

A Life of Wisdom
The Book of Ecclesiastes
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Well, good morning. I'm Pastor Darryl, one of the oldest pastors on staff, and they let me have a shot at you from time to time, and so the time is now for my shot.

I want to introduce a book to you. I'm the one who teaches Wisdom From the Word on Tuesdays. Right over in the chapel every Tuesday, bring your lunch. We're going through the hard sayings of Jesus right now, but this fall I want to begin to introduce this particular book, which I want to introduce this morning. It's a book that initially most people don't like because it begins with, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity." And usually they go, "Myrtle, let's read another book. This sounds really like a downer." And yet the word vanity actually is the word hevel in the Hebrew, not hell, but hevel and it means vaporous. It's the key.

And how do you extract enjoyment from life? Like a perfume, which is a vapor. You don't try to embrace it or play with it. You just in that moment you enjoy it and embrace it. So therefore, the essence of wisdom of life has everything to do with this kind of wisdom and how do we extract enjoyment? And this is what the book of Ecclesiastes, which is actually the personal journal of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.

In my 55 years of ministry, I have found that most people are chasing something. And that something usually has something to do with happiness. I've never met anybody who says, "My goal in life is to be miserable." Although I've met people that seems to be miserable, seems to make them happy. I mean, how many Christians I see who act like they've been baptized in pickle juice. But Jesus begins his sermon on the Mount.

I remember, if you want to know everything that Jesus wanted to teach you, Jesus specifically, you can just read Matthew 5, 6, and 7 because that's the Sermon on the Mount. But he introduces the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, those eight statements of introduction, and he begins each one with blessed are, blessed are, blessed are. The word is makarios. It means all the happiness of. Say, "Well, that's great. This is an attitude of, oh, the happiness of, but what's so happy about those who mourn and the poor in spirit? Are we missing something here with happiness?"

Well, what is happiness? And some people say, "Well, that's not very spiritual. I mean come on, how shallow can you be? The goal of life isn't to be happy." Wait a second, what does a psalmist mean when it says the joy of the Lord is my ... Strength. My very strength of walking and following Christ has everything to do with the joy of the Lord. And the word joy is from the Greek word chara, which means the absence of fear.

See, most people are driven by fear. You do what you do because you're afraid of something. And what would it be to live a life that you are not driven by fear? But the fact that all the fear's been taken away. Well, that's what this word joy actually means. And it is tied to happiness. Although our word, English word happiness, the root is hap. Well add that to haphazard and you get the idea that all the word hap means is by chance. And so by chance, you might from time to time find yourself in a place that you can actually extract enjoyment from your life. In other words, happy. But the question is, is this always just by chance? How do I put myself into a place that I have a good chance to experience this world of extracting enjoyment from it?

Think of unhappy people. Have you ever heard of Bertrand Russell? Bertrand Russell was an English philosopher, celebrated atheist. As a matter of fact, he's the guy that wrote the book, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, which is kind of a self-help book for atheists as they have no other real arguments. Apparently one day he was in deep thought, and he was meditative, and they asked him about it, and he actually said this and wrote it down. He says, "Because I made an odd discovery. Every time I talk to a scholar, I feel quite sure that happiness is no longer a possibility. Yet when I talk to my gardener, I'm convinced of the opposite."

You see, this pursuit of happiness, maybe I ought to look around and say, "Okay, who's happy?" I mean, where did all the happy people go, and what is it that they're doing? And would you expect the key to wisdom, the key to happiness would be found in a book that begins with vanity, vanity, all is vanity?

But like I said, this is Solomon's personal journal, and after he's about my age at this time. And after all wisdom is accumulation of, boy, I'm not going to do that again. And so he's learned this, and he puts this in this journal called *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. And like I say, apparently, it's the key to the wisdom of knowing how to extract enjoyment. These books here in the middle of the Hebrew canon are called the wisdom literature, and this is one of those. And the books, people say, "Well, it's so negative." Is it really? I hear people say it's pessimistic and it's basically the musings of a bitter, old man. Well, you tell me.

Let me just show you what's sprinkled through this book. 2:24, Solomon says, "There is nothing better for a man than to eat, to drink, to tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat, who can have enjoyment without Him?"

3:11, "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He's also set eternity in their hearts. He says, I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and do good in one's lifetime."

How about 5:18? "Here's what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink, to enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward."

How about chapter 9? Here he says this in verses 7 and 8. "Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart" as long as you're 21, "for God has already approved your works. Let your clothes be white all the time." That means you get dressed up to go to a festival. "And let not oil be lacking on your head." That's perfume so you smell good. Then he

says in verse 9. "Enjoy life with the woman whom you love, all the days of your fleeting life, which he has given to you under the sun."

Under the sun, this whole journal is about life from your birth to your death, physical life under the sun. Stop talking about the hereafter. It's not about heaven. But how do you extract enjoyment life now? "Is that in your toil in which you have labored under the sun?"

I don't know. This does not sound very pessimistic to me. Matter of fact, it sounds pretty hopeful. And so if we're ever going to move from the ordinary like most people driven by fear to something that's maybe a little more extraordinary, then I need to get a handle on this kind of wisdom because it's a handle on this happiness. And if the joy of the Lord is my strength, then I want to learn the wisdom on how to get there.

Now, those under 40 always tell me that the key of wisdom now is the Twitter and Facebook. I think that all gives you is a twit face. I don't think you're going to see wisdom. It's one miserable person trying to tell you why they're miserable. As I mentioned, this is Solomon's personal journal. He writes as an older man after his life has been beaten on a bit and he spends his life, what's interesting is he views his life as a laboratory.

Look at the first two verses of chapter 2. He said, "I said to myself, to myself, come now, I will test you with pleasure, so enjoy yourself and behold it too was hevel, vaporous. I said of laughter, it's madness. Of pleasure, well, what does it accomplish? I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body even with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely and how to take hold of foolishness until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives."

So he says, "I have committed my whole life as an experiment so that I could dig out what is it about this life that basically you can actually extract enjoyment as a gift from the hand of God."

Now, this is Solomon. This guy's lived out every fantasy you can ever imagine. The guy, first of all is king of Israel. Nobody pushes him around. Nobody can bully this guy. He's a trust fund baby. His dad, David, did all the wars, so he's left all the hard work. It's over. He was given a double portion of wisdom from God as a child. When it comes to wealth and power, no peer in existence in history at that time. And Flavius Josephus. Now why has mom called him Flavius Josephus? I don't know. Maybe back then it was a chick magnet, but Josephus tells us about the Solomon's life outside the scriptures as well as all the history up to the life of Jesus.

Well, he tells us that Solomon had 40 stalls of horses and horsemen for all of these, and then they would take these horsemen out to ride the horses, the king's horses. They had long hair, and they'd sprinkle gold dust in their hair so it would glitter into the sun. Sounds like a Karen Carpenter song, doesn't it? The guy had, he wrote 3000 proverbs. He wrote over a thousand songs. He's got 700 wives, 300 concubines. We're not going there.

But he summarizes his testimony in 2:10. Would you love to add this to your testimony? "And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for

my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor." In other words, he says "Anything I wanted to do, I did. Anything I wanted, any pleasure, anything, I got it."

And so then he summarizes this whole thing in this journal. Now, I don't know about you. I'd be curious what the guy has to say about happiness because he's had every break a human being could ever have. So after musing a bit over some of the agonies of life and the finality of death in chapter 12, he even admits at times, "I hate my life."

Anybody relate to that? Come on, we've all gone through seventh grade. "I hate my life." Well, but it's interesting the conclusion he draws. Look again at chapter 2:24. Here he says again, "There is nothing better." Here's this conclusion of his whole journal. "There is nothing better for a man than to eat, to drink and to tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?"

So there's some wisdom that has something to do with my relationship with God that has everything to do with this experience of extracting enjoyment from life. Now is this that old Epicurean philosophy, eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die? Well, that's not what he says. He says, "I've seen that it is from the hand of God."

Now I have somebody who's going to help us a little bit with this kind of wisdom, and that somebody is the Apostle Paul, because Paul studied the writings of Solomon. How do you know that? Because Paul studied under Gamaliel, the wisest teacher in the days of Jesus and then Paul, and Gamaliel, the curriculum was from the wisest rabbi, the wisest man in the history of Israel who would be, this is a softball, Solomon.

So we know that Paul actually had studied this. As a matter of fact, in Paul's little letter to Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4, Paul actually summarizes what he had learned from Solomon in this text. Like in 1 Peter, I'm sorry, in 1 Timothy 4, listen to what he says. He says in verses 4 and 5, "For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude." Take a note of that. "Everything created by God is good and is to be enjoyed and is not to be rejected if, if it's received with gratitude for it is sanctified by means of the word of God in prayer." He just summarized the whole journal of Solomon there.

As a matter of fact in chapter 6, he ties it directly to people who are wealthy. In 6:17 he says, "Now instruct those who are rich in this present world that their scum-sucking pigs are going to hell." No, wait, wait. Now let me read this right, all right? Relax. It says, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches," because that's a dead end, "but on God," watch this, "who richly supplies us with all things." You won't believe the last two words, "who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." To enjoy. So he says here, basically, I have learned the secret of how to extract enjoyment from what God has given to me as his reward.

As a matter of fact, that's why Paul says later in Philippians 4, Paul says, huh, I've had a lot of stuff. I've had nothing. I've been full. I've gone hungry. But I've learned the secret. And he says, "The secret is I've learned to be content."

Now the fact he says he learned to be content means it's not natural. You don't just all of a sudden wake up one morning and you're content. It's not the case. It's a skill. He says, "I learned to be content."

Well, from where did Paul learn to be content? Because if I'm content, and that's an old stoic, philosophical word, that doesn't mean to be lazy. What it means is that I need no more to enjoy my life. I'm so enjoying what I already have to such a degree, I need nothing more to actually enjoy my life. Now that's a skill that's learned. Paul said he learned it in Philippians 4:11. From where did Paul learn it? Same place you're going to learn it, right here in Ecclesiastes 5.

Let's pick it up in verse 18 and following. Ecclesiastes 5:18, here Solomon says again, "Here is what I've seen to be good and fitting." Interesting these two words, the word good in Hebrew is tov. It means designed to be enjoyed. God creates heaven and the earth, it was good. God designed it for us to be able to enjoy it. And then and fitting. Now that word fitting is an interesting Hebrew word yafar. It means without fear. God created things not to scare us with them, but actually to enjoy and not be fearful for there's no fear in them. Therefore, enjoy. He says, "I have seen to what is good and fitting: to eat, to drink and to enjoy oneself and all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life."

Notice he keeps mentioning the few years of our life because life is hevel, vaporous. It comes and it goes, and it flies by. So how do you enjoy a life that flies by like a vapor? It takes his wisdom, which God has given him for his reward.

Now, the key to Bible study is read the next verse, verse 19. "Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He's also empowered him to eat from them to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; for this is the gift from the hand of God. For this guy," verse 20, "for he will not often consider the years of his life."

It doesn't bother him that he's getting older. It's not like, I'm still trying to get what I want and I'm getting older and I'm going to miss out on it. That's not this guy's thinking at all. It says he does not even consider the years of his life because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

This guy is so focused on the gladness of his heart. This is a happy, happy, happy man. And he's happy because he's learned this truth of contentment, contentment. He learned how to extract both parts of any gift.

You see, you understand gifts have two parts. There's the gift itself, but you got to have the second part because the second part of a gift is the capacity to extract enjoyment from that gift or that gift becomes a curse.

Let's say some of you get together and say, "You know, Pastor Darryl, not only is he getting old, he's getting kind of fluffy. And so what we're going to do is we're going to go out and we're going to motivate him. We're going to buy him some brand-new running shoes. I mean the red ones with patented leather and we're going to wrap this thing up, 300 bucks." You wrap it up and you give it to me, and you give me this gift of running shoes. Let me say that again, running shoes.

There were these two guys in hell. They had been in hell for about 300 years. It was always hot and stuffy of course down there. And all of a sudden, the guy began to shake, and he says, "It's getting cold, frigid." All of a sudden began to rain, snow began to fall. It's snowing in hell. The guy says, "What's going on?" Apparently, Pastor Darryl's running these days. It's just not going to happen.

It's like if I take you out to Ruth Chris for a wonderful steak, but it just happened that the day I made the reservations was the day you went to the dentist, and he pulled most of your teeth out. All of a sudden, the gift becomes a curse because if you don't have both parts, the gift itself, but also the capacity to extract enjoyment from the gift, then there is no gift.

And notice what he says here. He says, "God has empowered him." Matter of fact, you say, well, God gave him riches and wealth. He should be happy. Should, isn't that a great word, should?

Read on, chapter 6. There's another guy. He gets more stuff. "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is prevalent among mankind. There's a man to whom God has given riches and wealth." Hey, that's like the first guy. Oh, but there's more. "And honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all he desires, but God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys his stuff." This is vanity and severe affliction. So that this guy, according to my math first guy, God gave him riches and wealth. This second guy gets riches and wealth and honor and everything his heart desires. So my math tells me which guy's going to be happier?

Well, the second guy, because he's got more stuff. Whoever has the most toys wins, right? And yet it says that the second guy is miserable. He doesn't enjoy any of his stuff. Everybody else enjoys his stuff, but not him. But the first guy, his heart is gladdened.

Now why first guy enjoys his stuff and the second guy doesn't? Well notice verse 19 again. "God has not empowered him to eat from them to receive his reward and rejoices his labor because this is a gift from the hand of God." That word empowered is the Hebrew word, interesting word, it's the word shalot, not shellac, shalot. And the word shalot in Hebrew speaks of given the capacity, that's why it's translated empowered, given the capacity to extract enjoyment from a gift, from a gift.

Now you notice the first guy, God gives him riches and wealth and he empowers him, he shalots him, and the guy extracts such enjoyment from what he has. He's contented because he needs nothing more to enjoy his life because he enjoys what he has so much. But the second guy, did you notice what it said? He gave him all this stuff, but God has not empowered him to eat from them. God did not shalot him.

Why? Why would God shalot the first guy and not shalot the second guy? Well, because we see with the first guy, he acknowledged that what he was given was a reward and was a gift from the hand of God. That's why back in 2:24, when he said, "Nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God. For who can eat, who can have enjoyment without Him," unless he shalots?

Where the second guy, he probably did the old-fashioned way. "I worked hard. This is my stuff and I earned it." And he doesn't understand how come he doesn't have any satisfaction to it. Well, why? Why is it that some do acknowledge that things are given to him from the hand of God and others don't? Well, the answer is a nose problem. Matter of fact, we got a serious nose problem.

What I'm saying is God packs our bag and God fills our bags with all kinds of talents and skills and abilities. Some sings like a bird like Jason here, and I wish I could sing. I chose hair over that particular gift. But no, there I go again. There I go. Forgive me. That's not edifying Darryl, slap, slap. Point being is this, God packs our bag and he puts all kinds of skills, IQ, opportunities, abilities, and there they are, gifts from God. But guess what? Our nose problems, we stick our nose in what? Everybody else's bag. I wish I had what you have. I wish I had your home. I wish I had your job. I wish I got that promotion. I wish. I wish. And because our nose is always in somebody else's bag, we don't even see what's in our own.

Matter of fact, we'll go back to chapter 6. Listen to what he says here. Verse 3. "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years." Now in this culture, that was a sign of a successful man. You have lots of kids and you live a long time. So here's a successful guy. "If a man fathers a hundred children," he better have a hundred wives. "If a man fathers a hundred children, and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things, and he does not even have a proper burial." Then verse 6, "For even if the other guy lives a thousand years twice," this guy is really successful, he's got lots of kids, but it says, "and does not enjoy good things, do not all go to one place?"

See that phrase, "but he does not enjoy good things." You know that word there translated enjoy actually is in the Hebrew? See. Simply the word to see. He doesn't see that God has packed his bag with good things. And because he doesn't see any of it, because his nose is in everybody else's bag, therefore, he never acknowledges anything that he has been given him from the hand of God. And you see that is what gratefulness is. Gratefulness is not like thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. That's got the depth of a thimble. Gratefulness is acknowledging that what I have has actually been given to me by the hand of God. And when I acknowledge that God shalots me, he gives me the capacity to accept such enjoyment of what I have.

Holly and I have been married 53 years. She looks different than 53 years ago. I look in the mirror and I go, "What happened" Good thing we both have a sense of humor. The point being is this, I adore Holly. I'd rather be with Holly than anybody else. She is the most intelligent, brightest person I know and the most precious person to me. Why? Not because of who we are, because Holly is British. I'm French. Do you know your history? We've been fighting for 53

years, but we've learned how to fight fair. But even when she's winning an argument, which she always does, gentlemen, good counsel for you, you want to be right, or do you want to be happy? But that's another story. The point being is this, even when I'm arguing with Holly, I'm arguing with somebody who's so precious to me.

Why? Because every day, every day I acknowledge that God put Holly in my life. And not only did God put Holly in my life, did God, she gave me two sons. And my two sons gave me two daughters. And my two daughters have given me six grandchildren. And I know that every single one, nobody enjoys his family more than me. When I get home, I'm calling Candice up in Idaho, just say, "How are you doing? I want to hear how you're doing because you're just so precious to me." Because God shalots me because I acknowledge even my family in my relationships.

I even love my lime-green Jeep out there. I remember Livia who's 22 now, but when she was 14, I made a deal with her. She called me sugar. Now, I was given, when Livia was first born, I could decide what the grandkids were going to call me. And one guy's called Bum Bum and Boom Boom and Papa. And I thought, "No, Sir Gramps." I thought that would sound so good. Little kids were running around, "Sir Gramps. Sir Gramps." Well, it came out cigar, so it really turned into sugar. So for the three girls, I'm sugar. For the three boys, I'm Pops. And we're all together I'm ...Sugar Pops.

Sugar Pops. Well, I remember when basically Livia, when she was 14, I said, "Livia, no boys till you're 17, you can have Grandpa's Mini Cooper." I didn't know she was a late pubertal. Didn't even like boys until she was 18. So she got the Mini Cooper. And I remember thinking, "Okay, this is probably my last car. I know what I'm going to get. I'm going to get a Jeep. And I'm going to get a lime Jeep, green Jeep just to irritate people." And I've been told, "Well, you can't love something that doesn't love you back." Oh no, that Jeep loves me back because the seats are right there. And when I get in my Jeep, I don't have to go down and turn around. I just slip right into that seat. That is great. I thank God for my Jeep.

And I have found as I more and more acknowledge all the different things, relationships, people and things that God's put in my bag and I acknowledge they're given to me by the hand of God, he shalots me. He gives me the second part of the gift. He gives me the capacity. He empowers me to extract such enjoyment from all that I have. I'm content. I need nothing more to enjoy my life.

We have pictures in our home of apples. Red, we got a sculpture of an apple core. I mean, it's like it's all been chewed up and you go, "Why would you have a sculpture of an apple core?" It is to remind us of the conveyor belt. Like we stand behind a conveyor belt, and every 24 hours, you get one apple. Now sometimes the apple's red, sometimes it's green, sometimes it's juicy, sometimes it's a little rotten. Sometimes you got to take out your blade and cut out that worm. But every day you get an apple. But we do one of three things. We would look at the apple for today and we go, "Oh man, you should have seen the apple in '67. Boy, back then I was really something and I enjoyed things and I threw for a touchdown. I played tennis and we won the da-da-da-da-da."

But you know what's remarkable about the past? You'll never experience life in the past. It's gone. You can learn from the past, but you can never live it. Same thing. The other thing we do is we look at the apple and we kind of go, "There's got to be a better apple coming. Boy, when I graduate, when I get married, someday when I get that bonus, I'm sure there's going to be a great apple." Meanwhile, as I'm celebrating an apple in '67 or anticipating some better apple coming my way, what happens to this apple right here in front of me? Just goes right by untouched. Untouched. And like I say, he says vanity, vanity, life is hevel, it's vapors.

And the very first thing to learn about enjoyment of life is you can't enjoy it in the future. You can plan for it. You can't enjoy it in the past. You can learn from it. But right now, this moment, we're living life together. It may not be the greatest part of your life, but we're living life together. And that's why when you hug your kids, hold them a little tighter. When you're having a conversation with somebody you really care about, take another five minutes because that moment is when you're experiencing life like perfume. And at that moment is when you acknowledge that what you experience is a gift from the hand of God, he shalots you and you will enjoy that moment just like you're enjoying that apple, take the biggest bite you can.

I've had people say, "You know pastor, can you give me one verse that just simply says, 'This is the will of God.' I just want to do something right today. So give me a verse that says, 'This is the will of God.' You know any verses that says, 'This is the will of God?'"

Sure I do. Here's one, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, "Rejoice always." Verse 17, "Pray without ceasing." It's kind of like having a cough. You can't clear your throat. Keep praying. But then he says in verse 18, "Now in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ," concerning you.

Now, why would God give us an imperative, a command to give thanks in everything? It's because he feels lighted like, "Gabriel, I give these people all the stuff, the very breath to breathe, and nobody ever thanks me for it." And Gabriel says, "I know God. It's so tough being God."

No, that's not God's experience. He's got angels singing holy, holy, holy. God doesn't need our praise. So why does he command us to give thanks? If it's not for him, it's for whom? It's for us, folks.

And why is it for us? Because God knows if you acknowledge and give thanks with gratitude, that is you acknowledge, see what I've given you. Acknowledge from the hand of God and you will find I will shalot, I'll empower you to extract such enjoyment in that moment of life that you'll learn contentment because you'll need nothing more to enjoy, to enjoy your life.

That's why when we come up together and we have such a privilege to have Jason, we joke around each other, but what a joy to have Jason, who would every week faithfully five services. Are you going to do all the Easter services? You're an idiot. But even with that gift of idiocy, whatever that thing is, the fact is to have Jason who will prepare and prepare others, equipping them to do work of ministry. And you know what he does every week, every service? He brings us together so that we acknowledge the greatest gift that has ever been put in our bag. And that

gift is our salvation. That there's a God, his grace, his love is still a mystery to me that he would give his son to experience the wrath of God on the sinfulness of sin.

Why was the cross so ugly? Why couldn't they just like the Romans sever Jesus' head off? There'd be, I assume, less pain. And yet, why? Because you see the ugliness of sin stripped away, and what sin does to an absolute innocent man. And we, we have that same capacity to do the very same thing because we're as much sinners as they were. And yet, how does that make you feel about therefore your forgiveness?

Oh my. I've been asked, "Would you permit somebody to put a spike through your wrists because of your love for somebody?" I would like to think I would, but I don't think so. And Jesus for us, for all of us, to make that provision for our forgiveness, there's nothing greater in my bag than that gift of grace and mercy and forgiveness.

So why is it sometimes we tend to forget our salvation? Not if we're here under the ministry of Jason and we're worshiping because that's what he's doing. He's calling us to acknowledge and to give praise and thanks and keep remembering the greatest gift we've received. And as we are praising, worshiping, receiving it, guess who shalots us so we can extract great appreciation and love and enjoyment of our forgiveness.

That's why it's so good that you're here. Hebrews 9:27 says, "Gather yourself together. Do not do that, which is the habit of some, but stimulate one another in the love and good deeds." That word stimulate speaks of a long pole with a sharp end. It can be translated to irritate. Holly says, that's my gift. But the fact still is when we gather, we remember, we remember, we acknowledge it's from the hand of God, and God shalots us and we walk out of here enjoying our forgiveness, and that motivates us to follow Christ. Amen.

This makes sense because this is number five. I have no more.

Heavenly Father, thank you for an opportunity to share with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, I would pray you would give us wisdom, that our hearts would be gladdened because we would see all the good things that you've packed into our lives. And we wouldn't let them pass by comparing the past or even looking forward to the future, but we would take that apple that's right in front of us and take the biggest bite we can. And in that moment, we will live life moment by moment, acknowledging the gifts that come from your hand. And Lord, thank you that you will shalot us, you'll empower us to extract such enjoyment that we will be a people that indeed joy, your joy in us will be our strength. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, and God's people said. Amen. No. It's thanks, shalot.