

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 21 July Ecclesiastes 01-02 Can I Find Meaning?
- 2) **28 July Ecclesiastes 03-05 Why Do I Feel Empty?**
- 3) 04 August Ecclesiastes 05-06 Am I Headed For Failure?
- 4) 11 August Ecclesiastes 07-08 Can I Keep On Going?
- 5) 18 August Ecclesiastes 09-10 Is There Any Hope?
- 6) 25 August Ecclesiastes 11-12 What is the Answer?

INTRODUCTION

- Solomon expresses some good aspects of life such as enjoying the blessings God gives to us while making full use of the limited time and resources we have
- AND a key part of life is realizing God has put Eternity in the hearts of everyone – IOW everyone has the realization there is life after death, even if it is suppressed through sin Romans 1:18

Passage	Comments
4:4-16	<p>God Provides Friends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v4. We labor to keep up with the Jones – so avoid it • vv5-8. Life-Balance issue. Where the “The fool sits back and takes it easy, His sloth is slow suicide” (v5. the Message Bible), the other extreme is being a workaholic (v8) – So, it’s OK to go on vacation (v6) • vv9-12. A team can outperform an individual star. Friendship is healthy and beneficial to good living. Even Jesus enjoyed the fellowship of close friends • vv13-16. Politics is a Cruel Business. People are fickle and “throng” to a new voice for only a short time
5:1-7	<p>God is Not to be Trifled with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon lays out some common sense guidelines when we approach our holy and awesome God <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guard your steps (check your words, thoughts, actions and attitude before approaching God) 2. Be ready to listen (God is not our magical genie) 3. Avoid the Sacrifice of Fools (impulsive, empty words) 4. Know our place (God is in Heaven, we’re on earth) 5. Speak Few Words (but let them be right words) 6. Pay Your Vows (be true to your commitments) 7. Fear God (take Him seriously)

Passage	Comments
Ecc 3:1-15	<p>God Controls Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon compares 28 activities into 14 contrasting pairs to hammer home the point “What’s the Point?” • v10. “to keep them occupied” literally “to answer Him” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ God does not want to assign meaningless labor, especially to His people. Every task has a purpose, even if it is to keep some of us from doing harm • v11. This passage has 3 parts: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. God has made everything “appropriate” or “beautiful” in its time. God’s works have order, harmony and beauty – consider the caterpillar 2. God has put “eternity” in our hearts – no excuse <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. “Man will not find out God’s ways” – for “His ways are unsearchable... and unfathomable!” • vv12-13. “enjoy the good life” literally “to do good in his life” – Do we view time as a threat or an opportunity? • v14. Life is designed for man to give God respect & fear – If only we would have the eyes to see this
3:16-22	<p>God Controls Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv16-18. “Furthermore” – Wickedness overcomes justice and righteousness – WHY, if God is in control do the righteous suffer and die young and the wicked, at times, triumph and live long on the earth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Solomon answer is basically “It is what it is.” ♦ Proverbs 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and turmoil with it; and ♦ Proverbs 16:8 Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice. • vv19-21. Man, like a dog, dies – and who knows where he will end up – This seems like a very cynical view. BUT remember Solomon’s perspective – life without God is a hopeless one • vv22. Therefore, from a worldly perspective, if we can have fun in this life, as hard as it is at times, then do so
4:1-3	<p>Better to be Dead than Red</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon realized oppressors can overwhelm the weak to the point of hopelessness – so it’s better to be dead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ In Nehemiah 5 we see the returning exiled Jews had to sell first their crops, then they mortgaged their lands, then they had to sell their kids just to survive under the oppression of their fellow Jewish rulers ♦ What can a righteous person do in such a situation? ♦ On one hand King David said he never saw the righteous forsaken or go hungry (Ps 37:25), yet we see Solomon painting a totally different picture ♦ How do we reconcile these opposing views?

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- We may not control time, but we can consume it. Whether we are rich or poor, black or white, male or female, smart or dumb, young or old, whole or handicapped we all have one thing in common – the same amount of time each day
- So, are we redeeming or wasting the time God has given us?
- Oh, Solomon’s opposing view of the righteous suffering is an expansion of the formula-based Deuteronomic principle we saw in Job where God allows bad things to happen to good people for therapeutic reasons, and good things to happen to bad people for judgmental reasons

NEXT WEEK: Ecclesiastes 5-6. Solomon continues his proverbial approach and gives a lot of 1-liner quips on wise living.



YES, IT IS BEAUTIFUL, ALICE, AND WE COULD HAVE BEEN HERE AGES AGO IF YOU HADN'T INSISTED ON US EATING ALL THAT OAT BRAN AND WHEAT GERM