

The Herd, The Hunter, & The Healer

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[0:00] Well, good morning. Good morning. Engagement is always good. It's a beautiful morning to be here.

! It's a beautiful morning to be here.! And care enough to correct me if I need correction. And my heart is that I have a heart that would want to receive that. Because the thing is that I prayed about what to share when James asked me to share, and I wrestled with different things, and I came to this conclusion on what I want to share on is very clearly what God has wanted me to bring.

It kind of ended up at a way different avenue than what I had originally thought. And it's going to be more, I'm going to try to teach, bring out more in what I'm trying to say in a more practical sense. Very practical, not so much maybe in a sense that, it's a lot of things that we've all heard, is what I'm trying to say, I guess.

[1:25] So, as we were, last week, we all went hunting, right? Most of us went hunting, went antelope hunting. And as we were hunting, I was thinking about the antelope.

I was thinking of them in the sense that they are the prey. They're being hunted. And so God has given them some physical aspects to their bodies that give them advantages to their predators, to the hunter.

And then I was thinking about that as us being the church, being the prey to the hunter or the predator, the enemy. So we have two forces, right, that are vying for our, to get us.

There's two forces. We have kingdom versus shalom. We have peace versus, I mean, empire versus shalom. We have the world. We have a kingdom. And we have a choice that we can make on which one that we're going to choose.

And sometimes I think it's not, sometimes I think it's hard because we choose kingdom, but yet there's so much noise that gradually we gravitate towards the empire, towards the kingdom of this world.

[2:36] And sometimes it's done mindless, maybe kind of mindlessly. Sometimes it's done through being busy, providing for our families. Sometimes it's done through business. You know, we all have things that we need to do in this world.

And it becomes a noise that just consumes a lot of our time. And so the thing is that I want to, that I want to try to bring out is how we can learn from the antelope.

How can we learn from them? And how can we apply that to our lives? And how does that look for us as a church? And how can we, how can, because I think there's so many ways that Jesus in his life on earth has portrayed physical things to point us to a spiritual reality.

And so the thing is that as I was studying a little bit about them, the thing is that I'd like to read a little bit about how the pronghorn, they're actually, we call them antelope, but their actual name is pronghorn.

How do they survive in the, how do they survive in this world? What do they have? Well, the biggest thing is their eyes. The antelope, they have the largest eyes of a North American hoofed animal.

[3:51] Their eyes are about 1.4 inches in diameter, which is larger than an elephant's eyes. They're set back far enough on its head, granting a massive 300 to 320 degree visual without moving its head.

Also, clarity. They have clear vision. Up to 8 to 10 times of a binocular. A binocular that magnifies 8 to 10 times is the clarity of their vision. And they can spot motion up to 4 miles away because their eyesight is so keen.

Pronghorns actually communicate visually. When one spots a predator, it will flare the white hairs on its rump. This bright white flash serves as a silent, immediate alarm to pronghorns.

Up to 2 miles away, that danger is close. And so I was thinking about that as they set together in a herd. Probably what made me think about it the most was on our last day of hunting, Brother Merlin didn't have his, but he had his sights on a buck.

And we as hunters, we do everything that we can to deceive our prey. We want them to think that we're not there. We want them to think that they're safe. We want them to believe that all is well around them so that we can stalk up to and take one, right?

[5:06] And so as we were setting up there, we stalked up to within 130 yards of this herd of probably 20 animals. And the one that Merlin was wanting to shoot was laying down facing us.

And he was sleeping, obviously thinking he's safe. He's in a herd. They're on a hillside away from the road. Everything is good. We're all safe, right? We believe in Jesus. I'm using this in a spiritual sense.

He was all safe. So we were waiting for him to stand up so he could get a shot. And so even though they have all of these things that keep them safe, to help keep them safe, they still made mistakes. I want to talk about some of these mistakes that the pronghorn made in order that we could get a shot and actually kill them. And I would like to apply that, in a sense, to maybe we can look at that on mistakes that we make as brothers and to be alert, to be vigilant, and to know that we have an adversary.

We have a roaring lion that's going and seeking for our souls and he's seeking to devour us. So there was a couple takeaways that we can take from the pronghorn. One thing that they have on their defense is alertness or awareness.

[6:22] They're very alert. They're very aware. Another thing that they have is speed to their advantage. And another thing that they have is visibility, clarity.

They have good eyesight. And also, another thing that they have to their advantage is staying in the herd. So we want to talk about each of these things and apply them in a biblical sense. And there's going to be a second part to this.

The second part is, unlike the antelope, we have an answer to these things. The antelope don't necessarily. If they make a mistake, they die. But we don't.

We have somebody that we can look to. I think we all know who that is and we want to close with that. But so the first thing that I want to talk about in Scripture is the defense that we have or the thing that we need to be aware of as the pronghorn are is 1 Peter 5, verse 8.

And there he teaches us, it says, to be sober. Be vigilant. Because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. And so I think it's very important.

[7:30] We know that the pronghorn are vigilant. They're, if they detect anything, they're up and they're gone. And I think us as a church, us as a body, we need to personally and collectively, we need to be aware of that.

We need to be sober. We need to be vigilant. And we'll talk more about that. What can we do to be sober? What can we do to be vigilant? And what can we do to know if the roaring lion is about us? And how will we respond to that? Because in 2 Corinthians, as Paul is talking, he's talking about forgiveness and comfort in this context.

But I use this verse in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 11. He says, Lest Satan should get an advantage of us. For we are not ignorant of his devices.

So we know that Satan is wanting to get an advantage of us. But also, Paul is telling the Corinthian church, we're not ignorant of his devices. And I think many of us are not.

[8:27] In our personal life, we're not ignorant of the devices that Satan uses in our personal lives. But how often, how easy is it for us to become complacent?

We're in a church. We go to church every Sunday and we're doing well, right? We're seeking the mind of Christ. But being aware that he is here and he is seeking to devour us.

It says in verse 8, it says, Be sober and vigilant. Sober and vigilant might be parallels. But to be sober means that we're not distracted with a lot of other things.

And vigilant is we are very aware. We are watching. We're not just thinking that he's out there somewhere. We're aware that he could be right here beside me. And he's looking to distract me from whatever it may be that I'm facing at that moment.

And because it says, He walketh around seeking whom he may devour. He's not just walking around roaring and looking if somebody mishappantly walks up to him. He is seeking our souls.

[9:27] He wants our souls. And so therefore, I think it's very important that we know that we do not, that we're aware that Satan does not get an advantage over us and that we are not ignorant to his devices.

Another thing that the pronghorn has in an advantage to itself, and I think that we could apply it to our spiritual life, is speed. What does the Bible teach us about fleeing?

So we know that there's several instances of the Bible that it talks us to flee, not to stand there, not to reason with it, not to allow that temptation into our life.

It says to flee. In 1 Corinthians 6, verse 18, it teaches us to flee from sexual immorality. In 1 Corinthians 10, verse 14, he says, Paul writes, Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. Flee from these things. Run. Let's not stand there and let's not try to decide if these things are okay. No, they're not. These things that affect us negatively, we need to flee from.

[10:31] In 2 Timothy 2, verse 22, he's teaching Timothy to flee the evil desires of thy youth. In Proverbs 4, verse 14 and 15, it says, Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Verse 15, he says, Avoid it. Pass not by it. Turn from it and pass away. Very clearly, the writer of Proverbs is teaching us to not entertain these things.

These things that are not of God, that are of this world, that are of the kingdom of the enemy, let's not even go, let's not go close.

Let's not entertain them. Let's not go near them. Let's pass away from them. And then in James 4, verse 7, he writes, it says, Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So earlier on, I was talking about fleeing. Flee from idolatry. Flee from sexual immorality. Flee from the evil desires of thy youth. But when we flee from these things, then we are resisting the devil.

[11:40] And when we truly resist him in these temptations and things that we face, then we truly are resisting him and he will flee from us. So a good example about fleeing and resisting is in Genesis chapter 39, verse 12, where Joseph, who physically ran out of the room when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, he resisted the temptation by fleeing the environment.

So the antelope, once they are aware that there's danger is imminent, they flee. They waste no time. They get out of there. And so I would like to encourage us as a body of believers, once we detect that there is danger, are we of one mind and of one spirit enough that we're willing to flee? And if we flee, are we willing to flee to Christ? Or are we all going to flee different directions because we have different opinions and ideas? My heart is that we could collectively meld ourselves in one that when we recognize the danger and we recognize Satan wanting to divide and to destroy, that we collectively recognize that and we have the hearts that we want to unite and flee to Christ.

We see these dangers and we flee together. We flee collectively. Not just that, well, I see the danger here, so I'm fleeing that direction. Because Satan, we ultimately know, we'll talk more about this as I go on, that his desire is to destroy and to divide and destroy.

When we become isolated, then we become a lot more vulnerable. When we allow ourselves to be isolated from us collectively as a body, we are prone to, the danger increases by quite a percentage in a physical sense and I believe it's that way in a spiritual sense.

[13:26] So, the next thing that we can talk about and we'll come back and maybe touch on some of these things is their visibility and their clarity. They have clear vision.

They have great visibility. They have better vision than what we have. They can see us walk up to three to four miles away. And one thing that I've learned studying about these is when they are laying there and they look at something intently, they're studying it.

So when they think that they see movement or they detect something, they intently look at it and they study it. And they'll study it for a couple minutes, two to four minutes, I forget.

And when they're studying and they detect more movement, then they're alerted. So when they think they see movement, they're, and can we apply that to our lives? When we see something that might not be good, that might not be right, are we willing to intently study it and do a critical analysis of it and to see is this something from the enemy or is this something from God?

So in Ephesians chapter 1, so I want to bring out a couple of scriptures that talk about opening our eyes, our spiritual eyes in that sense is the context that I'm using these scriptures in.

[14:35] In Ephesians chapter 1, verse 17 and 18, it says, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Have the eyes of our understanding been opened that we know the hope of his calling? Have the eyes of our understanding been opened that we know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in us as his saints?

Have those things been opened? I believe that I'm a work in progress in that. I want to understand that more and I want to receive that and understand how to accept that in a greater way.

But are our eyes, are our visible spiritual eyes, are they opened? Are they opened to where we can clearly spot the enemy out there for miles? Are our eyes, spiritual eyes, open to where when we spot the enemy we clearly can see that it's the enemy?

Or are we willing to entertain the enemy and analyze it and allow it to be a part of our life to truly see if it's the enemy or not? Or are we willing to see no, God has given us this clarity, his word has spoken this into our life and we will not entertain it, we will not, we flee.

[15:57] We're going to resist it, we're fleeing from it. We can take that clear from the pronghorns, visual. Once they have identified it and once they have been alerted, they're going to alert the herd and the herd and I have not seen any of the herds that we hunted, I have not seen any of them go in a hundred different directions.

They stood up, they identified the threat and then they left and they left collectively. Some might have wandered off of the group a little bit but for the most part they were in unity and knowing there's danger there and we need to go there and they didn't, what's interesting, they don't hide per se like deer would out east.

They don't run into a woods and take cover. They just run far enough away that they know that we can no longer shoot them or hurt them because they're out in the open prairie, right? They've learned to adapt.

God has created them to adapt to that. In Psalm 119 verse 18 it says, the writer says, Open thou mine eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy law.

And in the context of us as a church are we of the heart and the mind that Lord open our eyes to the wondrous things out of thy law that we may know God to such a way that we may be able to identify the enemy when we see it?

[17:15] Or is our vision blurred to the idea of, well, this might not be so bad, this might not be so wrong. And the thing in and of itself might not inherently be wrong, but I'm talking about in the sense of our life, how close are we willing to allow the enemy to move in and camp before we become alerted?

How close are we willing to allow him to camp around us and see him and know he's there before we become ready to flee? Like how close can the enemy come, I guess, in my life?

How close can the enemy bring his tactics to me before I'm okay, now it's time to flee? I just wrote down, how do we expect to lay close to the dark valleys and the sagebrush, the sagebrushes of sin, and expect to have safety or clarity when we open doors for the enemy?

Sometimes the greatest danger and vulnerability comes when we become careless. Again, what did Peter point us to? To be sober, to be vigilant. And so I put it into the perspective as this, the antelope that laid closest to the nose, the sharp hules, and the sagebrushes were the ones that had the most eminent danger.

So my wife and I tried to stalk up on some on an open wheat field. They were walking, they were kind of alert, they could see us, they were probably four or five hundred yards away, they were not scared, but they could see us.

[18:41] So my wife and I tried to stalk them, but what was hard was when you have a wheat field that's got an even heel with wheat growing, it's hard to appear up behind some sagebrush.

It's hard to come up behind them and actually not have them see you. Of course, we tried to belly crawl up to them enough that we could see them, but they spooked.

And we shot at them two times, but we missed them. I don't believe we got them, they ran away. But the point that I wanted to make was when we have sagebrush, we were able to sneak up on them.

When Merlin was stalking his, it wasn't hard. He could sit beside that sagebrush, it was very windy that morning, but the sagebrush is moving, right? With the wind, it's moving, so therefore, they look at stuff moving as long as it's not poking up above the sagebrush.

They are fairly okay, but look at what saved the two that we tried to shoot out on the open prairie. They had more of an advantage because they were not allowing themselves at that point in time to be up into the sagebrushes that allow the enemy to get close.

[19:50] So my point is, is how close are we willing to live or settle down and become complacent and content to the sagebrushes of idolatry, the sagebrushes of lust, the sagebrushes of temptation, the sagebrushes of noise?

You can take sagebrush and put any word there that you want. How close are we willing to lay to that and allow the enemy to use that as cover and think that it's okay? So through those things, I was just, I was just, I just wanted to share some of those thoughts because I think it's very, very important that we, that we, that we recognize that.

Now, the other thing that we want to talk about that I believe that they have an advantage over is staying in the herd. And I think today that can be very controversial and I don't mean it to be controversial.

I'm speaking my heart on how I see this situation from a scriptural perspective. So we know that when they lay in the herd, Brother Merlin was sharing this, I hadn't even known that, but when there's wind blowing, they will face with their backs to the wind and they will look downwind and they trust their senses from being able to smell that it will alert them with the 40 degrees of vision that they actually can't see.

It's not much. 360 would be a whole circle and they can see 300 to 320. So the little bit that they can't see, they trust their nose. And so, but when they have a whole herd laying around, the chances of them being tricked or deceived is a lot less.

[21:34] And so, the point that I want to make on that with us as a brotherhood, because I have been, we have been blessed since Christ has started us in our journey, is it has always been on my heart that it's very important that we collectively gather and encourage one another, that we look out for the dangers of one another.

Not that I'm here, not that I'm here to become a greater Christian. Yeah, I'm not taking away from that. But I come and gather with brothers and sisters because of what Christ has done to me.

I do it because I want to encourage and I want to bring and I also want to receive. And you probably all know which chapter I'm going to turn to on my first, as far as a scriptural perspective of staying in the herd is Psalm 133, verse 1.

And the writer says, Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.

And to me, that is very precious. A group, a body, a body in Christ that is part of the universal body of Christ is not put together by man. It cannot be put together by man.

[22:52] And if it's put together by man, it will not function. It can function from an external perspective for a time being. But as that body gets to know each other personally and to know the flaws that lie within each of us, it takes Christ and it takes grace.

It takes grace for us to experience it before we can extend that to you and know that you all are human just like I am. And even though you make mistakes, I'm willing to extend grace and say, I'm going to seek Christ in that brother or sister because I know that they have committed themselves to Christ and I know that they face things that I do.

But unless we experience that grace, I don't think that we can extend it. And when we don't experience it and we don't extend it, it brings conflict, it brings controversy, and maybe if I have time we'll go into some of those things that we have that the pronghorns or the antelope don't have and we have, we have, there is the possibility of those things rising up amongst us, not just from the outside and maybe we'll go to those scriptures that teach about it that we have those risings, we have the possibility of those things to rise up amongst us.

At least the pronghorn doesn't have a wolf rising up in the midst of their flock. I mean, they'd have to be really complacent if that actually happened in real life. But we have the possibility of that happening in us as a, as a, as a group of people, as a, as a collective church.

And in Hebrews 10, verse 24 and 25, the Hebrew writer points us and really exhorts us, I think, very directly in this. And he says, let us consider one another unto love and to good works, not forsaking

the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much more as ye see the day approaching.

[24:49] And it says, again, I think that they had it back in that day just like we do today. He says, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. It's so, it's so easy today.

Today, we live in such an individualistic world. There's so many people that, from my perspective, the things that I have seen as I grow is I have the Holy Spirit.

I don't need direction from you. I get my divine revelation from God. I get it from the Holy Spirit. And I don't need you meddling in my life and telling me how to live. I really don't need that.

I am saved. I'm a born-again believer. And I make those decisions. You don't have your life in order and you don't have anything to say. I can look into your life and I can see all the flaws that you need to straighten up.

Go ahead and you broom out those things out of your house and then you can come and talk to me. I think when we have that, personally, I'm giving my personal opinion on that, I think when we have that mentality, we're never going to see or be able to grow to the fullness that God wants us to grow in.

[25:56] In Ephesians 6, verse 11 and 12, what is another thing that we can do collectively as a body? What can we do to not allow the enemy near?

When we flee and resist, what is another thing that we can do? I believe in 6, verse 11 and 12, it says, Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness, of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. And I was just challenged with that, thinking about that yesterday.

It's so easy. When we wrestle against the wiles of the devil, when we stand against, when we wrestle against the principalities, it's so easy to make it the person.

It's so easy to look at the person and think, I'm wrestling against him. It says clearly that we're not. We're wrestling against a higher power that might be somewhat possessing that vessel at that time or using that vessel, the person as a vessel.

[26:58] Either we're being used as a vessel of honor or a vessel of dishonor, I believe. And so it's so easy to look at the person as a person and have hard feelings at the person versus realizing, no, we are wrestling, if we are in the armor of God, if we have the whole armor of God on, and we're wrestling against the principalities of this world, we're not fighting against men, brothers, or sisters.

We're fighting against the principalities, the spiritual forces. And I was thinking about that, when I think about the whole armor, I'm thinking about David, one thing that makes me think about is David and Goliath.

So Saul wanted David to put on the armor, right? The shield, have the shield, the whole armor, the breastplate, the helmet and things. And I think about it in this sense that are we willing to put that whole armor on?

Are we willing to let a brother, am I willing to let a brother speak to me and say, Brother Mike, I think you need to put on your helmet? Or am I going to say, nah, that helmet's kind of uncomfortable, I can't see as good, I have all kinds of reasons and excuses why I don't want to put on that helmet. And that helmet can be anything in my life spiritually that you want to apply to it. But I choose not to wear it because I think I'm good without it. I don't need the whole armor. I think when we're willing to compromise part of the armor of God, we're allowing ourselves to be open.

[28:21] We're opening doors that will ultimately lead to deception. And they will lead us away from the church, from the flock, from the body of Christ. And when I talk the church, when I'm speaking church, I'm speaking the true body of Christ.

I'm not just speaking about brothers and sisters that collectively gather together. In Romans 13, he talks more about armor.

He talks about putting on the armor of light. in 1 Thessalonians 5, chapter 5, verse 8, it says, but let us who are of the day be sober. There again, we have the word sober.

Peter talks about being sober, being vigilant. It says, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for an helmet the hope of salvation.

So we can read that in their day, the soldiers fought physically maybe more than they do today. But it was very clear that he used these aspects to talk about the armor of God.

[29:19] That we know that we as of ourselves are not able to withstand the wilds. We of ourselves are not going to be able to lay far enough away from the sagebrush and from the valleys that blur our vision without the armor of God.

And so, I wrote down, one of the enemy's greatest tactics is to separate, divide, and individualize and destroy. The enemy might not destroy us.

Like when we kill an antelope, we destroy it immediately. The enemy doesn't necessarily want to come in and destroy us and make me become someone completely opposite today.

But he wants to come in and slowly separate us. He wants to bring separation. He wants to bring division. He wants to bring confusion. He wants to blur our vision.

He wants to gray areas in our life that maybe should not be. All of those things start painting the greater picture of deception. In John chapter 10, verse 10, I'll read the first half of the verse and then later on, I'll try to come back and read the last half of the verse.

[30:27] It says, The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. So he comes to steal the things that we need and he comes to kill our spiritual life and ultimately to destroy us.

So now that we have talked about the things that the enemy that the enemy can use, the things that we need to be aware of, I would like to touch a little bit more on that and then we'll move on to our solution.

What is our solution to these things? How can we as a body collectively focus on the solution that actually brings us safety from these things? And then I wrote down another thing is isolation, separation, and division.

A lot of things that we might hear in today's society is I don't need fellowship with other believers. I have Jesus, I have the Holy Spirit, and I am born again, I have a vibrant life, I don't need that.

It's okay if somebody wants it, but I don't necessarily need that. I pretty much have things under control and what I don't, the Holy Spirit will show me. And I have shared that a little bit earlier.

[31:41] And then another thing is that how many can connect with this, nobody else understands the truth quite like I do. Nobody else really understands the truth like I do.

I have this understanding of it that nobody else really gets, so therefore I can't connect with brothers because they just ain't got it. I mean in simple terms. Or another thing is I can entertain this temptation without it affecting me.

I can lay close to this sagebrush of whatever and it doesn't really affect me, I don't have to worry about it, and if you warn me that it's going to affect me, you're meddling into my life and you have things in your life that you need to straighten out.

I don't really need that direction. I'm okay, I can entertain this temptation, it's not going to affect me. I don't need anyone telling me what to do, I have the Holy Spirit.

Before long, if we're people like this, we have great potential of being isolated from the very people God could use to encourage, correct, and strengthen them. And once Satan has us isolated, deception is imminent.

[32:48] I believe that deception is imminent if we allow Satan to isolate us and to separate us, we are open, we're ripe for deception.

I'm not saying, I don't want to say something that is not so. I'm using some of my theology and applying it, but the way I see it is if I allow myself to become isolated, I'm opening myself or I'm opening doors for the sagebrushes of sin to lie very close to my life.

Because the only eyesight or the only visual clarity that I'm going to have is my own. I'm not going to have anybody else that's going to be able to speak into my life. And then I wrote down, now that we have talked about the dangers, I don't want to end it in fear or confusion.

Our surety, unlike the pronghorn, is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have a mediator. We have an answer to these things that the pronghorn does not.

But also, I did mention earlier that we have a danger that the pronghorn doesn't have. And I would like to, before we go to my closing verses, I would like to turn to Matthew 24, verse 24, 25, and 26.

[34:02] Very familiar verses. But I think that they're very, that we also need to be mindful of these things from within. Amen. Jesus is speaking here.

In verse 24, he says, For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect.

Behold, I have told you before, wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth. Behold, he is in the secret chamber, believe it not. So he's pointing us that be aware,

there's going to be false prophets and false signs and things that are going to arise. And unless we are familiar with the correct, the genuine, we're not going to be able to recognize the counterfeit.

So I think it's very important that we recognize the genuine, the true word of God or the counterfeit is going to look just as real.

[35 : 14] And then also in Acts chapter 20, I won't read all of it, but I was reading in the earlier portion of that chapter and it just touched me the heart that Paul had as he's writing, I believe it might have been Paul that wrote this, Acts chapter 20 verses 29 to 31.

And earlier in the chapters it says Paul is calling on the Ephesian elders and he's talking about all the things that he has suffered for Christ and I didn't detect in any way that he was saying it in a way that people would glorify him.

He was saying it in a way how much Christ means to him that he was willing to suffer to that extent that they may gain Christ. In verse 29 he says, For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things. He says, Of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch. Do we remember? Vigilancy. Being sober. He says, Watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.

[36 : 35] I believe Paul's tears were genuine. They weren't tears about him thinking woe me I had to suffer this. They were tears for the hearts of brothers and sisters.

They were tears of the way Jesus had. They were the tears that I want to have. That I care about the hearts of others and not just the heart of myself. And so I just wanted to share that those are also things that the pronghorn might not necessarily have but that we need to be aware of.

That he is not above, our enemy is not above coming in amongst us as brothers and trying to have people separate and arise and draw away. We're not exempt from those tactics.

But now let's talk about the things that we have, the comfort that we have and the surety that we have. I would like to close with those verses. Let's turn to Psalm 91.

I thought that was just a very beautiful psalm that goes well with what I was sharing. Psalm 91. The writer starts out with, He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

[37 : 52] I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. And as I read verse 4, it reminded me as Jesus told the Jews.

He says, As a hen, I wanted to bring you as my chicks under my wings and you will not. You did not want to. And I was thinking, is that meat? Is that us today? Is Jesus wanting to gather us as a hen gathers her chicks?

And we just don't want to. No, no. I need to see. I need to be about here. I got it. I don't really need that much protection, right? I might need a little, but not to that extent. I don't need to be hid under the feathers.

I just, I, you know, I want to still be able to see and make some decisions. Verse 5, He says, Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flyeth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

[38 : 59] A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked, because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. And I was just putting that in verse 9, because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation.

Is the Lord in my life, I'm just, I'll talk from personal perspective, is He my refuge, my full refuge? Is He my true habitation?

Is that where I spend all my time? Is my habitation in that? Or is it dwelling close to the sagebrushes, wandering out close to the sagebrushes and entertaining temptations that I believe will not hurt me?

Because I have the Holy Spirit. in Romans chapter 8, let's turn to Romans chapter 8, verse 35. Paul writes, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[40:18] Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or pearl, or sword? And verse 37, I'll continue in verse 37, it says, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That's a beautiful promise that we have when we are truly and fully submitted to the headship and the lordship of Jesus. That these things cannot, they cannot pluck us from that.

And we'll read more in John about that. That these things cannot take us away. It doesn't matter if the enemy is there. If the enemy does become close, we are going, as a church, as a body, as a part of the functioning body of Christ, we're going to be aware of that and we're going to flee collectively.

We're going to resist it. And these things, this word, this truth is going to protect us. We don't have to fear that the enemy can more or less kill us as the pronghorn.

[41:32] Another verse that I would like to read is 2 Thessalonians. You don't have to turn there. You can if you want. I'm going to be turning to other verses as well. It's 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 3.

It says, But the Lord is faithful who shall establish you and keep you from evil. I just thought that's a very beautiful verse. It's a very beautiful description that when we are in him, he shall keep us from that evil.

He shall keep us. But how do we expect him to keep us from that evil when we truly are not in him, when we're not willing to put the whole armor of Christ on, when we're not willing to walk together in harmony as brothers and be encouraged and strengthened and directioned?

How are we going to, how do we expect that he's going to be keeping us from that evil? There's two different places in John that I'd like to turn to.

John chapter 10. A lot of these are familiar verses. John chapter 10, verse 27 to 29. Jesus says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them.

[42:49] And what happens? It says, They follow me. We follow him. We don't hear Jesus' voice. We don't recognize it and then say, Yeah, Jesus, I hear you.

I know you. But I am over here today or this week. I don't need any direction that much today. But I'll be back if I need some, for sure. Verse 28, it says, And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. When we are there, we are secure. We are safe. There's no one that's going to be able to pluck us out of his hand.

We are, the only way that we can be outside of Christ is by our own choice. There's nobody going to be able to take us out. We're going to have to make that choice. We're going to have to choose to not be in Christ before anybody can, that's not possible.

It's very clear. He says, no man shall ever pluck them out of my hand. And in chapter 17 of John, verse 15, and I thought this is very beautiful because this is Jesus' prayer for his disciples.

[44:04] And I believe that prayer applies to us today. Jesus is praying this for us. He says, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world. But that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

And so, Jesus is not praying that we're taking out of the world. He's not praying that we don't lay out in the grassy knolls. He's not praying that we don't make our home on this earth physically.

But that he keeps us from the evil. That he keeps us away from the valleys that obscure our vision. From the cliffs that allow the enemy to sneak up and get within 30 yards of us.

from the sagebrush that allows the enemy to sneak up to us and yet it looks safe. He's talking about those things. Keep them from that. Jesus' prayer in his heart is that God keeps us from those things.

And the only way that we can be kept from those things is if we are in him. Other than that, we're not going to collectively flee. We're not going to collectively unify. We're not going to collectively function as a body of Christ.

[45:07] We can do it for a time but it's not going to last. And Ephesians 6, I'd like to turn back to Ephesians 6 verses 13 to 17.

I'm just about done here. I'll finish up here in a few minutes. Verse 13 to 17. It says, the helmet of salvation.

And the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. So there it comes down to where is our protection? It is in the word. All of these things that he has given us in a physical sense that we gird ourselves with is in the word of God.

And in 1 John, I have one more, two more places that we'll turn to and then we'll wrap this up. In 1 John chapter 4 verse 4. He writes, ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

Another beautiful promise. The enemy that is vying for our souls has power. But let's not forget that that one that is within us that we have all experienced is greater.

[46:50] He is greater. I don't have to worry about that. The one that has saved me from eternal damnation is greater than the one that is in this world. And so, I said that I was going to read the first half of John 10 verse 10, I believe.

I would like to now turn and read the last half. And the first half, we read that the thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. But Jesus says, I am come that they may have life and they might have it more abundantly.

So that is our, that is, that is what, that is a substance that we can, that we can hang our life on. We can trust it completely. And so, closing thoughts that I have is, I guess what's, what is on my heart as a brother is I think there's not a brother in here or sister that I, that I can say I don't need.

I need everybody in this body. I need everybody to encourage me and to correct me if there's things that need correction. And as an exhortance to us as a body, I hope that that would be our hearts.

That we know that we need our brothers and sisters. We don't just come to church to gather together because the Bible says not to forget or forsake the fellowshiping of the saints. We do it because we are propelled out of the spirit of God within us that propels us to want to do this.

[48:14] And that we are able to extend grace to differences. When there are differences, I'm not talking about overlooking sin. I'm not talking about being okay with things that are clearly wrong.

But that we are able to overlook differences for the sake of the brotherhood and sisters. So that is my heart. That we can learn that when we flee, when we recognize the enemy and we flee, that we flee collectively.

And when we flee, that we don't flee all different directions because of hurts and differences because nobody understands the truth as much as I do. So my heart is that I can learn, that I can be a brother that can be exhorted, that I can be a brother that can be directed, and that I could be a functioning part of the body that helps bring life to the body, that helps make it function and helps shed light into this dark world.

So not meant to make anybody feel disheartened, but as an encouragement.

So thanks all for listening and may God bless you.