

I. What Is Good? (6:10-12)

- A.** Summary of the book thus far, and particularly of his findings:
- 1)** Nothing is new (Eccl 1:9-10)
 - 2)** God has ordained all things (Eccl 3:11, 14)
 - 3)** Everything is not only vain itself, but also perpetuates vanity
- B.** The two questions, which pervade the whole of the book: (1) What is good? (2) What will happen after a man dies? (12:14).

II. A Good Name Is Better (7:1)**A.** Exposition of the Text

- 1)** The manner of Solomon's instruction in wisdom
 - a)** Different styles (generally) between Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (Pr 10:7)
 - b)** Scripture teaches right actions and affections (Mi 6:8)
 - c)** Scripture teaches rightly ordered actions and affections (Mt 23:23)
- 2)** What is meant by a *good name*?
 - a)** A reputation among men known for faith and virtue, not folly and vanity
 - b)** Not the mere name, but the reality of the thing, to be truly faithful and upright.
- 3)** What is meant by *precious ointment*? Oil, in its common uses:
 - a)** As a medicine, for healing illness (Isa 1:6)
 - b)** Adorning of the body (Esther 2:12)
 - c)** Making food (1 Kgs 17:14)
 - d)** As a symbol of wealth (2 Kgs 20:13)
 - e)** To anoint kings and the other officers of Israel (2 Kgs 9:6)
 - f)** Summary: Oil signifies the comfortable possession of both necessities and commodities of life.

B. Doctrines from the Text

- 1)** How is a good name a good thing?
- 2)** How is a *precious ointment* a good thing?
 - a)** Consider the life of our Saviour (Mt 26:6-13)
 - b)** In the enjoyment of good gifts (Eccl 5:19)
 - c)** In the use of medicine (Jms 5:14; 1 Tim 5:23)
 - d)** In the liberty of outward adornment (Psa 45:7-9)

- e)** In the godly wielding of authority (Eccl 8:4)
- 3)** How is a good name better than a precious ointment? (Pr 22:1)
 - a)** As lasting things are better than what is more fleeting, so a good name is more lasting than ointment.
 - b)** Comforts will not prepare you for suffering and battles, but a life of faith and faithfulness will (Psa 112:5-8)
 - c)** Comforts will not sustain you in suffering and battles, but the strength built from a life of faith and faithfulness will.
 - d)** There is a greater adornment than the adornment of the body, and that is a good name (1 Pt 3:3-6).
 - e)** As the wicked are often able to secure plenty and power, and less often a good name, so a good name is better than oil because it is a more sure evidence of the work of God's grace in our lives.
- 4)** How can I procure a good name?
 - a)** By being faithful to God's Word (Psa 119:97).
 - b)** By making the right enemies
 - c)** By being faithful to your word (Pr 11:3-6)
 - d)** By being diligent in your work (Pr 22:29)
 - e)** By loving mercy among your neighbour (Psa 112:9a)
 - f)** By doing justly toward your neighbour (Psa 112:9b)
 - g)** By maintaining your good name (*Larger Catechism 144*)
- C.** Answering Objections to the Text
 - 1)** Isn't this caring too much about what others think of us? (Psa 112:10)
 - 2)** What if I have lived a life of sin and rebellion?
- D.** Uses from the Text
 - 1)** What are sins to repent of and guard against?
 - a)** Being too fastidious about our good name (Eccl 7:16)
 - b)** Thinking our name will last longer than it will.
 - c)** Ultimately, focusing on ourselves (*Heidelberg Catechism 122*)
 - 2)** How can I prioritize a good name over precious ointment?
 - a)** Recall this as a priority in your affections and actions.
 - b)** Remember the right priority of a good name (Lk 10:20)
 - c)** Remember that it is not your own name that is most important about you, but the name of God placed upon you in your Baptism.