

ECCLESIASTES

Eccl. 6:7-12



Eccl. 6:7 All the labour of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

9 Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it *is* man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what *is* man the better?

12 For who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him **under the sun?**

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

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- B. Things He Had Seen, 3:1—6:12
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 - 2. The Problem of a New Leaf Without a New Life, 3:12-17
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 - 5. The Problem of Prosperity Without Posterity, 4:4-12
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(a) A Blighted Soul, 6:3c

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(c) A Burning Sorrow, 6:4-5

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Tonight, we continue our study of the Book of Ecclesiastes. We begin by noting man's limitations regarding knowledge:

Eccl. 6:12 For **who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life**, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for **who can tell** a man what shall be after him **under the sun**?

Eccl. 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that **man should find nothing after him**. ...

24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, **who can find it out**? ...

28 Which yet my soul seeketh, **but I find not**: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.

Eccl. 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***.

Eccl. 9:1 For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God: **no man knoweth** either love or hatred *by all that is* before them. ...

12 **For man also knoweth not his time**: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

Eccl. 10:14 A fool also is full of words: **a man cannot tell what shall be**; and what shall be after him, **who can tell him**?

Eccl. 11:2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for **thou knowest not** what evil shall be upon the earth. ...

6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for **thou knowest not** whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good.

Eccl. 7:2 **It is better** to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart. ...

5 **It is better** to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Eccl. 9:16 Then said I, **Wisdom is better** than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard. ...

18 **Wisdom is better** than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

10. The Problem of Life Without Length, 6:7-12

a. The Desire for Food Described, 6:7a “All the labour of man *is* for his mouth...”

Gen. 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;**

- The relationship between food and health is complex. Everyone needs food to live, but too little food, too much food, or the wrong type of food has negative consequences for health.
- More than 2,500 years ago, Hippocrates said: **“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”**
- About half of US adults have one or more preventable chronic diseases related to poor-quality dietary patterns or physical inactivity, which disproportionately affect low-income and underserved communities. **Simply put, food can help people live healthier and longer lives, and food can help people die prematurely.**

<https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2015.0606>

b. The Depths of Folly Described, 6:7b-9

(1) A Word of Despair, 6:7b-8 “...and yet the appetite is not filled.”

- The emotional challenge of life is not satisfied by the abundance of eating.

(a) Regarding Wisdom, 6:8a “For what hath the wise more than the fool?...”

- A wise man has his problems with despair and is not satisfied.

Prov. 17:22 A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but **a broken spirit drieth the bones.**

(b) Regarding Wealth, 6:8b “...what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?”

- A poor man has his problems with despair and is not satisfied.

Prov. 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but **by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.**

Prov. 25:28 He that *hath* no **rule over his own spirit** *is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

(2) A Word of Disgust, 6:9

(a) Staying Desires, 6:9a “Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire...”

- The “sight of the eyes” may bring the pleasure through creating a “want.”
- But, the aging king’s wants can no longer be fulfill, thus it is better than the “wandering of the desire” = traveling soul.

Mt. 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: **the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.**

- Solomon's mind and eyes still work, but his body is failing to cooperate.
- Solomon's final word of counsel was to be content with what you have.

Heb. 13:5 ***Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have***: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

(b) Stupid Dreams, 6:9b “...this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.”

- Solomon started his reign as king by making wonderful choices.
- Solomon's fame and fortune produced a huge harem of females that turned his heart after other gods.

1 Kings 11:1 **But king Solomon loved many strange women**, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites; ...

4 For **it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God**, as *was* the heart of David his father.

9 And **the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God** of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, **that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.**

- Debilitation of aging and its consequences produced the despair of “chasing the wind.”

C. The Doctrine of Fatalism Described, 6:10-12

(1) You Cannot Change Your Fate, 6:10a “That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it *is* man...”

- Solomon despaired of the fatalistic perspective – you cannot change fate.

(2) You Cannot Challenge Your Fate, 6:10b “...neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.”

- To fight against fate is an exercise of futility.

(3) You Cannot Choose Your Fate, 6:11-12

(a) Life is Very Shallow at Best, 6:11

Eccl. 6:11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what *is* man the better?

(b) Life is Very Short at Best, 6:12

Eccl. 6:12 For who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him **under the sun?**

- Life focused upon that which is “under the sun” is disillusionment, despair, and discouraging.
- Solomon pointed out that we are too often too ignorant of our place in God's all-inclusive plan.

Jer. 10:23 **O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps.**

Conclusion

- A humble, wise man focuses upon the Lord and His Word, not things “**under the sun.**”

Psa 37:23 **The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD:** and he delighteth in his way.

Psa. 119:133 **Order my steps in thy word:** and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Prov. 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and **he shall direct thy paths.**

