

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 1ST, 2019 // BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes 11 encourages us to live by faith, make the most out of our season of life, and remember Creator God while we pursue His best for our present and future.

LIVING BY FAITH (ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6)

What's the point of life and is it worth living?

- This is the big question that Solomon set out to answer in this book.
- After experimenting and investigating "life under the sun", he concluded, "No, life isn't worth living!"
- The arguments to support his conclusion were the monotony of life (1:4-18), the vanity of wisdom (2:12-17), the futility of wealth (2:18-23), and the certainty of death (3:19-20).

But when Solomon brought God into the picture, everything changed.

- Life can at times seem monotonous, but it's actually filled with challenging situations from God, each in its own time and purpose (3:11).
- Wealth can be enjoyed and used for the glory of God (5:18-20).
- Wisdom can't explain everything, but it's better to practice wisdom than folly (8:1).

Death is coming for each of us and there's no way to escape it, but that should motivate us to enjoy life now and make the most out of the opportunities life gives us! (8:15)

- Now as Solomon reaches the end of his sermon, he presents his conclusion about how we can find meaning and enjoyment.
- The reality of life is that it's an adventure and we don't know how its going to pan out.

So Solomon speaks to the reality of accepting that adventure, living by faith, and with God's wisdom preparing for the unexpected.

- In verses 1-2 he uses language of a seafaring merchant- "cast your bread upon the waters" or "send out your grain in ships".
- In the business of transit and commerce, a merchant can't control the circumstances and a lot could potentially go wrong.

If the merchant waited until the circumstances were ideal, they'd never get anything done!

- Life has a certain amount of risk to it, and that's where faith comes in.
- But faith isn't the same thing as foolishness- Solomon's instruction is to take a calculated risk, "give portion to seven, or even to eight." (vs. 2)
- **Don't let fear cripple you into doing nothing, but don't put all your eggs in one basket!**

Vs. 3 pictures a farmer observing clouds, maybe to find the perfect time to sow or to reap.

- But vs. 4 reminds us that there is no "perfect" time to sow or reap!
- If you're waiting to do something until the ideal set of circumstances come around, you'll end up doing absolutely nothing.
- Life is an adventure, it's short, and often we must launch out by faith even when the circumstances seem imperfect.

Just like we don't know how a fetus is formed in the womb (vs. 5), so no one knows the works of God in His creation.

- **God has a time and a purpose for everything, so we must be obedient, trust Him, and live by faith in His Word when we can't understand.**
- Therefore, we're to get up early and work as hard as we know how to work (vs. 6) and believe that He'll give us what we need as He sees fit.

We're to be like a merchant that sends out ships full of goods or a farmer that sows various kinds of seeds in different soils, trusting God for the increase and the harvest (Gal. 6:8-9).

- We send out ships and sow seeds of kindness, the Gospel, friendship, and love.
- If all we do is worry and over-analyze ways things could go wrong or stress about doing it perfectly, we'll never accomplish anything.

REJOICE IN YOUR YOUTH (ECCLESIASTES 11:7-9)

In the Bible, night often symbolizes a time of sorrow, fear, or uncertainty.

- But the day ("light", seeing "the sun", vs. 7) often symbolizes a time of gladness & joy.
- The idea of "day" here seems to be more than just a physical reality- it also seems to include the joy that comes from being young and not yet experiencing the sobering realities of old age. Youth has its unique advantages.

Solomon is instructing the young to take advantage of the days of youth before the "days of darkness" arrive (vs. 8).

- He's not suggesting that younger people have no problems or older people have no joy- he's saying that being young and having youth is beautiful and it's something to rejoice!

- While you're young, rejoice in the season you're in and don't try to grow up too fast.

We find balance in the counsel that Solomon gives the young person.

- On one hand, the young are instructed to enjoy life and appreciate the freedoms that youth offers (vs. 9a).
- **But this advice is NOT advocating hedonism or sinfulness**, as there is a reminder that we must all give an account before God for our sins (vs. 9b).

If you're young- know that you have the opportunity to enjoy the special privileges that belong to youth that can never be experienced again in quite the same way.

- Youth and adolescence is such an incredibly short and beautiful season of life.
- But it's also such an incredibly crucial season of life because **decisions made in it can affect the REST of a person's life!**

What Solomon- an old, seasoned, wise king that has experienced everything-is pleading with youth is to enjoy life, but also to remember that sin has its consequences.

- Careless decisions and habits formed in your youth will follow you the rest of your life.
- Most old, miserable people were at one time young, headstrong, dumb people.

REMOVE & REMEMBER (ECCLESIASTES 11:10-12:1)

How do you "rejoice in your youth" and make the most out of this short life?

- One of the ways is to "remove vexation from your heart" (vs. 10).
- "Vexation" means "sorrow, inner pain, or anxiety" and is understood as hidden issues.
- What's he's telling is this- "deal with your junk while you're young because the older you get, the more it'll cost you."

The older we get, the more set in our ways we become and the more difficult it gets to be vulnerable, emotionally open, and in touch with our inner lives.

- Remove the vexation from your heart ("deal with issues") NOW before it gets more difficult.
- He also tells us to, "put away pain [or evil] from your body"- in other words, "take care of your body while you're young".

You are more than just your body, but your body is important- it's the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

- Your quality of life 10 years from now is dependent on how you take care of yourself physically now.
- **Certain things that seem innocent when you're young can be deadly when you're older.**
- **Wisdom is "putting away evil" from your body.**

Childhood and youth are so incredibly short- "youth and the dawn of life are vanity" (vs. 10b).

- These years go by so quickly, and we can't waste opportunities to prepare for the future.
- The most important instruction Solomon gives is found in 12:1- "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth."
- Remember means more than just, "think about God".

It means, "pay attention to, consider with the intention of obeying, honoring and respecting".

- It's so easy to neglect God when you're caught up with youth.
- Solomon is pleading with young men and women to put a priority on God in this small window that will affect the rest of your life!
- If you live long enough, eventually you won't enjoy life at all and you'll long to die.

When your mind is failing you, your body is shutting down, and you're at death's door- that's not the time to seek God for the first time.

- The right time to do it is NOW- you don't know if you'll have tomorrow.
- If you remember your Creator NOW, the trajectory of your life will look different than if you wait until you're old, miserable and desperate.

The best way to have a happy adult life and a contented old age is to start living right now by avoiding the things that bring trouble later on.

- Young people who care for their minds & bodies, deal with their issues, avoid destructive sins, and build good habits of health and holiness have a better quality of life down the road than those who go "sow their wild oats".
- Youth and "youthfulness" is a relative term.

While you're alive today, you have the opportunity to put into practice things in your life that will lead to a better quality of life tomorrow.

- **It's never too late to start really living.**
- The longer you kick the can down the road and put off today what you think you can get around to tomorrow- the longer you stay on the treadmill of a futile, meaningless existence and waste the most valuable gift God's given you.

"THE TOP FIVE REGRETS OF DYING" (PSALM 90:12)

- Live by **Faith**. Enjoy your **Season**. Remember your **Creator**.