

Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes
(Remember Now Thy Creator)
Living Well
Ecclesiastes 9:1-10

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. 2 All *things come* alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; *and* he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath. 3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing* that is done under the sun.

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. 8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. 9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. 10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

OUTLINE

- (1) **Help** (v1-3)
- (2) **Hope** (v4-6)
- (3) **Happiness** (v7-10)

INTRODUCTION

This book of Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon in the evening years of his life as a personal testimony to all posterity to teach the futility of worldly ambitions and desires in life apart from God.

In short, a godless life doesn't satisfy the human soul as our Lord Jesus says in Mark 8:36-37 *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The word "*Ecclesiastes*" simply means "*Preacher*", one who had gathered wisdom to speak about life.

The fruitlessness and futility of worldly ambitions and desires without God is depicted by the word "vanity" which he carefully chose to use and repeat throughout the book to epitomize such a life. In his introduction in verses 2-3, he lamented, "2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. 3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? Eccl 1:2-3 (KJV)" Can there be any real value and meaning in man's labour on this earth apart from God? The answer is no. Why you may ask?

This word "vanity" means "vapour" or "breath". This world's ambitions, desires and pursuits Solomon concluded give no real satisfaction to the soul for when we breath our last breath, that's it, we leave behind the fruits of all our labour, cannot bring with us. Hence, he is teaching this concept that anything that is of real value must be eternal. What is of value must be able to last. The truth is that this worldly life and its pursuits, like a vapour, like the morning dew, evaporate in no time when the sun is up, when this life is over. This he described is life "under the sun".

Having delineating the futility of a life without God, he tells us how we can be living well!

Three thoughts:

- (1) **Help** (v1-3)
- (2) **Hope** (v4-6)
- (3) **Happiness** (v7-10)

- (1) **Help** (v1-3)

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. 2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. 3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

It seemed that there is an equalization for all men and death is that one event that consummates for all men. Therefore, the question is asked if

there is a difference between one who seek to live life with the help of God and one who seeks to run his own life without God. Outwardly, it seemed there is no difference.

But a careful examination in truth will tell us that all things happen by the hand of God. He is sovereignly in charge of this universe. He has chosen a people for His own whom Solomon calls the righteous and the wise. These lived their lives guided by God.

God reveals Himself in His creation, what is called “Natural Revelation”.

Psalm 19:1-2 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

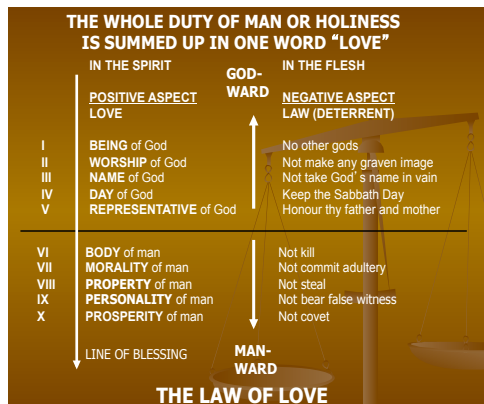
God reveals Himself in His Word, what is called “Special Revelation”.

Psalm 19:7-11 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

*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***

God guides and helps His people to live profitable lives. Man by himself has no true wisdom to discern even what to love and what to hate.

God gives His laws that man may live by them for their eternal blessing.



God's laws gives the governing order to all man. What he ought to love and what he ought to hate.

2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. 3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

He tells us that although the righteous is distinguished from the unrighteous, the wicked with the good, the clean with the unclean, he that offers a sacrifice and he that does not, he that is good and the sinner, he that seeks to live by their principles and those who choose not commit, there is an equalization that comes to all men. That is death.

Solomon is teaching us the concept of value and meaning in life. If death ends everything, he is right to say that he "hated life".

What difference does it make anyway! But dear friends, death doesn't end all. If we take a peek at the end of the book, Solomon revealed to us that there is such a truth as God's judgment. This Solomon will reveal right at the end of this book, that death does not end all, "hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil".

If there is no eternal judgement let us do whatever we want, why do we need a moral system anyway? Whatever we do, we do, whether we behave morally or wantonly there is no difference!

Solomon tells us that every man perish one day. Whether you are wise or foolish, you have to die, in other portions he mentioned whether wealthy or poor, man or animal all have to die. Then what is the difference? Is there any difference? No, there is no difference.

(2) Hope (v4-6)

4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

He tells us that as long as we are alive, there is hope. There is hope to find the true meaning of life. There is hope to know your Creator, the Source of life!

They have the opportunity to live this life profitably. Indeed, living a profitably on earth with God is preparation for the eternal life to come.

***2 Corinthians 5:7-11** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.*

If there is no judgment, there is no need to live well. But Solomon tells us there is a difference. There is a judgment to come. Therefore, we live circumspectly.

(3) Happiness (v7-10)

***7** Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. **8** Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. **9** Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. **10** Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

God blesses our food and drink to the nourishment and strengthening and comfort and joy. We give thanks to God for the food before we partake them. God bless them to our bodies.

He gives us the ability to work and we may get wages and be fed.

***Genesis 3:19** “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”*

The first principle that we want to understand is the truth that God ordained work. This is a consequence of the fall of man recorded in Genesis 3:19. Man is to work in order to sustain his physical life. So human labour is that which is ordained of God to feed or sustain physically man till the day he dies. From his labours, man shall receive the fruit of his

labour to feed and sustain his physical life. This is grace to man as it keeps him away from indulging in further sin as a consequence of idleness.

This truth is repeated in the NT. Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 3:12 to receive our provisions through diligent labour *“Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”*

Enjoy the Fruit of Your Labour - The Bible’s teaching is that man can enjoy the fruit of his labour. Having acknowledged that God is the One who has enabled him to work (Deut. 8:18) and returning the first fruits to the Lord, there is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should enjoy good in his labour (Ecclesiastes 2:24). And also that every man should eat, and enjoy the good of his labour, it is the gift of God (Ecclesiastes 3:13; 5:19). However, this should not be wasted upon lustful desires. As everything we have must be for the glory of God, *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”* (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Let thy garments be always white - The Jews wore white garments on festal occasions, as emblems of joy and innocence. Be always pure, and always happy. The inhabitants of India are all dressed in clean white cotton, and to this is the allusion in the text. [Clarke]

Enjoy your marriage. There is indeed great comfort that comes in a marriage relationship.

MacArthur said well, “Like most people of both sexes today, many Jewish men in New Testament times looked on marriage only as a means of gratifying their own lusts and of fulfilling their own purposes. Marriage was the accepted means of sexual indulgence and of procreating children, and it also provided a convenient cook and housekeeper. Unlike modern people, however, most Jewish men appear to have been little concerned about romance.

Romance can be a beautiful part of marriage that lasts even through old age. But romantic feelings cannot be the basis for a sound and enduring marriage, because they are largely composed of pleasant sensations toward the other person that are easily subject to change. **A sound marriage is based on permanent, unconditional commitment to one’s spouse, even if romantic feelings flicker or are extinguished altogether. If romantic feelings are the basis of a marriage, when a spouse begins to lose attractiveness, the other’s attention is turned to someone else who seems more promising and exciting.** When one romantic fling after another is pursued, emotional burnout is inevitable. Such a superficial relationship cannot last long and never achieves the expected fulfillment. Each

successive failure brings less satisfaction and more disappointment, disillusionment, and emptiness. The collective result, as seen so dramatically and tragically in modern society, is a generation of disoriented, lonely, isolated, untrustworthy untrusting, and emotionally bankrupt misfits looking for the next arousing sensation.”

He shared this testimony, “Some years ago I heard the story of an elderly minister who had been married for fifty years. One morning at breakfast his wife slumped over the table, unconscious. By the time her husband got her to the hospital she was dead. After the funeral he said to his sons, “This is a good day, a wonderful day.” When they asked what he meant, he explained, “Well, I know she is with the Lord now. And I am glad she went first. That’s the way I wanted it to be, because I didn’t want her to have the grief of burying me and of having to live alone.”

10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Serve God with your life. Serve Him for all that good that He has bestowed upon you.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, what thou hast opportunity and ability to do in the duties of thy calling, and in order to thy comfort and benefit,

do it with thy might; with unwearied diligence, and vigour, and expedition; whereby he again discovers that he doth not persuade men to an idle and sensual life, but only to a sober enjoyment of his comforts in God’s fear, and with an industrious prosecution of his vocation.

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave; thou canst neither design nor act any thing there tending to thy own comfort or advantage; therefore slip not thine only season. [Poole]

CONCLUSION

- (1) Help in God (v1-3)
- (2) Hope from God (v4-6)
- (3) Happiness with God (v7-10)

Amen.