

07.13.25

Genesis

Chapter 12 - God Chooses for Blessing

The Call for Distinction (vs. 1)

Genesis 12:1: Now the LORD said to Abram,
“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you.

Well, we come to a passage of calling out. We are the called-out ones. Church means “called out assembly” - “*ekklēsia*”. What are we called out from? Well, the Bible tells us that were called out from the world. It almost seems like we spend most of our life trying to fit in, and then God says, “You're not supposed to fit in. You're supposed to come out.” So, all the way through Scripture, we hear God calling us out.

One of the great passages is in 2 Corinthians 6, and in that particular text, Paul actually quotes from Isaiah, in Isaiah

52:11. In this passage, in the New Testament, He calls out and actually quotes the passage,

(2 Corinthians 6:17) “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE...”

The way that it's put in Isaiah 52 is,

(Isaiah 52:11) “Depart, depart, go out from there...”

“Be holy; be different.” God is calling us to be different. He's calling us to be separate.

It is bizarre that I've seen the church wrestle oftentimes, not this church, but the church as a whole wrestle with trying to be like the world, and yet that's the very opposite of what we should be. We should be so separate, so distinct, that the world looks at us and goes, “Wow, those are really unusual people.” Peter will actually call us “strangers and aliens”. So, that's the way we're supposed to look. That different. So, as we come to this passage, we realize that God is calling His people out, has been calling His people out from the very beginning. You would say, “Why would He do such a thing?”

Well, once again, you go back to Genesis 6, the world left to itself, continues to go in the realm of evil to such an extent that they do evil continually without interruption, and every thought of man is evil consistently. So, you realize, “I've got to get out of this place.” Bad company corrupts good morals, as Paul would say. So, we have to get out and how do we do that? Well, God is working in our lives. It is hard to detach ourselves from the things that have become familiar from the things that are in some cases, part of our family, part of the culture, the tradition. It's hard to come out of those things, and yet God is saying, “I want you to be different. I want you to be different. I'm calling you to be different.”

In Isaiah 52, where He starts off with that phrase, “depart from there,” the very next chapter is a very familiar chapter to us in Isaiah 53, and it begins by this phrase, (Isaiah 53:1) “Who has believed our message? ...”

And then it begins to describe Jesus Christ the Messiah, and in the description, it says, well, “He grew up like a tender shoot and we didn't regard Him in any way as one that we would be attracted to”, and He ultimately

becomes a Lamb to the slaughter. What the passage is telling us is that the message is so unique and so different than the world that if in fact you're looking for the things that the world looks for, you'll miss the message of salvation. "Who has believed our message?" Unless you depart from the things of the world and the way that the world thinks, you would not see the glory of God. It would be something that you would just totally miss.

In this passage that we're looking at, it follows Chapter 11, in which we see God working in the life of Abraham, and it is that tilling of the soil that really provides the venue in which God then comes and speaks to him. God is preparing our hearts. Could God speak to us at any time? Absolutely, but we wouldn't listen. But there are things that He is doing in our life that would cause us to listen and, in some respects, what we're going to be talking about today is the things that come into our lives that actually stir our hearts to have an ear to the things of God.

I oftentimes think of the passage in Ecclesiastes 12. In fact, if you'll turn there with me, it is a familiar passage

when we consider the aging process. We're all doing that, whether you like it or not, and it seems to be something which I've noticed you just can't seem to slow down or stop. In fact, the older you get, it seems like the months go by faster, and so things start speeding up. But Ecclesiastes 12 actually gives an interesting description of the process of aging. Now, what I believe aging does, is it is God's gracious way of gradually causing us to let go of the world. It would be a way of causing us to depart from the world. That's what aging does. After a while, you literally say to yourself, "I don't think I belong here." And God goes, "Right." But why it takes us so long to get to that conclusion, I don't know.

Ecclesiastes 12 starts off this way,

(Ecclesiastes 12:1) "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days..."

Before the destructive days, the calamitous days, the hard days, the days of suffering, days of pain, days of aches, the days in which you have a hard time getting up from your chair, tying your shoes. Well, I won't go into all the details.

“... before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them”;

(Ecclesiastes 12:2) before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain.”

Aging seems to eclipse; the sun, hope, joy, and it seems to in some way eclipse the moon. You know those dreams that you have, those aspirations that you have? The older you get, they seem to wane and you're no longer looking to the stars for the great things that could be, or the great possibilities that could be. Dreams and aspirations begin to cloud over, and the clouds return after the rain. What an interesting description that is. Difficult times come in our lives, and when you're younger, you go, “Yeah, but it's going to get better.” We even have songs, “*The sun will come out tomorrow,*” and aging has a way of saying, “It's not going to come out tomorrow. It's not getting better, it's getting darker.” After the rain, the clouds come back.

(Ecclesiastes 12:3) “in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble...”

The great arms and shoulders that you have as guys, you feel pretty strong and feel pretty protective. You can watch over, “I can guard over those things.” Now, they don't seem to be functioning too well and actually the way that it puts it, they start trembling. Have you ever seen people's hands start trembling?

“... and mighty men stoop...”

Talking about your legs.

“... the grinding ones...”

Your teeth don't seem to work too well because there seem to be few and idle, and when you look through the windows, they seem a little foggy. Things begin to grow dim.

(Ecclesiastes 12:4) “and the doors on the street are shut...”

That is to say, your opportunities begin to close the older you get.

“... as the sound of the grinding mill is low...”

You're just not able to do the work that you used to do. You get tired easier. Have you ever noticed that?

“... one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly.”

“What?” You just don't hear as much. What he's actually talking about within the passage is the things that begin to happen to us in the physical realm that cause us to actually lose contact with the world and our dreams and aspirations, the things that we might at one time want to do, the things at one time we could do, we no longer can do and we're no longer thinking in terms of things are going to get better; we're just trying to keep things from getting worse, and things progressively go that way. What Scripture ultimately says is that you want to put God first when you're young so that you're on the right course.

The ultimate conclusion is,

(Ecclesiastes 12:13) “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

(Ecclesiastes 12:14) For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”

Ecclesiastes will actually record the fact that God has placed eternity in our hearts. There's something inside of us that says, "There's got to be something more than this." What aging does is it helps us to realize that we are transient. It helps us realize that we're not forever in this world and it causes us to think through, "Is there anything that is permanent?" Because there is that thing in our heart that says, "There's got to be something that's permanent. There's got to be something that's lasting. There's got to be something that's true, that doesn't move, that is immutable, that doesn't change. There's got to be something that I can depend on, because obviously everything is changing in my life." And God says, "It's Me." So, what I'm saying is, that in many respects, what old age does in all of us is it causes us to reevaluate our lives, and it causes us to perk up our ears and listen to Him as He begins to talk to us. Because as the song goes, *"And the things of the earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."*

So, as we come to this passage, what God is doing in Abram's life is the same thing that He's doing in all of our

lives, as Peter so aptly puts it, we are called out. We are chosen of God, and we're to be a holy nation; a people for God's own possession. We don't belong here. We're strangers and aliens in this world. God's calling us out. How does He do that? Well, He does that through difficulties and He does it through disappointments. In fact, as you look at this particular passage, you begin to see the disappointments have really kind of been set up in Chapter 11. The things that have been coming in Abram's life. Not only does he have a brother that has died, and we read the passage, "Haran died," and we go, "Ok, next" and I would just have you stop. That's Abram's brother. I had a brother die. You don't just gloss over that. Your brother died. This is somebody that you were close to. This has got to be earth shattering and we know it's earth shattering in the sense that things begin to change. Marriages begin to happen and his father says, "We're moving out of here." All of that is change in Abram's life, and in the course of all of this change, we see Abram going a different way, and God says, "Ok. Now, since your world is kind of shook up, let Me talk to you about something that's permanent." We oftentimes come into

Chapter 12 without really considering the things that have been happening in Chapter 11, but God has been paving the way and all the way through the Bible is God calling us out.

I appreciate some of the songs that Sonny brought to us this morning because what I was really hearing was that sense of holiness, and really what that concept of holiness is, is us being separate from the world. Leviticus will actually describe it this way in Leviticus 10, as we are not common and we are not to treat God as common. Thus, the word “holy” is actually the opposite of common. Common is that which is antithetical to holy. So, what does He mean by that? Well, He wants you to be distinct. He wants you to be different. He wants you to be like Him. He's actually calling you in that way, and Scripture will actually describe it in many different ways.

For instance, Psalm 1 will talk about the wicked are like the chaff, and it talks about the difference between the wheat and the chaff. Well, of course we know that the chaff is that which you can't eat, so it has to go. So, they take it and they would start beating the wheat there on

the mound. So, the wind would blow away the chaff, and the only thing that would be left would be the wheat. So, what was the wheat? Well, the wheat was something that was beneficial, something that could actually be used, whereas the chaff was waste and would only be bitter and would be useless. So, what is God doing? Well, He's separating. He's separating that which is useful from that which is useless.

You have a familiar passage in Luke 22, in particular, where Christ is talking to Peter and He says, "Ok. Satan has requested permission to sift you like wheat, and I've granted him that." What's going to happen in Peter's life? Well, God's going to get rid of, for Peter, that thing called pride because up to this point, Peter was going, "I think I got this. I think I can handle this." And God goes, "Ok, what we're going to do is we're going to get you so low and so out of pride that you're going to be afraid of a little girl that says, 'Aren't you a follower of Jesus?' and you're going to start crying out. 'No, I have nothing to do with Him.' And you're going to realize just how weak you are." Because really up to that point, Peter was saying, "I'm

going to save You, Jesus.” Can you imagine somebody saying, “I'm going to save God”? “I'm going to save You, Jesus. I'm going to be Your rescuer.” And God goes, “Ok, you still have some worthless stuff in you.”

The same thing was true with Jeremiah the prophet, if you've ever read the Book of Jeremiah. We recently went through it, but in Jeremiah 15:19, God turns to Jeremiah and He says “What We need to do and what you need to do is you need to separate the precious from the worthless. If you'll do that, you can be effective, but you've got to come out. You've got to take this stuff out of your life.” And ultimately, 2 Peter 3 will make reference to what you've got to do is separate the temporary from the eternal. So, all of this is part of the process of calling out. We're being called out. We're separating these things; things that are worthless, things that would actually weigh us down, sins which so easily besets us. Things that are actually a part of our life have to be extracted out as we are extracted away from the world ourselves. These are the things that begin to happen, particularly to Abraham. Now, the question is, why is God

doing this in our life? And I would give you two main reasons. One is that God wants you to be totally dependent on Him. Up to that point, you're kind of working through things, "I can do this. I think I can figure it out." But if in fact you're going to point to God, God has to be so clearly the emphasis of your life that you're just totally dependent on Him and nothing else. It's very interesting, if you watch the world, they're dependent on their prowess, their abilities, the things that they have, their possessions, their education, all these things they begin to embrace. It's understandable, but if you're called out to represent God, He wants you to demonstrate that it's all God, not part you and part God. All God. So, there has to be a sense of total dependence on Him.

Great passage, if you look with me in Matthew 10, where Jesus is calling out His disciples. He calls them out to preach and He says this,

(Matthew 10:7) "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

(Matthew 10:8) "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons..."

Let me just say this, up to this juncture, there's nothing that you could do in any of that list. “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers...” Can you do that? That would all have to be God. I would think that would have to be God stuff.

“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.

(Matthew 10:9) “Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts,

(Matthew 10:10) or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.”

In other words, “I'm going to take care of you as you go. I'll burden certain hearts. I'll tell them to do certain things.” Those that go into ministry need to come to that point in their lives, but ultimately, all who are called, God is calling you to completely trust in Him. You look in Matthew 6, and he goes, “Why are you worried about your clothing? Why are you worried about your food? Why are you worried about your shelter? If you'll just seek first the kingdom of God, all these things will be

taken care of.” Well, that's a different kind of walk and way of thinking than the world, but it's a total dependence on God, and that's what God is calling you out. As He calls the church, He's calling you to think that way. When He calls out Abraham, He's going to say, “You've got to leave everything.” Everything? Absolutely everything.

We as believers, once again, like to compartmentalize, especially these paragons of the Old Testament, and we say in our own head, “Yeah, but that was Abraham.” And God says, “I'm calling you too. I'm calling you to completely be dependent upon Me.”

Then the second thing that God is calling you to do is actually be totally devoted to Him. That is to be devoted to no one else, but God, even to the extent of above family.

(Matthew 10:34) “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

(Matthew 10:35) “For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.””

It actually says in the Gospel of Luke, even against the wife.

(Matthew 10:36) “and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD.

(Matthew 10:37) “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:38) “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:39) “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.”

In other words, “You have to be devoted to Me more than anyone else in the world.” That's a different way of thinking that clearly is a calling out.

As you go into Chapter 12, Jesus separates this even clearer. Just in case you're going, “I'm a little confused exactly what that means.”

(Matthew 12:46) “While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him.

(Matthew 12:47) Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.”

(Matthew 12:48) But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?”

(Matthew 12:49) And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!

(Matthew 12:50) “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.””

I mean, that's pretty clear. What you're seeing is, it is a total devotion and what you'll see in Romans 12:10 is, “Be devoted to one another.” Who's the “one another” in the text? The church; your new brothers and sisters. There is a different kind of loyalty. That's hard to swallow when you think about it. That's pulling you away from everything that is familiar. How do you let go of these things? How do you come to this total devotion? How do you come to this total dependence that God has for you? Well, good news. God is shaking things up to call you out.

So, the things that are happening in your life are the very things that God is going to use to draw you to Himself, to cause you to commit to this level of devotion.

I think of the things that have been happening, in particular in Abram's life, and you have death and you have disappointment. Think about it. Disappointment. Not only is there disappointment in the death of his brother, but if you remember in Chapter 11, it makes it a point in verse 30 to tell us that we have a problem in the family. Not only with the loss of a brother and a son, but the wife that he chose to marry can't have children. Now, this is a real big problem, especially back then because you've been called to actually cause that family to grow. I mean, this is one of the callings, and you're actually perceived by how many kids you have and you're looked up to if in fact you have large family and a large inheritance. She can't bear children, period. She's barren. That's what it says. What the text is telling us is that this is a huge disappointment, especially to a guy who is named "father of exaltation." Abram means "father of exaltation". "You're the great father? Where your kids?"

“I don't have any, but I'm a great father.” Ok, that's not going to work. So, what we have with the disappointments that we're seeing, and things aren't working according to the way they should be working. Terah, his father, says, “We're packing up. We're moving. We're leaving Ur of the Chaldeans; we're going to settle. We're going to stop off at Haran.” And as they stop off at Haran, Terah, his father, goes, “I think I'll stay here.” Now, what we know is, initially it was Terah, Abram's father, that had the suggestion according to the text, “We're going to Canaan.”

In fact, if you go back with me in Chapter 11, it reads this way,

(Genesis 11:31) “Terah took Abram...”

Which seems to convey that Terah is doing kind of the leading in the bunch.

“Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan...”

That's quite a distance because like I said, they have got to go north before they go west because there's a desert in between. So, they're going to have to go 200 or 300 miles to the north. Then in order to get to Canaan, there's going to be maybe a total of 500, 600 miles journey. When they ultimately end, seemingly at this kind of resting spot called Haran, if you look at the passage, “... and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.”

No one told him to settle there, except Terah goes, “I'm done. I'm going to settle here.” And once again, just want to emphasize the word “Haran” makes reference to crossroads. So, it really is a crossroads of decisions. Are you going to come out all the way? Well, Terah, his father, stayed there and we know that Nahor, his other brother, stayed there as well. We know that because when Isaac needs a wife, he goes there in that particular land of Haran, and that's where Nahor was. Then, Laban and all of the family are still up there. So, they settled there, but God wants Abraham in Canaan. So, what's going to happen?

In Chapter 12, if you look there with me, the declaration that's given to us is,

(Genesis 12:1) “Now the LORD said to Abram...”

And I just want to emphasize the word “now,” because once again, it's in the context of what we've been talking about in which you have this continual sequence of events. So, it's in the sequential imperfect in the Hebrew, which is telling us that there is a sequence of events that have been happening.

So, now God talks to him, and the way it's phrased is,

(Genesis 12:1) “Now the LORD said to Abram,
“Go forth from your country...””

This is the place where you're familiar, this is the place of your citizenship, this is the place where you had status. This is the place where you have properties, this is the place where you had perhaps some kind of connection, even with the world in which you lived. This is where he'd been raised; for 75 years, he lived here. I mean, you kind of get settled after that particular point. Nevertheless, at this juncture, through the process of those difficult things

beginning to happen and you're going to have death, you're going to have disappointment, failure, frustration, stirring of things that, I would say, are just plain disappointments in your life, God's going to begin to work and you're going to go, “Wait. No longer in my life at this juncture is complacency, the common and compromise an option.” And God goes, “Ok. Now, I'm going to talk to you.” And you can hear His voice at this juncture because for the first time in your life you're listening to Him.

He says,

“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives...”

Which is really dealing with the whole family that was there as well, which he's going to have to break from his father at this particular juncture.

“... And from your father's house...”

“Household” is actually probably what He's talking about. Now, the interesting thing in the wording of all this is it's not only talking about a break from the household, but a break from the inheritance as well. So, anything that he

could have benefited from in the relationship with his inheritance, God says, "I want you to break totally away from that." So, why would He want him to do that? And the answer is total dependence on God. It has to be total dependence on God. So, He's prying Abram's hands literally off this. Now, the bizarre thing about this, and it is interesting to read Scripture, isn't it? Because you'll oftentimes read one passage and then you read another passage, you go, "That seems to contradict." But we know it doesn't. So, what is it we're misunderstanding? So, let me read you a passage that contradicts, just to be a wise guy.

If you'll turn with me to Acts 7, we have Stephen; a little over 2,000 years later, he'll make reference to this particular incident. As his testimony, he's talking to a bunch of Pharisees and religious rulers that have really rejected the Gospel. Why are they rejecting the Gospel? Well, many reasons. One is, as Scripture will tell us, that they're jealous. Another reason is that it doesn't fit into their lifestyle. Another reason is it doesn't fit into their traditions or their culture that they've actually fostered

throughout the years. So, now the Gospel is given and they go, “That doesn't fit in. That whole thing of mercy and grace, that doesn't fit in. What we're about is arrogance, condescending, critical, religion. That's what we're about.” So, Stephen is brought before him, and he gives this message. So, what he does is he actually goes back to the beginning of the nation and in a way, what he's saying to them is, “From the very beginning, God had not intended you to act this way, but He is calling you out from the way that the world thinks.”

So, he states this, if you look with me,

(Acts 7:1) “The high priest said, “Are these things so?”

(Acts 7:2) “And he (Stephen) said, “Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.”

So, He appeared to him, it seems, according to this passage, in Ur of the Chaldeans, before he lived in Haran. Remember, Haran was the mid spot where his father stayed and then they didn't go all the way to Canaan.

(Acts 7:3) “and said to him, ‘LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES...”

This is what we're reading there in Genesis 12.

“... AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.’

(Acts 7:4) “Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living.”

Now, let me tell you the problem with this text. Abraham was born when his father, Terah, was 70 years old.

Abraham, according to Genesis 12:4, is 75 years old when he leaves Haran and goes to Canaan. He's 75 years old.

That puts Terah at 145 years old when Abraham leaves.

Now, this passage says,

“... From there, after his father died, God had him move...”

Isn't that what it says? His father will live to be 205 years old. So, we have 60 years that are missing. See the dilemma? We have 60 years that Terah continues to live after Abraham leaves. So, what is the text saying? Well,

it's saying what Jesus have been saying all along, that you have to love God more than you love your family.

Do you remember that one particular passage in Matthew 8, and it's also in Luke 9, where one guy says, "I want to follow You wherever you go" and Jesus says, "Ok, come on." He goes, "First, let me bury my father." And Jesus says, "Let the dead bury the dead." Do you remember that? His father wasn't dead yet, but what he was saying is, "I want to wait until my father dies. Therefore, I get the inheritance, and then I'll be ready to follow You." And Jesus goes, "No, you have to drop everything and follow Me." In other words, no connection. If I can put it this way, there can't even be a sentimental connection; that you have to love God more than your family to that degree.

You read in the Old Testament, in particular in Genesis 35, where Isaac died and Esau and Jacob went back and buried their father. The same thing was true in Genesis 50, where you have Joseph and he goes back to bury his father. That was something that you did. But it could not be done with Abraham because God was calling him out

to such a degree that he was going to have to be so separate that he could not go back to bury his father. It's interesting, the way that the Hebrews put it in the *Midrash*, it declares Abraham absolved from the care of his father and from his burial. So, the point is that he had to see his father as good as dead because when he left him, he would not see him again. That's a very interesting text and one of the reasons why it's so interesting and why Stephen actually brings it up in this passage is that you can't think like you think. God has to be completely over you. Remember that incident with Peter in which God says, "Ok, I'm going to give you this vision, and here's the vision, there's going to be all kinds of animals drop down and you're going to look at them," and he does in the vision, "and you're going to say, 'I can't eat those. Those are unkosher.'" And God says, "If I say that they're ok to eat, you can eat them." Now, what God is doing in the text is He's saying, "You've got to actually put My word above what you normally think is normal, and you have to let that go. Everything that you thought was something that you were responsible for, when I call you,

it is so powerful that you have to deaden yourself to all those things and you have to come.”

If you look in Acts 7:52, Stephen’s main argument really within his dissertation is,

(Acts 7:52) “Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? ...”

In other words, “Your fathers were so far off that they kept killing God's messengers.”

“... They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One...”

“So, what makes you think that you would actually understand what's going on here?” And Abraham was going to walk in such a way that it would be so unique and so different that people go, “How in the world could he do something like that?” And yet, God says, “This call is going to be so unique and so different that you're going to go from your country, you're going to go from your relatives, you're going to go from your father's house, and I'm going to show you this land that you've never seen before, and all your props are going to be taken away.”

That's the passage. What is God doing? He's calling you to be totally devoted to Him, totally dependent on Him. I have realized as I've been aging that I have to depend on Him more and more. I have found that if I do that before those things happen, I'm in much greater peace. The bottom line is it's going to happen. The time is coming where into His hands, I commit my spirit, like it or not. But if I do that willingly, what a glory. As Paul will say, "I know the Lord will bring me safely home." And you begin to see how God works, and wouldn't you like to just live a little bit just to see the miracles of God in your life and to see Him go, "I'll take care of that," instead of worrying about it? You know how you have all that frustration and all that worry about things? "What am I going to do about this?" and God says, "Why don't we do this, why don't you totally depend on Me, and I'll take care of you?" Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to live?

I've got to close with this one passage in Psalm. If you would look with me in Psalm 39. The reason why I'm going to close using this passage is because David's wrestling with the things that God is doing in his life.

Those things of disappointment, the things of change, the things that are shaking up your world. In some cases, it is death, and perhaps in some cases, it's your own failures that have brought you where you are. I think in David's particular case, it was his own failures. You find yourself upset not only at the fact that you're at the place that you are, but you find yourself upset at God because He's not helping you out. Now, let me just emphasize, you chose your own path, and you want him to help you in that path? So, in some way, that's what this Psalm is about. So, it fundamentally starts off that something happens, it interrupts his life, it interrupts his lifestyle, and it stirs the pot of complacency in our life. God is doing that. Now, what God is doing is He's calling you, but your initial response is, "I don't like this." So, because you're such a wonderful and godly and righteous person, you're not going to complain. God's messed up your life, but you're not going to say anything. Aren't you a wonderful person?

(Psalm 39:1) "I said, "I will guard my ways
That I may not sin with my tongue;

I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle
While the wicked are in my presence.”

Now, I don't know. I don't want you to gloss over and just want to point out, what is he doing in the presence of the wicked? Psalm 1 says, “You don't want to go there.” So, why are the wicked in his presence? It's a very interesting point, but his point is, “I don't want the wicked to see me faltering. So, I'm going to zip it, but I'm not happy. I'm not happy with the way things are going, and quite frankly, I'm not really happy with God. I'm not going to say anything.”

(Psalm 39:2) “I was mute and silent,
I refrained even from good...”

Certainly, things will get better. Nope.

“... my sorrow grew worse.

(Psalm 39:3) My heart was hot within me,
While I was musing the fire burned;
Then...”

“I just couldn't keep it in anymore. I said, ‘I can't hold it in any longer.’” Now, what does he do? Well, he finally talks

to God, and that's what God is doing in our lives.

Difficulties, the things that are stirring up, we've taken the wrong way, we've gone the wrong way, and it's not until the consequences begin to show themselves that we start talking to God.

(Psalm 39:4) “LORD, make me to know my end
And what is the extent of my days;
Let me know how transient I am.”

That's what those difficulties do, don't they?

(Psalm 39:5) “Behold, You have made my days as
handbreadths...”

Which is the shortest way of measuring.

“... And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight;
Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.”

(Psalm 39:6) “Surely every man walks about as a
phantom;

Surely they make an uproar for nothing;

He amasses riches and does not know who will gather
them.”

What is the psalmist wrestling with? “I worked hard for all this stuff, and what happened? Where'd it go?” There's clearly a frustration here. I mean, what's going to happen with everything I worked so hard to get?

(Psalm 39:7) “And now, Lord, for what do I wait? ...”

“What do I have to look forward to?” “Ah, you want me to hope in You.”

(Psalm 39:8) “Deliver me from all my transgressions...”

I just want to emphasize that word “transgression”. You can actually, and probably should, better translate it, “rebellion”.

“Deliver me from all my (rebellion);
Make me not the reproach of the foolish.

(Psalm 39:9) “I have become mute, I do not open my
mouth,
Because it is You who have done it.”

“You're the one that's closed my mouth. I could not complain of man. God has done it. I could not complain of God. It was my own sin that caused this.”

(Psalm 39:10) “Remove Your plague from me;
Because of the opposition of Your hand I am perishing.”

“Why isn't God helping me rebel? He's just not cooperating, and it's because of this that I feel this resistance constantly against me.” Yeah. What God is doing is He's calling you away from the very things that you're embracing, and He's calling you to embrace Him.

I love verse 11,

(Psalm 39:11) “With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity;

You consume as a moth what is precious to him...”

Isn't that an interesting picture? So, you're going, “This is my favorite jacket,” and you pull it out of the closet. It's got all these holes, and it's amazing how a little moth can just spoil everything, and how your small acts of rebellion and your pursuits for things that are really worthless come up empty, and God says, “You know why I did that? To keep you from thinking that's going to bring you joy, to keep you from trusting in something that's going to ultimately fail you.”

“... Surely every man is a mere breath.

(Psalm 39:12) “Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry;

Do not be silent at my tears;

For I am a stranger with You...”

Once again, remember, the word Hebrew means “stranger” and “alien”. God is calling us to be different. He's calling us to be a stranger.

“... For I am a stranger with You,
A sojourner like all my fathers.”

When you get to that point, you're now called out; you now have a relationship with God. God's shaking things up to call you out, and He's calling upon you and me to be totally dependent upon Him, to be totally devoted to Him. How are things going?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we hear Your voice. We've become discomfited. We've become

irritated and frustrated over the decisions that we've made and the place that we are. We have settled in a place of the crossroads, and we've almost said to ourselves, "This is good enough." And yet You and Your grace would call us even to someplace greater.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to reevaluate your life. The things that are disappointments in your life, the things that are difficulties in your life, are the very things that God has been using in your life to keep you from being sedentary, to keep you from being content with staying at the crossroads. God is calling you to be all in. He's calling you to be totally dependent on Him and totally devoted to Him. If you will step away, God will give you joy that you couldn't imagine, a peace that you couldn't imagine, and He'll take care of you better than the world ever could. We're asking you to put your complete trust in Him, and if He spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, how would He not with Him freely give us all things? He loves you. He died for you. Receive Him as your Lord

and Savior. Receive Him as your provider and your caretaker.