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Revelation

Chapter 14 - Revealing the Consequence of Choice Beckons Other to Consider (vs. 8)

Revelation 14:6-8: And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

We're actually going to be just focusing on verse 8, since it is a paragraph. Did you know that it actually is a paragraph? Not my fault. We come to this Book of

Revelation, and what is it about? It's about unveiling. "*Apokaluptó*," making reference to the fact that God is unveiling things. The question, once again, beyond that is, what is He unveiling? What is His design? What is His purpose in uncovering these things? And the ultimate conclusion is that He's uncovering for the churches. In particular, it's a letter written to the seven churches in Asia Minor. And what He's doing is He's pulling back the covers, and He's showing not only what God's plan is for us and the ultimate resolve of that, but what He is also demonstrating is what the world is like, and many of those things that have been hidden and subverted. And He begins to pull back the covers; even by the fact that taking back the title deed of creation, He begins to open up this wonderful book and begins to claim back for Himself. But as He begins to reveal and take back the seven seals, you look and you go, "What a mess we've made of the world that He gave us." As you look in Genesis, God has so ordained that we would be stewards of this creation, and yet by the time Christ comes and reclaims it for Himself, what a mess it is. And so, you

begin to see those things transpire in the breaking of the seals.

The very beginning of Revelation talks about Christ, and it positions Him with the church as He stands among them, and His eyes are very much intense upon them, and His radiating light is that which really ignites us. And so, we become, as it were, candlesticks, or light in a dark world, the reason why God has called us. And we've made mention of this several times, but it's always good to re-emphasize that God has called the church to be a light unto the world. "Therefore, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God in heaven." We are lights on a hill. So, God has so ordained this, and it's a perfect metaphor, the perfect picture to make churches, put them on a lampstand, and show the light, because that's clearly what we should be doing, and God has so ordained us to do that. The unfortunate thing is, as you've been going through the seven churches, they've allowed the world to creep in. And so, as we've gone through the seven churches, and without us going through this again, because we've

actually done this several times, but without us going into great detail, the churches have allowed the world to infiltrate their way of thinking. And so, the Book of Revelation is going to reveal what exactly they're letting in their doors and how destructive that force is. And so, as He takes us through the book, He not only declares to the seven churches, "You're doing some things wrong and you need to straighten these things out." You know, He ends with the church of Laodicea, which to me, in many respects, defines our church today, "We're rich, we're wealthy, we don't even need God." And that's maybe the perspective of some. But we've come into a world of relying upon the things of the world. And that's one of the greatest crimes that we could have. Of course, the church at Ephesus, not loving like we had, that fervor and that fire that we had for God, and allowing the law and the legalism to subvert the message of the glorious gospel of Christ. He said, "I'm going to take your light out with that one." And Thyatira and Pergamum and all these that are allowing compromise and, in some way, allowing tolerance to open the door for Jezebel and all these kinds of influences. The church is doing that. And it's a sad thing

to realize that we're holding hands. And in many respects, many of our leaders and pastors are like Balaam, who is basically a prophet for hire. We're just making money rather than desiring to preach the gospel. The wonderful message in Matthew 10 as He turns His disciples is, "Freely you've been given, freely give." And it's a wonderful message that we have, and it is the message of God's love, which is not about taking, but about giving, "For God so loved He gave." And Paul will say, "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls." And that really is what the church should be doing. So, what we see is that the church has been off.

The wonderful picture that He gives us right after that is the way things are in heaven and the calm of that sea. We oftentimes sing, "the glassy sea". And what is that about? Well, we know that the sea really is that figurative picture of humanity. And as we read in Isaiah, the wicked are like the tossing sea. It can't be quiet. And we understand that by every wind and wave of doctrine, we are easily influenced. We've seen that influence come and be a part of our world and how fast things change. It boggles my

mind how quickly people move from one place to another. But they're like the surf of the sea. But in heaven, there's a calmness. And in His presence, there's a peace and the world is just not going to take it away. And you see that wonderful thing. And you see all the creative beings and the glory that is given to God and it is a place of praise. And it is a place of where God is in control. And that can only happen with that.

But we also then come into a scene; it's a very interesting scene in which John realizes that the earth is not there. The calmness of the heavens is not a part of the earth. And we're in great turmoil. I don't know if you noticed that. But we're in great turmoil. And so, that turmoil needs somebody to take the world back. And so, the invitation is given, but nobody's there. Is there anybody that will step forward? Anybody? Anybody? Any power? Any great power? And you see these angelic powers and they go, "Well, certainly this power, this power." None of them would take it. And John begins weeping. Nobody, nobody. But that wonderful picture behind the throne, a Lamb, diminutive. It's a small Lamb, as if slain. That Lamb

shouldn't even be walking. It's got its throat cut. He grabs the title deed and all of heaven breaks loose.

What Revelation is revealing is that the greatest power in all of heaven is God's love. And He has literally seated that power at His right hand to take possession of all things. And it's one of the reasons why I long to be in heaven, because that's where love reigns. And we come boldly before the throne of grace because of that. So, what a wonderful picture. It's almost like you have a camera in the heavens, and now you go back to the earth and you go, "But there's trouble." And as the troubles go, you not only see the troubles that humanity has produced, but then the troubles of the tumultuous spirits that are influencing the world as the trumpets begin to resound and the breath of the spirits begin to reveal just a malevolence of those beings.

But then we finally come to Chapter 12. I'm skipping some. We come to Chapter 12. And as we come to Chapter 12, we see that wonderful picture of what this is all about. Man has a tendency to think that maybe God's mean, that the whole judgment thing of God is just God

being cruel. But I think to me, Revelation 12 just sets me straight. Because what it does for me is it's as if God sits me down and He goes, "Son, let Me tell you something. I love your mother. And I love My kids. And anybody that tries to hurt them, it's personal to Me." And that's one of the reasons why I love this chapter, because you see the great dragon going after the child of God, and you see the great dragon going after the woman who God loves so much. And you realize that He has every reason to be upset. And it is literally the precursor to the bowls of the wrath of God that are going to come, but He's setting that wonderful stage.

In that, we come to Chapter 14, and in Chapter 13, you see that this world of ours has been taken over by not a lamb, a beast. So, the contrast that is seen in the Book of Revelation is that you have this beast, i.e. describing literally the insatiable desire of man to conquer. We see that in the Book of Daniel, which the nations are described as certain beasts. And in Chapter 13, you see a conglomerate of those beasts, of the different nations. It's

almost like they've come together into one, this amalgamation of hostility, and they now take control.

We know according to Chapter 11 that God has sent forth these two prophets to proclaim the marvelous gospel. We know it's the gospel because, according to Revelation 17, that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. So, we know what they're declaring. But what's interesting is, they're declaring the truth in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is where they get killed, which Scripture is telling us that religion is not a friend of God's, that there's a hostility towards God through the works of men in the realm of religion. So, you come to the end of that, and of course, the wonderful picture in Chapter 12. Then, in Chapter 13, you have just the hostility of this beast that is coming up and taking control. And it seems strange that people would acquiesce and give over their control to some beast, but it's the nature of man because it's who he is. And so, he begins to give over his control. And the ultimate end of Chapter 13 is, you can't buy or sell without the mark. And once again, the emphasis of the mark is the piercing in the skin. It's very interesting, which

is also that which is portrayed of the serpent piercing the skin. But as it gives that picture, it tells us that the number is 666, which He describes. He says that's the number of man. And what we understand is the treachery of man is the worst beast that could ever control, because there's vindictiveness and hostility, and so the control of man has come. But in the midst of this, what a wonderful picture, we have the 144,000 standing with the Lamb. And it is that proverbial light on the hill, isn't it? In which great encouragement comes. And I think one of the things that Revelation is telling us is that never is a light so bright as in the midst of the greatest darkness. And so, it is in the greatest darkness that these 144,000 stand unscathed, untouched by the things of the world. And this makes them shine so brightly.

What Scripture is telling us and what Scripture is telling the church is that before there is a proclamation and the declaration of the gospel, there needs to be a purging and a purifying of the church. In other words, before that message goes out, you can go around saying, "God changes sinners," but if you're not changed, if your life is

not right... And so, the church's responsibility is to first let their light so shine before men that they would see the good work, see the change in their lives and then they would glorify God in heaven. What a door, what an opening that gives as people begin to see the confidence, the peace, the lack of anxiety, the purity of a life, and they begin to go, "Okay, it's real." And so, it is that which starts off the proclamation. The proclamation is given, first of all, by the way that people are living, specifically the 144,000, and their pure lives in which they radiate. And then it goes into the angel declaring the message of the gospel.

If you drop on down to verse 6 and 7,

(Revelation 14:6) "And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel..."

And then he begins to proclaim. So, good news follows, what? It follows your life, right? Yeah. And as Colossians says, "In the way that you were called, so walk in that." And James says, "Faith without works is dead." So, you need to be walking and living that life. There is no veracity if in what we say, there's no validity in what we say, if in

fact we're not living this gospel. So, it's put in this order for a reason.

Then as we come to the verse today that we're going to be looking at, verse 8, we realize that there is a moment in which we are calling upon those around us to consider where they've been going and what they've been doing. So, it starts off with our lifestyle, which is the light. It then goes into the proclamation of the gospel. And to me, the whole Chapter 14 is about choice because it's setting the contrast and the comparison between those that are God's, which, I mean, it's so obvious, right? They're the ones standing on the hill with the Lamb, and everybody else following the beast. So, we have a war going on. Who's fighting? Lamb versus beast. Who do you think is going to win? Well, if you were thinking like the world, you would think, "Well, the beast is going to win this one." But of course, we know differently. But the thing about choice is this- not only does choice radiate. People say, "I don't know, I'm kind of thinking about making a decision." But you can't make any light until you make a choice. If, in fact, we were to ask you, "Are you a

Christian,” and “Who is a Christian?” The moment you raise your hand, a light comes on. And at that moment, something happens. Division. A divisiveness, a distinction begins to happen. If you were to talk about who is a Jew when it comes to the Holocaust, there’s the one who wouldn't deny it, and the one who would. See? So, it just immediately makes a distinction, and you see that distinction on a hill, and there's no doubt about it. But there's also something else about choice, because when I make a decision, if I believe it's the right decision, I want somebody else to come. I mean, if I'm raised my hand, I'm going, “Come with me.” And you can hear that with Christ as you go through Scripture.

I like John 1:36-39, where John the Baptist goes, “There's the guy. There's the guy. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” And they start going after Him, and they go, “Where are you staying?” And Jesus just simply goes, “Come and see.” I would love for Him to say that to me. “Just come and see where I'm staying.” And they got to live and be in His house. It's just such a miraculous thing.

But John 7:37 reads this way,

“... “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

(John 7:38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”

(John 7:39) But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; ...”

I mean, if you have Spirit of living water within you, wouldn't you like somebody else to come?

And so, this is why the dogma and the emphasis of this angel that is declaring, and the way it reads in verse 6,

(Revelation 14:6) “And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach...”

Once again, both words making reference to the gospel; preaching as well.

“... to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.”

It doesn't matter. You can kind of hear that parable, “Call on the highways and the byways, get everybody, anybody that will come.”

(Revelation 14:7) “And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment...”

Once again, “*krisis*,” making reference to the fact that the moment which God is separating. This is the time in which God is separating. Are you for Him or are you against Him? Jesus says, “If you're not for Me, you are against Me. You are making a decision.” And it's in trials that it just becomes so clear, isn't it?

“And he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him...”

Of course, the world has been worshipping who? The beast, and the image of the beast.

“... who made the heaven and the earth...”

This is not something that you made. This is someone that made you.

“... who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

(Revelation 14:8) And another angel, a second one...”

Once again, the conjunction particle is put in here, a particle of union, which means that it's inextricably tied together with verse 7.

“And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great...””

What's interesting is, it always starts with the gospel. The calling always starts with, “I've got good news for you.” But it also is followed by, “And you don't want to go that way, because that way is destructive, and you have no idea the pain and the sorrow that has come.” So, the description is, the other angel follows this, and says, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.” Now, I just want to emphasize that he uses the word “*piptō*” for “fallen”. But specifically, it's in what is called the “aorist active.” Now, the point of this is, it's in the active case, that Babylon is falling on its own. That's a very interesting point. You know, man exalts the things that he does, but he's just building a tower that's going to crumble because it's the materials, the things that he uses to build it. Well, if you build on a rock, you're not going to fall, but if you build on the sand, it's going to happen. So, it's that picture of,

because and by virtue of what Babylon loved and what it represented, it's falling. It's falling. It's unsubstantial. It couldn't hold itself.

And the picture is,

“... “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she...””

Which is making reference to the fact of the harlotry of the city itself; you're going to see this in particular in Chapter 17 and Chapter 18, as it describes Babylon as a great city of the harlot.

So, it says,

“... she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.””

If you underline the word “drink,” that's emphasizing in the figurative, putting something in somebody's mind. That's an interesting picture. So, as you would drink something in the physicality of it, in the literal sense, you're putting something inside of you. In the figurative sense, it is making reference to the fact that she has caused to drink; she has put things in the mind of man so

that he would embrace these things. It's become a part of his way of thinking. Babylon has done that.

And you see this, once again; if I could take you to Chapter 18, it gets more specific.

It says in Revelation 18:3,

“For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”

More specifically, if I could put it in there, “of her luxury”. In other words, there's something about Babylon that has allured them. Now, where a lot of people stumble on this is that they get fixated on the immorality thing, and they just think that it's more of a sexual issue, which obviously is a part of it. But the emphasis is not on that. The emphasis is on the immorality in the sense that you've loved something else other than God. That's what's caused the adultery. The world is alluring you into these things, and that's why it adds in the merchants. And as you go into Chapter 18, cargoes of gold, the silver, verse

12, precious stones, pearls; these are all the things that have allured us, and this is all of what Babylon is about. The best way I can describe this to you is in the very beginning. So, if you'll go all the way back to Genesis 11, we'll see how this Babylon has caused the nations to drink of the wine of her passions, of her immorality; more specifically, how Babylon has caused us to love something else other than God. And that something else is Babylon. If you look with me in Genesis 11, you'll see the initial coming together of humanity. And what an interesting picture. This has always been an interesting picture to me because it really in some ways is summarizing where the sin began. Genesis is the beginning of all things, right? So, as you go through the book, you begin to see that it's the beginning of sin. So, as we see the sins of the nations in this particular setting, what has happened is the whole earth coming together after the flood, and what God has already said to those that are coming off the ark, He goes, "Okay, here's the commandment," basically, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth." That's found in Genesis 9:1. I think it's verse 7 as well. But the emphasis is, "This is what I

want you to do.” Now, the moment you hit Chapter 11, what you're reading is anything but that. So, they're not filling the earth.

So, it says,

(Genesis 11:1) “Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.”

(Genesis 11:2) It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar...”

Which is basically two rivers, probably Tigris and Euphrates.

“... and settled there.”

Let me read it again. The whole earth, with the same words, the same language, settled. It didn't go into all the world. Now, what this is telling us is that this is a city that is founded on rebellion. So, the first picture that you're going to see is that Babylon is a rebellious place. It's in defiance of God. And you'll see this as well.

It says,

(Genesis 11:3) “They said to one another...”

When they're talking to one another, are they talking to God? Are they saying, "And Your will be done"? No, they're talking to one another. If you want to be wrong, talk to one another. If you want to be right, get in the word of God.

(Genesis 11:2) "It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

(Genesis 11:3) They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." ..."

Now, immediately, what are they doing? Well, it's very clear they're not using stones. They're making bricks. And it's about a kind of defiance of a human invention. That is to say, we're going to build something that God didn't create. We're going to make something that God didn't create. And I think that's one of the patterns that you see in science. Now, we know that God created all things. But what man wants to do is he wants to create himself with the things that God has and use it in some other way and say, "This is what man made." He wants to distinguish himself. "God didn't make this. God couldn't do this." You talk with somebody, "God helped you get a job." "God

didn't do that. I work for myself. I got my own paycheck.”
That's what they like to say.

So, in defiance, they make bricks, they burn them thoroughly.

Now, watch this,

“... And they used brick for stone...”

Instead of stone, would be another way of putting it, because God made the stone, so we don't want to use that.

“... and they used tar for mortar.”

Just in case it's going to flood again. That's what Josephus says. That's one of the reasons why they use the tar. In defiance, once again, “We'll protect ourselves from God's judgment. We'll secure ourselves.” And the fact that the word “city” in the Hebrew actually means a fortress is man's way of defying and shaking his fist to God and going, “We'll make our own protection. And we don't want to make it of the things that You have created. We want to make it according to our own ideas and our own invention and our own mindset.”

(Genesis 11:4) “They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city...””

A place literally where the accomplishments of man are exalted. And that's why you have the tower.

“They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered...””

Of course, that's what God wanted them to do.

“... otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.””

So, it's a place of rebellion, a place of defiance, of human invention, and a place where the accomplishments of men are exalted, are elevated. This is the city of Babylon. This is the tower of Babylon. And it's penetrated all of the earth. It's all the cities. It's all of the earth that's penetrated. Now, what's interesting is that Scripture will use the harlot as a picture of the city of rebellion, of the city of emphasizing the exaltation of man's accomplishment. Scripture will use that and begin to take the picture of a harlot and says, “Now, it's calling you.”

Well, let me show you a couple of the passages in Proverbs. As you read in Proverbs, you see that calling... Well, there are actually two women that are calling in Proverbs, right? Wisdom is calling, and you see that at the very beginning of Chapter 1, and it's peppered throughout, wisdom is calling to the young and the naive, "Come to me and you'll be safe and you'll be secure. Listen to my words." And then the harlot says, "No, immediate gratification is the way to go. We'll give you what you want now. And we'll promise you..." And the picture is one of greatness and aggrandizement, and megalomaniacs are walking the streets and saying, "We're greater than everybody else." And there's some kind of allurements to that. And you see at the very beginning of Chapter 1, "Come with us and you'll be just like us. Throw your money in with us and we'll be rich together." And it's a picture of the city, really, is what it is.

So, the one problem is that nobody's thinking about how this whole thing ends. And this is what the angel was declaring, "This building that you're going into is falling.

It's falling by virtue of what it's been built upon. It's falling.”

(Jeremiah 5:31) “... But what will you do at the end of it?”

It's a simple question. What will you do at the end of it? But as you go through Proverbs, you realize that the father is kind of working with his son and going, “You can't listen to these things. You can't listen to the world. It's alluring you. It's calling you.” And he gives the picture in Chapter 4.

(Proverbs 4:7) “The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom...”

(Proverbs 4:8) “Prize her...”

Of course, it gives the picture of a woman.

(Proverbs 4:9) “... She will present you with a crown of beauty.”

But then,

(Proverbs 5:3) “For the lips of an adulteress drip honey
And smoother than oil is her speech;

(Proverbs 5:4) But in the end...”

See, nobody thinks about, “Well, how's this going to end?” And so, it goes on and continues to give that picture.

“Now, son, listen to me, because if you don't, you're going to groan at the latter end.” (Proverbs 5:11)

(Proverbs 5:14) “I was almost in utter ruin In the midst of the assembly and congregation.”

So, then in Proverbs 6:20,

“My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

(Proverbs 6:21) Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.”

It's going to save you.

And he says,

(Proverbs 6:32) “The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;

He who would destroy himself does it.”

But the woman of adultery is going to be a picture of the city alluring. And if you look with me in Chapter 7, it gives the picture of this naive guy that's kind of walking. And he

says, "Listen, I'm just going to let you know the adulteress is going to come out and she's going to flatter you with her words." That's verse 5.

In fact, he's going to mention again in verse 21 of Chapter 7, that in her many persuasions she entices you. She's flattering you. "Wow, you look good today," and "I've been waiting for you," and "You're the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me." And of course, as Proverbs says, she just sees you as a loaf of bread. But the same thing is true of the city. The city is calling you, "We need people like you. We need great people like you. And you can come and you can build great things with us." You go, "Wow, I'm pretty important." "Yeah, we'll give you a watch at the end of your life."

(Proverbs 7:6) For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice,

(Proverbs 7:7) And I saw among the naive, And discerned among the youths A young man lacking sense,

(Proverbs 7:8) Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house."

Now watch verse 9,

(Proverbs 7:9) “In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness.”

Now, that's an excellent picture of telling us what's happening. What's happening is that the allurements of the world are more powerful in the darkness of our lives. It's one of the great themes of 1 Thessalonians, where he tells us in that Chapter 4, “We're not of those who have no hope.” But the hopelessness of the Thessalonians was causing them to be impure and causing them to find and look for immediate gratification in so many other ways. So, as you go into that book, you realize that it's in the darkness of my life that the world begins to offer me some sort of pleasure, or maybe a drug that will make it all go away. And so, there's an intoxication that happens; a wine that begins to mix, “Come on, come with us. We'll make you forget all your problems. We'll make you rich beyond your imagination. We'll find a way to deal with every issue that you have.” And the city begins to call. Self-pity is probably the first thing that begins to build you into this place and all your failures and all your

disappointments and all your grief and all of your anger. You're in darkness, and somebody says, "Come." What are you going to do? You're a patsy within this particular text.

So, it says in the passage in verse 10,

(Proverbs 7:10) "And behold, a woman comes to meet him..."

When? In the darkness. Yes, that's when she comes to meet him.

"... Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.

(Proverbs 7:11) She is boisterous..."

She comes with a sense of confidence, and she dwells securely. It's sort of like Isaiah 47 talks about Babylon. He says, "You're a harlot." He says, "I sit here, and I dwell securely. Nothing ever is going to happen to me." It's the reason it's so boisterous.

"She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home;

(Proverbs 7:12) She is now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner.

(Proverbs 7:13) So she seizes him and kisses him And with a brazen face she says to him:

(Proverbs 7:14) “I was due to offer...”

A little spirituality never hurts.

“I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my VOWS.

(Proverbs 7:15) Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly...”

It's almost like she's saying, “God has ordained us to be together.” I mean, can you think of any other reason why? So, the city calls. “God has ordained you to have this job. God has ordained you to be rich beyond your wildest imagination.” I'm not saying don't go to work. I'm just saying don't listen to the world. And don't think for one moment that the world is going to be the answer to your sorrows. Christ says, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden.” Someone else is calling to you, but it's not the city.

The passage reads this way,

“Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly...”

She doesn't love him. The city doesn't love you. The world doesn't love you.

(Proverbs 7:17) “I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

(Proverbs 7:18) Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning...”

Pleasure. But more than pleasure, you have affluence and lavish opulence and luxury that's within the text. How alluring is that? “You can have anything. Come. You'll be somebody. Finally, you'll be somebody.” And you can hear the allurements, of course, with the many persuasions.

This is why in Isaiah 47:12-15, God says to Babylon, “Your spells, your sorceries, your astrologers, your prognosticators,” of course, we would say your psychologists, your counselors, your philosophers, your scientists, “can't and will not deliver you from these things.” What will happen in the end? People aren't thinking through these things, and there seems to be no

sense of logic or right because they're enamored and intoxicated by the great beauty.

But if you look in Chapter 8 as well, does not wisdom call? Is not wisdom calling you? Why are you not listening? Well, because it's not promising you all those kind of riches. It's promising you riches of true value, of heart and relationship and depth of character, things that money could never buy. It's not promising you those things that look full of glitter and glamour. It's revealing to you that there's something greater.

You know, when you consider the parable of the soils, what's revealed in the parable of the soils specifically when it talks about the world choking out, is it really mentions 3 things that come in. The first is that the worries of the world come in. And by virtue of the worries, I just want to let you know that's one of the reasons why the world is trying to scare you to death. Because they know when you're scared to death and the worries of the world come, that you begin to seek them out. "We have the answer to your problems now that you're scared to death with the worries of the world."

Just take a moment and look with me in Ecclesiastes. You'll see this. You'll see the different things in the way that the world allures you and calls you to come. Ecclesiastes 5, if you look with me. And one of the reasons I like Ecclesiastes is, what's the theme of Ecclesiastes? Well, futility under the sun. But the point is, if you leave God out of the picture, wow, is this a terrible world. Because nothing makes sense without God.

So, you look in verse 17,

(Ecclesiastes 5:17) “Throughout his life...”

It's talking about man.

“... he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.”

And that's a good day. The point is, he's stating, there's a lot of sorrow in this world.

I mean, if you look at Chapter 8, what does it say in verse 15?

(Ecclesiastes 8:15) “So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry...”

Basically, Epicurean.

“... and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life...”

What is he saying? “Get drunk. Maybe you can numb the feeling.” And this is what man does. He looks for pleasure, he looks for maybe some way to numb the hurt, and he goes into the realm of escapism, right? I mean, really, most of the defense mechanisms that we create in our lives are just a form of escaping from the fears that we have. So, Mark (4:19) says, “The world will choke you out because the worries of the world come in, and before long, you're overwhelmed by the things of the world.” And then, of course, the city comes up and goes, “Well, we've got a solution for that.” The second thing that he talks about in Mark is the deceitfulness of riches.

If you look here in Ecclesiastes 5, it's just a warning in verse 10,

(Ecclesiastes 5:10) “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money...”

Just to let you know, it's not going to happen.

“... nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.”

Go into Ecclesiastes 10 with me, and it reads this way, (Ecclesiastes 10:19) “Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money is the answer to everything.”

Actually, the direct quote would be, “money answers all.” His point is, money has an answer to everything. So, it doesn't matter what the problem is, money goes, “I've got the answer.” And it's the lie of the city that says, “You make enough money, and all your problems will go away.” So, man starts making money and then he gets more and he still has problems. So, the world says, “You don't have enough.” So, he keeps making more. It never happens. So, you're choked out by the deceitfulness of riches. The world is calling and lying to you. It's saying, “Money has the answer.” It doesn't. It's not the right answer. It has an answer. It's not the right one.

And then Mark talks about the desire for other things. We won't read the chapter, but when you read Ecclesiastes 2, he's pursuing all kinds of pleasures. In fact, he even said,

“You know, I think I'm going to try to get drunk and see if that's going to make me happier, or maybe wiser,” which doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but once you start drinking, what's going to happen anyway?

But Chapter 11, if you look with me, it says this,

(Ecclesiastes 11:9) “Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.”

In other words, “Okay, we know you're going to have impulses, and we know that you're going to have desires, but you really don't want those to rule you. You don't want those making the lifetime decisions.”

Of course, you come to Chapter 12, and he says, “You better put God first when you're young, because when you get old, you can't do anything.” That's the summary of Chapter 12, if you want to know what the summary of Ecclesiastes 12 is.

But the point in all this is, we see the allurements. We see the choking out by this great city, Babylon, that says, "We have the answer." And so, it makes you want to trust in it. If you're trusting in the world, guess what you're doing? You're committing adultery. I know you don't think of it that way, but if you turn me to James, that's exactly what he's saying. Turn with me to James 4. I know we've hopped around, but hey, it was just one verse in Revelation, right?

So, you look with me in James 4, it's very clear that going after your desires when they're fleshly is not going to make you happy. His point is at the very beginning of James 4, "Why are you so angry? Why are you fighting? You're going after lustful stuff. So, you're envious and you're bitter and you're jealous and selfish ambition in your heart. And this is not from God. And this is what's making you miserable."

His point is, if you look with me in verse 4,

(James 4:4) "You adulteresses..."

Why does he call them adulteresses? Because they love the world and not God. They love Babylon and not God.

See? Babylon is that place of rebellion where man says, “It's our accomplishments that will bring us fulfillment. You come to man and you trust in us... And by the way, you can't buy or sell without our mark.” Yeah, that doesn't sound too freeing to me. Galatians 5 said it was for freedom that Christ came to set you free. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty. We are freeing agents because we're telling people, “Look, we don't seek to please men. We seek to please God, and we're bond servants of Him, and that's what's so freeing to us.”

But in James 4,

(James 4:4) “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? ...”

You're dating another girl. Who is she? The one that's been alluring you all your life. The one that's been telling you, “I have the answers to all your problems.” It's the world. It's the schools. It's the banks. Insurance. Health care. I'll stop.

“... Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

(James 4:5) Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

(James 4:6) But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

(James 4:7) Submit therefore to God....”

Stop listening to the world and listen to God. See, what makes us different is that we unite around faith in God. The world unites around the accomplishments of men. That's what makes us different. Not too complicated, is it?

He goes on and says,

(James 4:6) “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.””

The proud are the ones going, “I can make my own building,” It's why Isaiah 26 says what it does. I mean, you oftentimes quote, “Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusts in Thee.”

You'll quote that, but you forgot to read the first part.

God says, "I am the city. I'm your protection."

(James 4:7) "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

(James 4:8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

"Double-minded". Why do you think he sticks that in there? Because you're trying to love the world and you're trying to love God, and he goes, "Stop." You think about it. Ask your wife, guys. Ask your wife if you can bring your girlfriend with you. **No, don't.** "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." What's he talking about? A relationship. When you come before God, and you say, "I love You more than anything." I mean, 1 John 2, what does he say? Don't love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If you love the world, you have no love with the Father."

I've got to end with this passage. It's found in Isaiah 30, if you'll end there with me. It's become one of my million all-time favorites. But Isaiah 30, what a great text this is

because the Lord wants to save you. One of the statements that is made in Isaiah is, God wants you to bring you by the calm waters and a peaceful place. Of course, the waters of Tigris and Euphrates and the Nile, He says, "You keep running to them." But He says, "Come to Me."

The passage reads this way,

(Isaiah 30:15) "For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing,

(Isaiah 30:16) And you said, "No, ..."

"I'm going to take care of this myself. I have my own way of handling things. I'm going to run to the horses."

Of course, if you look at the beginning of Chapter 30, it says,

(Isaiah 30:3) "Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame..."

You're running to the wrong place. You're running to the things of the world.

(Isaiah 30:18) “Therefore the LORD longs...”

See, someone else is calling out to you. Yeah, I know the city's been beckoning you. I understand that. But you've not seen anything like this. Our Savior is on the cross calling you to come to Him. Why would you not? How could you look at His death on the cross and say that He doesn't love you, He doesn't care for you, and He doesn't want best for you. All these other guys are saying, “You come to us, and we'll get you to sacrifice for us.” Christ calls us and He's spreading His arms out wide, “Come unto Me, all who are wearing heavy laden. I'll give you rest. I'll die for you.”

“Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you,
And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on
you.

For the LORD is a God of justice;
How blessed are all those who long for Him.”

And that's all He's asking you to do. Long for the right thing.

The angels begin to announce, “There's good news. You can still be saved. But do it quickly.” Hebrews will put it

this way, “Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart. Today, do something about this.” And you can hear the angel as it flies through the midheaven, as we were talking about that picture of Absalom between heaven and earth, “The day of choice is here. Make the decision today.” And then you hear the second angel going, “You don't want to go that way. You have no idea where it's going to take you. It's only death and doom and hardship and pain and suffering and disappointment. You don't want to go there.” And in many respects, the church proclaims that same way. We start by standing on truth. We are the pillar and support of the truth, according to Timothy, as Paul writes to him. And then on top of that, we herald the good news and say, “Come.” And then we turn and say, “You don't want to go that way.” So, what a great picture that God has given to the church.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we ask You to change our way of thinking because there is a lot of allurements going on, and a lot of beckoning in the wrong

way from the wrong sources. There are people and things that are telling us that they have the answers to all of our problems. And it goes from pills to machinery. But Lord, we know that there is no one to trust in but You alone, that You are our only hope, and that Christ in us is the hope of glory.

With your heads bowed, you're going to have moments of sorrow. You're going to have moments of difficulty in your life. You're going to have disappointment, and you're going to have grief. You're going to have regrets. There are going to be times where you feel so unworthy that you wouldn't even want to walk in a church door. But Someone is calling you here. And it's the very One who died for sinners. You're the one He's been looking for. He's the One that will give you the desires of your heart if you'll just delight in Him. He'll change your way of thinking and cause you to love the things that you one time hated and hate the things that you at one time loved. You'll actually become a new person in Christ. Everything will change. You'll be born again. God is calling you. Oh, there are other voices. I hear them. But watch

how they treat their people. Now, look at Jesus. Look how He treats His people. Take this moment and just pray in this silent time in which we just reflect upon what the Spirit is telling us, and oftentimes it's very different in different lives. You pray at this time.