

# 11/22/20 - Ruth 3 - "The Eleventh-Hour"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's go into the Word today in Ruth, Ruth 3. And thank you, Ben, for reading the Word of the Lord. And today's sermon is titled, The Eleventh Hour.

I believe that many of us in this life will experience various instances of what we know as the eleventh hour moments, moments of having just that one final move, weighing in the balance, that one final act that could determine a drastic result, particular result, the final, the eleventh hour.

If you're a basketball fan, you might recall back in 1989, if you were alive then, I was, I think, in a jumper at that time. But I know the highlight reels from the NBA.

A. And back in 1989, many might recall Michael Jordan's infamous shot, known as the shot, when Cleveland played against the Indiana Pacers.

And Cleveland was up by one point at 100 points. Chicago was down by 99. With only three seconds left, the ball gets passed into Michael Jordan.

[ 1 : 20 ] And he takes a few dribbles to the left and sinks a floating two-pointer from the foul line to take the lead in the game within three seconds left.

More recently, you might recall LeBron James in 2018 in Game 5, where Cleveland had another shot in Game 5, where LeBron obtains almost a similar fashion, but the game was tied at 95.

And he receives the ball in, and not only does he sink one, he sinks a floating three-pointer from about the top of the arc.

He sunk that with three seconds left to go. It's moments like these, church, that keep us at the edge of our seats. It's those moments that keep us wanting more, that keeps us coming back.

It's often moments like these that are 11th hour moments that we experience a cacophony of emotions, of fear and faith, of hope and doubt.

[ 2 : 31 ] And furthermore, I think it is safe to say that when these 11th hour moments come, it truly exposes the best and the worst of personality types, right?

So, for instance, the pessimist might dismiss any need of urgency. The pessimist may accept defeat preemptively of saying, why try?

You know, there's three seconds left. I've been missing my three, so just, you know, we'll give it to someone else. We'll see what happens. For the optimist, in these 11th hour moments, they may minimize immediate need for action, saying, well, there's always next year, like the Browns infamous slogan, right?

There's always next year. In hope of tomorrow. But the realist, the realist upholds that urgency, uses that urgency, and that responsibility that weighs on man's behalf in a healthy fear and a healthy hope, the proper perspective.

So, for a student waiting 10 weeks to type that 20-page paper the night before, you know, those nights, the pessimist might say, well, you know, I'm going to flunk this anyhow.

[ 3 : 47 ] There's no way I'm going to be able to do this. So much research to put together. The optimist might be like, well, I might do half of it. But the realist really captivates upon the implications of their laziness and possibly procrastination, waiting till that 11th hour to get this big paper done.

You see it in work, getting late to work. Sometimes that final strike that's weighing over your head because you've been late two other times, and that third strike just looming as you just slept in again.

The pessimist might just stay home and maybe make a coffee and make some eggs. Yes, the optimist might say, well, maybe they'll be gracious to me. But the pessimist or the realist in that situation is the one who is shaking on the way to work, knowing that, man, they have slept in for a third time.

There's all sorts of situations in life that we experience that 11th hour moment. And it is interesting how those moments can truly expose the best and the worst of personality types.

And it is through the 11th hour moments that man is reckoned with the balanced hope and fear in the great providence of God, as he has every detail laid out.

[ 5 : 05 ] And as we get into the text today, we find Naomi and Ruth in an 11th hour moment, don't we? It's the end of the barley harvest. Everything's wrapping up.

That means that for these two women, the food will be limited in supply. No more food provision from Boaz's food fields.

And there's a plausible situation here that their feast may turn to famine once again. Let's turn to the Lord in prayer right now as we get into his word.

But I want us to ask ourselves throughout the passage today, I want us to ask ourselves, how do we worshipfully participate in God's providence to bring God glory?

Thinking of when the 11th hour come, do we realistically understand the weight of our obedience or disobedience?

[ 6 : 17 ] Or are we incredulous to our call to action as we respond in passivity? I believe after today, we will understand that our participation in light of God's providence should bring a healthy and reverent fear to act.

Let's pray as we go into the word and look at this. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this gathering and for everyone joined on the live stream.

We pray that they are able to focus on the message today, that they are indeed writing notes. They have notebooks open. They are focused, that they have undivided attention to the Lord's word today, to your holy and perfect words.

So, Father, we pray at this time, help us as we gather around this word, that this is not anything, meaning this isn't anything just words on a page, of print, of text on white pages.

This is your living and breathing word. As we turn to your word right now, let us recognize that. That as we turn to your word, we can analyze, we can take the principles of your word, we can take the reflections within your word and look at our life and to evaluate our life along the measuring stick of your word alone, not by cultural standards and compromises, but your holy, absolute, perfect word.

[ 7 : 49 ] Help us in this endeavor today. Help me to proclaim boldly. And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. The first section that we're going to be seeing here is going to be asking, what will Ruth do?

Verse 1 says, Then Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, and it may be well with you?

Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you serve? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. This passage seems to set up a new scene in which Naomi is obviously old.

She's past the years of being able to bear a child and still having maybe some subtle resentment over Ruth's devotion, feeling responsible because Ruth is following her and she can't get Ruth to go and find another man.

Don't follow her. Just let her die alone. Still feeling that resentment. This young woman will not, at this moment, will not wed and will not bear children.

[ 9 : 02 ] And we see that in verse 1, seeking rest. Obviously, she is still feeling that weight of being responsible for the whole situation surrounding their plight. And this new scene also contains great content and context that we are severely ignorant to regarding customs and practices during this time, as opposed to what we experience today.

We're going to look at that in a couple different contexts. We're going to talk about the elephant in the room in just a moment, too, of what's going on in this passage. But we will try to familiar ourselves shortly.

But however, don't you feel, before we go into the next section of passage, within these three, these couple verses here, don't you feel the sense of urgency that the ball is in their court?

It's the end of the barley harvest. They're looking at possibly starving. They're looking at possibly Ruth not having another opportunity for tomorrow.

For Naomi and Ruth, their resources are severely depleting. The future is beginning to look, indeed, like another famine for them. Church, we need to understand that this is a real circumstance.

[ 10 : 18 ] This has real complications of not responding wisely and timely according to God's providence.

This is a situation where the pessimist may falter and the optimist may sit back and relax and rest. But the realist captivates their mind and their hearts and their actions upon the urgency to plan wisely, timely, and accordingly.

So Naomi springs to action. Boaz! Let's just not sit and see what happens to us through the summer. Let's not just optimistically think that something else is going to come.

Let's seize the moment that is at hand right now to act. We must try something, Ruth. Right?

I want you to feel that tension in the passage as we go into verse 3. Verse 3 through 4, we see the plan unfold. Boaz is winnowing barley in the passage.

[ 11 : 27 ] Naomi instructs her to go. Get dressed in some normal clothes. Maybe smell good. Anoint yourself with oil. Take a jacket with you and go.

Wait until after he's done laboring and celebrating. And find him where he lays at night and cover his feet and lie down. Culturally symbolic of a proposal, which we'll explain here in a moment.

And wait for Boaz's instruction. This is huge, church, because just as the Lord directs our steps, as we make our plans and the Lord directs our steps, doesn't mean that man is released from the responsibility to plan and act at times.

And verse 5 indicates that she obediently responds to her mother-in-law's instruction and plan. Ruth prepares herself accordingly, and she arrives in verse 6 at the threshing floor.

The threshing floor is an interesting location. It reminds me of something. That Canfield Fair just keeps getting stuck in my head. A few weeks ago, we talked about the Canfield Fair and the Feast of Boots in the Gospel of John.

[ 12 : 41 ] But this also brings an imagery of the Canfield Fair. Maybe I just missed the Canfield Fair since they didn't have it this year. That might be the case. But the threshing floor is a large open area.

It's a hard-surfaced area. Threshing was loosening the grain from the straw. And winnowing was this exciting endeavor of throwing the grain into the air and separating the wheat from the chaff after it's being threshed.

And the wind would carry away that chaff as being useless. And it would carry it away, and the grain being more dense than the chaff would fall to the ground, and they would harvest that.

And I would imagine that this would be pretty fun, right? I think this would be kind of fun, but probably dirty. This would probably be a dirty thing, probably dusty, probably laborious activity.

But a time which marks the end of the barley harvest. I like to think of when we're done with laundry at our house, we're just like, laundry that we need to fold. Let's just throw it away, and we'll fold it another day.

[ 13 : 42 ] This is what winnowing sort of reminds us of, those times where we throw things up in the air and just how fun that can be. This is a celebratory time at the end of the barley harvest.

Obviously, you could imagine being in this context, in this culture at this time, being an Israelite, being a nation at Bethlehem and Judah.

You could imagine even having the opportunity to thresh, having this opportunity of winnowing. They just came out of a famine.

This would be a time of great celebration, right? After experiencing the famine of God, but also in experiencing and harvesting that, it needs to be protected.

All that God has benevolently provided through his hand. And so the first part of verse 7, we see this celebratory feast take place. And Boaz clearly celebrated like any of us might.

[ 14 : 48 ] You know, go out for some food and drinks, right? Enjoy in Thanksgiving. People are going to be doing this in just a couple days at Thanksgiving. Hopefully within the government's parameters.

And following those instructions. Lest you have to whine, show up to your Thanksgiving meal. Shame, shame. And that is how I read Boaz in this passage.

I don't read him as being this drunk fool. Up to this point in the passage, he hasn't even been painted as that kind of person. This is a man of valor.

He is simply merry. He is happy. He is joyful. Just like any of us might be as we experience this opportunity to thresh.

But he might also, he would also need to be alert through the night to protect the grain from theft. And that is exactly why he goes and lays. To protect and keep watch over the harvest from his fields.

[ 15 : 49 ] And so, it is this 11th hour that Boaz is out on the threshing floor, winnowing, throwing stuff, getting all dusty, dirty, celebrating with his friends.

And then finally, as the night concludes, he lies down and Ruth enters into the narrative. It's the 11th hour. Boaz has undivided attention to offer to Ruth.

Before he was distracted with labor. The other part, he was distracted and celebrating. Nobody wants to go and talk about something serious as being a redeemer during all of that. So, what she did was wait till she had undivided attention.

And that only happened when he laid down to rest. And so, if you could imagine being in Ruth's shoes, this would be a time of risk.

This is a time of uncertainty. I believe that in her realistic perspective of this situation, she moved in with great fear, as we'll see in this passage.

[ 16 : 55 ] And also, great hope. So, let's look at section two here. Because everything weighs in the balance of one question of what will Boaz do.

Let's read in verse eight as it continues. Then Boaz said, and so when the redeemer said to Boaz, oh, wait. That's chapter four.

We'll wait for next week for that one. I'm like, this doesn't sound familiar. Verse eight of chapter three. At midnight. There we go. The man was startled and turned over.

And behold, a woman lay at his feet. He said, who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant.

For you are a redeemer. And he said to her, may you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first.

[ 17 : 56 ] And that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask. For all my fellow townsmen know that you're a worthy woman.

Let's just take care of the elephant in the room for a moment. Because much of this passage brings in suggestive imagination of what is actually going on.

We got this man's feet being uncovered. Ruth's laying down with him. It's late at night. What is going on in this passage? I want to highlight something within this passage.

And it's called context. Based upon literary context of this passage, I am not convinced that anything immoral occurred during this time. And two reasons. And we'll observe some other reasons as the passage continues within its context.

But if you really do want sexually explicit activity occurring, next week is going to be a sermon to pay attention to. You will see in verse 12 or verse 13 of chapter 4.

[ 19 : 13 ] If you want sexual activity, go to that verse. For some reason, it is not specifically addressed and communicated in this passage. The author doesn't explicitly state it here because I don't believe that's what's being done right here.

Also, this type of sexual opportunity does not match the reputation of a man of valor that describes Boaz up to this point. The man who shows up to his fields and his workers.

He says, Lord be with you. This great man of valor who celebrates, who's a respectable man, whose name means in him is strength.

It just doesn't match up. To read that within this context, it would be odd for this to mean a sexual immoral activity. So what do we look at next? We look at culture.

We see that maybe something happens in here that maybe the author is trying to trick us with. Maybe this is something that is culturally relevant in this day.

[ 20 : 14 ] And I do believe the author has created enough room for our imagination today and the original audience to go wild. In the possibility, what's going on here?

Uncovering feet? Bad people, you. It leaves that opportunity for imagination to run rampant. To leave us as the audience biting our fingernails asking, what will Boaz do?

Having this occurrence so closely to the days of the judges, as verse 1, chapter 1 says, the reader may actually be very concerned for Ruth's well-being right now.

To approach a man in this type of situation, I mean, we'd be concerned that poor Ruth is going to get taken advantage of. And it's true for the sexualized culture then, and sadly enough, it's true for our sexualized culture now.

But as we continue, Ruth and Boaz are resting in the coldness of the night with darkness surrounding them.

[ 21 : 22 ] And at midnight in this passage, Boaz becomes startled and turns over. For another reason for, I don't believe that there is any sexual immorality because, you know, I won't get into specifics, but to turn over, you're in the wrong direction.

I don't believe that this passage is specifically stating that. But we need to feel the intensity of this scene, the things that matter in this scene, that fear, that 11th hour moment.

Ruth is truly about to either succeed or fail miserably. Ruth is risking it all. She's laying at Boaz's feet within a cultural meaning.

This is something significant as meaning proposal, to lay at the feet of a man. And what she's doing at this time is intruding. Obviously, I'd be startled at that.

You lay down alone, and all of a sudden, there's something at your feet. And he noticed, he knows exactly what this means because he doesn't ask Ruth, what are you doing?

[ 22 : 24 ] Look in this passage in verse 8. What does he ask her? He knows what she's doing. He knows what this means. She's essentially proposing the opportunity to be redeemed, to be married.

He doesn't ask what she's doing. He asks, who are you? Who is proposing this situation right now? So with all nervousness, with all boldness, this is the last shot.

This is the moment for Ruth. Ruth is laying all the cards out on the table. All hope of redemption or poverty weigh in the balance. And she says in verse 9, I am Ruth, your servant.

Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. This narrative begins to hit its peak intention with everything resting upon what will Boaz do.

Will he take advantage of her like any typical male within the days of the judges? Will he reject her and kick her to the curb for her great humiliation?

[ 23 : 35 ] What will Boaz do? Will Boaz alter the course of his life of arranging marriage with another family fortune, which combines his fortune with another fortune, to have a great fortune, to sacrifice all of that to redeem a family?

Redirecting the course of all the hopes and dreams that his life may have had up to this point, what will Boaz do? Will Boaz be the means of prophetic fulfillment of the very kindness that he spoke of to Ruth in chapter 2, verse 12, which says, The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

As Ruth says, spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. Will Boaz follow through with his own recommendation?

And we see in verse 10, Boaz responds, May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made the last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.

[ 25 : 01 ] Ruth didn't do anything to deserve such favor, such acceptance. To anyone of high status, she is as good as dead to anyone.

Just like the chaff blowing in the wind. She is as good as nothing. She is garbage to other people of high status. But to Boaz, she finds great favor.

To Boaz, Ruth was known to him, and all that have heard about what she has done to mark her as a worthy woman. Truly, Ruth is like that substantive grain that is threshed, that is winnowed and falls to the ground.

That for one man's trash is another man's treasure. She is that harvest at this time, the treasure of the harvest, that grain in this passage.

And here, she is truly the treasure being redeemed by Boaz. Truly, not only did Boaz see beyond the external impoverished state seen by the eye, Ruth's charitability gained favor of all.

[ 26 : 11 ] Her heart was broadcasted because of her benevolence. Truly, Ruth is the woman that Proverbs 31, 30 says.

A worthy woman who can find one whose works praise her in the gates. Often, church, we have to realize once in a while when it is not just our job to delegate, but to take ownership.

Because you see something significant in this passage, right? You see that out of the mouth of the Redeemer came the essence and means of that redemption.

There will come times where we don't just say we will do things or wait for others to do things for us, but according to our participation in God's providence, we need to act once in a while.

What simply comes to mind is those times where you say, yeah, I'll pray for you. Why don't you pray for them now? Or I'll give that to the elders to take care of.

[ 27 : 36 ] What's holding you back from taking care of that? Sometimes out of the mouth of the Redeemer comes the essence of that redemption and provision. Ruth participates in great fear of God's providence.

Boaz participates in great favor in the simple fact that there were apparently other options available for Ruth to go to be brought into redemption. But church, God's providence calls man to action.

Not of a pessimistically defeated man or the fleeting optimism that minimizes the present or future opportunity.

May we fearfully be responsive to God, allowing our reverence for him to alone drive our responsibility to act in accordance with his providential plans.

And Boaz in verse 11 had to quiet this trembling woman. There's nothing that has the power to intensify or relinquish fear than truly realizing the union between God's providence and human responsibility.

[ 28 : 45 ] That's something that should bring us trembled with fear. I believe a text like this has a tendency of evaluating our own lives in the midst of participating in God's providence.

For the Christian, might we become sensitive to God's leading as it calls us to act and not just delegate to other people.

How often we become expert excuse bearers and we remain settled and nestled in our own safe spaces in life. Church, may we be better known for making excuses to participate rather than making excuses for absence.

May we be making excuses for our absence. Ruth had every reason to not do what Naomi inclined her to do.

And so it is for us. And if you're not in Christ, if you are a non-Christian, I don't believe it takes an expert to know that life can turn poorly within a moment's notice.

[ 29 : 49 ] Plans that you might have for the future. Dreams of having your life depicted in some sort of standard that the world considers honorable.

Maybe expectations of your savings accounts or maybe the goals that you have. And within a moment's notice, everything can turn completely south.

May a message like this not pass you by once again without coming to Jesus Christ and seizing the moment and opportunity to do so.

Trusting in him alone through faith. There's nothing more fearful than to be on the unforgiving end of God's providence. That should bring you to great fear and trembling.

And as this chapter and narrative begins to bring some resolution, there is a glimmer of hope in all of this. And we see in this last section, what will Naomi do?

[ 30 : 51 ] And we see in verse 12, before the attention is turned to Naomi, as it sort of transitions and comes to a close. We see in verse 12, we see in verse 12, that Boaz is in agreement of being the family redeemer, just as Naomi predicted in the 11th hour at home before this day began.

And now this is something known as redeemer and things like that, that is very culturally bound to this time. Boaz is one of their relatives and actually a redeemer for their family.

The Hebrew word goel is best rendered in the Old Testament, non-soteriologically, as benefactor or the guardian of the family interests.

I like to think of it somewhere along the lines of some legal status of the power of attorney or something along those lines. But this term has immediate legal context known as the law of redemption in Leviticus 25.

This is the preservation, the redemption from slavery, redemption of property, and redemption of family name. And so this is exactly what Boaz is doing for Ruth in this moment, restoring this family name.

[ 32 : 10 ] And now there's some minor tension in the passage still, because now according to verse 13, it reinforces the parameters within Leviticus 25, seen in verse 47 through 49, that there is a closer kinsman than Boaz.

Meaning that Boaz could jump on this opportunity, no one would know, maybe. And that he could be disobedient to the law of the Lord. Another point that reinforces his godly valor character, that he did not sleep with Naomi, nor get drunk in his merriness at the celebration.

But it reinforces the parameters of the law of God, seen in Leviticus 25. Meaning that there's a certain order that this must be done. We don't know exactly the details of that order, but we know that Boaz consciously knows that he cannot follow the law of God and allow this to take place without first seeing someone else.

There's someone else who holds the right to redeeming Naomi through acceptance or refusal. And this is interesting, isn't it? Boaz is in complete devotion to the law of God.

He is a godly man, and now he has begun to assume the role of leading his prospective future wife in obedience to the law of God as well.

[ 33 : 28 ] Truly, any honorable Christian husband's duty. And we see throughout the verses 14 through 18, she stayed with Boaz until morning and has her unnoticed to preserve her worthy woman's status.

She doesn't, the last thing she'd want to do is get caught waking up next to Boaz. Then in a parting gift of grain as a token and symbol of that promise, similar to an engagement ring.

She returns to Naomi, hands full in verse 17, in prophetic hope of the fruit to come through all of this, through this redemption. And Naomi responds in great optimism, knowing to wait.

She gives no indication that she has any doubt. She says in verse 18, Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.

All resources exhausted. Everything rests in Boaz's hands. The narrative today is placed on hold with great anticipation of what comes next, and we'll see that next week.



[ 34 : 37 ] But it's still gripping us on the edge of our seat of how it will all turn out. As we survey our lives in the great scheme, the grand scheme of God's providence, do we actually believe that our responsiveness amounts to anything?

Or do we feel awfully small in the midst of a big God and little us? Does that ever make us to believe that our responsiveness amounts to anything?

That we might have reason to just pass things off and say it doesn't matter anyway in a pessimistic manner? Or thinking maybe too big of God and God's grace and saying, Well, another opportunity might lay ahead.

When the eleventh hour comes, do we realistically understand the weight of our obedience or our disobedience? Or are we incredulous to our call to activity as we respond with passivity?

Maybe another opportunity. I gave you an opening challenge before we began. I asked you, how do we worshipfully participate in God's providence to bring God glory?

[ 35 : 57 ] We ought to be warned and be left in similar tension that we draw out of the passage today. The tension we experience when we are left in the pending nature of uncertainty in the midst of God's grand plan.

When the church is faced in circumstances of one another, when someone else is in need, I believe that the church is called to act very swiftly.

This is the grace that we have received very swiftly, and that is what we reciprocate to one another's need. It is the law of God which paved the way for Boaz's great charitable actions toward Ruth.

Likewise, it should be the same compelling law of God that we find in the gospel, which leads us to be a church which acts very swiftly in benevolence towards one another's lack.

This is benevolence in all things, from our resources and even to our relationships. Christianity is not about hoarding. The storyline of the Bible is a narrative of man's rebellion against God, and God's still working things out for good.

[ 37 : 09 ] Amen? Like, yeah, we're going to mess up and everything. Amen. However, don't move so quickly to comforts. However, this does not alleviate the stark reality of our responsibility within that perspective, within that narrative that God is working out for good.

I don't know about you, but I'd rather my life be marked in immediate kindness, immediate charitability towards another, rather than justifying selfishness of reasons why I shouldn't act in a certain scenario.

The call of the gospel is one that is laid in Scripture, which cares unconditionally, charitably, just as Christ has acted charitably towards us.

It should be the same gospel which compels the community of God to a life of service toward another, not ourselves. How many of us might instead be prone to passivity?

Risking a reputation in heaven of a life on earth in disobedient error when God is actually calling you to be a solution. For example, how would you like to be recognized when you get to the gates of heaven?

[ 38 : 31 ] How would you like to be recognized when you get to meet Jesus face to face?

And I want you to listen, church. By not acting when God is calling you to act. This is the attitude of idolatry, which declares war against the character and nature of God and is sorrowfully the source where all rebellion originates.

Similar to fatalism. Fatalism is the disposition that abuses the doctrine of God's sovereignty. In exchange for human convenience, I call it laziness.

Fatalism. The disposition that abuses the doctrine of God's sovereignty. Pulling the God of sovereign card and I get to sit here and not act. And if somebody else can do it, somebody else will work it out.

Fatalism is indeed the epitome of Christian immaturity. That identifies obedience to God as optional. And disobedience as justifiable. This, brother and sister, is the heart of idolatry.

[ 39 : 51 ] Friends, if you're alive to hear this message, some of you might be sleeping today, and I understand. Every waking moment for us should be what it was to Naomi and Ruth.

Eleventh hour moments. I believe it was eleventh hour Christian living that led to the first great awakening. And the numerous revivals that came there forth.

Question is, are we living eleventh hour Christianity? If not, might that be the stem of complacency that you sense in your walk with God?

Consider the pessimist and the optimist in looking upon the days and hours of life. Life is valuable. Time isn't guaranteed. We are not promised tomorrow. So how is God calling you, church, to obedience?

If you're a Christian joined with us today as we come to our closing time today, I'd like you to consider the words in James 4, verse 13 and on.

[ 40 : 59 ] It says, Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow, we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit.

Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that. As it is, you boast in your arrogance.

All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

So if you are in Christ today and you're feeling that sense of pressure, of maybe being a little bit too pessimistic in light of God's providence, or maybe being too optimistic in the light of God's providence, rather than feeling that tension when circumstances occur, when you should be acting, but you fail to act, this is a call to repent of that.

[ 42 : 15 ] And many of us may need to do that repenting this morning. If you're not in Christ, don't let another moment pass you by. Because a moment apart from Christ today could lead to an eternity in hell tomorrow.

You're not promised even the next couple seconds in this life. Take your next breath, therefore, and call upon the name of Jesus to save you and surrender your whole life to him.

And come talk to me after the service if this is you doing so. We open with the challenge. How do we worshipfully participate in God's providence to bring God glory?

Well, we make excuses for activity, not passivity. We live 11th hour Christianity. Let's pray. Let's pray.