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Proverbs

Chapter 3 - A Most Valuable Heritage Richly Satisfied (vs. 9-10)

Proverbs 3:9-10: Honor the LORD from your wealth

And from the first of all your produce;

So your barns will be filled with plenty

And your vats will overflow with new wine.

Ah, the wonderful treasures of God available to us. Solomon will later say, “Thy word have I treasured in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” You realize that there are so many wonderful benefits that God has in store for us. He's not trying to withhold them. Not one good thing will He withhold. God desires for us to have an abundance and to be blessed. If He didn't want us to be blessed, He certainly wouldn't have given us a list of things to do in order to be blessed.

As you come to this Book of Proverbs, it's written in the sense of a father or a parent coming to the child and saying, “I want the best for you.” Probably the best way that's described throughout the book is by using the word “better.” “It's better” that he's not just wanting good for his son, he's wanting the best for his son. These things begin to be revealed as we come into Scripture. We have to see these things as treasures that God has and realize the great worth of them; to minimize them would be to really blaspheme God and His love for us.

The way that this chapter starts off, if you look with me in Proverbs 3,

(Proverbs 3:1) “My son, do not forget my teaching,

But let your heart keep my commandments;

(Proverbs 3:2) For length of days and years of life

And peace they will add to you.

(Proverbs 3:3) Do not let kindness and truth leave you;

Bind them around your neck,

Write them on the tablet of your heart.

(Proverbs 3:4) So you will find favor and good repute
In the sight of God and man."

"My son, do not forget." Another way of putting that would be "Do not disregard." You forget the things that aren't that important to you, but the things that are important to you, you won't forget. This is why you and I need to treasure the things of God.

So, one of the first things that he does is he says, "You need to love these things, son, and you need to embrace them, and you can't disregard the things that are being said." The very opposite. As he comes into here, he begins to explain the things that God really loves. I love the way that it's listed within the text, "kindness and truth." God loves kindness and truth. That's a wonderful thing, isn't it? You need to love the same thing that God loves and the word that he used at the very beginning is, "My son...keep my commandments," would probably be better translated "guard with your heart." The things that God loves, let these things be the things that you love.

The result of this, if you look within the passage is that you'll find favor, the favor of God. That's a wonderful thing to realize that if God is for us, who can be against us, right? Also, the respect of men. God will even declare if your way is pleasing to Him, He can make your enemies to be at peace with you. So, God is the one that controls those relationships and if you'll set your mind and your heart on wanting to do the very things that God desires you to do you'll have the favor of God and God will give you the respect of men. All the way through, he's given us, if I could put it this way, the formulas of inheriting things that are most valuable, and I can't think of anything more valuable than the favor of God, can you? It is a wonderful thing. So, he starts off this chapter with that and that wonderful, unforgettable favor that should be in our hearts. "Keep" would be the key that opens that. "Keep, guard the things that I tell you to do, love the things that I tell you to do." If we would teach our kids to love the things that God tells us to do as much as we teach them the things that the world tells them to do, how wonderful they would be. So, as he starts off with this, he continues to go through and he gives this sense of "If you'll do this, then this is what will happen."

The second thing that he tells us is that we could actually have Divine direction. I've had a lot of people giving me directions, but some of them aren't really that good and you ultimately end up on a dead end. But if you listen to the direction of God, He leads you in the paths of good, as he says, if you'll trust in Him. So, the key in this is you want the direction of God, you want God to direct you. Let me say this, when God directs you, it's evidential. It's efficacious, that is to say, it's real. God literally brings you in the path that is good. He'll make your way good. I mean, only God can do that. You see that really throughout Scripture in which man in his humanism, of course, obviously makes mistakes, fails, does wrong. And yet if you come back to putting your trust in God, "I'm going to trust You with all my heart. I'm going to stop leaning on my own

way. I'm going to look to You and acknowledge that You're in control of all these things." And God goes, "Ok, I'll make your paths good." That's a promise. We need to be telling our kids this. We need to be telling ourselves this; that this is the road to the goodness of God. Trust, complete faith in Him.

The third thing that he states within the passage is that we can have the cure for what ails you; an antidote for the problems that we have.

One of the interesting statements in Psalm 34, if you look there with me; I think the thought is, "Well, Christians or people that follow God shouldn't have any problems." Well, then, why does He give us an antidote? If we don't have problems than He doesn't need to give us an antidote, but it says this in Psalm 34:19,

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous..."

So, obviously, we're not without problems.

"... But the LORD delivers him out of them all."

How wonderful is that? We actually have the cure, and this actually means your bones.

I mean, the next verse is,

(Psalm 34:20) "He keeps all his bones..."

Right? That's one of the great statements that we read in Proverbs 3, not one of them is broken. And evil shall slay the wicked, but those who take refuge in God, will actually be translated in the New Testament, "will never be disappointed." God's going to give you great blessings. Of course, within the passage it's clearly telling us that there is something that you have to do in order to receive this antidote, and that is what? "Fear the Lord." We were talking about fearing the Lord and what it looked like, but if I were to put it more succinctly, I would say, to be in fear of the Lord is literally to be in awe of His presence, but to be in terror of His absence. The great fear that we have, and you see this literally in Exodus 33, where Moses comes before God, and he goes, "Look, if Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us from here." What's the most fearful thing you can imagine? Well, the back of God turned to me. See, that's the most fearful thing I can imagine. In His presence is fullness of joy; His right hand are pleasures forevermore. The presence of God, the nearness of God is what draws me to Him. Certainly, knowing of His grace and His mercy and His lovingkindness is everlasting. So, what is my greatest fear? Well, obviously, David says, "Do not cast Your spirit from me." I long to have that and the fear of the Lord then produces a wonderful antidote. I would say this, that many of the problems of man physically come from anxiety, anger, all of these things. I know

that the perception is that "I'm really looking for God to heal me of all my diseases." And I'm going to say He's not limited to that. He has no limitations. There's nothing that God cannot do.

There's a passage in Proverbs 16, if you look there with me, that begins to reveal just how destructive pride is in our life. When you understand what the fear of the Lord is, it really is a humility before God. As James will say, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He will raise you up, give you strength, heal your diseases.

(Proverbs 16:5) "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

(Proverbs 16:6) By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil."

Hurt and pain, that's what evil is, by the way; anxiety, all the difficulties.

One of the statements that is made in Proverbs is that a man can bear his physical pain, but a broken spirit who can bear. You begin to realize the necessity of being right with God in which He heals those frustrations. Nowhere is that better conveyed than in Psalm 32.

Once again, if you look with me in Psalm 32. By the way, one of the passages that we read last week dealt with the fact that to fear the Lord is to hate evil. More specifically, as he goes on to say, to fear the Lord is to confess your sins, because your sins as Jeremiah so aptly puts it, separates you from God and what a fearful thought that is when you consider that.

(Psalm 32:1) "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

(Psalm 32:2) How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!"

In other words, quit trying to say that you don't have any sin.

(Psalm 32:3) "When I kept silent about my sin, my body..."

Once again, we're dealing with a sense of healing, right?

"... my body wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.

(Psalm 32:4) For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer."

Obviously, there is no strength to deal with the difficulties that come upon you. Why? Because you didn't fear the Lord. You weren't afraid of Him leaving you. You were afraid of losing the desires of your heart, which were evil.

But if you fear the Lord, well, verse 5, what does it say?

(Psalm 32:5) "I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";
And You forgave the of my sin."

At this particular point, he goes, "Why doesn't everybody do that?"

He states in verse 6,

"Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found..."

What is the time that you may be found? Well, when you humble yourself.

(Psalm 32:10) "Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
But he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him."

Lovingkindness surrounding you. I can't think of a better healing, a better protection than that.

If you look in some Psalm 34, he starts off by saying if you humble yourself, then God begins to work on your behalf.

(Psalm 34:2) "My soul will make its boast in the LORD;
The humble will hear it and rejoice.

(Psalm 34:3) O magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

(Psalm 34:4) I sought the LORD, and He answered me,
And delivered me from all my fears."

Who was it that turned to the Lord? The man who feared the Lord, because it says this in verse 6,

"This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
And saved him out of all his troubles."

I like that word "all," especially right there.

(Psalm 34:7) "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them."

What's the key to the antidote? Fearing the Lord, obviously.

He doesn't end there,

(Psalm 34:9) "O fear the LORD, you His saints;
For to those who fear Him there is no want.

(Psalm 34:10) The young lions do lack and suffer hunger;
But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing."

Therefore, what does he want to teach the children?

(Psalm 34:11) "Come, you children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

So, what is he teaching them? How to have the cure that comes in their life because they're going to have afflictions. They're going to have difficulties. They're going to have problems that come into their life. You can't always be with them, but you can give them the cure, and the cure clearly is being right with God, being in fear of God; more specifically, in awe of His presence, in trepidation of His absence.

So, we come to Proverbs 3, and we now turn to this wonderful benefit that God has given us and will give us. To all who will honor Him He will give riches abundantly, supplying beyond what we could ask or think. We want our children to be successful, we want them to have more, we want them to have best. I know that people like to quote the Jeremiah passage in which God says, "I have My plans for you which are good," but to me, one of the greatest texts is in Zechariah, because when you come to this wonderful book, you start off by seeing that the children of Israel, though in a sense of quasi captivity with the Medes and the Persians, are somewhat complacent because everything's going along ok. Everything is working ok. They're able to buy the things they want to buy, able to build the big houses they want to build. So, there's a sense of complacency, but what's interesting is the picture that is given at the beginning of Zechariah in which God comes to them in this wonderful picture and He has these apocalyptic type horses that have gone into all the world. The world at this juncture, with the Medes and the Persians who are in control of the known world is at peace so to speak. So, he calls them together and he finds them meeting there with God in the ravine. A ravine, as you know, is not a mountaintop, it's down in the valley. So, there's the meeting, and as the meeting goes, he goes, to the angelic horsemen that have gone in all the world, "What have you found?" And they said, "Well, we found that everything is pretty peaceful." He goes, "I'm upset about that." And you go, "Why would God be upset about that?" Because they were settling for second best. He said, "You don't belong in the ravine, you belong in the mountain." And the book literally ends in Zechariah 14, with Christ coming down from heaven, standing on the

Mount of Olives, the mountains split open, and Jerusalem elevated above all other nations. God is declaring, "You would be complacent here. I want best for you." And I think oftentimes we settle in the lives of those that we love, and we say, "It's ok that you don't go to church," "It's ok that you don't love God with all your heart." It's not ok. We want better for you and it's the desire of our heart for you to love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind. There is no halfway in this, and no matter how peaceful at a particular stage in your life, things may be, God has far more for us. So, as we come to this, we realize that God has a desire to richly bless us, to richly satisfy us.

The way that it's put, if you look with me in Proverbs 3:9, is he gives, once again, the key at the very beginning of the passage and then he gives the result at the end.

(Proverbs 3:9) "Honor the LORD from your wealth..."

Now the word that he uses in the text for "your wealth" is really dealing with your riches. Probably the best way to describe it would be out of your abundance. It is giving an interesting picture, and "*rē'šît*" is the word that is used for things that you value most. So, in your perception, you're feeling fairly successful, you're feeling pretty good about the way things are going, and God goes, "Ok. If you have an abundance of anything, you ought to honor Me from that. The things that you value so much, you need to honor Me with those things." I mean, why does God give us anything, really? I mean, we're literally stewards of God, are we not? The thought is that "I got to figure this out. If I give God too much, then I'm going to have too little." And you begin to think in terms of "I don't want to be without." And God goes, "Ok, so, we have a problem, because you don't honor Me." Now the word "honor," I want you to underline. It's a very important word. We oftentimes see it translated as "glory," or "to glorify," and "*kābāq*" is the word that is used. It'd probably be spelled "k-a-b-a-d" if you were to look at transliteration. It's actually pronounced "k-a-v-a-d." Bs are usually pronounced that way. So, "*kābāq*" in the passage is making reference to glory. We've talked about this a number of times, but the root of the word actually comes from the word "weighty," or "to be heavy." It is a picture of value and more specifically, it is a picture of value on the scales. So, for instance, gold would be weighty, and feathers would be light. So, when we're dealing with things that are of value, this is the picture that God has given us, and what He's talking about is that you need to value Him more than anything else. There is a way that he describes this in the Book of Proverbs. In the Book of Proverbs, we oftentimes see this description that is given to us, almost the kind of metaphor that is given to us about weightiness or specifically glory or honor, and sometimes we read it, and we don't recognize what he's talking about.

Let me have you turn to a passage in Proverbs 16. Usually what you'll find is that the first verse of each chapter will set the stage for what he's going to be talking about. So, even though many of the phrases within that particular chapter perhaps seem disjointed and non-connective, if

you'll understand what he's saying at the very beginning, it will connect them all. I just gave you the key.

(Proverbs 16:1) "The plans of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

(Proverbs 16:2) All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight,
But the LORD weighs the motives."

Ok, within the text, God has given an interesting picture of things that are most valuable to Him. You might perceive that maybe your plans or the things that you do are the most valuable thing to you, but God goes, "Let Me tell you what's valuable."

Now, if you look with me in Proverbs 11, you'll see this wonderful metaphor or picture that is given of this whole sense of weight.

(Proverbs 11:1) "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight is His delight."

Now, we oftentimes understand that what we're dealing within this surface of understanding of this phrase is fraudulent behavior in the dealing with and buying and selling. So, you might stick sand in with your grain and make it a little bit heavier, or you might stick a false metal in with your gold in order to make it heavier. It's fraudulent behavior. You're trying to get away with making something out of something that's not valuable. You're trying to show that this is really valuable when it really isn't. Thus, you're fraudulent. So, it's an abomination to the Lord, "but a just weight is His delight." Now, the emphasis is that God knows what is valuable, and God is angry when we put the wrong things on the scale and we tell Him, "But it's valuable." And He goes, "It's not. Only those things that are valuable to Me," thus honoring Him, "are valuable. I'm looking for a particular weight." So, as this Proverbs goes on, the interesting point is that man in his own mind perceives that his riches are valuable. That's the valuable. The way he demonstrates this is he withholds giving it to God. God goes, "Ok, out of your abundance, give me something." He goes, "So, you think that's more valuable than me?" Think about this.

So, if you look throughout this particular Proverbs, in Chapter 11, verse 4,

"Riches..."

What's the value of riches? Yeah, He's going to show you that the thing that you're banking on really has very little to no value. You're putting them on the scales, He goes, "Doesn't match."

"Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death."

Now, what you'll see him repeating over and over again is the word "righteousness," which that would seem to be a valuable commodity.

"...righteousness..." (verse 4)

"...righteousness..." (verse 5)

"...righteousness..." (verse 6)

"...righteous..." (verse 8)

So, obviously, righteousness is going to be a key issue.

If you drop on down to verse 16,

"A gracious woman attains..."

"*Kābôd*," "honor," weight, value. So, what is he saying? That a gracious person, or more specifically a woman that shows goodwill to others, "That's valuable to Me." And it follows through with this in verse 17,

"The merciful man does himself good..."

That's literally translated, "gives good to himself."

(Proverbs 11:18) "The wicked earns deceptive wages,
But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward."

(Proverbs 11:23) "The desire of the righteous is only good..."

Here's one that's really strange. It's bizarre when you think about it, because it doesn't seem to make any sense. I'll read it anyway,

(Proverbs 11:24) "There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more..."

It's like he can't give it away fast enough.

"...And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want."

The generous man will be bankrupt. I mean, that just makes sense to me, "You can't give it all away." But it says just the opposite,

(Proverbs 11:25) "The generous man will be prosperous,
And he who waters will himself be watered."

(Proverbs 11:26) He who withholds grain, the people will curse him..."

(Proverbs 11:28) "He who trusts in his riches will fall..."

Are you feeling the unjust balance? The things that we declare to God are valuable and God goes, "That's not true. That's an abomination to Me. To say that's more valuable than this, is a horrific thing to do."

"He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf."

This is the fundamental principle that God has given us.

You see this if you look with me in Haggai 1. I've oftentimes thought about this particular book dealing with once again, the same time of the Book of Zechariah. Remember, as we were talking about God wants best and He wants you to be on a mountaintop, and He has great and wonderful things for you to do? The thought is, "Well, yeah, but how do I get there?" And God goes, "Well, you don't do it by investing in yourself."

It starts off this way in Haggai 1:6,

"You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes."

(Haggai 1:7) Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways!

(Haggai 1:8) "Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it..."

Now, what's the problem? Well, all you have to do is back up, and you see the problem in verse 3,

"Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

(Haggai 1:4) "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?"

In other words, "You're living in opulence in that you're beginning to think "It's all about me" and you've neglected Me. Where do you think your blessings come from? Who do you think sends the rain? How do things grow?"

So, if you look at the passage, He goes,

(Haggai 1:8) "Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified," says the LORD.

(Haggai 1:9) “You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the LORD of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house.

(Haggai 1:10) “Therefore, because of you the sky has withheld its dew and the earth has withheld its produce.””

That’s success. “I’ve withheld success from you.”

(Haggai 1:11) “I called for a drought on the land, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what the ground produces, on men, on cattle, and on all the labor of your hands.”

Ok, that's not good.

He states this in Haggai 2:15,

“But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD,

(Haggai 2:16) from that time when one came to a grain heap of twenty measures, there would be only ten; and when one came to the wine vat to draw fifty measures, there would be only twenty.

(Haggai 2:17) ‘I smote you and every work of your hands with blasting wind, mildew and hail; yet you did not come back to Me,’ declares the LORD.

(Haggai 2:18) ‘Do consider from this day onward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month; from the day when the temple of the LORD was founded, consider:

(Haggai 2:19) ‘Is the seed still in the barn? Even including the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree, it has not borne fruit. Yet from this day on I will bless you.’”

He's literally saying, “Mark it on your calendar.” I would challenge you this way, mark it on your calendar, the day that you start honoring God in the sense of doing what He wants you to do with oftentimes your most valuable possession. Watch what happens. Now, once again, I'm not even talking about necessarily the building permit; what I'm talking about is when you see somebody in need, you help them. I mean, that's one of the statements that's being said there in Proverbs 11 with the gracious woman, and you see that in the Proverbs woman. You see the poor. You see those that are destitute. You see those are that are in need because you know that this is the heart of God; kindness is this heart. So, you're not withholding good when it's within your capability to give it. You're looking to do the things that God calls you to do. You want to have His heart. You want to have this sense of generosity because you know that God is a generous God, and He loves to do good. As you begin to follow that path, instead of thinking,

“Well, how can I store up treasures for me on the earth?” If you just begin to invest in pleasing God, do you think God's going to let you go without?

The fundamental principle of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 is, look, God will supply every need in order for you to abound in the abundance of giving. God's just going to keep shoveling it in faster than you can shovel it out. He's got a bigger shovel, but the grace of God, God will supply all of your needs according to His. So, it's His riches that will supply this. So, interesting passage as He begins to reveal.

You see the same sense in Malachi, which you're real close to Malachi. So, if you come to the book right before Matthew, Malachi 3, you'll see the same fundamental principle that He gives

(Malachi 3:10) “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house...”

Here again, it's almost like God wants you to test Him. I mean, in Haggai, He goes, “Mark the calendar.” And in this particular passage, He goes, “Try Me. Try Me. See.”

Look at the passage,

“... and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.”

Until there's no more need. I mean, that's you fundamentally saying, “Wait, wait, wait. Enough.” Can you imagine saying that to God? “No, no, no, it's too much.”

Look at verse 11,

“Then I will rebuke the devourer for you...”

Have you ever wondered, “Man, I just don't understand. I'm making all this money, but it just seems to go away.” He goes, “I sent a devourer, He's eating it up.” Like you've got a giant rat in the back, and it just keeps eating it all up, and you go, “Where did it all go?” And He goes, “You want Me to take care of him?” “Yeah.” “Ok. So, honor Me with your wealth.”

If you go back to Proverbs 3, it is that fundamental point that he's going to bear on and it is that sense of believing that God is far more valuable; pleasing God is far more valuable; doing the things for God is far more valuable, and God goes, “Prove it.” Now, James will say, look, you talk about this stuff, but faith without works is dead. “Oh, I believe God is greater than anybody in the universe.” Prove it. “Well, I don't know. If I give Him something, I think I'll be in loss.” I thought you just said He owned everything?

Proverbs 3:9, “Honor the LORD from your wealth
And....”

There's a tie. So, here you have an abundance and God goes, "Don't just sit on that." Remember the guy in Luke? I mean, he has all this stuff and he tears down his barns, he builds bigger barns, and then he goes, "Ok. Now, I think I'm ok." And God goes, "Those barns should be open to help people." Nevertheless, in this particular passage, He not only is dealing with your abundance, but now the next phrase is,

"And from the first of all your produce."

Now, "first" has the connotation of not only meaning that you're coming right away, not being lethargic in your giving. You know how we have to think about it? Generosity really doesn't think about it. A sense of alacrity doesn't think about it; it's just aggressively giving. A generous person gives. But it's not just talking about you giving the first of your fruits in order, but it also means first as far as priority or best. So, when it's talking about giving your first, not only are you excited about giving, but you're making sure that what you give Him is not your leftovers, but your best. "I'm going to throw that away anyway." And you're going to give that to God? It doesn't pan out. That's a false balance in the scales.

"Honor the LORD from your wealth
And from the first of all your produce;

(Proverbs 3:10) So your barns will be filled with plenty
And your vats will overflow with new wine."

"Barns" would probably be more an underground place that they would have in which they would just fill it up and it was for the sense of your needs. He's saying you have more than you need, and the next phrase is really dealing with a sense of the abundance. Oftentimes, the "new wine" will make reference to joy. So, you have this sense of joy overflowing. As Christ will say, "I came, and I want you to bear fruit that your fruit will remain." And His statement within that same text is, "I came that your joy would be made full." So, the productivity to the sense of beyond what we would ask or think goes into the realm of not just what I need, but more than I could ever want. You look back on certain days, and you realize, "God has certainly given me even things that I didn't think I would want, even things that I didn't think I would desire, but He's given those things to me too. How God has blessed." Why? Because you honored Him. See, that's the key phrase. When you read through Scripture, and you read about our Savior, it defines Him. Why is He exalted above every name? Philippians 2 tells us, because He humbled Himself and He took on the form of a bondservant, and He did the will of God. He sought to honor God. How did He seek to honor God? Listen to the phrase, "He emptied Himself." Do you hear that phrase? That's giving up everything, right?

It's the same reason why in Philippians 2, you have a following of Philippians 3, in which Paul goes, "Everything that I counted as gain for myself, I surrendered." And you can see him

following the pattern. Don't you see him following the pattern? So, as it's written in 2 Corinthians, "Though he were rich," Christ, "He became poor that you might have the riches of God and glory." And you go, "So, what is really valuable?"

I love the way that Peter puts it in 1 Peter 1, "You know what's really valuable? The precious blood of Christ." That's what's really valuable. On the scales, God is well pleased. It's blasphemy to exalt anything else as more valuable than the precious blood of our Savior, and this is what we celebrate. We follow His example. I mean, Ephesians 5 says that you and I ought to be obedient and walk in the same path, in the same way that Christ did. Be imitators of God and walk in love, just as Christ who became a soothing aroma by His sacrifice. That's giving up everything. In a way, Christianity is kind of an interesting contest It's trying to give it all away. The harder you try, the more you receive. If you teach this wonderful principle, Scripture guarantees you'll never be without. "I'll take care of you."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your lovingkindness in giving us these truths that are certainly truths to live by; the treasures to obtain, security that goes beyond what we could ever control. For we know that in the day of wrath, riches aren't any good anymore, and in unsettling times markets can shift, but if we put our trust in You, if we will honor You above everything else, You've just guaranteed us, "I'll take care of you." We will test You on this, only because You want us to.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to value the right things. One of the ways that you demonstrate that you value the right things is by giving the things away that aren't valuable. I mean, in your own home, you know that there are certain things throughout the week that end up in the garbage can. Strange to say that many of the things that are garbage, as Paul would call them, we tenaciously hold on to. We would withhold them even if we had an opportunity to use them for Your kingdom. We say that we honor You, but Father, I know that often is not true in the reality of the things that I do. Forgive me for blaspheming Your name; for putting unjust weights on the scale.