

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 16TH-17TH, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

ALIVE (ECCLESIASTES 9:1-6)

"...IN GOD'S HANDS"

Our lives are full of uncertainties and questions, but **God is not surprised by anything because He knows everything.** Some Christians believe "open theism" that states God sometimes chooses ignorance, but the Bible doesn't support this.

- **The proper response to an all-knowing God is respect and trust.**

WE CAN BE CERTAIN OF THIS, WE WILL DIE

Though we cannot always predict "love or hate," we can be certain that one day our lives on this earth will come to an end.

- Solomon says people have "madness in their hearts" if they live without a fear of God and eternity. **If it's certain we will all die, certainly we should be preparing for the next life!**

BETTER ALIVE THAN DEAD

Solomon is referring to both literal and spiritual life and death in v4-6. **Living people can reflect on their mortality and hopefully make wise decisions,** while the dead have already had their chance to do what is right.

- This means we must be aware of our actions and lifestyles. **Life is to be lived on purpose, not haphazardly.**

WE MUST BE ALIVE IN CHRIST

Though many people are breathing, they are not truly alive because they don't know Jesus.

Solomon says, **"a live dog is better than a dead lion."**

- **This means that it is better to be nothing in this world but alive in Christ than to be everything in this world but dead spiritually.**

CONTENT (ECCLESIASTES 9:7-9)

GOD MAKE'S THE MUNDANE ENJOYABLE

Solomon alludes to the fact that when God is at the center of our lives, mundane activities like eating, drinking, marriage, and working can be filled with joy and fulfillment.

- **For God to be the center, we must have a prayer life, read the Word, and have a community of believers around us.**

BUT, I KNOW HAPPY NON-BELIEVERS

On the surface it may appear that many non-Christians have contentment, but when their focus turns to the big questions of mortality and the afterlife, the things of this life are not sufficient in satisfying and fulfilling them.

- **We keep ourselves constantly distracted, busy, and materialistic in order to avoid the serious questions.**

GROWING IN CONTENTMENT

Solomon briefly mentions marriage and how we should grow in our joy in marriage.

- The idea that marriage starts off amazing but grows stale is not biblically supported. **The problem is that we get lazy and forget that relationships take work and dedication.**

CHRISTIANS STRUGGLE IN LIFE TOO

V9 states that because we follow God we can enjoy our lives, but just because we follow God doesn't mean that we are impervious to bad things happening.

- The Bible doesn't sugarcoat Christianity. **Yes, it's fulfilling, but we will still have suffering because we exist in a broken world until He comes back.**

LIFE IS FLEETING, SO PAY ATTENTION

All of this goes back to the fact that **we must live life on purpose because it is short.** We must understand that God provides the means to be fulfilled and content and because this life is fleeting, we must live as wise as we can with His help.

BALANCE (ECCLESIASTES 9:10-12)

V10 IS A PIVOTAL SCRIPTURE

The wise person that follows God is to do their best at whatever they're working on until they die (Sheol). But, though we're to work hard, it is God that ultimately provides.

- Paul echoes this in Col. 3:23. **Hard work honors God and is a good witness of Christ to those around us. Christians shouldn't be lazy.**

WE MUST FIND BALANCE IN LIFE

Though it is important to work, it is also important (and commanded) that we rest. If we become workaholics, our relationships will suffer and eventually be destroyed.

- **All of us must balance work time, family time, marriage time, alone time, and most importantly, time with God.**

FASTER AND MORE ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Solomon says, "people are trapped in an evil time as it suddenly falls on them."

- **Because we are so busy and reckless with our time we will be suddenly caught off guard when the truly important things of life crumble due to our selfishness and lack of time management.**

WISDOM (ECCLESIASTES 9:13-18)

THE WORLD VALUES THE WRONG THINGS

Solomon tells a short story about a wise but poor man who delivers news that saves a city, but because he isn't affluent or influential, he is forgotten.

- The point is that the world's value system is cruel. **We don't value humility and wisdom, we elevate and reward pride and carelessness.**

GOD'S ECONOMY IS VASTLY DIFFERENT

Paul tells us that God uses the weak and honors their endeavors (1Cor. 1:18-31). Jesus says the first will be last (Mt. 20) and the meek are blessed (Mt. 5). Christ's life on earth is a perfect example of humility and balance.

- **Quite frankly, the world's methods have and always will, fail. Only the model of Christ works.**

WE FIND HOPE IN THE WRONG SOURCES (V17-18)

The "calm words of the wise" are effective while the "shouts of a ruler over fools" will bring destruction. If this is true, **why don't we pick our influencers more carefully?**

- **We have access to church, the Word, and to God Himself! But, for some reason we allow the shouts of the world to guide us!**

LET'S JUST GO THERE

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war" and "one sinner can destroy much good" yet we find comfort in guns, politicians, celebrities, and talking heads that get rich on our fears.

- **The 2nd amendment, gov't, and the news aren't evil per se, but they've become idols to many and they will inevitably let us down.**

THE PETER PRINCIPLE

In 1969 Laurence J. Peter wrote a book that stated that every person eventually reaches a cap where they become incompetent and are unable to move up anymore. In other words, all people reach a point where they are powerless without help.

LIFTING THE CAP (MT. 19:25-26)

When asked "Who can be saved?" by His disciples, Jesus replied, **"With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."** The only pathway to salvation and freedom is through God's Son Jesus Christ. **Mankind has never been able to save mankind.**

- Salvation also lifts the cap of our potential in this life. We can find **vitality, contentment even in the mundane, balance, and wisdom** in all we do, **but we must first seek God and His kingdom.** If we don't, we will find ourselves limited, discontent, and lost.