

What's Going to Waste?

Proverbs 10:5

Being a dad of two boys, ages seven and four, I am constantly confused by the choices they make. Specifically, what they think is going to impress me.

My oldest came to me the other day, dead serious, and said, "Dad, I think I could fit fifteen dogs in my bed." That was the whole sentence. He just needed me to know that. My youngest finds me, gets this look on his face like he's about to do something incredible, says "Dad, watch this!!" and then, does *something*, and falls directly on his face. And he looks up at me like he just stuck a landing.

I love everything they want to show me. But what they think impresses me and what actually impresses me are two completely different things.

And I think we do the same thing with God.

The things we find significant in life are often things that are insignificant to God.

He is not impressed by...

- How many dogs could fit in your bed
- Your vertical jump
- The performance of your investments
- What car you drive

Psalm 147:5, 10-11 (ESV)

"Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,¹¹ but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love."

(MSG)He's not impressed with horsepower; the size of our muscles means little to him."

The opposite is also true. What we consider insignificant God often treats as deeply significant. One thing I keep learning is that God cares about how we greet one another. He cares about how we say hello. What seems like a throwaway moment to us might be the most important moment in somebody's week.

There is more opportunity around us than we can imagine, if we will just learn to see things the way God sees them.

That is what this text is about. Let me read it to you.

Proverbs 10:5 (ESV)

"He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame."

And then this same verse in The Message reads like this:

Proverbs 10:5 (MSG)

"Make hay while the sun shines -- that's smart; go fishing during harvest -- that's stupid."

There are two sons here. Same family. Same season. Same opportunity. And they end up in completely different places. One understood the significance of the moment. The other missed it entirely.

For a church in transition, it can be easy to miss the opportunity of the current season.

So, this morning I want to give us three warnings from this text. Three things I don't want to be true of any of us when this season is over.

Don't sleep. Don't shrink. Don't waste.

Point 1: Don't Sleep

When I was a youth pastor, I used to tell my students every spring: don't waste your summer. I would use Proverbs 10:5 at the end of every school year. Summer is not just for sleeping in and scrolling your phone. Find rest, yes. But don't miss what this season holds. I am passionate about this because I almost missed it myself!

The summer after I graduated, I had an opportunity to go to Red Cloud, Colorado for a summer camp ministry. And I almost didn't go. I had just finished four years of high school and I wanted one more summer with my friends. I could see everything I would be giving up. I couldn't see anything I would be gaining.

But I went.

I am still close with the people I spent one hundred days with in Colorado that summer. I saw teenagers come to faith. I counseled kids navigating some of the messiest home situations I have ever heard of. I laid a foundation for ministry that summer that led directly to where I am standing right now.

And most of the people I was so desperate to stay home for? I barely talk to any of them.

WHERE WE SEE WASTE, GOD SEES OPPORTUNITY

I think we can make the mistake of reading Proverbs 10:5 as a simple contrast between a hardworking son and a lazy one. There is certainly something to that. But I believe this proverb has far more to do with the ability to recognize and rightly value our opportunities than it does with work ethic alone.

One son understood the significance of the specific season. The other one didn't. The sleeping son wasn't necessarily evil. He was

just unaware. He slept through something that would not come back around.

Adrian Rogers used to say it this way: "God has harvest times. But harvest times don't last forever." The opportunity to gather is always seasonal. And a sleeping son doesn't lose his sonship. He loses the moment.

Jesus used harvest language when he looked at the crowds:

Matthew 9:36-38 (ESV)

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

Jesus looked at the same crowd everybody else looked at and He saw something completely different. Everyone saw a crowd. Jesus saw a harvest. Jesus saw an opportunity that was ripening and needed workers **now**.

HOW MANY SPIRITUAL OPPORTUNITIES HAVE WE LET GO TO WASTE BECAUSE WE LET OUR FAITH FALL ASLEEP?

Vance Havner, an old Southern Baptist preacher, said, "Too many are willing to sit at God's table, but not work in his field." We want the blessing of the harvest season without the labor that the harvest requires. We want to be fed without being workers.

God does not allow any season or location He has placed you in to go to waste. There is a harvest in every season. There are people who need to see Christ in you right now. You may not be on the path you thought you'd be on. You may feel like you're in a holding pattern.

But God **WILL NOT** follow your roadmap. He has a better one. The question is whether you are awake enough to see what He is doing.

Don't sleep through the season waiting for a "better" one.

Point 2: Don't Shrink

I want to ask you something honest. Is there anyone here who would say the last few years were the best years of your life?

If we're being truthful with each other, many of us are still recovering from seasons of real loss. Lost loved ones. Lost jobs. Lost relationships. Political unrest. Financial instability. Broken marriages and broken dreams. And for a lot of us, the world just feels more uncertain than it used to.

I remember standing in a grocery store during the Covid years, looking at empty shelves. The bread aisle was bare. No meat. And something inside me just stopped. One question landed on me like a weight: What kind of world is my son going to grow up in? I stood there frozen.

I did not realize until that moment how much of my sense of security was tied to fully stocked shelves. It sounds almost ridiculous when I say it out loud. But that is how fear works. It finds your anchor point and it pulls it up. It can take a grown man and reduce him to panic over bread.

In the middle of a crisis, the things that become clearest to us are the things that are threatening us. And that is actually a gift. God wired us to recognize danger. But sometimes the greatest source of stress in our lives comes not from what is actually happening, but from what we are imagining might happen.

The fear grows bigger than the actual threat.

But sometimes the danger is very real and very present.

Matthew 8:23-27 (ESV)

"And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing.' And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'"

You need to understand what just happened before Jesus got in that boat. He had healed a man with leprosy. He had healed the servant of a Roman centurion without even being present in the room. He had healed Peter's mother-in-law. He had cast demons out of men. He had healed every kind of sickness that was brought to Him.

And then He gets in the boat. Right there with them. And they still panic.

I want you to picture two figures. One of them represents Jesus. The other one represents all the problems of your life. When the problems make the most noise, they move closer. They take up more and more space. And Jesus gets pushed further and further to the margin.

That is not because Jesus moved. He didn't. He was in the boat the whole time. The disciples repositioned everything around their fear.

WHATEVER POWER IS MOST EVIDENT IN YOUR LIFE WILL TAKE POSITIONAL AUTHORITY IN THE BATTLE FOR YOUR PEACE AND JOY

The disciples' shame was not that they were afraid of the storm. The shame was that they forgot who was in the boat.

Instead of standing firm and saying, "He was faithful before and He will be faithful now," our first instinct when we finally wake our faith up is to mimic the disciples and start complaining. "Don't you care that we are about to die?!" We skip right past trust and land on accusation.

And I get it. Because I have done it. When the storm is real and the boat is filling up with water, it is hard to think about doctrine. It is hard to remember what you know. Fear does not shrink in the presence of information. Fear shrinks in the presence of a Person.

We get caught in this cycle. We see Jesus at work. We forget what He did. Life hits us. We run back to Him in desperation. And all the while He was right there.

Remember what Psalm 147 said, FEAR the lord and HOPE in his steadfast love.

He is with you the whole time.

When you start partnering with Jesus in the trial instead of panicking away from Him, the storm may not die down. But something else happens. You get the assurance that the One who is with you is greater than whatever is set against you. You stop shrinking in the presence of the storm because you are standing next to the One who commands it.

And then something even better begins. Not only will Christ give you peace in the trial, He will begin to show you the opportunity inside the adversity. He will show you that this storm has a

purpose, and He is using it for something good. But you have to stay close enough to hear Him say it.

If you don't want to balk at the opportunity of the season when FEAR hits you, you must stay close to Jesus and remember that He is with you!

Don't shrink back from the season!

Point 3: Don't Waste

You may be in a season right now that feels like it has wasted your time, your potential, your development. A job that didn't work out the way you planned. A relationship that ended. Years that feel like they were stolen from you. The enemy is going to try to get you focused on everything that went wrong, because as long as you are looking backward at the loss, you cannot see forward at what God is building.

Hear me on this. God does not waste a season. Not one of them. He redeems what He allows.

Vance Havner wrote: "God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume." What looks like waste from where we stand is often raw material in the hands of God.

God has never wasted a season in the life of a believer. Not yours either. We have certainly wasted God's opportunities, but He has never wasted a moment of your life.

I want to take you to the moment in history that to some looked like the greatest waste of all.

When Jesus was crucified, there were people standing at the foot of that cross who had seen Him multiply fish and bread for thousands of people. They had seen blind men receive their sight. They had seen dead people walk out of tombs. They had watched Him stand up to the most powerful religious institution in the nation. They thought He was on His way to liberating all of Israel from Rome.

And then they watched Him bleed. And suffer. And die.

And I think many of them looked at that cross and thought exactly what the enemy wanted them to think.

WHAT A WASTE

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

"...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

The trial was not joyful. The text says He endured it. He saw it for what it was. He felt every bit of the pain. He despised the shame. But the joy of what was coming was greater than the agony of the present moment.

That joy is you. It is the harvest of salvation that was made possible by what He did. He was not wasting His life on that cross. He was spending it. For you.

We need to be reminded that God sees you as significant. Not because of what you have accomplished or earned. Not because of your performance or your record. Because of how He feels about you. Your significance comes from God, not from anything you can produce.

The minute my first son was born, I loved him. He had done nothing to earn it. I cannot overstate how much I loved him. That

love was not conditional on what he was going to become. It was just there. From the first moment.

Isaiah 64:6 (ESV)

"We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

"...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

There is hope for every one of us in this room.

You may be in a place right now where you keep failing. Where you keep coming back to the same sin. Where you feel like you have exhausted every chance you are going to get. You need to hear this:

JESUS DID NOT WASTE HIS BLOOD ON YOU. HE LOVES YOU TODAY AND WOULD DIE FOR YOU STILL.

You may feel like a season of your life has gone to waste. Maybe you feel like the last few years were lost and you can't get them back. God does not see it that way. Everything He allows, He redeems. He doesn't recycle -- He restores. He doesn't patch -- He renews.

God never wastes a season. Don't waste this opportunity to give Him your life.

Don't waste today.

CHALLENGE

Don't sleep. Open your eyes to the harvest around you. There are people in your life right now who need to see what Jesus does in a person. Don't sleep through the season God has placed you in.

Don't shrink. Stop letting the size of the storm reposition Jesus in your life. He is in the boat the whole time. Partner with Him in the trial. His presence in the storm is greater than the storm itself.

Don't waste. Don't let what feels lost become a reason to disengage from what God is still doing. He redeems what He allows. Give Him what you've been holding onto and let Him show you what He can do with it.

Summer is here. A new season is ahead. Don't waste this moment.