

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 19TH-20TH, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

REVERENCE (ECCLESIASTES 5:1-7)

"GUARD YOUR STEPS..."

Solomon tells us that we are to approach God in obedience instead of just haphazardly worshipping and sacrificing like "fools do."

- This means we **cannot worship however we please. We're to fellowship with God in "Spirit and Truth" (Jn. 4:24). 1 Sam. 15:22 says that "obedience is better than sacrifice."**

IT IS A HUGE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Because we've become "Christians" without emphasis on biblical literacy, **we have religious sincerity without truth, and that is lethal.**

- **Without the Bible, prayer, and accountability of the church we resort to spiritless prayers and worship without relationship with God.**

"DO NOT BE HASTY TO SPEAK..."

Solomon says, **"God is in heaven and you are on earth."** We need to be reminded that God is not like us, and He shouldn't be addressed as such. Rushing to speak can have disastrous consequences (Num. 11).

- A wise person chooses their words carefully and understands their audience.

THIS DOESN'T PROHIBIT LONG PRAYERS

Though we should choose words wisely, that doesn't mean we can't pray long prayers. It also doesn't mean that repetition is altogether bad.

- The point is to be sincere and biblical when we talk to God. A good model is **thank Him, repent, pray for others, and pray for your needs.**

IF YOU SAY IT, DO IT! (V4-5)

God is happy with those that keep their word because He keeps His. People who break promises can be restored (Peter), but we should strive to not make vows we can't keep.

- Pr. 20:25 says, **"It is a trap for anyone to dedicate rashly and later reconsider their vows."** This is why we're taught to **choose our words wisely.**

"THEREFORE, FEAR GOD."

Our words have tremendous power and can cause great evil if not under the control of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:5-6). If we don't "fear" God, we may use careless words that make God angry and "destroy the work of [our] hands."

- Solomon says **our "dreams" and "words" apart from God are futile. Therefore, we need to respect God.**

OPPRESSION (ECCLESIASTES 5:8-9)

INJUSTICE SHOULDN'T SHOCK US

Though we should be bothered by evil, we shouldn't be surprised by it. We become disillusioned with humanity because we give ourselves too much credit.

- We often say, "look inside yourself" or "follow your heart," **but without God there is no goodness in people (Rm. 7:18, Jn. 1:17).**

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

God is not the author of evil, mankind is. God gave us free will to make decisions and people that live without Him make poor choices that often hurt others.

- If we have a relationship with God **we can rest in His goodness even when we don't understand every situation.**

IT IS A TRUST ISSUE

We often rely too much on human reasoning to understand the ways of God. Again, He is beyond us. To criticize God's motives or ability because we simply don't understand is the height of arrogance (Rm. 9:21).

- **We can ask Him questions, but we must be humble and teachable when we approach God.**

WEALTH (ECCLESIASTES 5:10-17)

MONEY IS NOT EVIL

The Bible doesn't say money is evil, but that the love of money is extremely evil. The danger in loving money is that we can put our hope in it and make it an idol.

- Money, like everything apart from God, never satisfies the seeker. Solomon says when we get more, we just want more.

BUT, JESUS SAID TO GIVE IT ALL AWAY!

In Luke 18 Jesus does tell the rich young ruler to give away his possessions, but this is not a prescription for all followers of Christ. Money had become a god to the young man.

- **We love to point out other people's sins, and, it's easy to demonize those that have things we want isn't it? We need to focus on our sin first.**

IT IS ABOUT HOW WE STEWARD WEALTH

Most people's problem with money is that they don't properly use it. The Bible tells us to be givers to the mission of the gospel and to take care of family and others as we have opportunity.

- **If we understand that all blessings are from God's goodness, we learn to live open-handed with wealth.**

MO' MONEY MO' PROBLEMS

If we don't understand that all blessings come from Him, we will be anxious and money will be our downfall. Solomon says, "the sleep of the worker is sweet...but the abundance of the rich permits him no sleep."

- When money is our hope we live in fear of losing it. This is why **hope must be found in something greater.**

WEALTH DOES NOT GIVE LIFE

We "came from [our] mother's womb, so [we] will go again, naked as [we] came." Though the ultra wealthy have tried for centuries, money cannot stop death.

- **Finding life is a result of losing ours to Christ (Matt. 16:25).** Isn't it insane that people are still trying to live this life forever?

CONTENTMENT (ECCLESIASTES 5:18-20)

"HERE IS WHAT I'VE SEEN TO BE GOOD"

A relationship with God is the lynchpin to contentment. In all things we do, eating, drinking, working, and playing, God can bring us joy if we recognize that He is our source of hope and fulfillment.

- We're to enjoy the temporary things of this life as we long for the eternal things of the next life.

WE MUST BALANCE REALISM WITH HOPE

Even if we have a great relationship with Jesus, we will still have hard times. In those times we must lean on Him and remember that whatever happens He is good!

- Jesus told us that **we will have suffering** and that it rains on the just and unjust. **He also promised He would be with us in Spirit until He returns in person.**

THE CHRISTIAN "DOES NOT CONSIDER" THE DAYS

Solomon isn't saying that we shouldn't think about what we are doing or how we live, but that the follower of God is not preoccupied with their mortality.

- **The Christian shouldn't have a midlife crisis or live in fear of age or death. We're to be "occupied with the joy of [our] hearts" that is found in Christ.**

DO WE SEE GOD IN OUR EFFORTS?

- **Do we take the time to remember the provision of God?** Do we think about the food we eat, the clean water we drink, the conversations with friends and family, and the work we are blessed to have?
- **Have we become entitled, making it hard to see the blessings of God?** Do we lose sleep over what we don't have?

HOW DO WE LEARN TO SEE GOD?

- **It is hard to see God when we are always looking at ourselves.**
- We need to **pray**, and we need to make ourselves the last priority in our prayers.
- We must **choose humility** and recognize that He gave us this day and everything good in it.
- We must **intentionally pause** and look.

ARE WE IN LOVE WITH THE WRONG THINGS?

- Have we fallen in love with things that are incapable of satisfying? **Can we enjoy the things of this life without idolizing them?**
- Many of us are anxious in this life because we don't long for the next one. **Are we anticipating Jesus' return, or are we preoccupied with the pursuit of having more _____ in this life?**