

Ecclesiastes 11: 5 and 6; “Not Understanding God’s Works”, Message # 76 in a series entitled – “Remember Your Creator”, A Bible Study conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on the evening of August 8th, 2012, at the Rendall home.

It is interesting to see the progression of thought used by Solomon here in this chapter. We who believe in God are to “cast our bread upon the water”, which means that we give some gifts of our material substance to help truly needy people around us. It also means that we are thoughtful enough also to give them the gospel and the truth of the word of God. It is the bread for their souls. As Old Testament believers and New Testament believers, we are here exhorted by Solomon, to give a portion to seven or eight in terms of the food that we have with us. Good works can begin with something as simple as feeding people a meal. But we go on from there. Having our faith in God, because of Christ and His grace, we are to see ourselves as clouds full of rain, and we are to pour ourselves out in blessings upon needy people as we are able and willing. This is a part of being engaged in doing the good works that we are called to do, once we have been saved from our sins and brought into the kingdom of Christ. We are to remember that what we do for God and for Christ, while we live, will be remembered and rewarded by our God. If we do nothing good with our life, having had the opportunity, when our tree falls to the ground (that is, when we die) then we will certainly perish in our sins.

In verse 4, then, Solomon goes on to amplify on this truth of giving to needy people by warning us against our making excuses for not spreading the truth of the word and not doing good works while we now have the time to do so. If we observe the wind, if we focus on all the things which supposedly could prevent our doing our good works, then we will neither sow, nor reap. We are told here in verses 5 and 6 that there are three things which we do not know, and really, those three things ought to encourage us to continue on faithfully in doing our good works and sharing the truth of the Bible. 1st - We do not understand the way of the wind. 2^{ndly}, we do not know how God makes bones to form in a mother’s womb. And 3^{rdly} – We do not understand how God brings spiritual prosperity. This is what we want to look at this evening.

1st of all – We do not understand His work in the wind. (verse 5a)

“As you do not know what is the way of the wind...” “So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.” We are told here that there are many things that we do not know about God’s working, in regard to the things which He makes and does in the physical creation. The two mentioned are the way of the wind and the formation of the bones of a child in the womb. Both are very mysterious to us. We should be able to easily conclude this: The working of God in both the formation of man in the womb and God’s formation of the New Creature, or New Man, in the regeneration of a man, his New Birth, is something which we cannot

understand. Nevertheless we ought to use it as a motivation for our continuing to trust in Christ and labor for Christ.

First we do not know the way of the wind. Turn with me over to Job Chapter 38, verse 24. “By what way is light diffused, or the east wind scattered over the earth?” We really do not know how God does this, do we? Here Job needs desperately to understand that God is infinitely wiser than he is, in all that He had permitted Satan to do; all that He had ordained concerning Job. And one of the ways that this is proved to him is by Job’s understanding that he cannot understand God’s ways in the wind. Satan’s way with the wind was to destroy all of Job’s children. God’s way with the wind is to use it to save and deliver His people from their sins and bondage. Let’s turn to Exodus Chapter 14 to see this. Here in this chapter the children of Israel have left Egypt after God had sent 10 successive plagues upon them, so that Pharaoh finally let the people go. But Pharaoh was not really happy with himself at all, for letting the people go. So he hardened his heart again and went after them. Actually, Lord says to Moses here in verse 2 – “Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea.” “For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.’” “Then I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.” “And they did so.” (They chased Israel and all the way to the Red Sea. They now were backed right up to the sea. I want you to see now, how God uses His mighty wind in this situation to defeat their and His enemies, and to deliver His people. Pharaoh and his armies pursued Israel and this what God did. Verse 13 – “And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not be afraid.’” “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today.” “For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever.” “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.” “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Why do you cry to Me?’” “Tell the children of Israel to go forward.” “But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.” “And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.” “And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them.” “So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.” “Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.” “And the Angel of the God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.” “So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel.” “Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.” “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea

into dry land, and the waters were divided.” “So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”

Now, I have read all of this to you to show you just how sovereign the Lord is over the way of the wind. What was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians was light by night to Israel. The children of Israel didn't know the way of the wind, but God knew exactly its way and what He intended to do with it. He had perfect control over it to deliver His people by using it. After they had passed through on dry land, He had the perfect control over it to cause it to cease at just the right time, and the waters returned to their normal depth, and all the Egyptian army was drowned in God's judgment upon them. In applying this to yourself as a believer, God knows exactly the way of the wind and therefore you ought to trust in Him, that He will work all things together for good you. The same Providence that destroys God's enemies, He will use to work for your good. Therefore you ought to go ahead and do the work that He has called you to do. Your greatest work is to be found in trusting in Him. Even if He is bringing strong winds of judgment upon others, and showing them His justice, yet He will be gentle with you, O believer. He will be for you, even if you have many earthly enemies. It is true that you do not know the works of God, but you will be upheld in your faith; you shall not be shaken, when you are trusting in the Lord. God is not only sovereign in regard to physical use of the wind, He is also sovereign over who is given a New Heart and thus will be saved from their sins. There is a very famous verse on the subject of the wind if you will turn with me over to John Chapter 3. This verse will serve our purposes very well. John 3, verse 3. “Jesus answered Nicodemus and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes.” “So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Now the word for “spirit” here in the Greek is πνευμα (pneuma) and the Hebrew word for “wind” in our text that we are studying tonight, is that same kind of word, which can either be translated “wind” or “spirit”. “You do not know the way of the wind” or “You do not know the way of the spirit, or how bones are formed in the womb of her who is with child.”

How can we apply this? God is very sovereign and mysterious in His work in the New Birth in the heart of the one who will become a Christian. How does the direction of a sinner's heart change so that He will not be against Christ and even desire Christ for himself? It is by the Lord's great power of the spiritual wind blowing upon, and in his heart, convincing him of sin and righteousness and judgment. The Spirit blows upon the sinner's heart in such a way that the enmity is taken away, and there is a way made for the seed of righteousness to be planted there and a New life is created where before was only deadness. In applying this

truth, there is every reason for you to share the gospel repeatedly with the same persons that you have shared it with before. You do not know the working of God, or how He brings about His purposes in salvation. Those whom you have spoken to before may have rejected the truth many times when you presented it to them. But it only takes the wind of the Spirit, coming sailing into the heart, and all is changed. Don't give up praying for them. Keep sowing the seed of the Word. Keep giving a serving to seven or eight.

2nd - We do not understand His work of making bones to form in a mother's womb. (verse 5b)

“Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.” Once again we find that in conception and the gestation of the child, that God's work is very mysterious and very powerful. Look over at Psalm 139, verse 13. “For You, God, formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.” “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.” How does God grow the bones of the little one in the womb? You do not know. But God knows and it is well kept secret. He does His marvelous work very slowly and very definitely, and so very gradually these bones form in the child's body in the mother's womb. This is meant to be an illustration of spiritual truth to us. Even as God does His physical work of forming bones, even so He does His mighty works of grace. In bestowing His free gift of salvation, God forms faith in the heart of the sinner whom He causes to become interested in the gospel of Christ. He sends His Spirit to savingly work in him in relation to the gospel which is shared or preached.

Your part is to tell people about their need of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2: 1 – “And I brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.” “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.” “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” And how then will we become holy? Will it be our own self-efforts? Turn over to Philippians 2, verse 12. “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” Let us understand that we are saved by the mighty working of God in relation to the hearing of the word of God, and let us understand that we become holy by the mighty working of God very gradually over time by God's powerful working to change our minds about what we truly want to do and to pursue. He works in our hearts to turn us away from selfishness, away from worldliness, and toward spiritual truths and realities in our hearts and in our doing good in relation to others around us. This working may be imperceptible to

us as we try to analyze it, but God is most definitely doing it. Therefore trust Him and continue to labor for His kingdom. Walk worthy of His calling you.

3rd – We do not understand how God brings spiritual prosperity.

“In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good.” In other words, the sovereignty of God is a great motivation to evangelism and good works. The truths that we are studying here should give us great hope in regard to the salvation of others around us, and our own becoming holy, which is the goal of much of our labor as a Christian. We do not see how it is that certain people can be saved, or how we ourselves can become holy. But with God nothing is impossible. Turn with me over to Galatians 4, verse 16. The Apostle Paul was afraid that those whom he had preached the gospel to might be going back to Judaism again. He says to them, “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” “They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them.” “But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you.” “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.” Paul’s greatest desire was to see Christ formed in each one whom he had preached to, who said that they had believed the gospel. He travailed in birth for them, but he knew that God had to give them life. Turn over to 1 Corinthians Chapter 3 and verse 5. “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?” “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” “So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.” His working is mysterious, but it is very definite in the case of His Elect. And even though we may see it as being very uncertain, it is not. Paul would labor over them as a mother trying to bring forth children, but he knew that God alone could give them the right understanding of grace. God is sovereign over all the results of all our preaching and our sharing of the gospel, all of our sowing of seed, and all of our doing good works. That is the reason that we ought to continue in it, both morning and evening. It was the “sound a mighty rushing wind” that was heard on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostle Peter preached and 3,000 souls were brought into the kingdom of God, and they were baptized and brought into the church that day. But notice Paul’s commentary on this in 1 Corinthians 3, verse 8. “Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.” How does this relate to our text in Ecclesiastes? It does so in this way. “Do not hesitate to sow your seed in the morning, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that or whether both alike will be good.” Labor on, spend and be spent, for you will reap if you faint not. Galatians 6, verse 7 says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” “For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap

corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”
“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”