

Ecclesiastes 11: 3 and 4; “He who Observes the Wind”, Message # 75 in the series – “Remember your Creator”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on July 11th, 2012, at the Rendall Home.

In our last study we saw that “casting your bread upon the waters” meant two things. It means, for the Christian, that you should give out of your literal bread, your earthly supply of bread (food, resources, money), to those who are in need around you. And you should give of your spiritual bread, which is the truth of the word of God, to needy people around you, that they might be saved and strengthened in their faith. The reason for this he states; “For you do not know what evil will be upon the earth”. In other words, you do not know what will happen in the future; what might happen to your health and strength, or what outside forces and situations might prevent you from doing good again. God, and all godly people would agree; do it now while you have the ability. Solomon now amplifies upon this principle of godly giving. He gives us illustrations, both physical and spiritual, because he wants us to do good to people around us in order that we might prosper and strengthen the kingdom of God. Each of us needs to think about whether we are putting these principles into practice. And so I will word the points that I will make in that first person so that you will consider your own heart and life. In verses 3 and 4, Solomon is showing me 1st – The principle of emptying myself upon others around me. 2nd – He is showing me the principle of thinking about myself as a tree, and where I will eventually fall and lie. And 3^{rdly} – He is showing me the principle of not observing the wind or the clouds; those things which might make me think that I should not go out to sow, or expect to reap.

1st – The Principle of emptying myself upon others around me.

“If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth...” The clouds, here mentioned, which are full of rain, represent persons who have been given much. The “earth” is a word picture which represents the many needy people who are around us. And, as such, Christians ought of themselves, to give of their abundance, pouring it out upon others around them. It doesn’t mean that you should be burning yourself out for others, but rather that you would be giving of what you have been given to help others. There are those Christians who are full of earthly wealth and have been given many earthly blessings. And there are those Christians who have been given great spiritual wealth as well. They have been given so many spiritual blessings, they ought to give of what they have to help others. You will very rarely see a full dark cloud that will not do so, and if you do see it withhold its rain, you wonder about it. Lately, around here, you have seen it do this very thing. Dark clouds will come up, but there is no rain given. I believe that it is an indication that God is not pleased with us. If God is pleased with a

people He will give them rain in its season. If He is not, He will withhold it. Look at Amos Chapter 4, verse 7. “I also withheld rain from you, when there were still three months to the harvest.” “I made rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city.” “One part was rained upon, and where it did not rain the part withered.” “So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, but they were not satisfied; yet you have not returned to Me, says the Lord.” You can see here the reason that God withheld the rain, can’t you? It was so those who had been sinfully straying and wandering away would return to God. It was so that they might see who the source of all blessings is. God has now been withholding rain from us here in Tama, three months from the harvest, and still we do not return to him. They think that mother nature gives rain rather than God, and they wonder why He is offended. No, it is God who gives us every blessing that we have, and the satisfaction also to drink from the rain that He gives to others.

You and I, as believers are being compared to clouds which are full of the rain of God’s blessings. Turn with me over to John 1, verse 16. “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Each Christian has received of the fullness of Christ’s grace, and because of it, they should desire to use what they have, pouring it out in service to their precious Savior. Turn over with me to Job Chapter 29, verse 21, and you will see that Job was one of those who had been given great spiritual wisdom from God to give to others. He was indeed a cloud full of God’s blessings. “Men listened to me and waited, and kept silence for my counsel.” “After my words they did not speak again, and my speech settled on them as dew.” “They waited for me as for the rain, and they opened their mouth wide as for the spring rain.” This was God’s blessing to Job and to them. He was the cloud full of the rain of God’s wisdom. And they looked to him to be given wise counsel. What a blessing godly men are to a church and to a nation. They are clouds full of rain that empty themselves upon the earth. But ungodly men and false teachers are described in Jude 12 in this way: “These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.” “They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” What should we do if we find that we are in drought conditions, either in our community, or in our soul? Well 2 Chronicles 7: 13 tells us. “When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” The way that our land will be healed in our day is when godly men, men who hold to the Scriptures, are raised up to “water” the souls of many people. And we can help our own land when the gifts and resources that God has given to us, are not all being selfishly used on ourselves, but being used in Christ’s service to help others in

need. Proverbs 11: 25 – “The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.”

2nd – Solomon is showing me the principle of thinking about myself as a tree, and where I will eventually fall and lie.

“And if a tree falls to the south or the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.” If the “clouds” mentioned in this verse are a reference to people, then we can also reasonably conclude that “a tree” which falls to the south or the north is also a reference to a person. In the Bible, people are often compared to trees. Psalm 1, verse 3 – “He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” Psalm 37: 35 – “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree.” “Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more.” The tree falling to the north or to the south, I believe, refers to the spiritual condition of the person when they die. When a tree falls, it is certainly dead at that time. The direction that it falls is important, because “there it will lie”. Look over at Isaiah Chapter 14, verse 13. Speaking of the king of Babylon who was influenced by the same spirit as Lucifer had when he fell, which was pride; it says – “For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” “Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.” “Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?’” “All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, everyone in his own house; but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch,...” In other words where the tree fell, it will lie. The king of Babylon was a bad tree. He died in his pride and was cast out as an abominable branch. His tree fell to the north because he wanted to sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north, and be like God; and he died in that damnable state without ever having been humbled or repenting over his sins.

Jesus says in Matthew 12: 33 – “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. He is speaking of all people. All people are either bad trees, because of their sins, or they are good trees because they have believed in Jesus Christ and have repented of their sins. They have come to Christ for grace. There is a good example of this in the Old Testament book of Daniel. In Daniel 4: 13 we find Nebuchadnezzar say this. “I saw in the visions of my head while on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven.” “He cried aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.’” Nebuchadnezzar did not know what this meant and Daniel had to explain it to him. Look at verse 20. “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong

whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen by all the earth, whose leaves were lovely and its fruit abundant, in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.” So, you see, it was the king himself who was going to be cut down to the ground for a time, in terms of his kingly power. And after that time, he would come back again into his kingdom and power, when he had learned the lesson not to be proud. But God does not teach these kind of merciful lessons except to those whom He is going to have saving mercy upon. His tree fell to the south rather than the north. Verse 34 says, “And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation.” “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.” “No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

And 3rdly – Solomon is showing me the principle of not observing the wind or the clouds; those things which might make me think that I should not go out to sow, or expect to reap. (verse 4)

“He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.” The wind would be a legitimate obstacle to sowing of seed. The seed might be cast from the hand, and not land where it should, to be planted correctly. But in this particular verse it means that if I take notice of all the difficulties that might exist in regard to my sowing and reaping, I will never get the job done at all. So it is with anything good that we desire to do for Christ’s cause and kingdom. If you simply look at the adversity or the difficulty of doing a good work, or of sowing the seed of the word of God, then you will neither sow nor reap. We will look more in depth at these things in our next study. But now, in closing, let us look at Psalm 126. “When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream.” “Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.” “Then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’” “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.” “Bring back our captivity O Lord, as the streams in the South.” “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.” “He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” The Lord brought back the captivity of Zion when Cyrus the Persian king decided to let the Jews go back to their homeland and build their temple once again. He was a heathen king, and yet the Lord moved in his heart to do this thing. It brought them to joy and laughter over what an extraordinary providence it was. The Lord had done great things for them. Similarly, for the Christian, he has been brought out of his captivity to sin through the sufferings of his Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of

Kings and Lord of Lords. He sowed His life as a seed in the ground in His death, and has reaped a great harvest. Even so, Christians should see that their prayers and their tears and their labors to sow the seed of the word of God and doing good works for their Master will doubtless bear fruit in the coming day when the Lord will return. In the day of the resurrection Christ will come again and bring all of his saints with Him; the sheaves of His righteous labors and sufferings. And when He returns those believers who have sown in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. Those who have sown to righteousness and those who have sown the word of God, shall have something very tangible to show for it. It shall be revealed in that day, what the labors of each Christian were, and those labors shall be rewarded by our Lord Himself. Let us all work toward that great Day, with our eye fixed on Jesus and the eternal reward of serving Him here and now.