

“Rejoicing in Life”
Ecclesiastes 11:7-10
(Preached at Trinity, March 3, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 3-6** Solomon warned of the danger of failing to give due diligence in life. Of looking upon all the dangers in life and refusing to take risks. It is a wasted life because it fails to savor the goodness of life—all that God has provided by His goodness. It misses the joy of living.
2. **Verse 7** introduces this next section well.
Ecclesiastes 11:7 NAU - "The light is pleasant, and *it is* good for the eyes to see the sun."
Literally it says, "The light is sweet." A savor to be enjoyed.
It's like Solomon is saying, "It's good to be alive."
It's good to wake up and see the light. To smell the many aromas that fill the air. To hear the sounds that seem to surround us. To taste the endless variety of flavors that excite the palate.
With the dawning of each new day hope is renewed in the presence of God's abiding faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:22-24 KJV - "*It is of* the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. ²³ *They are* new every morning: great *is* thy faithfulness. ²⁴ The LORD *is* my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."
3. These verses are full of joy.
Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU - "Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all"
Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood"
Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood."

- I. The first thing we need to heed in these verses is the importance of joy
- A. God commands us to rejoice
- Philippians 4:4 NAU** - "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"
1. This is a major theme in the Bible.
 - a. The Hebrew word for rejoice or joy is שמח (samach) is found 168 times.
Psalm 5:11 NAU - "But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You."
Psalm 9:2 NKJ - "I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High."
 - b. We've also seen it in Ecclesiastes – nine times.
Ecclesiastes 3:12 NAU - "I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime;"
 - c. The Greek word χαίρω is found 68 times
 2. God has shown mercy upon this fallen world. Life is to be enjoyed by all. But only believers rejoice in God's goodness. Only believers express gratitude for God's goodness. Only believers can appreciate Solomon's words.
Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU - "Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all"
 3. Life is a gift from God. Life is to be enjoyed by all. Solomon writes to both young and old.
 4. To old men -
Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU - "Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all"
 - a. It is true that the strength and vitality of youth fades but the wisdom and experience of the aged should be treasured. Regrets can be consuming but God's grace continues to shine, even in our weakness.
 - b. We are to enjoy our days. Some become bored in old age, but this shouldn't be the testimony of Christians.
 There is great joy in a long life of contentment in Christ and an ever-increasing desire to depart to be with Him.
Psalm 91:16 NAU - "With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation."
 4. To young men -
Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood."
 - a. There is strength and energy with youth, but they must guard against the danger of inexperience, pride, and temptation.

- b. Solomon tells the young to enjoy their youth. It is a season of life to be treasured.
- c. And there is joy in progressively growing in maturity and holiness.

- B. Life is sweet, but we must be careful not to set our hearts upon it where it becomes idolatry.
1. This is far more prevalent than we realize. Most people idolize youth and despise old age. Billions are spent on measures to deny the passing of time. Most live as if they will never see death.
 2. We are warned against becoming lovers of this present age.
1 John 2:15-16 NAU - "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."
Colossians 3:1-2 NAU - "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."
 3. Life can blind us to the reality of eternity.
 4. And the joys of life must never be enjoyed without praise to the Giver of life. There must be an object upon which our joy rests. The charge to us is:
Psalm 32:11 NAU - "Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."
Psalm 33:1 NAU - "Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright."
Psalm 37:4 NAU - "Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart."
Philippians 4:4 NAU - "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

II. We are taught to number our days.

- A. Our life consists of a multitude of individual days.
1. We are to weigh each and every one
Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU - "Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all"
 2. Some days are full of rejoicing – "let him rejoice in them all"
 3. Some days are full of difficulty - **Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU** - "let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many."
 4. Solomon tells us to embrace each day. Awaken to each new day with joy and expectation.
Ecclesiastes 11:7 NAU - "The light is pleasant, and *it is* good for the eyes to see the sun."
 5. The idea is that even in our darkest hour, the light of the sun will shine once again. We serve a good and gracious God.
Psalm 30:5 NAU - "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy *comes* in the morning."

Psalm 88:13 NAU - "But I, O LORD, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You."

B. Our days pass quickly

Ecclesiastes 11:10 NAU - "childhood and the prime of life are fleeting."

1. The young tend to despise getting old. They freely use the word "dated." They want all things modern and "trendy."
2. Wisdom helps us to enjoy every season and embrace change. Wisdom teaches us that our youth is but for a moment. Rejoice in it but prepare for the advancing years. Solomon declares the great blessing of the joy of growing old with the wife or husband God blessed you in our youth.

Proverbs 5:18 NAU - "Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth."

III. We are warned of the dangers that accompany living.

A. Life is to be lived and enjoyed. We are to rejoice in our days. But we must not pretend there will not be many dark days.

Ecclesiastes 11:8 NAU - "let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many."

1. Dark days are our lot in a fallen world. The world is under God's wrath.

Romans 1:18 NAU - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"

2. The problem of humanity is pretending we deserve all bright days. We complain loudly in adversity because we think some injustice is being perpetrated upon us.

a. God reveals His holiness in the afflictions of this life. They are a token of His righteous judgment.

b. God also reveals His transforming grace as His people receive the dark days while trusting Him.

3. Solomon makes the observation that days become more difficult with age.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 NAU - "put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting."

Barzillai testified in 2 Samuel 19

2 Samuel 19:35 NAU - "I am now eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I hear anymore the voice of singing men and women?"

B. Solomon directs his wisdom towards the young

Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood."

1. But remember, youth passes quickly.

Ecclesiastes 11:10 NAU - "childhood and the prime of life are fleeting."

a. For most, even when they are told to savor the season, they still live as if their youth will last forever.

- b. Too often youth is lived with careless abandon and squandered away. The elders must warn them to take it all seriously—that self-indulgence will consume them.
- c. John Wesley’s mother wrote him when he was young:
As self-will is the root of all sin and misery; so whatever cherishes this in children ensures their wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we further consider, that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own: that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will’ no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends upon this; so that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul; the parent who indulges it does the devil’s work; make religion impracticable, and salvation unattainable.¹
2. There are temptations that accompany youth. Things that capture our attention and seize our heart.
- a. This is true for many. They live recklessly, selfishly, without any thought of their duty before God. There is no regard for sexual purity. No regard for self-restraint.
- b. Knowing this Solomon admonishes us:
Ecclesiastes 11:10 NAU - "So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting."
- c. We must know we will give account to the all watching, all knowing God
Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things."
3. But we don’t have to look at **Verse 9** with a cynical eye. With youth there is freedom to follow the desires of the heart. There is greater safety in taking risks and greater time to correct missteps. There is a presumption of possessing more time to dream, to make bold plans for the future, greater liberty to make changes in the course of life.
4. Yet, all must know they are responsible to God for their decisions and actions. Paul gives wise counsel to us:
2 Timothy 2:22 NAU - "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

¹ Charles Bridges, *An Exposition of the Book of Ecclesiastes* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860), 344–345.

Conclusion:

1. Solomon provides us wise counsel in these verses.
We are to enjoy life. We are to rejoice in God our Creator. We are to savor the various seasons of life.
2. Rather than dwelling on the things that are wrong and continually offering up our complaints, we rather count our blessings and enjoy the life God has granted to us. Yes, there are dark times but we have a gracious God before whom we must pray without ceasing.
Philippians 4:6-7 NAU - "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
3. We must never forget the One before whom we will give account.
Ecclesiastes 11:9 NAU - "God will bring you to judgment for all these things." He knows all, sees all, governs all. We must live before Him in all praise and worship.