

ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 3:9-11



Eccl. 3:9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

This evening, we continue on a wonderful, spiritual journey through the Book of Ecclesiastes, known also as “The Preacher.”

I. THE PREACHER’S SUBJECT, 1:1-11

A. The Preacher, 1:1 (Solomon)

B. The Problem, 1:2-3

C. The Process, 1:4-11

II. THE PREACHER’S SERMON, 1:12-10:20

A. Things He Had Sought, 1:12—2:26

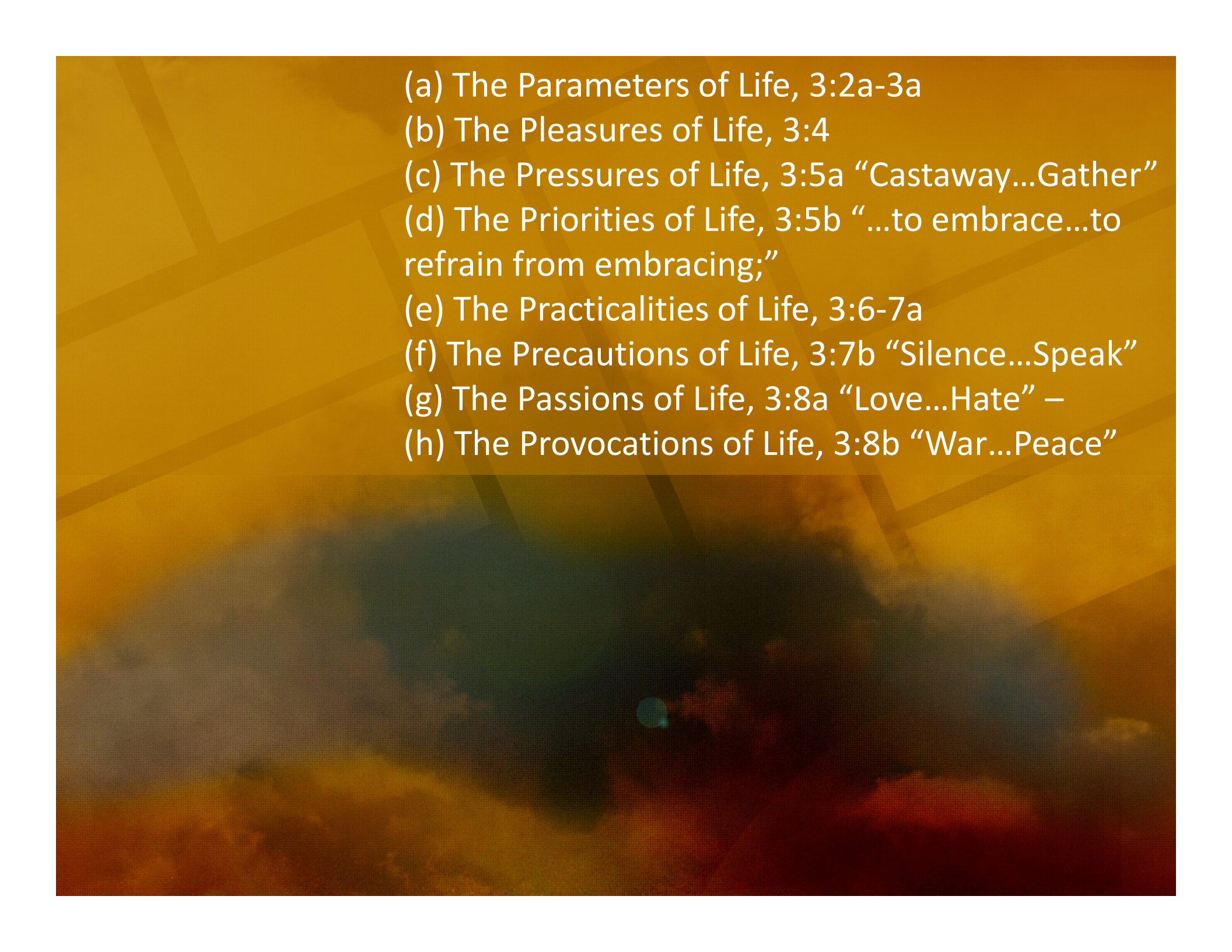
B. Things He Had Seen, 3:1—6:12

1. The Problem of Time Without Eternity, 3:1-11

a. The Logic of Time, 3:1-8

(1) The Rule Expressed, 3:1

(2) The Rule Expanded, 3:2-8

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- (a) The Parameters of Life, 3:2a-3a
 - (b) The Pleasures of Life, 3:4
 - (c) The Pressures of Life, 3:5a “Castaway...Gather”
 - (d) The Priorities of Life, 3:5b “...to embrace...to refrain from embracing;”
 - (e) The Practicalities of Life, 3:6-7a
 - (f) The Precautions of Life, 3:7b “Silence...Speak”
 - (g) The Passions of Life, 3:8a “Love...Hate” –
 - (h) The Provocations of Life, 3:8b “War...Peace”

Last week we considered the “Logic of Time.” There is a “time for...” a multiplicity of activities – some may not affect every area of our life, but we will encounter many of them. Regardless of life’s encounters, God’s fingerprints can be found all over them.

Tonight, we are looking at “The Limitations of Time” in 3:9-11, beginning with a penetrating question.

b. The Limitations of Time, 3:9-11

(1) What He Discerned, 3:9-10

(a) The Penetrating Question, 3:9

Eccl. 3:9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

Eccl. 1:3 **What profit hath a man of all his labour** which he taketh under the sun? ...

- The rhetorical question motivates us to consider our priorities.
- The rhetorical question is another way of asking – What is your life?

(b) The Perpetual Quest, 3:10

Eccl. 3:10 I have seen the **travail**, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

Eccl. 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are **done under heaven**: this sore **travail** hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

Original Word: עֲנָיָן

Transliteration: inyan

Definition: occupation, task (**travail, business**)

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6045.htm>

עֲנָיָן i.e. (generally) employment or (specifically) an affair:—business, travail. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=H6045&t=KJV>

- The same Hebrew word, only used in Ecclesiastes, is translated “business” in Eccl. 5:3, 8:16

Eccl. 5:3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of **business**; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words.

Eccl. 8:16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the **business** that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

- The “travail” = the business at hand.
- In Eccl. 3:10, the emphasis for each of us is to know that whatever is our “business,” once again God’s fingerprints are all over it: “...**which God hath given** to the sons of men to be exercised in it.”

(2) What He Discovered, 3:11a “He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time...”

- Solomon saw beauty in everything as he contemplated that all had a purpose for its creation as the Creator had so designed.

Original Word: יָפֶה

Transliteration: yapheh

Definition: fair, beautiful

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3303.htm>

Deut. 21:11 And seest among the captives a **beautiful** woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;

1 Sam. 16:12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a **beautiful** countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he.

1 Sam. 25:3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a **beautiful** countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil in his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb.

Song 6:4 Thou **beautiful**, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as *an army* with banners.

- Compare translations from four other versions and note the differences:

New International Version

He has made everything **beautiful** in its time. He has also set **eternity** in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

New American Standard Bible

He has made everything **appropriate** in its time. He has also set **eternity** in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

Holman Christian Standard Bible

He has made everything **appropriate** in its time. He has also put **eternity** in their hearts, but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to end.

New King James Version

He has made everything **beautiful** in its time. Also He has put **eternity** in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

King James Bible

He hath made every *thing* **beautiful** in his time: also he hath set **the world** in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

<https://biblehub.com/ecclesiastes/3-11.htm>

(3) What He Decided, 3:11b “...also he hath set **the world** in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”

Original Word: עולם

Transliteration: olam

Definition: long duration, antiquity, futurity (for ever, **world**)

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5769.htm>

Psa. 73:12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the **world**; they increase *in* riches.

Psa. 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the **world**, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

Eccl. 3:11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the **world** in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

Isa. 45:17 *But* Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded **world** without end.

Isa. 64:4 For since the beginning of the **world** *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

- The word “eternity” is only found one place in the Bible – Isa. 57:15

Isa. 57:15 For thus saith **the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy**; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

- The heart of an unspiritual person longs for the world.

2 Tim. 4:10 **Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,** and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

1 Cor. 7:31 And they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for **the fashion of this world passeth away.**

- The overlooked principle of verse 11 is the futility of “searching:”

Eccl. 3:11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, **so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**

Job 11:7 **Canst thou by searching find out God?** canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Ecc. 8:17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*.

- The unsaved person is a “worldly” individual, focused upon worldly matters, and not focused upon “eternity.”
- God initiates the “searching” that draws a person to Christ:

Rom. 3:11 There is none that understandeth, **there is none that seeketh after God.**

Jn. 6:44 **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:** and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned **of the Father, cometh unto me.**

Conclusion

- God is the “Initiator” of eternal relationships with His creation.
- God gives mankind the freewill to listen to His call, or to refuse it:

Prov. 1:24 Because **I have called, and ye refused**; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that **they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:**

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 **Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,** and be filled with their own devices.

Phil. 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that **he which hath begun a good work in you** will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

Phil. 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling.

13 For **it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**

Rev. 3:20 **Behold**, I stand at the door, and knock: **if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.**

