

Part 6 - The Better Way to Live

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- [0 : 00] And Ecclesiastes is the philosopher's guide to the Bible, and it asks deep questions. Ecclesiastes is a book that asks the deepest questions. It challenges our assumptions about what life is, and it asks us, and it helps us wrestle with, what is life?
- And that is one of the most profound, simple, and deep questions we ask ourselves, and really the hardest one to come to terms with and find an answer to. Because what is life?
- How much of life do I get to control? How much life do I get to determine what it is and what will be? And how do I control the outcomes, right? The Buddhists, the Dalai Lama, Jordan Peterson, Ecclesiastes, they all sum up life this way.
- Life is suffering, okay? If you exist, you are going to experience suffering. You cannot avoid that.
- And so life is suffering, right? That is not something that we crochet on a pillow to put in our house or get a fridge magnet to throw in our fridge, right?
- [1 : 10] That's kind of a bummer. But if you stop and you think about what does it mean to be a creature? What does it mean to be created? And that intrinsically means that you and I have limited power.
- We're not almighty, you and I. We're not almighty. We can't fully be in control of everything, even though we want to be. We have limited power. Now, obviously, many of us would agree to that on some level.
- But rarely do we wrestle with the implications of what it means to be created, to be a creature, to be a person with limited power, because if we are that way, then we can't be in total control, even though we try.
- Now, to say this differently is the life we live is quite often different to the life we want, right? The life we live is quite often different to the life we want.
- Now, there are two ways that we can live in response to this reality. And this is what the next part of Ecclesiastes is all about. So verse 1 of chapter 7, it says this, A good name is better than precious ointment in the day of death and the day of birth.
- [2 : 18] It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.
- The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning. But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools.
- For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so the laughter of fools. This also is vanity. So we went through a series of verses there, and you'll probably notice this little rhythm in those verses, right?
- There's a way, and then there's a better way. There's comparison being made, and the comparison is made between a life of pleasure and a life of pain.
- And here is what the writer is getting at. It is better to embrace the fact that life is suffering than to deny it. It is better to embrace that life is suffering than to deny it.

- [3 : 22] See, by default, we are pleasure seekers. That's what human beings are. We run after pleasure. We want to dwell in the house of mirth and feasting and laughter.
- That sounds fun, right? We try to cover over the stench of life's BO with the perfume of revelry. That's what we're trying to do. I mean, often you look around, and that's our pursuit of life.
- But that isn't the reality of life. Sometimes life stinks. That's it. We can't do anything about it. We can't control that. It is hard, and it is painful.
- And while the wise learn to embrace it, the fool runs from it. But why is that? Why is our propensity to run from it? Because, again, we're wired for pleasure.
- We want to permanent park in the fun house where we can laugh it up and eat and drink forever. Now, it's okay to have fun. It's good to have fun. It's good to laugh and eat and drink.
- [4 : 19] But that's not all that life is. That's not the sum total of life. And we can't make that our life's goal. Now, you may ask, why don't? Why don't we? Why can't we?
- Who's to stop me? Well, no one's to stop you, but we have to realize that, man, there's real life consequences if we choose to live that way. We're all familiar with Peter Pan syndrome, right?
- Young men who refuse to grow up into responsible adults. And what's the common trait in these men that are stuck in adolescence? They live for fun.
- They want to camp out in the fun house. That's where they want to stay. All they want to do is just have fun playing at life and leave the burden of responsibility to someone else, for someone else to pick up.
- And in the end, what does that do, man? It doesn't turn them into anything good. It doesn't turn them into anything useful at all. In the end, man, they become what happened to the boys in Pinocchio, right?
- [5 : 18] Y'all remember that old cartoon, Pinocchio? All the boys that went to Pleasure Island? And what happened to them? In the end, they turn into jackasses, right?
- Is that okay to say in church? But that was the point of that moment, right? All your life spent in Pleasure Island, having fun, living it up, avoiding responsibility.
- What does that turn you into? Man, it doesn't turn you into anything useful. It turns you into a jackass. Now, it's easy to pick on them, but actually, man, that's every single one of us.
- We are wired that way. We are adverse to pain and trial. We want to live on Pleasure Island. Sigmund Freud said humans operate at their deepest subconscious level by the pleasure principle.
- Check out what he learned. Because it's actually not averse to the Bible. It doesn't cut against the grain of the Bible and the truth of the Bible. It actually agrees with it. This is what he said.
- [6 : 19] The id, what the Bible would call the soul and the heart of man, seeks immediate gratification of all needs, wants, and urges. In other words, the pleasure principle strives to fulfill our most basic and primitive urges, including hunger, thirst, anger, and sex.
- And this is done in order to avoid or reduce anxiety or tension. See, it's funny that one of Freud's groundbreaking discoveries was already written 3,000 years ago in Ecclesiastes.
- See, our basic instinct, what he's pointing out, is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Now, there are other ways that we do that besides just refusing to grow up and take responsibility.

And this is where you and I need to do some soul searching for ourselves. When trauma hits, when trauma hits our lives, for me and you, when we feel anxious or tension, what do we turn to?

What is our immediate response? We run to what the world calls codependencies and what Christians call functional saviors. This can be escaped through fantasy worlds on our screens, Netflix, Fortnite, Instagram, porn, candy crush.

[7 : 40] Or we can escape it through sex and alcohol and drugs. And that's not just illegal drugs. I mean, that's prescription drugs as well, guys.

Those things are being abused like crazy. And it could even be food. See, for myself, when I look at my life and when I got stressed and anxious, the thing I learned to turn to was pornography.

That's what I did when things got tough. I turned to that. But now, it's coffee and Netflix, right? I traded a codependency on something for a codependency in another way.

We create these interesting sin categories as Christians, stuff that's like unacceptable to do and then stuff that's like, ah, it's no big deal. It's more acceptable. And ultimately, as we binge on our functional savior more and more, we become, as Pink Floyd's saying, we become comfortably numb.

That's what happens to us. And that's the big lie, guys. That's the big lie. We believe suffering is going to rob us of happiness.

[8 : 50] It's going to rob us of living a meaningful and valuable life. But in actuality, some of the deepest human experience is found in suffering.

It's found in the trial and it's found in the pain. Now, this doesn't mean that we live to suffer, but it means we shouldn't fear it and we shouldn't run away from it.

And I think most of us do because we think it's going to crush us. And here's the thing, guys. You know what? It can and it will if we don't know God's grace.

See, God gave us the gift of grief to get us through suffering. There's a few things we're going to look at today of how God graces us with things that he's given us to get us through this suffering.

And the first one we're going to look at is grief. The wise, they embrace grief as a gift from God. And you might say, hold on, hold on. Did you just say grief was a gift? Yes.

[9 : 49] Let me explain. See, so many of us treat grief like it's the Ebola virus, right? We don't want to catch that. But the Bible doesn't see grief that way. In the Bible, grief was this really intentional process that brought healing to the suffering soul.

See, Ecclesiastes chapter, it's repeatedly saying it's better to go to the house of mourning. It's better to go there.

Notice it doesn't say that the closet or the prison of mourning. It says it's better to go to the house of mourning. Man, the wise, their hearts are in the house of mourning. It's a house.

It's a home. And where's a home? A home is filled with people. A home is filled with life. Grief, the first rule of grief is that it's a community project. Grieving is meant to be done together.

See, we get it all wrong today when it comes to dealing with our emotions. We keep them in. We're told not to let them out, deal with them privately, or just don't deal with them at all.

[10 : 50] But what's funny is that never works out in the end. So some of the jobs that are exposed to the most traumatic things, death and suffering and a lot of brokenness, you think of policemen and firemen, military, you Marines, you see and experience crazy stuff.

I was talking with a retired Marine who actually fought in battles and saw people killed and had friends killed and had to deal with it.

The way we deal with it is we just joked because we had to move on to the next thing. We had no time to deal with our emotions. That's not good. And what they're learning and what we're seeing and what they're learning with in the police and firemen, man, what's resulting in the lack of dealing with these things, dealing with what they're seeing and not being able to process emotion.

There's a lot of divorce. There's a lot of anger. There's a lot of abuse happening. There's a lot of over drinking, heavy drinking, and use of drugs to cope with these things. But you know what the good news is?

Their leaders are starting to wake up to the fact that, like, hey, the way they've been dealing with it isn't okay. And they're starting to learn that, hey, we actually have to let these guys, like, process and deal and confront what they're experiencing, what's happening.

[12 : 04] It used to be just suck it up and get on with the job. And for many of us, man, we've probably been raised that way. We've been probably told that's what it looks like to be a good leader, a good parent, like, to be able to make that next promotion in our job.

But the Bible says, man, that's not the way. That's not the way we're wired to live. That's not the way God created us to be at all. See, the bigger the loss that we experience, the longer the grieving process is.

You look at the Old Testament and the people of Israel, right? Man, when someone died, they took a week to grieve. And it wasn't just the family that lost it.

The whole town would come out to grieve with them. They would sit with them in their house. They would play sad songs called dirges to get in touch with what was going on in the heart and to pull out what was going on in their hearts, which is the whole point of grieving together.

The whole point of grieving together is to help recognize and work through the hurt. Grief honors our emotions, and it honors that our emotions in a way that bring emotional health.

[13 : 21] Now, you might think, man, this is like real Captain Obvious stuff, right? Our six-year-olds learned this in Frozen. All right? Conceal, don't feel, that whole song, let it go, right?

Hey, I got a daughter, I'm not ashamed. I know that. But here's the thing. They're finding out that actually, man, this is so unhealthy to keep stuff in.

You have to learn how to process. A.J. Marsden, he's a Ph.D. and a professor of psychology in Florida, at a university in Florida, he says this, avoiding emotions such as sadness.

Keeps us from processing what is going on. It keeps us from being able to accept and move past the event. It keeps us, sorry, negative emotions are useful, especially sadness. Sadness can improve your judgment and motivation.

Fascinating. Those who allow themselves to experience sadness can use this emotion as a catalyst to push them out of their comfort zone and do more to start to feel better. In fact, those who process their sadness also show greater perseverance.

[14 : 28] Now, this isn't groundbreaking stuff. Many of us would agree without assessment, but agreement doesn't necessarily lead us to practice, right? See, we may not purposefully conceal how we are feeling, but we have a more widely accepted practice of avoiding emotions.

And that's just keeping ourselves super busy. That's living life at a frenetic and hurried pace. Because if we go fast enough, guess what?

We don't have time to stop and feel those things. See, before we can find out what we are feeling, we have to slow down to listen and process what we're feeling in our souls.

And that's the third little point here is, man, you don't rush the grieving process. There isn't a verse in a Bible that says how long your grieving process has to be. There's no, like, for one day thou shalt grieve, but on the second day, you know, shutteth it down if there's anything like that.

There's no such thing happening. It's not said anywhere. There isn't a rule that's offered us from science or psychology that shows us how long appropriate grieving is either.

[15 : 41] But what we do know is that you aren't meant to stay in that place of grieving permanently. You're not meant to stay in that place of sorrow. That isn't healthy. But you shouldn't hurry through it either.

At some point, we do all have to get back to living, right? But we can't use that as an excuse to avoid grieving. So then what's the right amount? How do we know enough grieving has been enough?

And that isn't really the right question because there isn't a formula. Grief isn't a formula. It's a process. And that is why popping a pill won't take away your negative emotions. It covers them.

It numbs you to them. But it really doesn't deal with them. Now, I want to say like, hey, there's a caveat here. There's obviously like, there's people that really experience legitimate stuff where their bodies are producing chemical imbalances and stuff that they just can't control.

But for many of us, and we have to step back and see like, hey, am I just numbing myself because I don't want to experience suffering? I want to rush through it.

[16 : 47] I want to hurry through it. I want to ignore it. Man, our modern day fast-paced world thrives on the formula approach. It just loves the formula.

It makes things so easier. It makes it make sense. And so we are always trying to reduce our problems down to a formula. Science has told us we can fix our grief problem by just taking pills that are chemical inhibitors, chemical blockers, to keep our brain from doing what it wants to do or experiencing what it wants to experience.

Or the other trick that the brain can release chemicals that make us feel good, right? So we're artificially creating these emotions. You remember the line in the first Predator movie?

I'm so happy that I get to talk about the Predator movie in a sermon today, right? Remember the first Predator movie, Arnold Schwarzenegger? It's like, man, back in the day when they had so many awesome action films.

So there's this part in there where they just had their first like gunfight with this alien. They're trying to figure out what's going on because they can't see him and they don't know what's happening. And Jesse Ventura's character, he's got these, you know, sleeveless arms because he's got big guns and he wants to show them off.

[17 : 57] And he's bleeding in this arm after a gun battle. And then one of his comrades, one of these soldiers next to him in his unit looks at him and says like, hey, man, you're bleeding. Then comes one of like the greatest, cheesiest one-liners of male bravado ever, right?

He spits tobacco and then says, I ain't got time to bleed, right? Man, that dude had to be a Marine, right? So for many of us, that's our gut reaction to dealing with suffering, right?

I ain't got time to grieve. And the root of that isn't courage. The root of that isn't bravado. It's actually pride. And we shouldn't skirt around this like it's no big deal because actually it's a huge deal because pride leads to all sorts of problems.

In verse 7, it says, Surely oppression or extortion drives the wise into madness and a bribe corrupts the heart. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning.

And a patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools. Say not, why were the former days better than these?

[19 : 11] For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. And here's the thing, guys. A proud person is a dangerous person. See, if we don't slow down, if we don't deal with hurt and pain, if we don't take time to recognize that inside our soul we're not okay, we bottle it up and try to put a lid on it, it doesn't stay there.

Eventually it leaks out. And it leaks out in other ways and it leaks out in really bad ways, like what we see here. Eventually the hurt inside that we ignore starts to hurt others. And then we're not safe to be around.

Look at what an article said in a medical journal on depression, addiction, and denial. When pain and sadness is kept inside and not dealt with, it can slowly surface in the future through other behaviors, including anger, overeating, and difficulties with others, which is a really broad category of saying, like, you just mistreat others.

We pass judgment on others because it's easier to deal with other people's faults rather than our own. This passage, it talks about oppression, bribery, quickness to anger, fantasizing about the good old days.

And these are just poor substitutes to cope with setbacks, disappointment, or pain. These offer quick solutions to suffering, right? Which is what the pride and the impatient want.

[20 : 43] And we want the quick solution. We want the fast solution. It looks for the easy balm to soothe itself. Because what it's feeling is it's feeling heartburn in the soul.

Right? Like it says in verse 9b, it's anger. It lodges in the heart of fools. And I don't know about you, but I think of, like, Tommy Boy. It was like, I used to grab these bear claws and they'd get lodged right in here, you know?

That's what anger does, man. It just, it gets stuck in our soul. And it moves out and it gives us heartburn. We'll feel it. Have you ever wondered why it's so easy to get revved up with anger and outrage, but it is so hard to get to a place of repentance where you apologize with sincerity?

You ever wondered why that is? It's because pride is a lot more convenient than patience. It is. And we see in here, man, the comparison of pride and patience, which is a little bit odd, right?

Isn't humility the opposite of pride? That's true. But here's the thing. You can't be humble without being patient. You cannot be humble without being patient.

[21 : 52] The proud, they're not patient. They're hurried. They're always running around, busy, busy, busy. Pride feeds on instant gratification.

It's short-sighted. It loves the shortcut. It ain't got time to bleed, right? So it looks for the shortcut to grief. It looks for the shortcut out of grief and suffering and not feeling good.

It looks for the shortcut to wealth. It looks for the shortcut to happiness. That's why a proud person is often really good at starting things, but they're really good at making big promises. But they're really bad at following through.

They're really bad at, like, fulfilling those promises. See, we all have pride in us, guys. I'm preaching to myself. We all have pride in us. We all have the potential of becoming proud and dangerous, right?

Better is the end of the thing, the beginning, though. And we want to shortcut that. We want the end results. We want the ultimate thing as soon as possible, right? We all love weddings. And they're fun and they're flashy.

[22 : 56] It's the start of something new. It's amazing. There's vows and there's good food and there's dancing and there's gifts. But the wedding is one day. That's it. Marriage is what happens after the wedding.

Marriage is a lifetime. Marriage is a process. Bill and Carolyn Warner just celebrated, I think it was 46 years of marriage. Marriage the other week.

They still love each other. They're still together. But go and talk to them about what those 46 years were like. It was a lot harder than their wedding day, let me tell you that.

Their wedding day vows were put to the test. There was lots of opportunity to be unfaithful and impatient and angry. Patience, it sees that the end, man, is better than the beginning.

Pride loves the wedding day. Or to be single again. Or life before kids. Pride always wants to take us backwards, right?

[23 : 56] Why were the former days so much better than these? That's a pride statement. Who is that question directed at? Well, in the context of these verses, that question is directed at God.

God, why were the former days better than these? We have to realize that most of our complaining and anger and anxiety is really a misdirection at people and stuff.

It's actually directed towards God. We're not honest with ourselves about it. Think of Israel complaining in the wilderness. Why did Moses bring us out here to die of starvation and thirst?

Wish we were back in Egypt living it up. Remember when we had it so good in Egypt eating all this meat? And you're just like, wait a second, that's not how it was at all. And they thought they were complaining at Moses.

God said they were complaining at him. See, when we idolize the past, we want to go backwards, we actually, what we do is we condemn God and we blame him for what our current reality is.

[24 : 59] Man, God, why can't our marriage be like our wedding day? Why are my kids not behaving well? Or why can't, you know, why are they so difficult to deal with? Or why are they not following Jesus right now?

Or why did I get passed over for that promotion? These questions that we ask God. And we're going to ask those questions. In a marriage, in a family, your career, in your walk with Jesus, man, there's going to be times when things aren't going to go the way you want them to.

In any of those moments, we're going to ask those questions. Even for us, in this church, together, just announced losing that permanent building. The next space, we don't know what the next space is going to look like. It could be a lot less ideal with this one.

Pride will tempt us to be upset. Or long for the better past. Man, why can't it be like the former days? But the patient spirit rests in whatever situation it finds itself in.

The patient spirit accepts that every good or bad thing comes from God. Patience is the attribute of the unhurried, unworried soul.

[26 : 02] The patient spirit isn't prone to quick, bad decisions driven by haste and hurry. Which, you know what, makes us safe for others as well as ourselves.

In verse 11, it says, wisdom is good with an inheritance. Or wisdom like an inheritance is good. It's an advantage to those who see the sun.

For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money. And the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it. See, verse 12 can be read this way.

Wisdom is like a shelter. It preserves the life of him who has it. It doesn't promise that we're going to live longer. But it promises that we won't live halfway.

We won't live running from suffering and pretending that life isn't hard. Wisdom fully embraces reality. That actually, it's a safe place.

[26 : 56] And it's a shelter. It's a good place to be. But how do we do this? How do we do this? Is there some magic wand we've got to wave over ourself? Is there some secret incantation that makes us like just live this way naturally?

Are there 10 steps we've got to follow to become patient? No. The answer isn't found in us. It's actually found in God. Verse 13.

Consider the work of God. This is where he leaves us. After all this, consider the work of God. Consider God. Who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity, be joyful.

And in the day of adversity, consider. God has made one as well as the other. Are you okay with that? So that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

In short, this is what it's saying. The wise live by faith in God. The wise live by faith. A wise person is patient and surrendered to God's will.

[27 : 58] Wisdom doesn't demand that God explain all his ways. It's comfortable sitting in the mystery. It doesn't try to solve what is unsolvable.

Man, we don't like that. We want everything to work like a formula. We want everything to be able to be figured out. Nice and predictable. And that's what karma is, right? It's this cosmic formula where everything kind of balances out and we try to make sense of it that way.

But life isn't that way. You can be perfect, but still you will experience the days of adversity. You can be bad and experience the days of prosperity. The good may die young.

The bad may live long. So the reality of life is that it shatters the hope of any kind of simple karmic formula. So here's the question for us.

If there isn't some invisible force balancing it all out, then what are we left with? And if it's not that simple, that everything kind of like the good outweighs the bad, or everything kind of balances itself, what are we really left with?

[29 : 00] Well, we're left with what he gives us in this whole passage. Two options. We can live in denial, pleasure island, partying it up, living it up, just running after mirth and all this other stuff.

Or we could live in denial by responding with aggression and thinking like, I can fix this. I can fix this. Oppression, extortion, anger. Those are all proud fixes of trying to sort out this problem of life.

Or we're offered wisdom, the cup of wisdom, faith in God. Are we going to drink from that, friends? Are we going to drink from that? The writer invites us, consider the work of God.

Consider the work of God. But what is he calling us to consider? He goes on to say this, Who can make straight what he has made crooked? Now that's kind of weird.

I'm thinking, maybe the writer had dyslexia, right? Surely he meant he can make crooked, or who can make crooked what God has made straight?

[30 : 06] Surely that's what he meant. But he didn't say that. And he didn't say that for good reason. He wants us to stop and scratch our heads. Because we think, no, he's got it backwards. Because we're comfortable believing that God makes crooked things straight, right?

It's easier to humble ourselves and patiently submit to a God like that. But we aren't comfortable considering that God also made things crooked. And to surrender that is another level of surrender.

That's a much more difficult level of surrender, to surrender to a God realizing that's true. Now let me be clear, this isn't talking about evil. This isn't saying that God makes evil things happen.

What it's talking about is what James says. Man, God allows the trial. He brings us into the trial, right? There is purpose in his suffering. It's for us, and it's for our good. Because God is good.

He doesn't make evil, but he does make the trial. And there are trials that you and I are in, maybe even right now, that we want straightened out immediately.

[31 : 07] But God hasn't intended them to be straight. Maybe that's for our whole life, or maybe that's just for a season.

We have a daughter who has diabetes. I look at that and I say, that's crooked. God, this isn't fair. You know, look what I'm doing for you. I could respond that way.

But are we comfortable sitting and it's like, you know what? God has made some things crooked. And you know, I have no power to straighten that out. That's a tough thing. And some of those things, like I said, are for our whole life.

Some of them are just for a season. God called us to walk through. The point is, is that he has made some stuff crooked. The rain falls on the just and the unjust. The sun warms and comforts the righteous as well as the evil.

Prosperity and adversity come to good and bad people alike. Now, we're tempted to look at that and just scratch our heads and be like, man, that is totally unfair. That is totally jacked up.

[32 : 09] That is totally crooked. But then, how would you make that straight? How would you sort that out? How would you stand in the place of God and say, oh, you know what? I got a better plan than you.

In all your wisdom, how are you going to make that better? Maybe you think you can. You wouldn't be the first person you tried. Buddha, Marx, Kant, Nietzsche, plenty of others.

Been working at that formula for a long time. You know what? Didn't work out in the end. All their ponderings, all their planning, all their schemes, all their good ideas.

They haven't made straight what God's made crooked. But Christianity, it doesn't tell us to even try to solve that problem.

It just says, man, surrender. So we surrender. We surrender to the reality that we are creatures and he's creator. We surrender to the reality that we are weak and unable.

[33 : 09] We can't fix it. The gospel says God came down. He came down to earth to make what was crooked straight. Man can't make straight what God made crooked, but God did, and he did it through Jesus.

And we're about to take communion right now. If I could have the band come up. And before we do, I want us to consider. I want us to consider God. He invites us to consider God.

I want us to consider God. Communion reminds us that Jesus endured patiently through the greatest suffering. He was a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief.

Jesus lived in the house of mourning. His heart was in the house of mourning. Jesus was the most righteous man. The most upright man.

The most uncrooked man. But he was made crooked for us. He stood in our place. Why? So we could be straightened out. While we live this life under the sun, we're going to spend plenty of time in the house of mourning, guys.

[34 : 15] We just got to stop wrestling with that and say, okay, that's how it is. But one day, this is how we cope with it, guys. One day, that will all end because of Jesus' resurrection.

Right? Heaven, Jesus' kingdom, is not a house of mourning. Man, it's a house of feasting. It's a house of singing. It's a house of mirth, of joy and laughter, endlessly and forever, unceasingly. And we long for that day, and we cry out with the Spirit and with the church, saying, man, come, Lord Jesus, because that's what we want.

Oh, this life, the longer we live it, the longer we see, man, how much difficulty and suffering and trial there is in it. And guys, we could either get mad at that or we could let that feed that longing in our hearts for his kingdom.

And here's the thing, guys. We also get to taste that now. We don't get to taste it fully, but we get to taste some of that now. By God's grace, we get to taste it.

[35 : 25] We get to taste and see that he's good. We get to enjoy him. We get to know that even in our difficult times, in the pain, in the trial, we're not alone. He's with us, and he brings us into a family that we rally around each other and love each other in those moments.

And so we endure with patience, embracing all of life together, all of life. Long for heaven. I'm gonna invite you to come and take communion as you do.

I want you to consider what God is calling you to surrender to today. What are you running from? What do you need to live and surrender to?

Then come and take his body that was broken, his blood that was shed. It's the bread that we eat. It's the cup that we drink. And come, we say, thank you.

Thank you, Lord. You've made the crooked straight. I can't do that. You've made the crooked straight. And one day, that's gonna be forever. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you that this is true.

[36 : 30] We thank you that you are the king sitting on the throne in a kingdom that will never pass away, that will never end, and that is perfect, and that our hearts long for it.

We can't wait to be out of the house of mourning and the house of mirth with you. But until that day, help us, man. Help us to receive and consider. that sometimes you bring delight, and it's joyful, and we can rejoice, but sometimes you bring adversity.

And in that, it makes us hunger for you all the more. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.