

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DEC 7TH-8TH, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

### OLDER (ECCLESIASTES 12:2-4)

#### THE LAST WORDS OF AN AGING KING

The last chapter of Ecclesiastes is imagery of the changing physiology of an aging person. Solomon wants to remind us that the body and mind break down over time, so we must use our time wisely.

- This is a man who **had it all, but lacked a connection with God. Ecclesiastes reminds us this is futile.**

#### "THE CLOUDS RETURN AFTER THE RAIN"

This phrase indicates that many **people can fall into depression in their old age because they have not trusted God, but themselves.**

- **The problem is that our bodies and minds begin to fail us.** The hands that have been our "guardians of the house" begin to "tremble" and even "strong men stoop."

#### "THE WOMEN WHO GRIND GRAIN CEASE"

This is probably a reference to losing teeth and not having the ability to enjoy the foods one once did.

- Solomon also mentions that "ones who watch through the windows see dimly" referring to the loss of sight. Again, it is difficult to have one's body start to break down.

### OLDER PEOPLE CAN BE MORE ISOLATED

Oftentimes people become more lonely and forgotten by younger people around them. "The doors of the street are shut" refers to the inability to work or be involved in community.

- This goes back to having a strong relationship with God. **Even if we are forgotten by others, we are always remembered by Him.**

### FUTILITY (ECCLESIASTES 12:5-8)

#### "ALSO, THEY ARE AFRAID OF HEIGHTS"

Because the body is aging and becoming more fragile, the fear of getting injured by accidents or other people increases.

- In Solomon's time, older people were vulnerable to being attacked when they traveled ("dangers on the road").

### ALMOND TREES AND GRASSHOPPERS

Because the body is aging and becoming more fragile, the fear of getting injured by accidents or other people increases.

- Almond trees in America blossom in the spring and have a pink petal, but in the Middle East (where Solomon lived) they bloom in winter and have a white petal. Grasshoppers losing their "spring" is a reference to loss of sexual desire and passion.

#### "BEFORE THE SILVER CORD IS SNAPPED"

The "silver cord" may refer to the spinal cord, the "gold bowl" may refer to the heart, and the "wheel" may refer to organs, but more than likely it's referring to the cord connected to a bowl dipped into a well.

- Water is often equated with life and the Spirit. When the "cord" is broken, life is over.

### FROM DUST TO DUST

All the talk of aging reminds us that **we will become bitter if we choose to live our lives for ourselves rather than God.** The central theme also comes back into focus; **life is short, and the pursuit of anything other than God is futile.**

### WE MUST WALK THIS OUT WITH BALANCE!

We can pursue dreams, careers, adventures, and relationships, but **all of these things will come up short and eventually crumble if a relationship with God is not the first priority of our lives!**

- **Solomon wants us to know that true fulfillment in everything we do begins and ends with God.**

### THE END (ECCLESIASTES 12:9-14)

#### SOLOMON IS THE MASTER TEACHER

Though Solomon had misused his time as king, God had still given him a great gift of wisdom and the ability to communicate in a way that was both truthful and applicable.

- Many teachers have a tendency to be so creative they diminish God's Word, while others are so studious they fail to apply it to everyday life.

### TAKING ANCIENT PATHS INTO MODERN SCENARIOS

Society was different in Solomon's time, but people don't really change. We still struggle with laziness, materialism, lust, distraction, greed, and power just like cultures in the past.

- **Failure to study history and the Bible is foolish! Knowledge of past mistakes along with the wisdom of the Spirit will save us from great heartache!**

### THE BIBLE MOVES AND STABILIZES US

The Bible says Solomon's words are like "cattle prods" and "embedded nails" given by the "Shepherd."

- Cattle prods are meant to jolt into action. The Bible does just that. It may hurt at times, but it moves us in the right direction. **What is good for us doesn't always feel comfortable.**

#### "EMBEDDED NAILS"

This is the same as pegs used to hold a tent into place. God's Word not only moves us, it gives us the knowledge that protects us and gives us sanctuary.

- **The wisdom found in the Bible protects our souls, minds, finances, families, and even our physical bodies to an extent.**

### READ AND STUDY, BUT REMAIN FOCUSED (V12)

Though we may find good knowledge from many other sources of literature, we must keep the Bible as the ultimate source of truth in our lives.

- **All truth is God's truth, but many false religions, philosophers, and new agers have convoluted truth by surrounding it with lies.**

#### "WHEN ALL HAS BEEN HEARD..."

Solomon plainly says, "the conclusion of the matter is this: **fear God and keep His commands,** because this is for all humanity."

- We tend to overcomplicate life. **We are designed to live in accordance with our Creator: to fear and respect Him and to do what He tells us to do through His Word.**

#### "FOR GOD WILL BRING EVERY ACT TO JUDGEMENT"

Maybe one of the most sobering sentences in the Bible. God is such a Righteous Judge that every act "including every hidden thing, whether good or evil" will be held into account.

- **Nothing escapes the eyes of God. This shouldn't scare us unless we are living in a manner He has warned us not to live.**

### WE GET ONE SHOT AT THIS LIFE

- Ecclesiastes is a book about pursuing everything the world has to offer, acquiring it all, and then finding out it didn't bring contentment and fulfillment.
- One may argue that looking back on one's life and realizing it was wasted may be the biggest tragedy of all.
- What is the purpose of our life? Is it to pursue and glorify God?
- **Do we pray, read, and commit to Christian community?** If not, how do we expect to weather the storms of life? Where do we run when storms come?
- **God is present, are we?** Do we realize how short time is in this life?
- Do we take the time to see God? Do we find time to **Sabbath?**
- Do we work to find balance in all that we do: work, study, relationships, family, and alone time?
- **What do we find our identity in?** Where do we think our value comes from? Is it in something other than God?
- Do we believe that God lifts the cap on our potential and possibilities?
- **Do our private and public lives align?**
- Are we preparing the soil for God to make something grow?
- **If we had to give an account for how we've spent what time we've had, would we say it was used wisely?**

INDEED, WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED GRACE UPON GRACE FROM HIS FULLNESS,  
...GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN 1:16-17 (CSB)