : 44 ] He and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. That's pretty good. Somebody told me this morning. He was almost the youngest of the brothers. But he was the first to die.

I thought. Oh. That's interesting. Maybe the stress of office. Sorry. Sorry. No. Yeah. No.

I don't know. Don't know. Don't know. 110. No. That's pretty good. Right? And then Joseph said to his brothers. Okay. So he's not done. Listen carefully.

Because he's not done. And God's not done. Was he a good ruler? Yeah. Did he do good things?

Yeah. He saved a lot of people. Yeah. He's a wise. That was good for that time. What about next?

Is it all done? Is it all forgotten? Yeah. Joseph's going to get forgotten by the Egyptians. But he's not going to be forgotten by God or his people. Because read on.

[ 53 : 38 ] He says to his brothers. I'm about to die. But. God will visit you. And bring you up out of this land.

To the land that he swore. To Abraham. And Isaac. And Jacob. Remember those dudes? Now he's going to give the land.

Finally. Then Joseph made his brothers. Made the sons of Israel swear. Saying. God will surely visit you. And you shall carry up my bones from here.

So Joseph died. Being 110 years old. And they embalmed him. And he was put in a coffin. In Egypt. End of story. Right? Dot.

Dot. Dot. Dot. Next chapter. 400 years later. Oh. Joseph was forgotten. But not in the text. Next part of the story.

[ 54 : 38 ] See. Joseph did great good. Many people. Many people were kept alive. Through his wisdom. His wisdom was not meaningless. His governing was not useless.

Because it wasn't about him. Right? It was beautiful. It was meaningful. Because it was. He was serving God. God. And God always has the bigger picture. So. It was not the end of the story.

Joseph himself says. There's still. There's still nothing. God's not done. God's still coming back. And he's still coming back. He's going to visit you again. Bring you out of Egypt. He's going to visit you again. Bring you into the promised land.

He's going to visit you again. And give you a king. He's going to visit you again. And take you into bondage again. Then he's going to visit you again. Bring you back. Then he's going to visit.

[ 55 : 34 ] Quick. Thursday night. Over. Over. Testament. Then he's going to visit you again. And this is the big one. Because then he's going to send his son. And his son's going to visit you in person. Oh.

That's the big point. Of the whole plan. He's going to visit you in person. He's going to bring his own tent. So to speak. He will visit us in his son.

Who will. Lay his life down in our place. Right. He will take our. Our sin and shame.

Our shame. Shame. Right. He takes all our failures. And gives us grace and hope. He pays our debt.

And gives us his cleanness. And his righteousness. He takes our shame. And gives us his glory. It's a really good deal.

[ 56 : 36 ] Right. By the way. He was that second. Too. He was. He was the one. Who came from prison. And rose to the throne too. In this story.

He's the wise young. Who was poor. On earth. And was imprisoned. On earth. In a sense. In this body. But then rose.

To power. And his. Kingdom doesn't. End. He never. Gets forgotten. So. Are you a lone wolf?

Or can you be a lone wolf? You have that tendency? Do you seek to do life on your own? You're self-reliant.

Self-protecting. Self. Yeah. I mean. We all have some of that. Don't we? Have you gone down that road. To. And you're driven. Or you're.

[ 57 : 35 ] Seeking some. Achievement. Or you're seeking some appreciation. You. But you found that road. Totally empty. There's no. End to the toil. There's no.

End to the people. And then it's never satisfying. You're never satisfied. With what you've achieved. Are you there? You felt that? I have the alternative.

Come to Jesus. All who are weary. And heavy laden. Who are empty. And. Done with this other stuff.

Come to me. I will give you rest. Not this rest. Rest for your. Soul. Which won't rest. Anywhere. Else.

Because your soul. Is what's driving you. To find fulfillment. In every. Quick. Fix. Or every. Earthly. Hope.

[ 58 : 36 ] Only Jesus. Can give you. Rest. Peace. Fulfillment. Satisfaction. Meaning. For your soul. We're going to sing.

Come as you are. It talks about. Lay down your burdens. Lay down your shame. Earth has no sorrow. That Jesus can't heal. Talks about the broken.

And the weary. Those who need mercy. Those who need hope. This is a great song. For those who feel that. Right. It's very honest. Come as you are. Let me pray.

And we'll. I know. I don't warn the worship team. By the way. We're going right into worship. No. Let me pray. Father. Thank you. For your word. Thank you.

That Jesus is the answer. And we don't say that tritely. That to all of this. That we go through. To all of this. Natural tendencies. We have to fix things ourselves.

[ 59 : 34 ] Natural tendencies. To try to be self-sufficient. And self-reliant. To want more. It's all out of unbelief.

That you have already provided the more. That the simplicity of coming to Jesus. Is really. The real rest.

For our soul. Help us believe that. We believe. But help our unbelief. This is what we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.