

ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 4:7-12



Eccl. 4:7 Then I returned, and **I saw vanity under the sun.**

8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.

9 Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*?

12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

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
- 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
 - 2. The Problem of a New Leaf Without a New Life, 3:12-17
 - 3. The Problem of Mortality Without Immortality, 3:18-22
 - a. A Low View of Man’s Dignity, 3:18-19
 - b. A Low View of Man’s Destiny, 3:20-21
 - c. A Low View of Man’s Duty, 3:22

In chapter 3, Solomon's perspective "under the sun" was that there is no justice in the courthouse and no righteousness in the church house. Chapter 4, begins with "everything is hopeless."

In this fourth chapter – "The Preacher" – deals with **four areas of life he observes that reinforce his view that all is enigmatic:**

1. oppression (vv. 1-3),
 2. rivalry as the motivation for work (vv. 4-6),
 3. isolation in work and life [lack of community] (vv. 7-12),
 4. the problem of government (vv. 13-16).
- As we continue in chapter 4, we were confronted with "gloom and doom."

5. The Problem of Might Without Right, 4:1-3

a. Gloomy Consideration, 4:1

(1) The Anguished of the Oppressed, 4:1a “So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done **under the sun**: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter;

- Welcome to life under Fascism, Communism, Nazism, and Socialism.
- “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

A proclamation by the pigs who control the government in the novel *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/all-animals-are-equal--but-some-animals-are-more-equal-than-others>

(2) The Arrogance of the Oppressors, 4:1b “...and on the side of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter.”

- History is replete with mankind murdering mankind.

b. Gloomy Conclusion, 4:2-3

(1) Praising Those the Tomb Has Received, 4:2

Eccl. 4:2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

- The fatalistic pessimism of Solomon is...if you're dead, you're better off than the living.

(2) Praising Those the Womb has Refused, 4:3

Eccl. 4:3 Yea, better *is he* than both *they*, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

- Solomon praises the barren womb – that it is better never to have been.

6. The Problem of Prosperity Without Posterity, 4:4-12

a. The Resentful Man, 4:4-5

- Solomon expressed the humanity perspective of the futility of life by two examples:

(1) The Lusting Fool, 4:4

Eccl. 4:4 Again, I considered all travail, and **every right work**, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. **This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**

(2) The Lazy Fool, 4:5

Eccl. 4:5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

b. The Realistic Man, 4:6

Eccl. 4:6 **Better is** an handful *with* quietness, **than** both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.

Tonight, we go from the “gloom and doom” to facing life alone or with someone.

c. The Ridiculous Man, 4:7-12

(1) The Situation, 4:7-8

(a) No Son, 4:7-8a

Eccl. 4:7 “Then I returned, and I saw vanity **under the sun**.

8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother...”

- The “Lone Wolf” in life most often lives a life of loneliness.

Gen. 2:18 And **the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone***; I will make him an help meet for him.

- Companionship and family provide so many benefits in defeating loneliness.

(b) No Satisfaction, 4:8b “...yet *is there* no end of all his labour; **neither is his eye satisfied with riches...**”

- The “Lone Wolf” is focused upon himself – his labor, and his lust for more.
- Too often a workaholic uses labor as a deterrent from facing family obligations and responsibilities connected to fellowship.
- Such abrogation produces a void, not satisfaction of achievement.

(c) No Sense, 4:8c “...neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.”

- The “Lone Wolf” lives a life of loneliness, self-indulgence, and no one with which to share any joy nor success.
- After considering the loneliness of the “Lone Wolf,” a better way is advocated.

(2) The Suggestion, 4:9-12

(a) Production, 4:9

Eccl. 4:9 Two *are* better than one; because **they** have a good reward for **their labour**.

- The unity of duality – sharing in labor and reward = companionship.

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

- Two people with common ideas, goals, philosophies/convictions, beliefs, etc. possess a solid foundation upon which to build a relationship.

2 Cor. 6:14 **Be ye not unequally yoked together** with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

(b) Precaution, 4:10

Eccl. 4:10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but **woe to him that is alone when he falleth**; for *he hath* not another to help him up.

- Common sense substantiates the advantage of having companionship.

“Help! I’ve fallen and I can’t get up!” (Life Alert ad)



http://www.lifealertprotection.com/images/senior_falls.jpg

(c) Preservation, 4:11

Eccl. 4:11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*?

- Two together is practical in regard to generating support for survival during inclement weather.
- Two together is practical in regard to survival in self-defense.

(d) Protection, 4:12

Eccl. 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

- Three-cord unity is even stronger than duality – especially represented in marriage = God + husband + wife

Conclusion

Psa. 127:1 **Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it:** except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: *for* so he giveth his beloved sleep.

3 Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward.

4 **As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.**

5 **Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them:** they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

