

How to Be Bold for the Lord (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] In Ecclesiastes chapter 11, each of us came in this morning with things on our minds.

Things going on in our hearts. We're individual people. We have relationships. We have jobs. We have responsibilities. We live in a broken world among broken people as a broken person.

Trying to live faithfully for the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's a tough time. But it's been tough before for other Christians in other eras, right?

And we're here and God's still on the throne. And we just sang and read about and prayed about the king of the universe. And so as we move through this time in this sermon this morning, please let it be at the forefront of your mind that you serve the king of the universe.

So that there is no power in heaven or on earth that can thwart his purposes for your life. Down to the very details of who you are and how you live.

[1 : 35] And we know who wins in the end. Right? The trumpet's going to blow and the cavalry's going to show up. And he's going to make all things right.

So until that time, we are called to live in faithfulness to him and trust to him. And so part of living in that trust is living in a holy boldness as children of the king.

Now that's not arrogance. That's not pride in myself or in yourself. That is trusting the king of kings and letting that make a difference in my life.

Allowing that to define how I live in life. I'm a servant of the king. I'm not all of that. He is. And he has shown me a great mercy and grace to allow me to be part of what he's doing in this time.

I get breath for life to serve him. What a blessing. What a privilege. It's as basic as that. So the title of my message for this morning is a part two.

[2 : 43] It's how to be bold for the Lord. And it's building on what we talked about last Sunday as we started to exposit chapter 11 in Ecclesiastes.

So I have in chapter 11 a divide. We're dividing it into two primary actions of obedience for wisely investing in what matters most to God.

Can we find those Michelle? There we go. It divides into two primary actions of obedience for wisely investing in what matters most to God.

That's what we're interested in as Christians as we live our life before the Lord. Father, what pleases you? What matters most to you? And so the first of these two primary actions, we'll get to number two, God willing, next week, is be bold in faith.

Be bold in faith. Now, what do we mean by that? Do we mean by that that we're supposed to be reckless? No. Does it mean we're supposed to be rash, emotionally driven?

[3 : 51] No. Does it mean we're to be rude in our faith and pushy? No. That's not holy boldness. We're concerned with being bold in faith in holiness.

So what is it then? Here it is. It is to have a wholeheartedness towards God evident in a holy boldness toward life.

So there's this wholehearted devotion to God that's being expressed in your daily life, the details of your life, by this holy boldness.

It is a boldness that is characterized by the character of Jesus. It is grace-filled, tender, kind, compassionate, wise, discerning.

It is filled with peace and a desire for peace. Romans 12, 18. As far as it is, concerns you, be at peace with all men.

[4 : 56] That's our heart. That's what we don't want to be at war with anyone. We don't want to be at odds with anyone. If living the gospel puts you at odds with people and with the world, so be it.

But don't let it be because you're rude, rash, and reckless. In the name of Jesus. It doesn't work that way. It is a fearless faith.

Holy boldness is a fearless faith in God. Leading to an eager obedience. A fearless faith leading to an eager obedience.

And what are we looking for or what are we acting out of in the way of a motive in that obedience? To please God in every aspect of our lives. That's the holy motive that we each hold on to as we walk with the Lord.

Father, we want to be pleasing to you. We just don't want this thing to be about me. We want it to be about you. When you meet people and interact with people, especially people in the world right now who are full of fear, people who are full of anxiety because of the unknowns, do you understand how many people in the world live in the unknown, being defined by the unknown?

[6 : 21] They're scared to death of that. They are absolutely petrified of the unknown. What's around the corner?

We're not called to live like that. We live in a fearless faith in the Lord. Now, the question in all of this is, what does this look like as we live life as God's gift?

This has been Solomon's emphasis for now into 11 chapters in this book that he's written. Living life as a gift from the Lord. And what should it look like for you to live that life, knowing that God's given it to you as his gift?

Is it yours to just live any old way you want? No, of course not. So that's what we're asking and answering. I've adapted four responses of this wholehearted life from commentator Michael Eaton. I just took a few things that he said and kind of ran with it and expanded on it. And we're going to get to that. But I want to read first the verses that we have here before us in chapter 11.

[7 : 28] We'll focus on these first six again for today. And then next week, God willing, we'll do the remainder of the chapter and finish it up. Verse one, cast your bread on the surface of the waters for you will find it after many days.

Divide your portion to seven or even to eight. For you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth. If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth.

And whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies. He who watches the wind will not sow.

And he who looks at the clouds will not reap. Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.

Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening. For you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed or whether both of them alike will be good.

[8 : 35] Now, we'll stop there because that's pretty much what we're going to deal with for today. So these four responses that I want to highlight, particularly from verse one and then carry you into the remainder of the first half of this chapter.

These four are and we'll put the first one up here for you. Trust, trust God in the adventure that is life. If you were here last Sunday, we're doing a little bit of review for all of this.

Trust God in the adventure that is life. And we're getting that from verse one in the first word cast. What does it mean? This is an imperative. This is a command.

As we saw last week, what does it mean for you to cast? How do you involve yourself in the activity you're being commanded in in casting? It means to send out or to let loose.

It means to trust God with your daily life. So this is not let go and let God. This is not some willy nilly, subjective, touchy feely kind of thing.

[9 : 42] It's this is not Hallmark stuff. This is something very established and very rooted. Trusting God with your daily life. It's to trust God by obeying what you know God says.

There's plenty that you don't know and that you can't know. But there is one important reality that can define what we do know and then how we move forward in our lives in that holy boldness.

And what we do know is what God's written and revealed to us in Scripture. That's what we stake our lives on. That's what we order our lives by.

And that's how we trust the Lord. Now, I'm not going to do any more than that with these four as I go through. I'll outline them a little more as I go. But we covered all of that. Just that one verse last Sunday.

The second response that I shared with you from last time. Second wholehearted response to God in this is commit.

[10:48] Commit. Let's put that one up there. Commit your valuables to what God says is valuable in life. This is another way of saying your livelihood, your goods, your resources in life that you know are from the hand of God.

Everything you have, your clothing, your cars, your money, your stuff, the air you breathe every day. It's all from God. And so we're committing everything that God's providing for us back to him in our service to him.

It all comes from his hand. He gives it to you to live a meaningful life. And we take this from cast your bread. Your bread. Your bread are the resources of your life.

It's what God is providing for you. So trust, trust God with what God has given to you as you begin this adventure of living in a holy boldness before him.

Number three was watch. Watch for God's faithfulness in life. Watch for God's faithfulness in life. And it comes from where we focused on verse one.

[12:07] For you will find it. The part of verse one. Cast your bread on the surface of the waters for you will find it. Again, this is not let it let go and let God or name it and claim it.

We're not going there. That's not at all what this is talking about. We're watching for God's faithfulness in trusting and in committing and in watching. God is the subject.

God is the object of our faith. This is a spiritual reality for us. Spiritual means of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit living in us is guiding us, counseling us, instructing us in how to live a life of trust.

Trust, commit, watch for. So the priority of our life is faithfulness to God. The holy boldness is grounded and rooted in trusting God.

Because he's faithful. So we learn to watch. So this is the promise of return on your investment. That's what we said last time. So realize, realize your return on what you're investing.

[13:20] Again, we talked about this when we when we were dealing with it last Sunday. The return that you have on on the decision that you're making in whatever context it is, you're you're casting, you're committing, you're trusting, you're wholehearted in.

You want to make a holy, bold move before the Lord. I want to live life boldly before the Lord. I don't want to be back in the shadows. I don't want to be wringing my hands with anxiety.

I don't want to be constantly looking and worrying and being afraid. I want to step out. I want to be counted. I want to stand up for the Lord. I want people to see Christ in me. I don't want him to see me and think, oh, what a great guy.

I want him to see Jesus Christ and say, what a great God. What a great Christ. What a wonderful way to approach COVID-19. I'm not afraid.

Why am I not afraid? Because I'm a courageous warrior. No, because I have Christ living in me and I know the God of the universe. Doesn't mean I'm not prudent. Doesn't mean I'm not wise or discerning or careful.

[14:19] Doesn't mean I don't consider other people. I do all of that. But I don't let any of that keep me in inactivity. I don't allow any of it to cause me to go hide in the house.

I ask my Lord, how can I move out and make a difference for Jesus in the midst of a difficult, dangerous time? Christians don't run and hide and stick their heads in the sand and allow themselves to act like the world.

We serve a great God and a great king who's doing a great work. So again, we're not reckless. We're not rash.

We're not rude. We're not pushy. We covered all of this last time. Realize that as God begins to make return on your investment in living a holy and bold life, as God blesses you, realize that what you will find and what begins to come back, it might look different from what you thought you would get in the way of a reward or a blessing.

It might be less. It might be more. It might be entirely different. And there are many of these kinds of rewards or return on your holy, bold investment in life that you won't receive in the way of reward until you get to heaven.

[15:39] Now, what are you going to do with that? You're going to let that make you bitter. You're going to let that make you resentful. Doubtful. Is that going to cause you to not trust the Lord because it's not turning out the way you thought?

Look, I'm doing A, B, C, and D, and I've done them pretty well. And I'm not getting what I thought I'd get out of this thing. You can read that however you want, but I'm telling you, Christians can get really locked up inside when we have these expectations of God based on what we're doing and we

feel like God's not showing up and doing his part.

That's just not the way to think about the king of the universe, is it? So we just need to be very careful and not allow the world to be conforming us to think the way it thinks about God.

People who aren't walking with the Lord and thinking in terms of denying self, taking up their cross and following the Lord, people who are not living like that and thinking like that have the mindset that when they make an investment in something, they ought to get a decent return on their investment.

I want to remind you, we're aliens and strangers here. We're not building up treasure here. Where are we building up treasure? In heaven. That's what matters.

[17:00] So faithfulness is the issue, isn't it? Faithfulness. So you're watching. You're watching for what God's doing in your life. You're watching for his faithfulness in your life.

Listen, the issue, the issue is that you invest from the master on behalf of the master and realize that is never wasted or unrewarded.

You're investing what the master gives you on behalf of the master and he never, ever goes back on what he promises. He will reward.

It will return. Maybe in heaven, it may return in a way different from what you expect. And that's why I'm asking you to be on the watch for it.

Cast your bread on the surface of the waters for you will find it. You will find it. This is Solomon's way of telling us how sound and wise this kind of life is and how our final response has to follow on these first three, at least according to chapter 11, verse one.

[18:16] Here's the final one. Number four is wait. Wait for God's rewards in life after many days. You will find it after many days.

Patience. So this is patience. Patience. This is living by God's timetable. But patience, I'll remind you, doesn't mean apathy or inactivity on your part.

And I'm going to do a little bit with that in the next few minutes just to make sure we really we're really honing in on this. You're already involved then. Let's say you're already involved with the first three responses.

You're casting. You're trusting. You're committing. And you're being watchful in all of this. All right. Your boldness. Your boldness for God begins with you casting.

You have to make a decision and you have to act. You have to step out. You have to be willing to move to do something.

[19:18] All right. So you're casting again. We go back and listen to last week's because we explained a lot about how that works. You carefully, you prayerfully and you wisely choose a course of action by trusting God through an active obedience to his truth.

So really what we're talking about is you're trying to apply the truth of Scripture. The wisdom of the word of God to a specific situation that you're facing in life.

You're making a decision and you're stepping out in boldness before the Lord in that. You may not have it all figured out. You don't have any idea how the outcome will be, but you're stepping out in faith before the Lord prayerfully wisely.

OK. Now, listen to this. I'll put this up here because I want you to see it. The next slide, Michelle. Your course of action is based upon what you know.

This is critical. Your course of action is based on what you know from Scripture as you apply wisdom and understanding to your context of life.

[20:23] There's going to be lots of times and have already been lots of times when you're not going to have all the info that you want. You know, we talked about it being like a recon operation. You've gone out.

You've done your research. You've done what you could. You're trying to act prudently. You're in the word. You're asking God to give you scriptural understanding of how to move forward in this particular situation.

And you've decided you're going to move forward in it. It's got to be based on what you know from Scripture. As much as I'm able to discern and understand God's heart and will and wisdom from the word of God, I'm going to take this course of action in order to please him.

You see where you are in that now? That's good ground, isn't it? Your feet are on solid ground if you're moving out that way. You're applying it in that context of life.

Then you commit your resources to fully support your decision to act. So you don't go in half-hearted.

[21 : 24] You move ahead in a wholehearted devotion to the Lord. Cast your bread on the surface of the waters for you will find it after many days. Wholehearted devotion to the Lord.

You remain spiritually watchful for evidence of God's faithfulness to you. I hope what you're hearing and seeing as you think through this scenario with me, where's your focus?

In every one of these, I'm pointing you somewhere in your mind. The focus of your heart is constantly on God.

You're looking for God. You're watching for God. You're listening for God's activity in your life.

Right? Even though there's maybe plenty that you don't know and understand about the context, there's plenty that you can know and understand because you're focused on the Lord and you have the truth of his word to guide you.

So it's not like you stand there in indecisiveness going, yeah, I don't know. I just don't know. I don't know if he'd have me do this or not. You don't do that. You're going to have to act.

[22 : 37] Again, look, we've spent almost 11 chapters going back and forth with the vanity of life, the meaninglessness of life, the purposelessness of life lived without God.

There just has no merit, bearing foundation, meaning nothing. Life without God is meaningless and people jump from one meaningless thing to another trying to fill the void.

Solomon has been telling us that over and over again, and he's told us, be wise, be wise, be wise.

Now he's coming to the end of the chapter and he's saying, now be wise and get busy.

Be wise and get busy. So I'm preaching it like that. This is a call to action, as I told you last time. So you remain spiritually watchful for evidence of God's faithfulness to you.

Say, Jeff, how do I do that? What does that look like? Think thankfulness. What does it mean to be watchful for God's activity in my life? What does it mean to have my radar tuned to spiritually looking for God's activity in my life?

[23 : 40] What does that mean? Am I seeing the devil under every rock or am I seeing God under every rock? No, listen. Think thankful. Keep your heart and mind tuned to spiritual things by thinking thankful.

I want to live a thankful life. I don't want to live a pessimistic, cynical, fearful, go hide in the sand life. Thankful people are bold people.

They're not bold because they think they're all that. They're overwhelmed with the goodness of their God. And out of the goodness of their God, they're constantly looking for opportunities to say thank you, demonstrate thank you.

Holy people are thankful people. And they have reasons to be. Those reasons sometimes get stuffed because we allow the world to dictate.

We allow the circumstances to overwhelm us. The focus gets down here instead of here. Have you heard the saying?

[24 : 47] You've heard me say this. Have you heard the saying, you're so heavenly minded, you're no earthly good? That's not what we're talking about. A thankful person is well grounded in heavenly realities, but they're practical people.

They realize that they're living in a real world with real stuff going on. They're just careful about who they're giving their heart to. Who they're trusting.

Who's defining them. Am I defining me? Do I want the control? Or does God cast your cast? Listen, cast is risky.

Because you don't know. And he's going to say that. He's going to tell us that. Think thankfulness.

This is what Paul, the Apostle Paul, constantly reminded us to consistently cultivate in our walk with Jesus.

I'm just going to take you to one place real quick. Colossians. Because we're memorizing Colossians and we've been in Colossians. Talking through these things.

[25 : 57] Chapter three. I want you to see this in your Bibles. So I'm asking you to come here with me. Chapter three of Colossians. I want you to think the theme of thankfulness and look forward in these verses.

Colossians three, beginning in verse 15. Paul says. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

To which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom.

Teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. You say, Jeff, how are we supposed to approach worship when we're singing together on Sunday like this?

With thankfulness. You ought to be singing out of a deep-seated gratitude to God. Why? Because you've taken time to rehearse the goodness of God in your life. And if you come in here depleted from the week, that can happen.

[27 : 08] Then draw on the faith and joy and gratitude of your brothers and sisters. Draw on it. Let that happen. That's great. And then go hug them and thank them and tell them.

You encouraged me today. I came in here beaten down and it's been a tough week. Thank you. And just seeing your heart of gratitude and your faith. And they may look at you and go, oh my goodness, I had a week like that too.

Really? You saw that? That's good. And then verse 17. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

There's that spiritual focus on Christ. Giving thanks through him to God the Father. Folks, that's revolutionary. That'll change your life.

That's a wonderful. This is what it means and looks like for you to be watchful for practical reasons to express your humble gratitude to the Lord.

[28 : 12] It's a whole different perspective on living life. I'm going to be a thankful person. Because I have reason to be a thankful person and I've been commanded to be that person.

Listen. You're on the lookout. You're on the lookout for reasons to praise and thank God. First, for who he is.

Can I encourage you to do something? Can I encourage you that as you interact with one another, particularly here on Sundays, look and listen for the character of God being expressed in these other people.

Learn to listen and to recognize when the character, the fruit of the Spirit of God is operating through another human being in your presence.

So that you recognize that's the gentleness of Jesus right there. I just saw the meekness of my Lord in you. I just heard humility.

[29 : 17] Just oozing out of what you just said to me. I just heard gentleness and kindness. I just heard patience. Oh my goodness, I heard forgiveness.

I see forgiveness all over you. Thank you for being forgiven, forgiving toward me. Thank you for believing the best about me. I dropped the ball on this.

Thank you for being gracious. How'd you like to live like that? How'd you like to have other people speaking that into your life?

Saying that to you. That's a thankful person. That's a person focused on spiritual verity, spiritual realities and truths. You're on the lookout for this.

So first and foremost, you're praising and thanking God for who he is and who you see him being in other people. Secondly, you're thankful for what God blesses you with as you cast watch and wait on him.

[30 : 19] You're not just thankful to God for what he gives you and does for you. Yes, you are. But you're thankful for him. You're thankful for him.

Thank you for being in my life, God. Thank you for being faithful, God. I'm just thankful for you. As you trust, then as you obey, as you fully commit, as you watch and as you wait on God.

Especially waiting on his faithfulness. Let me put this up here for you to see the next slide, Michelle. You wait for the Lord's rewards by living to please God from what you know.

Of his will for you in scripture. You're going to see in just a second why I'm emphasizing what you know. In scripture, not just what you know about the situation, but what you know about your God and what you know of God's truth as it operates in your life.

That's where you want to put your feet and plant yourself. You don't want to plant yourself in circumstances. What do circumstances do? They shift and change.

[31 : 37] What does culture do? Right? We can't measure our lives by that. But I tell you what you can count on and measure by.

You can stick your feet in the concrete of the truth of God and in his character because he's not going to shift or change. And he's always going to keep his promises. So that's where we start.

In our evaluation of what's going on. That's how we begin to have a sense of boldness. So in other words, you see where I'm going? I'm trying to help us understand if I'm going to be bold, I got to ground that in something.

Or my boldness is hypocritical and superficial. It'll it'll flicker out when it gets tough. That's not boldness. I don't know what that's something else. Holy boldness perseveres.

It perseveres. The only way holy boldness perseveres is if it's grounded in something bigger than itself. Who's that? God.

[32 : 43] God. So we interpret then all the remaining verses of chapter 11 by these principles in verse 1. These four principles that we've put out to you now in terms of trusting, committing, watching, and waiting.

And waiting is not inactive. You don't wait by sitting on your hands. You wait by seeking to live a life that pleases the Lord. Just keep living for the Lord. Right?

Just keep living for the Lord. Now we take these four and we apply them to what remains. Look at verse 2 with me. Divide your portion to 7 or even to 8.

Now look. I want you to either underline or circle this or somehow note it in your Bibles. For you do not know. What misfortune may occur on the earth.

Divide your portion to 7 or even 8. For you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

First of all, dividing to 7 or even to 8 is kind of a Hebrew formula for fullness or completeness.

[33 : 51] It's like X plus 1 plus 1. It's like he's saying add to, continue on, do more. Some commentators thought if you take the analogy of maybe ship building or farming or almsgiving that we mentioned last time that they wanted to put this on.

The analogy of, you know, cast your bread upon the waters is kind of like saying we're going to send our ships out all over the known world to do trade. Or we're going to farm.

We're going to plant and sow and reap and all that kind of. And I told you they're all undecided about any of those analogies being really what Solomon, but what they were all in agreement was, was the point.

The point was trust, commit, watch, and wait. So that's what we're focusing on. Now, as you do all of that, as you take all of that into consideration, divide here, divide 7 even to 8, that becomes a formula for telling you, in terms of moving out in this bold activity for the Lord, do it full throttled.

Follow through in serving the Lord in your course of action. It's akin to what Solomon said back in, what is it, chapter 9, verse 10.

[35 : 12] Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you're going. He's saying this is your opportunity to do it now.

You have one life, so you have one opportunity to continue to move in this faithful, holy boldness before the Lord. Don't waste it. Don't waste it in fear, anxiety, inactivity, or in selfishness or laziness. Get busy for the Lord. Full throttled follow through. I love that. Commit. Get behind it. Put everything you have behind it. And stay forward.

Trust the Lord. All right, let me put this up here. Because I want you to see it. The critical element of interpretation comes in the clause, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

So this is the reality we all have to deal with in our everyday walk with God. Do you understand this? You've had this, right? You just don't know. You plan one thing.

[36 : 22] You hope one thing. And you turn the corner and it's a whole other thing. And you feel like somebody just hit you with a brick. Or threw a curveball. Or some nasty pitch that you just couldn't hit.

And you're like, where'd that come from? That's what he's saying. You never know what's around. Have you ever been hurt? Has anybody ever hurt you? And you didn't see that coming?

Maybe somebody in your family. Maybe somebody that was close to you that you trusted. This is life. Solomon says, you never know.

You never know when it's going to come. How hard it's going to come. Or where it's going to come from. You do not know what misfortune may occur. However, this is the reason this is the critical element of interpretation in this first part here is this.

This is the very matter that can either freeze you in fear. Or maybe even in laziness. Or spur you on in a bold and beautiful fear of the Lord.

[37 : 28] It can go either way. In the first instance, you're paralyzed and you're selfish. Because you're frozen in fear.

You're looking at the world or the circumstance. Your eyes are in the wrong place. Your eyes are on yourself. So you're just lazy and you just don't want to be involved. I just don't want to be involved. I don't need that in my life. I just, you know what? For some Christians, let me put this up here, Michelle. The next one. For some Christians, not knowing and the reality, the reality of misfortune are reasons to hide from life, hoard in life, or hate in life.

You say, Christians? Well, professing Christians at least. But for those who fear the Lord, it's reason to honor God in life. What am I saying?

The unknown will either ruin you or it'll bring you to honor the Lord. It's just that straightforward. And so that's why I'm encouraging you, as Solomon says all of this, don't define your life and live based on the unknown.

[38 : 47] Based on constantly forecasting what might happen. What could happen. You can take those things into consideration, but you better not let them define you. Let the truth define you.

So that you move forward in holy boldness, trusting in the Lord. Look at verse three with me. If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth.

And whether a tree falls toward the south or north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies. What is he talking about here? How does this relate to what we've been saying? He's he's dealing with the reality of human limitation.

Our human limitations are being highlighted. We cannot know or control all the potential outcomes of what we choose to do for the Lord.

Outcomes are not our responsibility because outcomes are their domain of the Lord. You might think a thing will happen this way result in these things only to find out in that relationship that it had the opposite effect.

[39 : 52] Or turned out to be something very different than you'd planned. And sometimes you won't even know how that happened. You may you may even think, what did I do wrong?

Where did I go amiss? And it may just be a sovereign God is working in a purpose beyond your understanding. That happens. Clouds sometimes bring rain, sometimes not.

What else do they bring? Storms. Sometimes the rain is great for crops. Sometimes the storm destroys them, puts them flat on the ground.

Storms make trees fall this way or that way. We can't control that. Sometimes falling trees destroy property and even kill people.

Other times falling trees become an opportunity to cut firewood so people can heat their homes and cook their food. You see, Solomon's being very basic.

[40 : 58] You just don't know. The tree falls here and there. It's good for somebody. It might not be good for the other one. If it fell that way, it missed my house. Oh, but it got my neighbor.

Poor soul. You don't know. Let me put this slide up here for you. If these kinds of realities and their unpredictable outcomes paralyze you, you'll never trust, commit, watch, and wait in your service to the Lord.

You'll hide, you'll hoard, and you'll learn to hate. You'll become bitter. Folks, you'll hide in your house. You'll hide in your job.

You'll hide in your hobby. What you will not do is go out in your life. Because you'll find in your community. You'll find you.

You'll find that you're present. ... the potential bad whatever the past it's one of the bad things about this look at verse four with me if you would he who watches the wind will not sow he who looks at the clouds will not reap that's exactly where he goes next so here is someone waiting for all the conditions to be perfect with as little risk as possible before they'll ever make any of the slightest effort to do anything and i'm not talking again about being reckless not weighing consequences not being prudent you understand we've already covered all of that here we're just saying this person has learned to be so skittish so full of their own ability to figure things out that there's never really any effort in faith unless all the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted i'm not stepping one foot where's the faith in that no risk what i would say and i've encountered this plenty of times i've been guilty of this in my own life when you're doing this you're being controlling not careful there's a difference yes be careful be prudent be wise not controlling a farmer a farmer constantly remains indecisive this is the picture he stands there in the field unplowed not ready looking at all of the

circumstances taking in everything that's going on he's indecisive as he stands there sizing up the winds sizing up the clouds waiting for perfect conditions and so what happens the perfect conditions never come so he never plants if he never plants he never harvests so the opportunity for both passes him by what does god call that waste waste so minimize risks you say jeff can we do that well sure there's nowhere here we're saying don't minimize the risks that's okay but if minimizing the risk for you means inactivity we're not good something's wrong here minimizing risk is prudent and it's wise but don't allow risks don't allow the unknown the uncontrollable the possibility of loss keep you from acting boldly in faith in your service to the lord you see this coming up in five look at verse five just as you now here it is again do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman so you do not know the activity of god who makes all things the bottom line is we can't fully understand or control the power of the wind around our planet as much as we try to harness it wind still does tremendous damage and causes much loss of life all around the globe we can't fully understand or control the intricate formation of a baby's body in the womb so you do not know the activity of god who makes all things folks who makes all things who's in control it ain't us but the reality of the wind and the baby do inform us that god is and that he's in control now the question comes is that enough do you have to have it all figured out have you heard me say before

[45 : 51] what in the world would the israelites have done if mooses was standing on the edge of the red sea with pharaoh's army the greatest army in the known world at that time bearing down on them gonna cut them to pieces right there what if mooses had said when god said lift your arms lift your staff and then cross over if mooses would have said oh wait a minute you're gonna do what how are you gonna do that no you till you tell me how we're gonna do that i ain't gonna do it i want to know what you're gonna do how how we go it's gonna be muddy you move the water and it's gonna be so muddy you're gonna make me go down in there we're gonna all get stuck and then he's gonna stand up there with and just you're listening to me going this is ridiculous that's right but how often do we say till you tell me how all this is gonna turn out i'm just gonna stay right here i ain't gonna do it i've done that too god help us all verse six now we're going to get active again we're going from cast your bread to sow your seed sow your seed in the morning do not be idle in the evening for you do not know what do you think the point of these six verses might be whether morning or evening sowing will succeed or whether both of them alike will be good please notice folks then what i've pointed out four times in six verses solomon emphasizes human limitation and ignorance about the matters of life and the things of god in verse two he mentions it he mentions it twice in verse five and now once in verse six so this is why i took pains to point out to you in verse two our inability is the critical element of interpretation for this section we can't control life we're not meant to we can't know predict change control the twists turns injustices vanities and adversities of life if you focus on those things if you focus on the wrong the world does to you the injustice that comes your way you'll live out of that focus and you'll be cynical and bitter and fearful it'll lock your life up and that's exactly what your adversary the devil wants he can't rob you of your salvation but he can sure make it look miserable to be saved we don't want that we can't know we can't control the way the lord operates in our lives or in other people's lives or even know how god works his will in the issues of our world i don't understand god's activity in a tsunami that kills a quarter of a million people in a matter of hours i don't get that i don't know that i'm supposed to i don't get despotic leaders all over the world who maim and murder and rape and control people's lives i don't get that the only thing i know about that's what the bible tells me we live in a sin cursed world where people do evil things and there are evil people so we can't get caught up in all of that or we'll be the person standing there looking into the sky and waiting sizing up making excuses paralyzed by fear and indecision ultimately doing nothing we have to operate

not on what we don't know but what we do know i'm going to say that a little differently so that the emphasis will impact you more we don't operate on what we don't know we operate on who we do know that's why this is titled a bold faith it's a bold faith it's not a blind faith there's nothing blind about faithfulness in the lord nothing blind about that you hear christians say take a leap of faith no such thing in the christian life take a leap of faith don't do that take a holy bold step in the lord put the faith where it's supposed to be and there's no blindness you don't know all of the outcomes that's fine but you know who's in control we have to operate on what we do know what we do know what we can count on is that god controls the wind he forms each baby by his purposes so if we focus on what we don't know and can't control we'll never act on behalf of the lord we'll mire

ourselves in ourselves it is one of the most terrible tragic heart-wrenching things in the world to see a human being all mired in him or herself just all caught up in them all locked up we want to see people delivered from that to know Jesus is to know the king of the universe to be forgiven for your sins to be cleansed to be given life Jeff what does it mean to look to Jesus here it is Jesus Christ was sent to the earth by God the Father for one purpose to take on the sins of all who would believe in him everybody who would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ God did this he took your sin your wrongdoing your rebellion against God and in a way that only God can do I'll use Rob he laid it on Jesus say how did he lay it he reckoned or credited your sin to Jesus so now he's looking at his son and seeing your sin and my sin and God said now that sin requires the punishment of death that is the punishment for all and any sin death and so Jesus died being punished to death for your sin that was credited to him by God somebody had to pay the death penalty for your sin Jesus paid it so Jesus went to the grave because of me for your sin yes he paid your penalty if God would have left you in your sin and not put it on Jesus then God would have to punish you for that sin and the punishment is death which means for you to be separated from God for all eternity in a devil's hell it's very real then Jesus rose out of the grave and conquered death and in conquering death he now has reign and rule over all of the power that sin and death brings into our lives so the penalty of death and the power of death and sin have been conquered in the life death burial resurrection of Jesus Christ that's why we make so much about Jesus he is our life he is our hope and our forgiveness for sin that's why we look to him so you say well then Jeff what happened if you trust Jesus

to forgive you for your sins God promises to forgive you for those sins and then to take the righteous right standing life that Jesus lived on this earth having never sinned and credit that to your account just as he credited your sin to Jesus now he takes Jesus' perfect sinlessness and credits it to you Jesus gets your sin and dies you get Jesus' life and live and people say that's remarkable that's what we call the gospel that's the gospel and that changes people's lives God controls it's the same thing with the past folks you can't change the past but you can learn from it as you reflect on who formed and who purposed your past who formed and who purposed your past God so whatever's happened in your past it's not something you need to dwell on learn from it move on step out verses two through five teach us we can't we can all struggle with what we're going to call decision deficit disorder all right verses two through five we all struggle with decision deficit disorder indecisiveness we want all this you know because we're control freaks we're control addicts we all can allow life in our own spirit our sinful preoccupation with ourselves to keep us mired in ourselves and thus inactive for God but verse one and verse six help us counter these sinful tendencies to hide hoard and hate we hide hoard and hate because we've encountered painful realities and the unexpected and the unfair and the unjust kinds of things in life so as I close listen please just like some Christians are frozen into inaction by the unknown or by the potential for loss or risk or pain some Christians become paralyzed by the idea of options God don't give me options just tell me what to do do I buy it or not do I do it or not do I marry or not do I change or not the Bible says don't be that indecisive person act so don't be idle don't hide don't hoard don't hate get to work for the Lord you say Jeff what do we do here's how you handle the uncertainty and the indecision of whether it will be better for you to sow in the morning or evening

I just gave you some examples right do I do this or do I do that do I or do a huh is it A or is it B is it E maybe I need to get down to X you know maybe it's going to take a what do I do all right that's what we're saying sow your seed in the morning don't be idle in the evening for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed see you don't know you don't know which one of those is going to be the right one but what is he saying sow sow your seed so I'm going to tell you how do you handle the uncertainty and indecision of whether it will be better for you to sow in the morning or sow in the evening here it is you ready it's so simple that we could miss it sow all day get the bag get the seed get out there and sow all day get after it trust the Lord don't presume on the Lord do your homework get busy for Jesus don't trust you trust the

[58 : 25] Lord I want to end with two quick verses that I'll put up here so we can read them because both of these relate to just the whole topic that we've been talking about so far what then is Apollos and what is Paul servants through whom you believe even as the Lord gave opportunity each one Paul says I planted my brother Apollos he watered but who was causing the growth God so then neither the one who plants Paul nor the one who waters Apollos who was another disciple is anything but God who causes the growth what's Paul's focus it ain't me I head down doing my thing I just serving the Lord I want to be bold in the Lord but it ain't about me it's not about Apollos

this was this was Paul talking about the ministry that he had among these folks and what they were doing was dividing themselves up into camps and following their different little heroes

Paul said it ain't me and it ain't him it's the Lord who's doing this focus on the Lord and then this verse this is the last one let us not lose heart in doing good for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary there's your reaping if you don't see the results you want to see right away that's not a reason to grow weary and not do well stay at it trust the Lord so be bold for the Lord and respond to him with decisive obedience we need more and more Christians who are going to be decisive in their obedience to God through scripture all right let's pray together father god in heaven you have called us almighty lord and king to holy boldness you have called us to a life of sowing and reaping and trusting and

God in our relationships it's true as I look into the eyes and faces of my brothers and sisters I see people lord individuals people who have trouble in their relationships with others people who've been hurt people who are uncertain people who are dealing with the realities of life and so I ask you God if you would be gracious and merciful to us to help us understand your will in scripture help us to be people of the word of God help us to discern and order our lives and do our homework and our research based on what we know the Bible to teach us help help us to move out in that biblical wisdom that Solomon speaks of help us to see almighty God we pray that all of life is a gift from you and we are expected to be good stewards managers of the gift of life help us to step forward in faithful holy boldness and let the world see

Jesus living in us help us to repent of hiding hoarding and hating help us God to make a difference for Jesus in his meekness gentleness love patience kindness and may you receive all of the honor and the glory as the world looks in and sees us living in that meekness for you we pray this in Jesus precious name amen