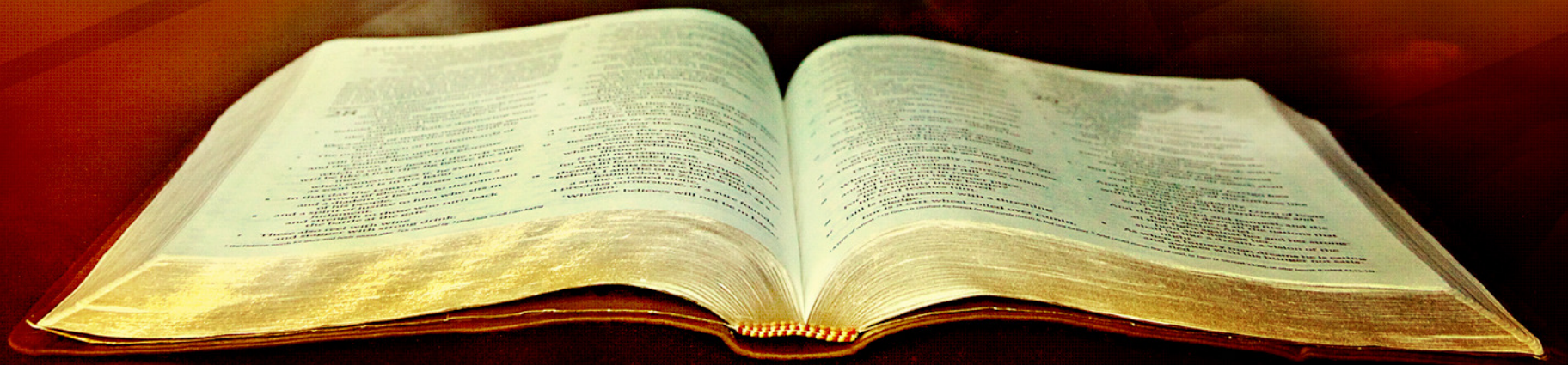


ECCLESIASTES

Eccl. 7:8-14



Eccl. 7:8 Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

10 Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance: and *by it there is* profit to them that see the sun.

12 For wisdom *is* a defence, *and* money *is* a defence: but the excellency of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

13 Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked?

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.

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
- C. Things He Had Studied, 7:1-10:20
 - 1. Life’s Frustrations, 7:1-29
 - a. Cynicism About the Better Things of Life, 7:1-14
 - (1) Character Values, 7:1a
 - (2) Conventional Values, 7:1b-6

(a) Life's Sum, 7:1b

(b) Life's Sorrows, 7:2-4

i. The House of Mourning, 7:2

ii. The Heart of Man, 7:3-4

- Things We Laugh About, 7:3

- Things We Learn About, 7:4

(c) Life's Seriousness, 7:5-6

i. The Rebuking Comment of the
Farsighted Man, 7:5

ii. The Ribald Cackling of the Foolish Man,
7:6

(3) Contemptible Values, 7:7

Tonight, we continue a paradoxical view of life. Last week we saw the contrast between the “house of mourning” and the “house of mirth.” Tonight, we will embrace the reality of principles and not romanticize the illusions of the perceptions.

(4) Conclusive Values, 7:8a *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof...*”

1 Cor. 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, **quit you like men**, be strong. = “**Finish the job.**”

(5) Crucial Values, 7:8b-9

(a) The Principle Expressed, 7:8b “...*and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.*”

- Patience IS a wonderful virtue.

Psa. 37:7 **Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him:** fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Psa. 40:1 **I waited patiently for the LORD;** and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Rom. 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Col. 1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, **unto all patience** and longsuffering with joyfulness;

Heb. 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and **let us run with patience the race that is set before us,**

Jas. 1:3 Knowing *this*, that **the trying of your faith worketh patience.**

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

- The “proud in spirit” exhibits an attitude of superiority of self over all others.

Prov. 6:16 These six *things* **doth the LORD hate**: yea, seven *are* **an abomination unto him**:

17 **A proud look**, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

Prov. 16:5 **Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD**: *though* hand *join* in hand, he shall not be unpunished. ...

19 Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Prov. 21:4 An high look, and **a proud heart**, *and* the plowing of the wicked, **is sin**.

Prov. 28:25 **He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:** but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

Jas. 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**

(b) The Principle Expanded, 7:9

Eccl. 7:9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Prov. 14:29 *He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding:* but **he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.**

Prov. 21:5 **The thoughts of the diligent** *tend* only to plenteousness; but **of every one that is hasty only to want.**

Prov. 29:20 Seest thou a man *that is* **hasty in his words?** *there is* **more hope of a fool than of him.**

Eccl. 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and **let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God:** for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: **therefore let thy words be few.**

(6) Comparative Values, 7:10

Eccl. 7:10 Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

- In verse ten, another philosophical position is confronted – phenomenism:

Phenomenalism, a philosophical theory of perception and the external world. Its essential tenet is that propositions about material objects are reducible to propositions about actual and possible sensations, or sense data, or appearances. According to the phenomenologists, a material object is not a mysterious something “behind” the appearances that people experience in sensation. If it were, the material world would be unknowable; indeed, the term matter itself would be unintelligible unless it somehow could be defined by reference to sense experiences. In speaking about a material object, then, reference must be made to a very large group or system of many different possibilities of sensation. Whether actualized or not, these possibilities continue during a certain period of time. When the object is observed, some of these possibilities are actualized, though not all of them. So long as the material object is unobserved, none of them is actualized. In this way, the phenomenologist claims, an “empirical cash value” can be given to the concept of matter by analyzing it in terms of sensations.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/phenomenalism>

phenomenalism

noun Philosophy.

the doctrine that phenomena are the only objects of knowledge or the only form of reality.

the view that all things, including human beings, consist simply of the aggregate of their observable, sensory qualities.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/phenomenalism>

- In other words, phenomenalism, no past experiences have any value – none can be used as a foundational basis as “truth” must constantly be learned in the present.
- We cannot live in the past, but we can learn from the past.
- The challenge of the past is to “recognize” principles learned, not “romanticize” pleasures exaggerated.
- “The good ole days” were not as good as we remember.

Num. 11:4 And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

5 **We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely;** the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

6 But now our soul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beside this manna, *before* our eyes.

Psa. 106:13 **They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:**

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

15 And **he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.**

(7) Concrete Values, 7:11-12

(a) Wisdom in the Daily Things of Life, 7:11

Eccl. 7:11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance: and *by it there is* profit to them that **see the sun**.

(b) Wisdom in the Deeper Things of Life, 7:12

Eccl. 7:12 For wisdom *is* a defence, *and* money *is* a defence: but the excellency of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

Ex. 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: **that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.**

Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

3 **That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.**

(8) Considered Values, 7:13-14

(a) The Works of God, 7:13

Eccl. 7:13 Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked?

Isa. 42:16 And I will bring the blind by a way *that* they knew not; I will lead them in paths *that* they have not known: **I will make** darkness light before them, and **crooked things straight. These things will I do** unto them, and not forsake them.

"God balances our lives by giving us enough blessings to keep us happy and enough burdens to keep us humble."

Wiersbe, Warren W. "Ecclesiastes." In *The Bible Exposition Commentary/Wisdom and Poetry*, pp. 475-538. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries, 2004.

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**.

(b) The Ways of God, 7:14

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.

- Enjoy “the day of prosperity.”
- Embrace “the day of adversity.”

2 Cor. 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for **when I am weak, then am I strong.**

Conclusion

For a believer, adversity is a “teacher” for edification:

1. Adversity teaches us that God is in control of all things:

Rom. 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

2. Adversity is allowed by God and accompanied with mercy:

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; **only upon himself put not forth thine hand**. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; **but save his life**.



3. Adversity will be limited:


1 Pet. 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Heb 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For **whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth**, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

4. Adversity produces spiritual purity:

Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and **the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;**



Heb. 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless **afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**

Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; **if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.**

2 Tim. 2:12 **If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*:** if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

Phil. 2:14 **Do all things without murmurings and disputings:**

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, **in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

17 Yea, and **if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.**

18 **For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.**

