

Topics from Proverbs: The Sluggard - Teddy Tash

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[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good morning.

Good morning. We got the Stiles, we got the Dumbs, we got the Rankins. It's like we're at Maplewood. We got everybody here. All we're missing is the Kleppels, right? All the Kleppels are out on the camping trip. I typically go on that camping trip, but procrastinated in trying to get my week of speaking switched, and here I am talking about the lazy man, or the sluggard.

So kind of an appropriate little object lesson on laziness to start with. So we're continuing in Proverbs, and we're going to look at the sluggard, or the lazy man.

Sluggard literally means the one who is sluggish. First of all, it's been quite a little while, if ever, that I've got to share a message on a topical study.

[1:01] Typically it's a passage or a chapter of the Bible, and it's kind of refreshing, kind of nice to do a topical study. It gives you a little more liberty with it, a little more room to take it how you want to, the direction you want to take it.

So that's kind of refreshing. And then second thing, I don't know that I've ever heard a message on the sluggard before, or a message on the lazy man. So there's kind of a few firsts here.

But what I want to do today is kind of define what the sluggard is, define what the lazy man is, maybe look at a few examples from Proverbs, a few examples of what this type of person, this lazy man would be like.

And then there's about a dozen or so verses that mention the lazy man in Proverbs. So kind of run through those and pull out a few common themes. There's like three common themes I want to pull out from all those verses.

And then sort of look at some Old Testament examples. We've got three or four examples that I want to look at of instances where men in leadership became lazy, didn't do what the Lord had told them to do.

[2:17] And then hopefully we can pull a lesson out there for ourselves. So before we get into that, let's pray real quick, and then we can rock and roll. So Father God, thank you for this time. Thank you that we could worship you this morning and remember you in the breaking of bread.

Thanks that we could sing a few songs to you now. And God, as we open your word, I pray that you would just bless it and just bless those who hear it. And hopefully we can learn a thing or two about clinging to you and just getting things done for you.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. So a quick definition. Like I said, the word sluggard, not a real commonly used word. Actually, if you Google sluggard or if you Google anything and you say define, so for instance, define sluggard, it's kind of cool.

Google will give you word usage over time. And it kind of peaked the word sluggard in about 1850s and then steady nosedive since then. Not a real commonly used term.

But again, the word sluggard literally means one who is sluggish. So slug and then A-R-D. So sluggish. And the idea is kind of slow, idle, indolent, which is not a word that we use very much, but idle.

[3:33] You know, you start your car. It's sitting there in the driveway. The motor's running. It has all the capabilities of going somewhere. But it's not. It's sitting in the park. It's idling. It means slothful.

When you think of animals and you wanted to think of an animal that's slow, sloth is probably the animal you'd think of. There's that movie, I think it was like *The Life of Pets* or *The Secret Life of Pets*, something like that.

And the trailer for the movie is the hero and his partner go in to the DMV. And it's all animals, right? And they go into the DMV and there's a long line. And the person at the counter is a sloth.

That's the animal they chose to represent the DMV counter. And they tell him a joke and there's a long, real awkward pause. And then the sloth, ha, ha, ha.

You know, that's hilarious. And then he tells his coworker, Amy, really long pause. Did you hear that joke? And that's the idea, slow, not moving real fast, not really getting anywhere.

[4:33] And then kind of the last part of the definition of sluggard means to lean. If you think two guys out trying to dig a hole, one guy's using his shovel to dig, to get somewhere to move earth.

And the other guy's using his shovel just to kind of lean on the shovel. That's something that, you know, I think people can relate to on that one.

So kind of this idle, slow-moving, indolent type of person. That would be just Merriam-Webster's definition of sluggard.

It's kind of interesting, the more you dig into the word, you'll start to come up with things that relate to, like, anxiety or worry. And I think we'll see that as we get into Proverbs a little bit, that perhaps the lazy man is lazy because he's worried about doing things.

He has anxiety or he's anxious about going out into the real world and accomplishing something. And so perhaps just keep that in mind when we start talking about the lazy man, that maybe the lazy man is a worried man or an anxious man.

[5:43] But I want to give you a couple examples here from Proverbs before we really start pulling too much from it of just what the lazy man would look like. And I'll tell you, we're going to kind of jump all over in Proverbs again with it being topical.

So if you just want to listen, that's fine. If you want to try and keep up, that's fine too. But the first example is going to be from Proverbs 12, verse 27. And this is what it says.

It says that the lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting, but diligence is man's precious possession. The lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting.

You know, I said earlier, I don't know that I've ever heard a message on the lazy man or the slugger, but I can guarantee you that never before has a message started off with reading that the lazy man does not roast what he took in hunting.

This is probably part of church history right here, leading off with that verse. And what does that even mean? The idea is unfinished business.

[6:40] The lazy man would go out, he'd go through all the toil of gathering his hunting equipment, going out, you know, climbing the tree, shooting the bow, getting the deer, dragging it back to the house, butchering it.

And then, man, you know, I'm tired. Just forget it. I'm not even going to cook it. It goes to spoil. It's unfinished business. He starts something that he's not willing to see through to the end. He doesn't roast what he took hunting.

19.24 says that a lazy man buries his hand in the bowl and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

This thought, this exact verbiage is used twice in Proverbs, that he buries his hand in the bowl and won't bring it to his mouth again. Again, the idea is unfinished business.

He prepares the meal, he sets the table, gets the food out, and, man, he grabs the food, but he's just too tired to actually take a bite. His meal goes cold on him, so to speak.

[7:41] Unfinished business. Right there in 19, on the opposite side of the page, it says, Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger.

Over in 20, verse 13, it says, Do not love sleep, or you'll come to poverty. So this is the kind of person that we're talking about, someone that's just addicted to sleep, doesn't want to leave, doesn't want to leave home, wants to stay in, and if you love sleep, you'll come to poverty.

It's hard to make money while you're sleeping unless you have, I guess, good investments, but that's the type of person we're dealing with, one that's just addicted to sleep. And kind of on that same vein, 26:14 says, As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed.

That's kind of a weird thought to visualize. As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed. If you think about a door, it's got the front side and the back side, and you open it up and you see the front side, you close it, you see the back side.

That's what the lazy man's doing on his bed, just back and forth, laying on his stomach, laying on his back, just tossing and turning, just restless in bed. So those are just a couple examples to sort of lead off with, just to kind of keep that person in mind as we pull some common themes out here.

[9:07] And real quick, before we pull the common themes out, I do want to stop and pause and say that work sometimes is looked at as maybe part of the curse. In fact, I've said that, man, I've got to go to work as part of the curse.

That's not really true. Work is a good thing. Work was created before the fall. If you look in Genesis, it says that God labored or he worked for six days, and then he took some rest.

He had to rest from the work which he had done. And that was before sin was in the world. Adam was created, it says, to tend and to keep the garden. And that was before the fall.

And keeping a garden is hard work. I don't know if any of you in here have a vegetable garden or a flower garden, but it's a lot of work. You know, as soon as you get something growing, an animal comes in and destroys it.

Or, you know, you get something that looks good, and then it rains like three inches in a week. Or it gets 90 degrees and just burns everything up. It's a lot of work to tend and to keep a garden.

[10:04] And that's on a micro scale. Imagine what Adam was dealing with, right? You know, on kind of a macro scale of the Garden of Eden. So he was created to work, and that's a good thing. Adam was created to do what else?

To be fruitful and multiply. That's a ton of work. I only have one kid, and my wife will tell you it's very hard. It's pretty easy on me because she does a lot. But that's a ton of work.

We got a text from Tom and Nikki last night. They're watching two grandkids, and they said, boy, I don't know how we ever raised five kids. Two is wiping us out. So that's a lot of work.

So nothing wrong with working. That's not a bad thing. In fact, it's good to work. So I just wanted to put that in there just as kind of a side note. So work is good, but the sluggard refuses to work.

And this is where I want to pull a couple common themes out. Like I said, there's about 13 to 15 passages. There's 15, but two of them repeat themselves. So about 13 or so original passages that mention the lazy man or mention the sluggard.

[11:13] If you read all of them, which we're not going to do, but if you were, I think there's kind of three common themes that you'll pull out. And the first one is that the lazy man is full of excuses.

That the sluggard is full of excuses. Back in 26, verse 13, it says that the lazy man says there is a lion in the road, a fierce lion in the streets.

There's another passage where it says there's a lion in the road. I shall be slain in the streets. So again, you sort of see this almost anxiety or worry. Boy, there's a lion out there.

I'm not going out there. I could get eaten. I'm going to stay in where it's safe. I'm going to stay in my bed. It's safe here. Chapter 20, verse 4, he's got another excuse. It says the lazy man will not plow because of winter.

He will beg during harvest and have nothing. He won't plow because of winter. Man, it's cold outside. I'm not going to go out there and work. I could get frostbite. I don't want to do that. That's dangerous. I'm going to freeze to death. I'll deal with it later.

[12:17] And again, man, I'm going to stay in where it's nice and warm and cozy. I kind of think of the lazy man almost like a little kid. You know, a little kid carries around their little security blanket, right? You know, it's safe when I have my blanket with me.

And I kind of feel that way about the lazy man, you know, just worried and anxious about things. And so, man, I'm going to stay in. I'm not going to do anything. If you look at 24:33, you see that these excuses sort of creep up on the lazy man.

And that's the problem with excuses or with lies is that sooner or later you start to believe your own lies. Sooner or later those excuses become true. And so 24:33, it says, He doesn't say, you know, I'm going to sleep for like the next month straight.

He says, no, I'm just going to take a little sleep, just a little slumber. I'm just going to take a little rest. It's a little, a little, a little. But the problem is if you say, well, you know, I'm just going to take a nap this afternoon.

I'll deal with my problems tomorrow. What happens tomorrow? Well, you know, I'm just going to take a little more rest. I'll deal with it tomorrow. And the idea is that tomorrow never comes, right?

[13:39] Tomorrow never comes for the lazy man. And so it says your poverty will sneak up on you just like that. It doesn't happen all at once. It's sort of this insidious, creeping laziness.

So the first thing, lazy man is full of excuses. He's worried about leaving the house, about going out and performing any type of activity.

So those excuses over time, they have some consequences, and they start to take a toll on the emotions. And so we're going to look at a few emotions that the lazy man has. And I've got to tell you, these are not real good personality traits.

Not a single one of these is something that we should aspire to. These are all kind of negative things. So looking at the emotions of the lazy man, chapter 13, verse 4 says that the soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing.

The soul of the diligent shall be made rich. There's another verse that says the diligent hand will rule. But the soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing.

[14:46] Doesn't that sound just terrible? To just be in want all the time, just wanting things, desiring things, and then not having the means with which to get them. Just constantly unsatisfied.

That's terrible. You know, that's an awful thing. Desires but does not have. Back in chapter 26, we'll see the arrogance or the pride of the lazy man.

It says in verse 16 that the lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly. So the lazy man, you know, starts lying, starts giving these excuses over time, and it changes his mindset so that he thinks, No, I'm right and you're wrong.

It says he's wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly. Bill McDonald put it that that verse means if there's seven guys who are trustworthy guys, wise men, you know, you'd think like elders in the church, something like that, they would sit down with the lazy man and unanimously say, What you are doing is wrong.

You're being lazy. And he would say, No, I'm right. You're wrong. I'm not being lazy. You guys are just making fun of me. You guys are just pushing me.

[15:58] It twists his mindset. And there's a lot of pride there, a lot of arrogance there. Wiser in his own eyes. Another verse here, chapter 21, verse 26, says that, or sorry, we'll start in verse 25.

It says that the desire of a lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. So he's stubborn. He's refusing to do any kind of work.

So a stubborn man. And it says, He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare. You know, if you're a lazy man, you're not working, you're not doing anything as far as activity goes, yeah, you're not going to have anything.

And I think it's only natural, especially in the sin nature, that if you don't have anything, you're going to covet what other people have. You're going to covet the things that others have worked for.

And so he covets greedily. Not only that, he's selfish. Look at the end of the verse. It says, He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare.

[17:06] And so the implication there is that, well, if the righteous man is giving and not sparing, giving selflessly, that the lazy man would be keeping as much as he can for himself.

He would be selfish. And so those are just a few of the emotions or the mindset that the lazy man becomes. He becomes unsatisfied, proud, arrogant, stubborn, greedy, covetous, selfish.

That doesn't sound like a real fun place to be. Over time, these excuses, these worries that the lazy man or the sluggard would have, and the emotions, the personality changes that he would have lead to action, or perhaps we should say inaction.

They keep him from doing things. And the lack of action or the inaction obviously has consequences, or you could call this effects, effects. So you've got excuses, emotions, and then effects.

There's too many of these effects, if you will, to really go through verse by verse, but just to read a few of them to you, one of the effects of being lazy is that you'll have nothing.

[18:15] You'll be put to forced labor. You won't work because you choose to or work because you enjoy it. Somebody's going to make you work. It's going to be forced labor. It says that the lazy man is a brother to the great destroyer.

You know, if you're a husband and you're trying to lead your family, or if you're a father trying to lead your family and you're lazy in that, you're going to destroy the house, man. You're going to destroy the household, destroy your wife's life, your life, your children's life.

You know, if you're in a position of leadership and you're lazy in that, you don't take action in that, you're going to destroy what has been built up around you, a great destroyer. Three different times it says you'll go to poverty.

It says you'll go to poverty, you'll come to poverty, poverty will creep up on you. It's hard to be lazy and be rich. It just really is. Not that it's all about being rich.

But if you're lazy and you're not working towards any type of goal or not even working at all, you're not just going to accidentally stumble into wealth. You know, look at the people that play the lottery.

[19:22] They're not wealthy people. There tend to be poor people that are trying to make it rich without putting the work in. I try not to talk politics or religion at the bar, but we're not at the bar, so I'll talk about both.

You know, there's a certain candidate that wants to have what they call income equality. Income equality. And the problem with that is that intelligence and certainly work ethic are not equally distributed, so why should income be equally distributed?

If you're not going to work, you're going to come to poverty. That's right here from the Bible. There's another verse that says that the way of the lazy man is like a hedge of thorns.

And they oppose that or contrast that to the righteous man whose way is like a highway, or the upright man, sorry. His way is like a highway. And that means that the road's going to get tough for you.

If you're not putting work in, if you're just sleeping all the time, being lazy, scared to go outside the house, life's going to get hard for you. Your way is going to be like a hedge of thorns. We do some deer hunting in the fall, and Ben can attest to this for me, that we walk through quite a bit of thorns while we're doing that deer hunting.

[20:44] In fact, some of the places we walk, you will have all four limbs off the ground at one time. Your right and left arm will be stuck in some thorns, and then somehow your legs each end up in thorns, and you think, I'm not touching the ground anywhere.

And you have to wiggle your way out of that and think about just going through life like that.

Wouldn't that be tough if your way is like a hedge of thorns? There's a passage here in Proverbs where it says that he comes upon the house of the lazy man and the one who is void of understanding, and his vineyard is overgrown with thorns, his field is overgrown with nettles, and his wall is torn down.

You know, if you don't maintain the things that the Lord has given you, if you're a poor steward of those things, one, he's not going to give you any more to be a steward over, and two, you're going to lose your opportunity. The opportunity cost is real.

You know, you have the opportunity with a vineyard that's nice and trimmed and pruned and ready to go, but man, you let that get grown over with thorns, there goes your opportunity. Your time, your chance to make money, to be successful, whatever, is gone.

And I think that's true in ministries. I think that's true in positions of leadership. Sometimes the Lord allows you an opportunity to do something, and if you are lazy with it, and if you don't do anything with it, he'll take that away.

[22:06] He'll give that to someone else. So the vineyard's overgrown, the walls are torn down. Probably my favorite one, and this is actually my favorite verse in regards to the lazy man, and it's my favorite effect,

if you will, of the lazy man.

It comes from 1026, and it says, As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the lazy man to those who send him. I think we've all been camping.

We've all been at the campfire. You're roasting your marshmallow, and what happens? The smoke gets in your face. You think, no big deal. Wind's blowing this way. I'll go around that way.

What happens every single time? Wind starts blowing this way. Well, dang, it's in my eyes again, and then you switch, and it switches, and tug of war. It's just constantly in your eyes. And it's not really painful.

It's not like, oh, my goodness, this hurts. Like, I just broke a leg or something. It's just annoying. It's irritating. It's just the most irritating sensation there is. Smoke in the eyes.

[23:10] And that's how the lazy man is to those that count on him or those who send him. You know, again, if you're a husband and you're lazy in the responsibilities as a husband, you're like smoke to the eyes of your wife.

As a father, if there's something that you need to discipline your child in and you're lazy about that, that's going to be like smoke in the eyes to your wife, to your child.

I think about this verse in regards to, like, camp ministry, Turkey Hill ministry. Sunday, or sorry, Saturday mornings, you know, it's kind of last day of camp.

Kids are coming to get picked up. Jimmy Allen, who's one of the full-time guys down there, will sit in the office and he has a list of things that need to get done. It's the same list every week. You know, go to the gym.

You've got to sweep the floor. You've got to mop the floor. You've got to take the trash out. Go to the kitchen. You've got to sweep. You've got to vacuum. You've got to spray the rubber foot mats out. So on and so forth. And without fail, there will be about 10 to 20 people that come in and they get their job.

[24:13] Okay, Jimmy, we'll go do it. 45 minutes later, okay, it's done. What else you got? Okay, I'll go do that. 45 minutes, hour later, okay, what else you got? And there's about 10 to 20 people that, I don't know what they're doing.

They're picking up sticks. There's a nice chess board right there in the office. They'll be sitting there playing chess. And, you know, those who are counting on you to work, if you're being lazy, boy, that's irritating to the ones that are counting on you.

There's nothing worse than coming back on a Saturday morning and you're just covered in sweat because it's like 200 degrees outside and somebody's sitting there in a hoodie in the air conditioning playing chess.

There's nothing more irritating than that. You know, I think of the Lord in the temple where he's turning over tables. That's kind of what you want to do in that situation. But the lazy man is irritating. It's smoke to the eyes, vinegar to the teeth to the ones that are counting on him. So, with that in mind, you kind of have an idea of some of the emotions, some of the excuses, and some of the effects of the lazy man.

[25:26] I do want to look at a couple examples of how this plays out. So we'll kind of look at how this plays out in a practical sense. First example is going to come from right here in Proverbs.

Chapter 6, we'll read kind of 6 through 9 or so. In this, Solomon uses an animal to kind of shame or to teach the sluggard.

It says, chapter 6, verse 6, Go to the ant, you sluggard, and consider her ways and be wise, which having no captain, overseer, or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest.

How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? And then it goes into, again, a little sleep, a little slumber, and so on. But look at the ant.

That's a good example. What's it say? It says, there's no boss. There's no captain, no overseer, no foreman out there pointing directions.

[26:35] The idea is that the ant is self-motivated, that the ant sees a future need and decides that they're the only one that can do anything about it. And so they go and they meet their future needs.

I would argue that the lazy man also sees his need and is just indifferent towards it or is fearful of it and therefore doesn't act. But the ant, even without any type of leader or boss driving them, is self-motivated, sees, and anticipates future needs.

It says that they provide the supplies in the summer. You know, the ant sees, okay, there's a job to be done, we're going to need some supplies. So it makes provision. And then it gathers harvest. So self-motivated, sees and anticipates needs, makes provisions, gathers.

What's interesting about the ant, if we were to go around the room and say, okay, you can be one animal for 24 hours, zero people in here would say the ant.

We might get the eagle, you know, top of the food chain, you can fly, you can fly really fast. Bear, lion, tiger, you know, again, you can run and move really fast, kind of top of the food chain, no one's coming after you.

[27:49] But the ant, that's down there. That's probably towards the bottom of the list. Teeny tiny, just about anything could kill an ant, a big gust of wind, bunch of rain, somebody squishing you.

And if there were ever an animal that could just be full of excuses, and legitimate excuses, it would be the ant. But it doesn't let it stop, none of the excuses let the ant stop itself from providing, from getting out there and being active.

You know, you want to talk about anxiety or fear, ant's got to be top of the list on that. You know, any moment you could just get squished. So I think that's a good example, but looking outside of the book of Proverbs, I think it's always good to go take a look at the Israelites.

They are pretty good at setting bad examples. So I've got three or four little passages here that I want to look at. Two or three we'll be pretty familiar with.

The first one comes from the book of Samuel, and it's David and Goliath, right? And so David and Goliath, let's look at some of the excuses. You know, he shows up, his brothers say, well, where are those few sheep that you're watching?

[29:05] They don't even say, they don't even call him a shepherd. They just say, well, what about those few sheep? They say, man, you're just a youth. You're just a little boy. Goliath over here, he's a man. He's a man of war, is what they say.

They say he's been a warrior since he was a youth, and here you are just a little youth. They got these excuses. And again, those lead to some emotions. The words that they use in Samuel is that they were afraid, they were dismayed, they were greatly afraid.

So they're full of excuses, and those excuses bring about some emotions. Another passage, you think about the Israelites when they go to the promised land and they send 12 spies, right?

10 were bad and 2 were good. What do the spies say? They say, boy, the men there are strong. They're stronger than we are. Boy, their cities are fortified.

They got fortresses built. Again, they say they're stronger than we. They say we're like grasshoppers compared to those guys. They're so big. And what emotions come from that? Well, the people complain.

[30:08] The people are afraid. The people weep. You know, does the Lord forsake us? Are we not to go take the city? And again, in each of these instances, that fear, that worry, that doubt brings about laziness.

It brings about inaction on the part of the Israelites. You know, the Lord told them, go take the city. But the leaders or the people are swayed by these 10 spies that have excuses. And so inaction. I do want to read a few parts of this next passage. If you'd turn with me to 1 Samuel 13. This is looking at Jonathan and Saul.

And kind of for context, the Israelites are fighting against the Philistines. And they haven't quite come to battle with them yet. The stage is sort of getting set for battle.

And there's about 600 or so Israelites. And if we'll start in Samuel 13, verse 19, it says that there was no blacksmiths to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had said, lest the Hebrews make swords or spears.

[31:22] So the Philistines said, hey, Israel, you're not allowed to have any blacksmiths. We don't want you arming yourselves. So verse 20, but the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his maddock, his axe, his sickle.

So the Israelites, no blacksmiths, no metal workers. If they ever needed, you know, the lawnmower blade sharpened, they'd go down to the Philistines, get it done. And so the result of that, verse 22, it says that it came about on the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who are with Saul and Jonathan.

Now, I know the lesson here is to not make excuses, but this would be a phenomenal excuse to, like, not go to battle. If no one that's with you has a sword or a spear, you're in trouble.

That's a pretty good excuse. And so no weapons, they're outnumbered. But look at the two. We're going to compare Jonathan to Saul here.

14, verse 1 says that it happened on the day, or it happened one day, that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who bore his armor, come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side.

[32:33] And he did not tell his father. So Jonathan, his armor bearer, hey, let's go take these guys on. But Saul, verse 2, was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree, which is in Migrin, and the people with him were about 600.

You know, earlier I said one of the definitions of sluggard is to lean. Saul wasn't even leaning. He was already sitting down. He was sitting down on the outskirts of the camp underneath a tree.

You know, here he is, a man who's supposed to be leading the nation, and he's sitting down on the job, afraid to go take action. And so what's the lesson in all of this?

The lesson comes from verse 6. And this is true of David and Goliath, of the spies in Canaan, and of Jonathan here. From verse 6, it says that Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.

It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few. Nothing restrains the Lord from saving.

[33:49] You go on to read the story, the Lord delivers them. They kill about 20 guys. They kind of trick 20 guys into being surprised, and so the two of them kill about 20 Philistines, and there's a big earthquake, and there's all this confusion, and the Philistines end up fighting themselves.

They don't even realize they're fighting neighbor against neighbor, and the Lord delivers them that day. And that's the big lesson, is that when there's fear, when there's anxiety, and those things start to creep in, and you start making excuses, well, you know, there's a lion in the road.

Boy, it's too cold to get out there. You've got to go to the Lord. You've got to cast your anxiety on Him, and that's the big mistake of the lazy man, that he tries to do things in his own power and is incapable.

You know, you look at David. What does David say? He says, The Lord has delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear. He can save me from this Philistine. He says to Goliath himself, You come after me with a spear and a sword, but I come to you in the name of the Lord. If you look back in Numbers with the 12 spies, Caleb and Joshua say that the Lord is with us. Let's go take this land. And that's the idea, and that's the idea for us is that life is hard, and there are hard things you have to do, and it's easy to just say, You know what?

[35:11] I'm going to stay in bed. It's safe here. But you have to remember that the Lord is with you, and the Lord will deliver you. That's what Jonathan says. Nothing restrains the Lord from saving. I think that's great.

As believers here in the New Testament, you know, we have verses like, The Lord will never leave us or forsake us. That last song that we sang, Come As You Are, the line is, Draw near to Him, and He'll draw near to you.

He's been waiting on you to call on His name, so come, come as you are. That line comes from James 4, verse 8, which was a passage that Lydia and I tried to memorize when we were dating. 4, 7 says that, Resist the devil, he'll flee from you. And verse 8 says, Draw near to the Lord, and He will draw near to you. So if you have anxieties, you have fears, you have excuses for not doing something that the Lord's laid on your heart, draw near to Him.

He'll draw near to you, and He'll give you the power and the deliverance to go do whatever action you need to do. I want to have one final example of this for you, and I think this is an encouraging one, because it's a lot easier said than done, right?

[36:21] This comes from Judges chapter 6, and it's Gideon. Like I said, it's a lot easier to just say, well, the Lord is on our side, you know, rah, rah, go team.

But I like Gideon here. So the Lord calls to Gideon, chapter 6, verse 12 of the book of Judges, and it says that the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, the Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor.

And instantly, Gideon starts with the excuses. You know, the Lord has forsaken us, He's let all these things happen to us, where are all these miracles that our fathers talked about? Excuse, excuse, excuse. And then the Lord turned to him, verse 14, and said, go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites.

Have I not sent you? Gideon, I want you to go save the people. Go do that for me. More excuses. Lord, how can I save Israel?

Indeed, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least of my father's house. You know, Lord, I'm from a bad tribe, I got a weak clan in the tribe, and even in my own family, I'm the least.

[37:40] And what's the Lord say? All right, yeah, you're right, just never mind, go do whatever. No, He says, I will be with you. 16, the Lord said to him, surely I will be with you. So Gideon goes and he obeys.

No, he doesn't, and that's why I like it, and that's why I like this passage so much. He says, Lord, if it's really you, if you're really going to be with me, will you show me a sign? Gideon says, you know, Lord, I want to trust you, but will you just show me a sign?

And so the Lord's gracious to him, he's patient with him. He says, yeah, go put out an offering, and when Gideon puts out the offering, fire comes down and it consumes it. Gideon says, all right, Lord, I know you're with me, and he goes and obeys.

No, he doesn't. He says, Lord, you know, the fire was cool and all, but can you show me just one more sign? Do you mind just showing me one more sign, what I'll do? I'll put my shirt out overnight. I want the ground around the shirt to be dry, and then my shirt will be wet, and if my shirt is wet with dew and everything else is dry, then I'll obey you.

I'll trust you. I promise. And so what happens? Goes to sleep and says, he wrung his shirt out and it filled a bowl full of water. So Gideon says, all right, Lord, thanks, you know, let's do this.

[38:50] No, he doesn't. The third time, he says, and this is what I love about it, verse 39, it says, Gideon said to God, do not be angry with me, but let me just speak once more.

Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece. Let it now be dry on the fleece in the ground. Let there be dew. So he says, Lord, just one more time, just please, I want to serve you, but I'm just scared, Lord, will you help me just one more time?

I'm going to put my shirt out. If it's dry and all the ground is wet, then I'll obey. And the Lord, it says, verse 40, God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but on the dew there was ground.

Or the dew was on all the ground. I love this passage, because like I said, it's easier said than done. Well, just rely on the Lord, and then you can, you know, do whatever you want.

You can go do the things that the Lord has for you as long as you're relying on him. And that's true, but boy, it's easier said than done. And Gideon here, he hesitates, and I resonate with that.

[39:54] That's why I like it, because I relate to that. Lord, I want to obey, but will you just help me? And the Lord does. He gives more grace. Three times, he's with Gideon and shows him that he's with him.

So that's a message on the sluggard. Might be the first time ever. So hopefully we drew something from that. If Dave wants to come back up here, we'll close with a song.

Father God, just thank you for your word. Thank you for the lessons therein. Lord, we know that life circumstances are hard sometimes. God, it's easy to be afraid of those things.

I pray that you will remind us that you are with us, and that you'll never leave us or forsake us, and that you desire for us to serve you and work for you. God, and that you will help us to do that.

You will enable us to do that. Even if we doubt, Lord, like Gideon did three times, he doubted you, Lord, but you stayed faithful to him, and you were faithful to us too, and we thank you for that.

[40:56] You're a good father to us, and we just pray all this, and thank you for all this in Jesus' name. I'm doing so much for you, chúng I'm going so much together, and we hope you're still going through it.

Thank you, thank you. Thank you, humble and você is human. Thank you too. Thank you, and you
bonne to love it.
Thank you, and we'll see you next time.