

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 26TH-27TH, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

WASTED (ECCLESIASTES 6:1-6)

WE CANNOT LIFT THIS WEIGHT ALONE

In contrast to the righteous person who is blessed with things but ultimately finds joy in God (5:18-20), 6:1-6 focus on the weight we face when we've been given much but don't recognize where it comes from.

- **One reason so many struggle with the heaviness of life is because we think success is solely in our hands.**

WE ARE PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE

Success and contentment come from God, but we must **be humble, realize the source of joy, and choose to walk in it.**

- It is similar to salvation. **We cannot save ourselves, but we must be willing to be saved** and to walk in fellowship and obedience with God.

WE MUST ALSO DEFINE SUCCESS

When we talk about God enabling us to succeed, we must be clear to not fall into heretical prosperity teachings.

- **True success is in a relationship with God and others, strong work ethic, integrity, living out the gospel, and knowing our purpose and value.**

THE KEY IS ALWAYS GOD

It is impossible to have a proper definition of success and wealth without having a relationship with Him and having the guidance of the Word.

- **Also, we tend to take it all for granted and find contentment elusive when we fail to remember that all good things come from Him.**

BETTER DEAD THAN TO NOT KNOW GOD (V3-5)

In biblical times it was a sign of blessing to have a lot of children, yet we hear Solomon's recurring theme that anything apart from God is futile.

- **Even if we live a long life and have a name that stretches generations, without God we end up in the "same place," dead and lost.**

SUCCESS WITHOUT CONTENTMENT

- First, we must define success.
- Second, we must choose to recognize where true success comes from.
- Lastly, we must understand that we can never truly enjoy success without God being first in our lives.

SATISFIED? (ECCLESIASTES 6:7-9)

AN INSATIABLE APPETITE

Solomon points out that when our hard work is done just to satisfy our selfish desires, the appetite for more is never quenched.

- It is not that we shouldn't work hard or even want to achieve great things, but **we must constantly check our motives and why we do the things we do.** God is pro hard work and advancement!
- **Col. 3:23 (CSB), Prov. 16:3 (CSB)**

EARTHLY WISDOM IS A TEMPORARY ADVANTAGE

V8a alludes to the fact that someone who has intelligence and wisdom but doesn't know God has advantages in life, but that comes to an end.

- This goes back to enjoying **the temporary things of this life while longing for the eternal things to come. Without God, eternity is dark.**

THE POVERTY GOSPEL? (V8B)

There are several interpretations for the 2nd half of v8, but one is that **many find identity in their lack of having the same way people find it in what they do have.** Solomon's point is both are deprived because they don't have God.

- **To give it all up for any other reason than God telling us to is fruitless.**

SOMETIMES OUR SENSES DECEIVE US (V9)

The Bible warns us from letting our feelings and emotions be the mechanism to steer our lives.

Emotions make wonderful servants, but terrible masters!

- We're a society that believes feelings dictate reality and truth. **If we all followed emotions instead of His Spirit, horrible chaos would ensue.**

WORK WITHOUT FULFILLMENT

- Are our plans misplaced? Do we ask God what His plans are before we make ours?
- Do we miss fulfillment in our work because we are not ultimately working for THE Boss?
- Do we let our feelings determine truth in our lives?

MEANING (ECCLESIASTES 6:10-12)

WE ARE INCAPABLE OF FIGURING IT ALL OUT

V10 simply points out that before mankind existed there was an all-knowing Creator. Mankind keeps attempting to find all the answers, but apart from Him, we're utterly confused.

- We cannot escape our limitations in this life; we will die and that is inescapable.

"...NOT ABLE TO CONTEND WITH ONE STRONGER..."

Our problem is pride. Because we don't want to admit that there is an authority above us, **we use "many words" to rationalize our actions and legitimize our ideas of who we are and what our purpose is.**

- **Humility and submission to God are essential for finding purpose, meaning, and contentment.**

"WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE FOR MANKIND?"

Solomon asks what advantage do we have to not seek a higher power than ourselves? Haven't we seen that humanity apart from God fails in their endeavors?

- He also asks, "For who knows what is good...?" **With no definitive compass, morality changes from person to person and that is unsustainable!**

WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING GOD, WE'RE SHADOWS

The use of shadows in the Bible shows the frailty of humanity. Shadows have an appearance, but no real substance. They can easily change directions and they don't last when the light hits them.

- **When we don't identify as a creation of the Creator we find ourselves easily thrown off course and weak.**

QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

- If there is nothing greater than us, who determines what is moral?
- If there is nothing greater than us, what makes us valuable? Where do we go after this life? Do we even have a soul?
- Are we humble and willing to submit to a higher authority?

WHERE DOES OUR VALUE COME FROM?

- What idols impress us the most? Will they withstand time? Do they love us back?
- What makes life worth living?
- Why is it important to live with integrity if there are no eternal ramifications?
- What gives us worth? Meaning? Purpose?

IT'S ALL ABOUT IDENTITY

- When we find our identity in success, work, color, sex, gender, politics, nationality, or whatever else we may identify with, **life always comes up short because those things are temporary and we're not made in their image.**
- **We will learn who we are when we recognize Who He is.**