

**Ezekiel 15 & 16**  
**‘When It Keeps Going From Bad to Worse’**  
**Pastor JD Farag**

KAPONO: Would you stand bow your heads in a word of prayer? Heavenly Father, thank You so much, Lord. We thank You for this time that we can gather together, Lord, as a body, as a family, Lord, sit under Your teachings, Lord, through Your word.

We just ask that You would bless this time together, Lord, and we thank You for the rest that our pastor has gotten over these past few weeks, Lord. We thank You for bringing him back to us. Lord, would You continue to use him, Lord, speak in and through him, Lord?

And I pray that this evening, Lord, we will receive what You have already planned in advance for us to hear, Lord. So thank You again for this time and for this place that You have blessed us with. We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus, we say, amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen!

[ Applause ]

Good evening! Oh, no, no, don't do that. Don't do that.

[ Applause ]

Oh, good evening!

[ Audience says, "Good evening!" ]

You guys are just —

[ Church member says, "Great to have you back!" ]

too kind - thank you. Actually, I do want to thank you because you guys have been very gracious to me and patient with me during my extended time off. I know it was a little bit longer this time, and I do want to apologize, too, for not being clear that I was not planning to be back on Sunday, July 9th, this last Sunday. I could have probably worded it better when I made the announcement.

But actually, Sunday, July 9th, and you weren't supposed to know this, was my 61st, no, 21st, oh no, 61st birthday. It's a typo, yeah!

[ Applause ]

Anyway, I wanted to add that last Sunday to my time off, and actually, I'm so glad I did because my family really needed me during that time and for those weeks that you were so gracious to let me have off with my family. But I'm back and you're —

[ Applause ]

you're not getting rid of me that easy.

[ Laughter ]

You're stuck with me. So I'm back, and we're back in *Ezekiel*. So we left off last time, *Chapter 14*. We're going to pick it up, *Chapters 15 and 16*. And for those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you know what's ahead, and very interesting couple of chapters before us tonight. The first chapter, *Chapter 15* that we're going to study is short, and *Chapter 16* is not.

In fact, it's the longest chapter in the book. And it is rather graphic. I suppose it would be appropriate to just forewarn you in advance that the material in *Chapter 16* is going to get a little bit graphic. I'll do my best with the help of the Holy Spirit to teach it.

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And there was a rabbi in Israel that forbid the reading of *Ezekiel Chapter 16* in public, just the reading of it. Now, for those of you again that read ahead to stay ahead, you understand why, so anyway...

Are we off to a good start?

[ Audience responds, “Yes.” ]

Should I go and take some more time off again? No?

[ Audience responds, “No!” ]

Well, by way of a preface, the two chapters, yeah, the title alone says it all, right? They speak to this very important matter that I think if we're all honest with ourselves, we would have to admit we all struggle with. And it's those times in our lives when the situations and circumstances seem to keep going from bad to worse.

You ever had those times when, I mean, you just thought to yourself, it just can't get any worse than this? And then it does. Or how about this? You try to get in there and do something about the situation so that it doesn't get worse and go from bad to worse, only to make it worse. In other words, the more you do, the worse it gets.

Well, that's what we're going to see tonight. And when we get to and get through *Chapter 16*, and maybe even better said, gut through *Chapter 16*, we're actually going to get an answer to this question of: What is it that we can do when things keep going from bad to worse? And here's the thing. It's not what you think. It's not what you think.

So why don't we pray, and we'll ask God to bless our time together in His Word tonight? If you would, please join with me. Father in heaven, thank You, Lord. We readily admit, humbly confess before You that we desperately need You in the power of the Holy Spirit to give us understanding into these chapters that we have before us tonight. They're here in Your Word for a reason, and we want to know what that reason is, what it is that You want us to see in chapters like this, especially *Chapter 16*.

So would You? Would You open up the eyes of our understanding to what it is that You would have us to see and know, and hear and learn, and even take heed to, as hard as it might be and as difficult as that might be?

And Lord, particularly for those that might be here tonight or watching online that are really struggling in a situation that just seems to keep going from bad to worse and even worse than worse, Lord, we just want to ask You to help us tonight. Give us understanding, particularly with this matter at hand, dealing with these two chapters.

So Lord, it's all Yours. the Holy Spirit now, please, God, needs to take over. And as only You can teach us and guide us as we navigate our way through this portion here in Your Word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen, amen.

All right, well, *Chapter 15*, very short; it's a parable, actually. It's known as the parable of the wood of the grapevine, which is now going to be likened unto Israel in a very interesting way, as we're about to see. So *verse 1*, **“Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: “Son of man, how is the wood of the vine better than any other wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest?”** *[These are rhetorical questions of sorts]*

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**[Verse 3] Is wood taken from it to make any object? Or can men make a peg from it to hang any vessel on? Instead [Verse 4], it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for any work?”**

Well, the answer is no. It's worthless. It's useless. This particular vine is of no use, of no value, of no worth, absent any fruit, and conspicuously absent from this short chapter is the mention of the word “fruit.” If this vine does not bear fruit, what is it good for?

You can't make anything out of it. You can't even use it like a peg or a nail to put it in the wall to hang something on. It's good for nothing. In fact, it is not even really good for fuel for the fire. That's how worthless it is. It burns so quick, turns to a white, worthless ash quickly, of no value, no purpose.

Well, it gets worse. That's why I titled the Bible study, 'When Things Go From Bad to Worse.' The whole Bible study is going to go from bad to worse.

**Verse 5, “Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for any work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned? “Therefore [Verse 6] thus says the Lord God: ‘Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

**And [Verse 7] I will set My face against them. They will go out from one fire, but another fire shall devour them. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I set My face against them. Thus [Verse 8] I will make the land desolate, [And here's why] because they have persisted in unfaithfulness,’ says the Lord God.”**

Point of the parable, end of the chapter, point of the parable: Like the vine, good for nothing, bearing no fruit, you, Israel, Jerusalem, have bore no fruit. Just like the vine in the parable, so too, you, Israel, Jerusalem are of no use and will be burned. And Jerusalem was burned.

How are you doing so far? Are we okay? You ready for *Chapter 16*? Okay, buckle up then. It's going to get bumpy.

**Verse 1, “Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: “Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.**

**As for your nativity [Verse 4], on the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you. You were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. [As was the custom of the day when a baby was born]**

**No eye pitied you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you, but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. [You were left there to die]**

**“And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ Yes, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ I made you thrive [Verse 7] like a plant in the field, and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.**

**“When I passed by you again [Verse 8] and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love, so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,” says the Lord God.”**

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Think the Book of Ruth. Remember when we studied through the Book of Ruth? What a book! What a book! The Moabitess and the Kinsman Redeemer, a picture of Christ, Boaz. They got married, beautiful love story, romantic. This is what they did when they would enter into a covenant of marriage, as God did with Israel as His wife. They would cover them, as Boaz did with Ruth. And then they got married. This is what God is saying. I did with you and for you so that you could be Mine. This was the marriage covenant that they entered into.

And interesting, and I want you to hang on to this because it's going to come back up at the end of the Bible study tonight and I hope makes sense. What were they when He found them? Nothing. They were left to die. And when God passed them by, He said, "No, live!" He saved their life.

What did they contribute to the saving of their life? Nothing. What was their part in this? Because it's a pretty bad situation, pretty dire; wouldn't you agree? You're born; you're left to die. Things are going from bad to worse. And it doesn't look good for you. And then God says, well, "I will."

Hang on to those two words. I will take you. I will adorn you. I will marry you. I will prosper you. What did they bring to the table in order for God to do this? What did they do to warrant this from God? Nothing. God did it. He's the one that swore an oath. He made the covenant with them. They did not make a covenant with Him.

Think Abraham. Remember when the Abrahamic Covenant was born? And that's where we get the word in our modern-day verbiage: "Let's cut a deal." It comes from the Abrahamic Covenant when they would cut covenant. How so? The way they would enter into a covenant is they would take animals and they would cut them up. And the —

[ Audience gasped ]

We haven't even got —

[ Laughter ]

The two parties entering into the covenant would walk amongst the cut-up animals in the midst of the blood that they lay in, and they would enter into this covenant, not contract, covenant. And the covenant was: If we break this covenant, may what was done to these animals be done to us. That's called the deterrent. It wasn't a good time in human history to be a corporate attorney.

[ Laughter ]

You might say nobody dared to break a covenant. But there's an interesting twist to the story, if I can say it like that because when God told Abraham, cut the animals and let's enter into this covenant, Abraham does so, and then God comes to cut covenant. But before He does so, He puts Abraham into a deep sleep. This is no time for a nap. We're going to make a deal.

But why's God putting Abraham into a deep sleep before they enter into this covenant? Because Abraham is not making a covenant with God. God is making the covenant with Abraham. Why is God not allowing Abraham to make a covenant with God? Because Abraham cannot keep a covenant with God. God is the one who keeps the covenant with Abraham.

That's what's happening here. I'm entering into a covenant with you. I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you. And you became Mine because you are mighty fine. That's not in the original; I just wanted to add.

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**“Then [Verse 9] I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin. [That's not cheap stuff, by the way] I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. [Very expensive] I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. And [Verse 12] I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.**

**Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly beautiful and succeeded to royalty. Your fame went out among the nations [Word traveled] because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you,” says the Lord God.**

**But [And here's where it takes a turn] you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself and played the harlot on them. Such things should not happen, nor be.**

*[Again, I'm going to be very careful here because this is very graphic]* **You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. [By the way, this is alive and well today] [I'm going to leave it right there]**

**You took your embroidered garments [Verse 18] and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them.”**

Notice “My” is capitalized. That's My oil. That's My incense.

**“Also [Verse 19] My food which I gave you — the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey which I fed you — you set it before them as sweet incense; and so it was,” says the Lord God. Moreover [This is where it goes from bad to worse, to worse again] you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured.”**

This is, of course, speaking of the god Moloch, an iron statue with a “fire in the belly,” which is where we get that modern-day expression, that they would sacrifice their children, child sacrifices, by placing the baby on the arms of this iron statue. And that baby would scream and, I'm sorry, burn to death as they sacrificed their children to this god Molech, again, alive and well today — we don't call it that. Instead of a fire in the belly, it's an abortion.

I want to be gracious. You know, abortion, unfortunately — well, let me just say this. If you've been a part of an abortion, God is a forgiving God. You're not condemned. It's not the unforgivable sin. God is a restoring God. God is a gracious God. God is a forgiving God. Abortion is evil through and through.

But have you asked yourself why? Why is this such an abomination? Because of what it does to the one who does it. You know, I was a part of a pregnancy ministry. In fact, this church was birthed, pun intended, in the Aloha Pregnancy Care and Counseling Center in Kaneohe in the waiting rooms. Some of you — actually none of you except Bernie will remember; she's the only one. Did you know that, Bernie? We talked about that, right? You were the only one that was there from the very beginning.

In the waiting room of the Aloha Pregnancy Care Counseling Center, we started Calvary Chapel Kaneohe. The waiting room: It seated about 14 people, not comfortably. The waiting room: smaller than your women's restroom, by the way, just to put it into perspective.

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And the ministry — I was on the board — was to these precious mothers because for the rest of their lives — and the fathers too — they're — they're — I tell you; I've had conversations with fathers who didn't want their girlfriend to abort their baby, who wept bitterly and would be haunted by it for the rest of their life. And the ministry to these precious people is such that for the rest of their life, when they see a baby, they see their baby they aborted. They would have been two; they would have been three; they would have been four.

God says, don't do that because I love you, and I don't want you to suffer unnecessarily the consequences of you doing that. It's not “don't do that because I'm God and I said so.” Sin is not bad because it's forbidden. Sin is forbidden because it's bad for us, and God loves us, and He doesn't want us to suffer. He's trying to protect us from needless suffering and pain. So here, they were involved now in these child sacrifices.

And at the end of *verse 20*, **“Were your acts of harlotry a small matter, that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire? And [Verse 22] in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.”**

Before I found you, do you remember where you came from? Do you remember what you were before I found you and saved you and redeemed you?

**“Then it was so [Verse 23], after all your wickedness — ‘Woe, woe to you!’ says the Lord God — that you also built for yourself a shrine and made a high place for yourself in every street. You built your high places at the head of every road and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by and multiplied your acts of harlotry.**

**You also [Verse 26] committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke Me to anger.**

*[It gets worse]* **“Behold [Verse 27], therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, [Get this] who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.”**

The Philistines? Excuse me? You mean you made the Philistines blush? Wow!

**“You also [Verse 28] played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied. [There's this insatiable lust that you have]**

**“How degenerate is your heart!” [Verse 30] says the Lord God, “seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot. “You erected your shrine at the head of every road and built your high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot because you scorned payment.”**

What? In other words, they weren't even doing it for the money anymore. And it's even going to get worse if you can imagine.

**You [Verse 32] are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband. Men [Verse 33] make payment to all harlots, but you made your payments to all your lovers and hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry.”**

Did you get that? I mean, you... Now wonder this shouldn't be read, let alone taught. You think I want to teach this? Except it's my first Thursday back; I gotta...

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[ Laughter ]

That's the Lord. Are you kidding me right now, Lord? I'm not going to skip it. Every word in God's word is in God's Word for a reason. We're going to see it tonight. We'll get there. Don't look at your watches. It'll be shortly. Sort of.

But again, did you get what we just read? Did you? Did you grasp that? See, harlots: you're even worse than a harlot because a harlot gets money for their harlotry. You pay money for harlotry. Wow! I mean, that's breathtaking.

**“You are the opposite of other women in your harlotry because no one solicited you to be a harlot.”** *[That's even worse!]*

Because isn't that what harlots do? They advertise, they solicit, they seduce. You're not even — you're not even being solicited. You're going out soliciting.

**“In that you gave payment, but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite.”**

**‘Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God [Verse 36]: “Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children which you gave to them, surely, therefore, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, and all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness.**

**And [Verse 38], I will judge you as women who break wedlock or shed blood are judged. I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. [You've broken our marriage covenant] I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down your high places.”**

Again, these high places: I don't want to get too graphic, but they were very sexual in nature. Worship: the worship was very sexual in nature.

**“They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare. “They shall also bring up an assembly [Verse 40] against you, and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with (their) swords.**

**They shall burn your houses with fire [Verse 41] and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. And I will make you cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. So I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet and be angry no more.”**

Now we've got some hope. And the hope has, at its core, the aforementioned two words: **“I will.”**

**“I will lay to rest My fury.” “I will make you cease playing the harlot.”** [I will]

**Verse 43, “Because you did not remember the days of your youth, but agitated Me with all these things, surely I will also recompense your deeds on your own head,” says the Lord God. “And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.**

**“Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs [Verse 44] will use this proverb against you: ‘Like mother, like daughter!’**

Wait, I thought it was like father, like son. No, this is a slam. **“Like mother, like daughter.”** You don't want anybody saying that to you. And by the way, just for the record, I stopped saying this to my wife

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and daughter after I read *verse 44*. I realized that's not good to say. You shouldn't say that because that's not a good thing.

Like father, like son? It depends. It's like when somebody says, "Uh, is that your son?" My response is "Why? It just depends. I'll let you know. If it's good, yeah, like father, like son. The apple doesn't fall too far from the tree."

[ Laughter ]

***Verse 45, "You are your mother's daughter, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite."***

And by the way, that's true, right? Because Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees. Eber was the descendant, not direct descendant, of Abraham from where we got the lineage of the He-br-ew. Eber.

But Abraham was not technically Hebrew. It was his descendants that would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and sand on the seashore. Don't you find it interesting, by the way, just parenthetically, let me say that you're like the sister of your sisters who loathed their husbands and children. It sounds like it's contagious. Monkey see; monkey do.

You're kind of mimicking, imitating what they're doing. What were they doing? Disrespecting, loathing their husband and children. You're acting like them. You're imitating them. That's another topic for another time unto itself.

Now *verse 46* gets worse. ***"Your elder sister is Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, [Wait for it] is Sodom and her daughters."***

We just went from bad to worse, like 0 to 100 in .0000001 seconds with just that one verse. You're like, You're comparing us to Sodom? Yeah! That's pretty bad. No, it's worse than bad.

***"You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways."***

Worse than them. You're not only like Sodom; you're worse than Sodom. It doesn't get any worse than that.

***"As I live," says the Lord God, [Verse 48] "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had [I want you to underline this for a reason] pride..."***

This was the sin of Sodom: Pride. Isn't that an interesting choice of words? In other words, it was the pride that led to the abomination. Translation: Gay Pride. Did you get it? Did you make that connection? The sin: oh, sexual debauchery? Yes. Homosexuality? Absolutely. What was the source of it? Pride. Pride. And we're going to see that right now.

***"She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit."***

Stay with me. Pride led to the abomination. Pride preceded, was the catalyst for the committing of the unspeakable abomination. It started with pride. And isn't that the truth?



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Pride is at the center of all sin. And at the center of the word "pride" is the letter I. The center of the word "sin" is the letter I. The center of the word "Lucifer" is the letter I. Pride: We are never more like Satan than when we're proud.

Because what did Satan do? What was the first sin? Not the garden. It was in heaven. That's why there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. The sin was pride when Lucifer said "I." "I will ascend my throne above the Most High."

I: If I'm not mistaken, and I could be, if my memory serves me correctly, there were eight I's. I, I, pride.

*Verse 51.* Hang in there. **"Samaria did not commit half of your sins, [Half your sins] but you have multiplied your abominations more than they and have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done."**

Interesting: Your abominations justified their abominations. They saw you doing it, and thought, hey, cool!

**"You [Verse 52] who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs. They are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame because you justified your sisters."**

That's on you. By the way, there is such a thing as sanctified shame. Sanctified shame. There's a sanctified shame that convicts and brings you to the Lord. But there's also the shame that condemns you and distances you further from the Lord. And that's the litmus test by which to gauge whether or not the shame is sanctified.

Sometimes I think we need a good dose of shame. We're shameless. No shame. Shame can be good. And that's what he's saying here. You need to be ashamed of yourself. Shame on you.

In Arabic, one of the most — well, for lack of a better word, intense rebuke is harij ealayk. Shame on you.

In that culture, it's like the ultimate. It's — because in that — the cultural dynamic is such that — well, here's an example. Do I have time? Eh, I've been gone for a while. I'm gonna — I got time.

[ Laughter ]

You know, the first miracle that Jesus performed, turning the water to wine at the wedding? Do you know why that was so serious? Why the host, the wedding party, and everybody was freaking out? And why Mary — by the way, the last recorded words of Mary in Scripture were, **"This is my son. Do what He says."** Just wanted to, for the benefit of those who lean towards Catholicism.

And oh, by the way — oh, I didn't — why am I? Because I just do. More is said of Sarah as a godly woman and other women in the Bible than were ever said of Mary. I digress. You'll forgive me. But do you know why Mary came to Jesus? And Jesus' response — people struggle with His response — because **"what is it that you have to do with me, woman?"**

It's kind of like "who you calling, boy? Get over here, boy! You don't talk to your mama like that." What He was saying was, **"my time hasn't come yet,"** but this situation is so serious that I'm going to go ahead and do it because of what's at stake.

What's at stake?

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If they run out of wine at a wedding in the Middle East, you will be so shamed you could never show your face in public again. That's why He did it. And that's why He responded the way He did. What's your point, Pastor?

My pastor — (Chuckling)

[ Laughter ]

Maybe I should take more time off.

My point is that there needs to be shame because it rises to the level of being so serious in the eyes of God as an abomination in the sight of God. Shame on you. You're going to bare your shame. And that's a good thing.

**Verse 53, "When I bring back their captives, [Oh, there's more hope] the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then I will also bring back the captives of your captivity among them, that you may bear [It is here again] your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when you comforted them."**

In other words, your shame will be so great that you will never want to repeat the folly that caused the shame in the first place.

**"When [Verse 55] your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state.**

**For your sister Sodom [Wait, still my sister?] was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the reproach of the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and of the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere."**

By the way, don't miss that. The world does not like you. The world's not your friend. The Syria, the Philistia, the Egyptian, the et al, the Sodom, the Samaria, the all of the above, they hate you. Why are you trying to be friends with them? They despise you, by the way.

Yeah, but they friended me on Facebook.

Come on.

**Verse 58, "You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the Lord. For thus says the Lord God: "I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant."**

And then *verse 60*. Let's bask in the first word of *verse 60* because it changes everything.

**"Nevertheless [I want you back] [I'll take you back] I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will [I will, I will] establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed [So ashamed as to never repeat them] when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will [I will] give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you."**

In other words, not because you broke covenant, but because I have a covenant with you.

**Verse 62, "And I will establish My covenant with you." [See, I can't break the covenant] Then you shall know that I am the Lord," that [Verse 63, last verse]**

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*[Can we just all collectively take a deep breath and sigh of relief?]*

**that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,” says the Lord God.”**

Wow! Okay, hang in there with me.

The question at the beginning was: What is it that we can do when things in our life keep going from bad to worse, whether deserved or undeserved, whether because of a fault of our own or through no fault of our own? Things are going from bad to worse, and they keep getting worse. And the more I try to keep them from getting worse, the more they're getting worse. What do I do?

Answer: Nothing. He'll do it. In other words, you have a situation in your life right now that you're dealing with, and you're going, I don't know what to do. Every time I try to do something, I just make it worse. It backfires on me. I end up creating the very thing I'm trying to avoid.

And I mean, just when you didn't think it could get any worse, it just got worse. And you go to bed at night, assuming you can even sleep, and not toss and turn all night with this hope, just hanging on to hope that you're going to wake up in the morning, and there's going to be some kind of a breakthrough and things are going to turn around.

But instead of turning around and getting better, it got worse again. What do I do?

I'll do it.

What do you mean?

No, JD, what you don't understand is, is that I've made this situation so utterly impossible anything you throw at it or try to do about it will be met with total and utter failure. In fact, if you keep trying to do something about it, you're just going to keep making it worse. I'll make it better.

Question — think this through with me: If God is going to do this for them after all that they did, as bad as it was, how much more will He not do that for you? It's called grace. It's called mercy. And again, we bring nothing to the table. There's nothing we contribute. In fact, the only thing we can do is hope. Don't lose hope.

Oh, sometimes this situation looks hopeless and you're hanging on. I think of Paul, and I've referred to it often. I hope you don't tire of me referring to it, but it is perhaps amongst the most powerful and profound passages in all of the pages of Holy Writ.

In *Acts Chapter 27*, when Luke, Aristarchus, and Paul are on that ship, and they're going to shipwreck, and this is not Paul's first rodeo/shipwreck. He's been in three shipwrecks before. He has a Ph.D. in shipwrecks.

But in this storm, Luke writes, by the Holy Spirit, **“When we had finally given up all hope of surviving.”** Three words: we, finally, hope. We?

Who's we? Paul gave up all hope. Paul? Come on! He knows that he's going to go to Rome. God told him he's going to go to Rome. And he's given up hope that he's going to survive this storm? Paul? Yeah. Well, he survived it. Yeah, but what did he do? Nothing. Oh, surely he claimed the promises of God. No, the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “Paul, do not be afraid.”

You know why that happened? Because — I know this is deeply profound — Paul was afraid. Do not be afraid. He was terrified. This is how it ends. I'm not going to make it out of this one. He says, no,

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no, you are going to survive — I know you've given up hope, but you're still going to get to Rome. I just have a detour for you because I have a bunch of people on this island called Malta that I want to save. So I had to add Malta to your itinerary on your way to Rome.

But he survived it how? Because God said, I will make it so you survive. It wasn't Paul's grip on God. It was God's grip on Paul. Paul's already resigned, given up all hope. Finally, keyword finally — in other words, he was holding on for as long as he could, and finally he just said there's no hope. This is how it ends.

So what did he bring to the table of surviving that storm? Nothing. God did it.

You're in a storm tonight. You're in a situation tonight. It's going from bad to worse. And have you ever had this happen? I have. You pray about the situation, and it seems like the more you pray, the worse it gets.

You know what I do? I stop praying. I'm like, really? So the more I pray, the worse it gets? Well, then I'm going to stop praying. Maybe it'll stop getting worse because it seems like the more I pray, the worse it gets.

Okay, you don't do that.? You're more spiritual than I am.

We reason, we logic, we — we — we — in our finite understanding, lean on what little understanding we think we have and don't acknowledge Him and trust in Him with all of our hearts so that He can straighten it out and see us through the storm that we're in.

Yeah, it's going from bad to worse. Yeah, it's starting to look pretty hopeless now. Well, that's when God rushes in, and it may not be how you think. In fact, I would venture to say it's almost never how you think. I'm preaching to myself; I want you to know because I am fully capable of helping God out.

[ Laughter ]

Oh, I'm so glad you laughed. You do that, too, right? Here's how I try to help God out. I try to figure it out. And then I send got an email. I got it figured out. It's an Excel spreadsheet. Okay, so here's what we need to do.

God's like, thank you so much, JD, for your suggestions. I'll take it under advisement.

[ Laughter ]

You know why we do that, right? Because we want out of storm.

And God says, No, I'm not going to get you out, but I am going to see you through it.

Help me, God, I mean, it's getting worse by the minute.

And it's almost like God, not in a snarky way, is up there saying, I know; I'm letting it get worse because when "I will," you will know that it was Me who did it. Because there is no other way. There's no other explanation. You will know that I am God. I will. I will.

You won't. Stop trying. Stop trying. I will. Let me. Let me.

It's been said — and I'll close with this — and I appreciate your patience — I didn't go too long. It wasn't too bad either, by the way. See, the things you learn over the years as a pastor is you make it sound really bad, so then it was not as bad, then it's not as bad.

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That actually was pretty bad. Actually worse than bad...

It's been said that the hardest part of faith is the last half hour, when all hope has been lost, when it's just gone from bad to worse, to worse, to worse, to worse. And that last half hour is the hardest part. I hope you're encouraged, especially if you're in a situation tonight that is difficult and going from bad to worse.

Because, again, if God's going to do that for them, how much more will He do that for us? We have the greater covenant, right?

Why don't y'all stand? Kapono, come on up.

Father, thank You. Oh, am I ever so glad to be done with *Chapter 16*. And I'm sure everyone is in agreement with me. But a needed chapter, though, Lord; there was a lot there for us tonight. And there's more even perhaps that the Holy Spirit would like to be given permission to minister to us and have unfettered access to our hearts in order to do so.

Lord, I want to just close the Bible study by praying and asking for anyone, myself included, who might just be going through some situation that just has gone from bad to worse, Lord, I just pray that there would just be a strengthening and an encouraging of the heart as only You can and are always so faithful to.

A chapter like the one we just finished here with *Chapter 16*, would be a much-needed reminder for us, not how bad they were, but how good You are despite how bad they were, and we are. I believe that's why You have a chapter like this recorded for us and preserved in the canon of Scripture. It's not to see the graphic ugliness of their abominations. It's to see the goodness of Your grace and love and mercy and kindness.

You're a merciful God. You're a long-suffering God. And You love us unconditionally, unconditionally. And You'll take us back no matter how grievous the sins we commit against You. You'll never leave us. You'll never forsake us. You'll never abandon us. You'll never break covenant with us. You'll always take us back, restore us. You're a restoring God, a forgiving God.

Thank You, God. Thank You, God. We love You so much. Thank You for always taking us back. In Jesus' name. Amen.