

Profit and Loss

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[0 : 00] Habakkuk 2, verses 6-20, if you would stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

Here God is speaking to Habakkuk.! Will not all these take up their taunt against him with scoffing and riddles for him and say, Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own! For how long? And loads himself with pledges!

Will not your debtors suddenly arise and those awake who will make you tremble? Then you will be spoil for them. Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you.

For the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them! Woe to him who gives you the blood of man! It's evil gain for his house to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!

Who have devised shame for your houses by cutting off many peoples! You have forfeited your life! For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the woodwork respond!

[1 : 15] Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity! Behold, it is not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire, and nations weary themselves for nothing!

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea! Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink! You pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!

You will have your fill of shame instead of glory! Drink yourself and show your uncircumcision! The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory! The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them! For the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them!

What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it? A metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!

[2 : 16] Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, awake! To a silent stone, arise! Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in it!

But the Lord is in his holy temple! Let all the earth keep silence before him! May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? I know I've shared this story with you, but it's applicable to our text this morning.

It was written by Leo Tolstoy. It's a short story entitled, How Much Land Does a Man Need? That story tells of a peasant named Pahom.

Pahom determines that his life would be better if he had more land to farm. And he believed that the proceeds would improve his station in life to the point where he would have nothing to fear at all, even the devil himself, he says.

And so as Pahom acquires more land, he begins to undergo a transformation. He becomes more possessive of the land that he has. In fact, the land seems to begin to possess him.

[3 : 30] That makes him less charitable with his neighbors. But the more he gets, the less satisfied he becomes. Finally, after buying and selling a lot of land and making a small fortune, he is introduced to a people called the Baxchers.

And he is told that they are a simple-minded people who own a huge amount of land, but they don't understand its true value. So Pahom goes to strike a deal with them, the deal he thinks of a lifetime. Their offer is very unusual. For the small sum of 1,000 rubles, about \$15 in American, he can walk around as large an area of land as he wants, starting at daybreak, and marking out all of the land, all of the plot that he wants of land with a spade.

If he returns to his starting point by sunset that same day, all the land that he encircled with his spade would be his. But if he doesn't return to the starting point by sunset, he would lose his money and he would receive no land.

Pahom is elated by this deal. This is a deal that, to him, seems too good to be true. That night, Pahom experiences a surreal dream in which he sees himself lying dead at the feet of the devil who is laughing at him.

[4 : 59] But undeterred by the dream, Pahom sets out with his spade and he marks out a huge piece of land for himself. However, as the sun begins to set, he realizes that he is far from his starting point.

So he runs as fast as he can to the waiting backshires. And he arrives exhausted just as the sun sets. The backshires cheer his good fortune, his newly acquired and immense property.

Pahom is now richer than he ever could have imagined. But the run exhausted him. And he collapsed and he dies of physical exertion.

His servant takes his body and buries Pahom in an ordinary grave, six feet long and six feet deep. Thus, the question posed by the title of the story is answered.

How much land does a man need? In the end, not much. Just enough to house his remains. I remember as a kid, Saturday mornings after cartoons were over, episodes of the Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous would come on.

[6 : 12] You guys ever watch that show hosted by Robin Leach? That show allowed the common man to see how the ultra-rich lived. And they seemed to have it all, didn't they?

Mansions, beach houses, expensive cars, yachts, rare collectibles, butlers, maids, personal chefs. That was the life. And as you watch that show, Robin Leach encouraged his viewers that if they never gave up in pursuing what they really wanted, if they kept plugging away at it, their dreams could come true.

And then he'd end each episode with his signature catchphrase, sending us off with champagne wishes and caviar dreams. For many people, that seems like the way to live.

And so they pursue making their champagne wishes and caviar dreams come true. Like Pahom, they exert themselves in gaining more, only to realize at the end that all of their labors to gain material prosperity were in vain.

[7 : 22] You know, there's no U-Hauls behind hearses. Jesus warned that the life spent acquiring and attaining the wealth of the world will end in great and tragic loss.

Jesus said in Matthew 16, verses 24 through 26, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? Habakkuk begins his book, if you recall, with a series of laments to God, expressing his heartbreak over the sinfulness of his people.

They have normalized and they have celebrated sin. And so he asks God for spiritual revival, for spiritual renewal. But God informs him that his patience with his people has ran out.

[8 : 36] And instead, he will punish them for their sins. And shockingly, Habakkuk learns that God will use the Babylonians, a more sinful people, to do it.

God's answer perplexes the prophet. He wonders how God, who is both sovereign and holy, could allow the Babylonians to do this and prosper as a result of the pain that they inflict on others.

But as we saw last week, God tells Habakkuk that the Babylonians will face a harsher judgment.

They will be God's instrument to discipline his people. But while God will preserve his people in the end, Babylon's empire will one day be totally annihilated.

Though the Babylonians thought at this point that they had it all, though they believed that their champagne wishes and caviar dreams would last forever, God tells Habakkuk in our text this morning that it will all come to an end.

Those who thought they had it all would lose it all. And God reminds us, as he reminded Habakkuk back then, our main idea this morning, which is that there is a profit that ends in loss.

[9 : 53] There is a profit that ends in loss. And a loss that ends in profit. And a loss that ends in profit.

What unfolds in this text has been labeled by some theologians as a taunt song. A taunt song is a song or poem designed to mock or scorn another.

Now, in our society, taunting is discouraged, isn't it? In the NFL, when a player taunts a player on the opposing team, it's a 15-yard penalty. In fact, the Chiefs would be undefeated, but they lost a close game as a result of a taunting penalty.

And you can probably tell that I'm a little bit bitter still about that. I was going to have Pastor Tyler prepare some taunt songs.

I thought maybe we could play KU's theme song this morning. But, you know, God foiled my plans in that regard. But in this case, God is holy.

[11:00] God is always right. And God is right in the taunts that he gives towards those who would think that they can defy him. The Babylonians had pillaged and plundered.

They had raped and ravaged the peoples and the lands that they had conquered. They acted violently and unjustly. This taunt is like when a murderer is convicted in a courtroom.

You know, the evidence reveals that this person is guilty. There's no doubt. And when the verdict is finally read, the victim's families rejoice because justice has been served.

Remember when David charged down the hill towards Goliath, he taunted him. It was like holy trash talk as he faced him because Goliath thought he was greater than God, the God of Israel.

And God humiliated him by sending a boy without armor or sword, armed only with a slingshot to bring him down. But the basis of David's taunt weren't in who he was, but who God is and his righteousness and his justice to avenge himself of those who would dare to defy him.

[12:11] The taunt song in this chapter is made up of five different woes. Each woe in the song identifies a specific sin and then pronounces God's righteous judgment of that sin.

Babylon's sins, their greed to gain the world's treasures were manifested in five different ways. And the irony of this taunt song is that those who pursue and gain the world's treasures end up losing it all in devastating and in tragic ways.

Through this passage today, God reveals to us two ways which you can choose to live. You can either live man's way or you can live God's way.

And in the final analysis, I hope that you will see that God's way is so much better. Let's look at man's way first.

Man's way is this, a profit that ends in tragic loss. Man's way is simple. Gain all that you can by whatever means necessary.

[13:16] But as Jesus said in Matthew 16, it is a way of living that ends tragically. A way that ends woefully. And so as we look at verses 6 through 8, again, God says, Shall not all these take up their taunt against him with scoffing and riddles for him and say, Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own.

For how long? Will not your debtors suddenly arise and those who awoke will make you tremble?

Then you will be spoiled for them. So the first woe that God pronounces upon the Babylonians regards the way they have gained their wealth through theft and extortion.

Theft is a sin as old as the human race. Adam and Eve, if you recall, took from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, a tree which belonged like everything belongs to God, and a tree which he prohibited them from eating from.

Stealing is such a serious sin that God made it a part of the Ten Commandments. The Babylonians were guilty of doing what most nations do whenever they take over another.

They plundered the people. They took whatever they wanted. They helped themselves. The people were helpless against them. And they then imposed heavy taxes upon them.

[14:33] In many ways, they acted like the mafia. Pay us to protect you from us. Their practices also are eerily similar to many practices used in modern societies by lenders who use excessive interest payments and exploitive lending practices to cripple and take advantage of those who are financially vulnerable to keep them in debt for as long as they can.

Now, I knew someone who worked for the human resources department of a payday loan company. And this was some time ago, but, you know, times were tight.

And so the company decided they were going to lay off a lot of employees. And they laid off their employees so that their executives could receive their Christmas bonuses, which were in the upwards of six figures.

We need to be careful here, though. You know, it's easy for us to point the finger at Babylon and talk about how horrible they are.

And they were. But maybe there's a little bit more of Babylon in us than we would like to admit. You know, for some of you kids, you're about to go trick-or-treating in a few weeks.

[15:52] You know how there's always that house with that family that puts out a bowl of candy with a sign that says, take one.

And when you see that, you could take one. Or you could say, how silly of them. How foolish. I'm going to take the whole bowl and dump it into my basket.

If you do, you'll think that you're being smart. But that's stealing. For you students, you may be guilty of stealing by cheating on tests in school.

Stealing answers from your classmates or asking Alexa for the answer to your homework instead of finding it yourself. I think somebody was convicted over here.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Amen. You steal by plagiarizing and copying others' work and passing it off as your own.

[16:55] Just a few weeks ago, I received an email from our doctoral office at Midwestern with a stern warning and reminder that they had caught a lot of students plagiarizing and warning us of the consequences if we did that.

These are pastors. These are men who are supposed to be men of God. Adults, you may be stealing by loafing on your job, pretending to be busy while you surf the internet.

People steal by padding their expense accounts, by cheating on their taxes and making fraudulent insurance claims. We're not correcting the cashier when they give you more change than they should have.

We think we're being smart in these things, but in the end, God says that those who plunder will be plundered. The Babylonians will lose all that they've taken.

Those whom they plundered will one day plunder them. Their stolen profits would end ultimately in loss. And again, we go back to Adam and Eve. They stole because they thought they would profit from eating of the tree of knowledge.

[18:13] And the profit they thought they would gain is that they would become more like God. Instead, they fell into sin and judgment. So when you steal from others to gain wealth for yourself, God says you will lose all that you have taken and you will suffer a loss as a result of it.

That's the first woe. The second woe, verses 9 through 11, woe to him who gets evil gain for his house to set his nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm. You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples.

You have forfeited your life for the stone will cry out from the wall and the beam from the woodwork respond. The second woe is connected to the first. Babylon stole from other nations and then they used sinful methods to secure what they had stolen.

The phrase, set his nest on high, pictures an eagle setting its nest high in the cliffs, safe from trouble and harm. The Babylonians impoverished those whom they conquered by stealing from them.

And then they kept them in poverty by cutting them off from the ability to make profits by taking away their land and using stolen resources of the land to conquer and to fortify and to secure the wealth that they had sinfully gained.

[19:39] This was unjust treatment. God says even the inanimate stones that they've pillaged and they've plundered, the rafters that they've taken from people, testify against them in what they've done.

I'm sure many of you have read the book, Killers of the Flower Moon. If you haven't, I encourage you to read it. It's a tragic tale of the treatment of Native Americans, of the Osage tribe.

They were cut off from their land. They were made promises that were not kept by our government. They were taken advantage of by people who price gouged them and then murdered them to gain the rights to their oil deposits that were discovered under the land.

Man will do horrible things to other men in order to gain wealth and secure it for themselves. But this is a temptation for us too. Maybe not so extreme, but we likewise desire security, don't we?

And in wanting security for ourselves, we are tempted to mistreat others in order to strengthen our position. But like God, we must condemn such practices that people use to advance themselves by trampling on their neighbors.

[20:54] And we know that those who greedily worship their wealth by seeking its security are those who ultimately make a God out of money and they seek to keep it to themselves instead of

understanding that they are a steward of God's resources.

Jesus told a parable about that in Luke chapter 12, verses 16 through 21. He said, It's not a sin to acquire wealth if you do so through unselfish motives.

And if you don't make that wealth, you are God. But you have to understand that you are a steward of what God has given to you.

And what you think you own really belongs to God. And he's entrusted you with those resources to be good stewards of them. And he's given you those resources to invest them to advance the gospel, to advance his kingdom instead of using it to build your own on this earth that is passing away.

If you are greedy, and if you seek that security, and if you worship money and material possessions, then it may be that you don't know the true treasure that is to be found in Jesus Christ.

[23 : 03] The next woe in verses 12 through 14 says, So here this third woe deals with the sin of violence.

The sin here is identified as hurting others in order to gain power for yourself. So if you follow the chain of woes here, Babylon stole.

They secured their stolen treasure and the lands and the wealth that they took. And they acquired them through violence by shedding the blood of others.

You know, anytime you hurt another person to increase your power in the relationship over them, you have committed the sin of violence against them.

You can do that at work with your co-workers. You can do that at home with your spouse or your children. And if you do so, if you use that abusive language and speech and actions, in that way you are acting like Babylon.

[24 : 21] This is not the way God works though, is it? We know the gospel. We know that God gave his only son. And we know that his only son emptied himself, impoverished himself of the glories of heaven.

And he did so in order to seek our good. And he achieved that good not by shedding the blood of others, but by shedding his own blood on the cross to rescue us from the just and righteous wrath of God for our sins that we've committed against him.

And he will return. And he will establish a kingdom far greater than Babylon ever dreamed. The Babylonians thought they were building a world empire that would last forever and ever, but it didn't even last a hundred years.

Don't waste your life acting like Babylonians. Have the mind of Christ. Be like Jesus.

Philippians 2, 1-11 says, So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

[25 : 38] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.

Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The next woe comes in verses 15 through 17. Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink. You pour out wrath and make them drunk in order to gaze at their nakedness. You will have your fill of shame instead of glory.

[26 : 45] Drink yourself and your uncircumcision. The cup of the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and utter shame will come upon your glory. The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them for the blood of man and violence to the earth, the cities and all who dwell in them.

So the fourth woe here deals with the sin of exploitation. The specific example is that of getting someone drunk in order to take advantage of them.

You know, immediately when I read that passage this week, there were two people that came to my mind. The first is Bill Cosby. Bill Cosby was America's dad.

He used to love watching the Cosby show, and we thought, I thought, that Cliff Huxtable and Bill Cosby were the same person until the exploitations of women were revealed, were exposed.

That changed things. The other person that came to mind was Ravi Zacharias. He was an amazing apologist, a brilliant human being.

[28 : 04] I used to watch videos where he would go to Harvard University and Yale and all these Ivy Leagues, and he would answer questions from the students that you could tell they hated God.

And they had answers that they thought would stump him, and they tried to make him look foolish, but then he would give these compassionate answers that were so deep and rich. And he had a huge ministry.

But then as he died, what he hid behind closed doors was revealed. And the glory that that ministry, the good that that man had done, is now clothed in disgrace.

When you take advantage of others to gain pleasure for yourself, God says that you will be filled with shame and you'll be covered with disgrace as a result of that.

We're reading a great book in our men's discipleship classes, Kent Hughes, Disciples of a Godly Man. We were on this topic just recently about how important it is you pay attention to and you guard your mind from what you're putting into it.

[29 : 16] That what you put in comes out. And instead we need to put in what is good so that goodness comes out. If you haven't read that book, I encourage you to do so. And you know, don't we tell this to our kids all the time?

I think one of the first songs I can remember singing in church besides Jesus Loves Me is be careful little ears what you hear. Be careful little eyes what you see.

We know it and we teach it, but do we do it? Woe to those who exploit others for sinful pleasure.

They will be exposed. Verses 18 through 20 says, what prophet is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies.

For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols. Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, awake to a silent stone, arise. Can this teach?

Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver. There is no breath at all within it. Now here this woe addresses the sin of idolatry.

[30 : 23] The sin of trusting something or someone other than God to direct your life. The Babylonians were idolaters they also trusted in themselves and their own strength and their own skill and they didn't give God any credit or any acknowledgement whatsoever.

You know, we can have this picture of idolatry that it's bowing down to an image covered and overlaid in gold and silver and jewels. But the Bible says that anytime you trust something other than God to direct your life, anything that you worship other than him becomes an idol to you. You can make an idol of your career. You can make an idol of your ministry. You can make an idol of your children and your grandchildren and your spouse and your money and your fame and your achievements and status symbols and many other things.

The idols we often make today are more in the self than on the shelf. I love this quote by J.I.

Packer. It's a little lengthy but he talks about the fact that we make idols in our lives today.

He says, what other gods could we have besides the Lord? Plenty, he answers. For Israel, they were the Canaanite Baals, those jolly nature gods whose worship was a rampage of gluttony, drunkenness and ritual prostitution.

[31 : 47] For us, there are still the great gods, sex, shekels and stomach, an unholy trinity constituting one God which is self. And the other enslaving trio, pleasure, possessions and position whose worship is described as the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

He continues, football, the firm and family are also gods for some. Indeed, the list of other gods is endless for anything that anyone allows to run his life becomes his God and the claimants for his prerogative are legion.

In the matters of life's basic loyalty, temptation is a many-headed monster. People today also create an image of God in their minds that is in reality an idol though they call it by God's name.

Whenever they hear sermons or whenever they read the Bible and what it says about God's wrath or hell, even the doctrine of substitutionary atonement that God the Father would crush his only son on the cross for our sins.

They hear these things and they're aghast. And they say things like, that doesn't sound like God to me. Or they'll say things like, God to me is and fill in the blank.

[33 : 10] When you allow your opinions and your feelings to overrule what God has said and revealed himself to be in his word, you've fashioned an image of God in your mind that is an idol and really that idol is created in your image.

and in that way you have created a God who exists to worship you instead of you who exists to worship God. And you know what? You and I, we are not good at being God.

And others are not good at being God for you. Those who trust in idols are deceived and ultimately they will be disappointed. even if you were to follow man's ways, even if you were to be the richest man or woman in the entire world and you had it all, in the end God says that you will suffer the loss of those things when you die and worse you will suffer eternally for having rejected him in the eternal life that he's offered you by faith in Jesus Christ his son.

That's man's way. Now let's look at God's way. God's way is a loss that ends in tremendous gain. A loss that ends in tremendous gain.

Verse 20, but the Lord is in his holy temple let all the earth keep silence before him. So here God reveals to Habakkuk that though it appears like the Babylonians are winning, though their sinful ways and practices have resulted in their living the good life, he is in his temple in heaven.

[34 : 55] And unlike their idols, he's not mute, he's not dumb, he's not deaf, he's not blind, and he's not powerless like them. He is enthroned in his temple.

He is reigning over the entire universe that he has created. He is sovereign over all things. He is in control even when everything seems to be out of control.

And I love that God reveals himself to Habakkuk as the world needing to be silent before him. God is there, he's ruling, he sees it all, he will act.

You know, my dad is a very calm person, but he's not a person that you want to make angry. And if your dad was like that, you know, sometimes the worst feeling is when dad is silent.

He doesn't yell. He's silent. He's disappointed. You know, something bad is about to happen. God is in control even when it seems like things are out of control.

[36 : 04] And here he tells Habakkuk, the whole world should be silent in reverence of who he is. His awesome holiness and mightiness and his presence in his temple was meant to remind his prophet that he has not forsaken his people.

His apparent silence would not be mistaken for abandonment. He will act and he will fulfill his purposes at the appointed time. The people of this world like Babylon then clamor and they strive for wealth, for security, for power and pleasure in sinful ways.

They trust in idols of their own making rather than God. And in the end, such a life is lost tragically. And that's man's way.

But God's way is different. God's way is that you lose your life for Christ in order that you may find it in Christ. You abandon your ways, your sins, you reject selfishness and self-centered pursuits.

You know that those things cannot satisfy, they haven't. What makes you think that they ever will? And you find your true self in the way, the truth, and the life who is Jesus Christ?

[37 : 23] Who is Jesus Christ? Colossians 1, 15 through 20 defines him. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things.

And in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body of the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross.

Our passage today is a judgment passage. And those passages can be difficult to read and they can be difficult to preach. but they remind us that God is holy.

That God is sovereign. That God is just. And he is good. They remind us that we have all sinned. Every single one of us has sinned.

[38 : 40] Every single one of us falls well short of God's glory and his perfect standard. But they remind us that for those of us who know Christ, those of us whom God has been gracious to reveal him to, that in Christ the judgment has not and will not fall upon us.

It's already fallen upon his son who graciously took it and bore it. who endured our shame who bore our curse who shed his blood and gave his life so that we have life in him.

He died that we may live and he rose as a guarantee that we will too. So the main point of application for this morning is this.

it is better to have Jesus than all the treasures of the world. Do you believe that? Do you know that? Do you live your life like that?

God encourages you that if you do, this is the abundant life. This is the treasure to seek. This is how you don't waste your life by making Jesus the greatest pursuit of it.

[40 : 10] Three questions of application this morning for you all to discuss in your groups tonight. I encourage you to look at them before then and even later this week. First question, have you ever seen people get a taste of their own medicine or fall into their own traps?

How did that make you feel? Did you ever take it as a warning for yourself? Question number two, what idols do people worship today?

In what ways are they powerless and foolish compared to God? As I've said before, if you have a struggle trying to figure out what those idols are, what do you daydream about and what is your worst nightmare?

Often that will help you locate it. And then finally, read Ephesians 4.28, Proverbs 10.9, Philippians 2.1-3, Matthew 20.25-28, 1 Thessalonians 1.9.

How do these scriptures compare to the five woes God pronounces against Babylon? How do they contrast between man's way and God's way? God's way is so much better.

[41 : 20] Maybe this morning you realize that you've been going your own way and God has revealed to you the tragic loss that awaits you if you continue to go that way. And he's revealed to you that his ways are best and that you need Christ.

I would love to talk to you today and you can do that during our time of invitation. You can do that sometimes afterwards because I know it's hard and it's not comfortable to come up in front of everybody but I want to know and I want to talk to you. And maybe it is that God has refined you through his word today that you realize that you know what there's a little bit more Babylon in me than there should be.

And hopefully his word has purified your heart and maybe you just need to come up and pray and confess that you've gone your own way and it's not gone well and ask for the Spirit's help that you would walk with him and that your life and your time here would not be wasted.

Let's pray. Lord we are, as we sung today, we are prone to wander.

We are prone to seek the treasures of this world. We're prone to believe that in them we will find satisfaction and joy and peace and purpose.

[42 : 38] But over and over again, Lord, your word reminds us that they are foolish ways and foolish things to live for. That in the end, if we make them our pursuit, we'll have wasted the precious little time that we have here in this world.

God, we pray that you would direct our attention back to Christ where it never should have left.

Christ, that he would be the treasure that we pursue. And Lord, help us as your people living in the midst of a culture that is very similar to Babylon back then, to courageously and to lovingly warn them of the tragic loss that awaits them if they don't know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

God, be glorified in our lives. We pray that our lives which you've given us would matter, that they would advance your kingdom, that they would give glory to you, that you would be pleased until that time when we stand before you and hear you say to us, well done, good and faithful servant.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.