

ECCLESIASTES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ecclesiastes chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we saw last week as we began our study of Ecclesiastes that Solomon is trying to find happiness, joy, satisfaction “**under the sun.**” In other words, he is trying to find life apart from God and so far he is not doing well and the reality is, none of us will find that abundant life apart from God!

This fits in with our society today which is trying to grab for all that gusto you might say and they are coming up far short. In a nation that has more than most people in the entire world, we are the most depressed, discouraged, downcast because we too are trying to find this contentment in all kinds of things instead of God. We are looking for that joy, that satisfaction, that abundant life “**under the sun**” and we will never find it under the sun only in the ***SON OF GOD, JESUS CHRIST!***

Interestingly enough, as we begin Ecclesiastes chapter 3 this is a very familiar portion of Scripture not only for Christians but also non-Christians. In the early 1960's, maybe the late 1950's Pete Seeger wrote a song called, “Turn, turn, turn” and he only wrote eight words to that song, everything else came from the King James Version of the Bible, the first eight verses of Ecclesiastes chapter 3. Most people know this song as it was song by the music group The Byrds!

Now let me say this before we begin reading these verses, not singing them! This is not a very uplifting song. It is very fatalistic in nature! I realize some romanticized or glamorize these verses as Pete Seeger did, but as you will see, if that is your idea of romance or desire for life, you need help! Remember that Solomon is trying to find the meaning to life, the joy of life, that abundant life apart from God and what he finds here is that it is just boring, mundane!

You are born and you die. You love and you hate. You build and you destroy. You have peace and then there is war. That is just life and it is boring apart from God. Solomon is doing what so many do today as I have said. They are looking for that satisfaction, that meaning to life apart from God and they just can't find it. Learn the lesson from Solomon; it is not out there apart from God!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

ECCLESIASTES 3

VERSE 1

1. Now in just reading this opening verse you may get the idea that this might not be so bad, at least until you get to verses 2 through verse 8 and then you see the fatalistic, the monotonous view of life that Solomon had. And apart from Christ he is not wrong. This is life “**under the sun**”, apart from God and there is no purpose, there are seasons, there is a time and life goes on, Que sera, sera, whatever will be will be!

2. In these 7 verses we are going to be looking at we will find a total of twenty-eight life activities and Solomon is probably just looking at the totality of life. Fourteen of these will be positive and that is great. But there are fourteen that are negative and guess what, when you add this all up the good cancels out the bad and you are left with zero! That is life apart from God, it is empty, it truly amounts to nothing. So I guess we will open up tonight by singing the blues! Let's read on and see what Solomon has to say and then we will see his conclusion in verse 9.

VERSES 2-8

1. What Solomon is speaking of here is how mundane life is. You are born and you die, and in between we have all these other activities taking place. And understand that this is not an endorsement to do these things; it is just a reality of what happens in life!

2. All of us here have been born and all of us here are waiting to die, at least I think none of you have died yet, the study is just beginning. But that is the outlook in life, we are born to die and that is not very encouraging unless you are in Christ. One preacher put it like this, "I'm not waiting for the *undertaker* – I'm waiting for the *upper-taker!*" (Peter Pell). Amen to that! That is our hope, that just as Jesus was raised from the dead so too will we. When these bodies go back to the dust of the earth we will be present with the Lord! You see, once you put Christ in there, in your life it changes everything!

3. You plant and then you pluck what you planted.

4. He goes on to say that there is a time to kill and a time to heal and some feel that Solomon is speaking of warfare or capital punishment, self-defense. I don't think so. He is speaking of life apart from God and it is either a slaughterhouse or it is a hospital!

5. You destroy things and then you build them up again. You see, life is just mundane!

6. You weep and you laugh you mourn and you dance and sometimes in the same day. That is just life!

7. You remove the stones and then you go and gather them up. I don't know, maybe the wife had gardening plans and you took away all the stones and then she decided she wanted them back!

8. There are times to embrace a person and there are times not to. I think you get the idea here.

9. For those that invested in the Stock Market several years ago, you understand this one. A time to gain and a time to lose!

10. I just cleaned out the garage here at the church and for this one all I can say is, "No it is not time to keep the stuff, it is time to throw it out!"

11. I guess if you tear things up you are going to have to sow them back together. And maybe we see a picture of how fashions change, the hem line goes down and then it goes up.

12. There is a time to speak and there is a time not to speak, be wise.

13. A time to love and a time to hate gives to us a picture of how fickle man can be. He loves a person one minute and then next minute he hates them. That is life apart from Christ!

14. And lastly, there is a time for war and then there is a time for peace and just look at the history of this world and you will see the devastations that war has brought and then a short period of rest, of peace with more wars! This is life apart from Christ because man wants what he wants and not what God wants and thus, he fights for it so he may gain more and more stuff and in the end, he will not find the satisfaction that he is looking for apart from Christ and he will go after more lands, more things, more people looking for that satisfaction. Now look at the conclusion that Solomon comes to in regards to the futility of life!

VERSE 9

1. “Yes we are born and we die and everything in between and what does it profit us?” That is the question that Solomon is asking and answering. When you add everything up you see fourteen positive things in life and fourteen negative things in life, like I have said. And the sum total of life is a big fat **ZERO!** When you add it all together there is nothing to life, at least apart from Christ! There is no profit to life “**under the sun!**”

VERSES 10-11

1. Life apart from God is empty, it is futile, there is no real meaning to it. But once you place God back into your life you find the meaning, you find that abundant life! And God takes the things we go through and He makes them beautiful in **“its time”** or **“His time”** not our time! I think this fits in with what Paul said in Romans 8:28, **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

I may not see how something is going to work out for good. I may not feel how something is going to work out for good. But I can **“know”** that whatever I am going through will work out for good because I am the Lord’s and I trust His Word in the situation I am facing!

2. Also, I don’t care who you are, God has also placed in all of us the knowledge of Him, that there is a God. Now we can suppress that truth, we can try to block it from our lives, but it is there and the issue here is that we will never be complete until He fills that void in us. Thus, as we come to Him and view the things we see with eternity as a back drop we will be able to enjoy the fruits of our labor for we once again have a correct perspective of things. And even though we may not know all the details of our life, God will begin to reveal them to us one step at a time.

The bottom line is this, and this goes for all of us, Eaton wrote, “The Preacher’s vast researches have found nothing in the finite earthly realm which can satisfy the human heart intellectually or practically . . . This is the nearest he comes to Augustine’s maxim: ‘You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you.’”

VERSES 12-13

1. Keep in mind that Solomon is living in a backslidden condition; he is not walking with the Lord. And there is this struggle going on in his life, he knows what God desires and yet he is trying to fill his life with the things of this world and he is not satisfied. He is basically saying, “I know what God desires, I know that He has placed eternity into our hearts, but why should we not go out and eat, drink and be merry. Let’s enjoy the good life.” The problem for Solomon and for people today is that they don’t enjoy it, they are dissatisfied with life and you can see it with the vast numbers of people that are depressed today. That is life; life apart from Christ, a life lived under the Son of God and not in Him!

2. Like Solomon, we too can become restless, unsatisfied as we look at the things that we don’t have instead of all that God has blessed us with. And once you go down that path you will try to fill your life with the things of this world, things that are found under the Son of God and again, not in Him!

Paul was a man who knew how to be content as he wrote in Philippians 4:11-13, “**Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**” May we learn that our contentment is only found in Christ and not in things! And thus, whatever state we are in, let us be content knowing that whatever the Lord desires us to do, we will be able to do it for He will not only equip us for the work but He will provide the work for us! That is where our strength or contentment is found, in Him and not this world!

VERSE 14

1. Even though Solomon was living in a backslidden condition, he knew the truths of God found in the Word of God, that was not the problem. It was applying those truths to his life and I think that is where we stumble many times!

Solomon starts out by saying that God's decrees are immutable or they are unchanging and we should all be thankful for that. Imagine if God's decrees changed, one minute salvation might be through Jesus and the next it might be through good works or this or that and we could never know what God wanted at any given time if He kept changing, but He doesn't!

In Hebrews 13:8 we are told, "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is [always] the same, yesterday, today, [yes] and forever (to the ages).**" I think that is very clear, Jesus is unchanging!

Now, isn't it interesting how the Devil attacks this doctrine! How does He do this? He does this by introducing false doctrine into our lives. You see, look at the cults and how they have new revelations from God, new truths from God and yet, the Bible is very clear on this, there is no new truth because Jesus is unchanging. Even in some so-called Christian churches today we see false doctrine being introduced, new doctrine, we see Christianity emerging as they like to say, but it is not what God has said in His Word.

Thus, we do not need to have special glasses to read the golden tablets to see what God is saying now. We don't need to have a new translation of the Scriptures so we can have some new doctrine introduced. If Jesus is the same, if He is unchanging, then Jesus, being the Word is unchanging and thus, the truth in His Word is the truth and it doesn't have to be changed or updated. Whatever God decides will stand!

Also, you can't add to what God has said and you can't take away from what God has said. His Word will stand and you and your words will fade away!

God is sovereign, and whatever He desires to do He does. Now the only reason we can rejoice in that is because He is a good God, there is no darkness in Him at all. If He wasn't a good God, we would be in trouble and that fear would be one of hiding from Him and not a reverential fear.

And so God's actions are permanent (*it shall be forever*), God's actions are effective and complete (*nothing can be added to it*) and God's actions are totally secure (*nothing taken from it*). May we never forget that!

VERSE 15

1. The idea here is that history repeats itself. There is nothing really new under the sun. The problem is that we don't learn from history or I should say we don't learn from *HIS – STORY!*

The Bible is a history of sinful man and a loving God coming back to redeem sinful man. The lessons that others have gone through are there for us to learn by so we don't go down those same paths and tragically we don't listen and we fall into the same sin as they did. May we learn the lessons of faith that God is showing us!

VERSES 16-17

1. Again Solomon is looking at this world, the here and now from a worldly perspective, “**under the sun.**” And Solomon takes a look at the judicial system and when he does he sees the evil that is there. Instead of fair judgments there was wickedness. Instead of righteousness what he found was wickedness!

Does it sound familiar? It should because as you look at the corruption in our judicial system today it is no different. The reality Solomon tells us, is that not only will these judges stand before a holy and righteous God and be judged, but so too will the wicked! You may get away with things in this life but you won't when you stand before God in your righteousness, which are like filthy rags before Him apart from Christ! It is as Paul said in Hebrews 10:31, "**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**"

VERSES 18-20

1. Solomon tried to get a job at Hallmark writing greeting cards but was turned down and you can see why! Now please understand that what Solomon is saying here is not from God, he is not correct regarding death.

How can I say that with such certainty? Because Solomon opens this section up by saying, "**I said in my heart.**" This is not what God said or revealed to him, this is the conclusions that Solomon came to in his own heart and it is what we do when we look at things apart from God's Word, which will enlighten us.

Solomon is telling us that man and beasts are the same. They live and they die and there is no advantage. We are all going back to the dust of the earth, we will be in the ground just like the animals are, hope that lifts your spirits. Now you know why he didn't get that Hallmark greeting card job!

2. Let's get a correct perspective on this because man is different than the animals. First of all man is a triune being, he has a spirit, soul and body. And everything was great until sin entered the world and then the spirit died and the body appetites controlled the person. You see, outside of Christ the spirit is dead and man acts just as the wild animals, just turn on the news and you can see that played out.

Wild animals are basically two dimensional creatures, they have a body and a soul. Man apart from God is also a two dimensional creature who is living to feed the body appetite. That is why man can do such heinous crimes, acting like wild animals, for their spirit is dead, and they need to be reborn in Christ. Once a person comes to Christ their spirit is reborn you might say and they are controlled by the Spirit and not by the flesh because the bodily appetites are crucified!

And any person who has come to Christ will enter into His presence in glory one day; we don't go to the same place as the animals at least not in the same capacity for we are the Bride of Christ! There really is nothing said about animals concerning their life after death. Sorry.

VERSES 21-22

1. The reality is that outside of Christ you go down to hell and in Christ you go to be with the Lord when you die. As Paul said in II Corinthians 5:8, **“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**

And the problem for Solomon is that he is still reasoning things out with his “**under the sun**” thinking and that will never work! What happens to man in the end? Solomon says that basically there is nothing, death ends it all. That means life has no meaning, no significance, just like the animals so too is man! That is wrong and the Scriptures are clear on that. Life does have meaning in Christ not apart from Him. For those apart from Christ, all you have is your good works but for the Christian we have Christ and His righteousness that has been imputed into our lives by faith. That means we can stand before a holy and righteous God in the righteousness of Christ while the person who rejects Christ will stand in his righteousness which are like filthy rags and he will be cast from the presence of the Lord!

ECCLESIASTES 4

VERSE 1a

1. Solomon is now focusing on the oppressed, those that are taken advantage of. And in this condition there seems to be no hope for them, no one to comfort them or help them out of this terrible condition. Robert Burns said, “Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn!” How true that is, the inhumanity that goes on. And please keep in mind the perspective that Solomon is looking at this by, all this that is “**done under the sun.**” Solomon, his perspective is an earthly one, and because of that, he says the following as we continue on in verse 1 of Ecclesiastes chapter 4.

VERSES 1b-3

1. The outlook of natural man as he sees all the injustice that is taking place around him is it is better to be dead and not have to deal with all this oppression. He did not even want to see it any longer. Make no mistake about it, a life lived outside of Christ is hopeless. Solomon is not just speaking about life after death but is there true life after birth and his conclusion is that there really is not abundant life “**under the sun.**”

But for those in Christ there is hope, comfort, deliverance. David said in Psalm 18, “**I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.**” Psalm 18:1-3. Perspective is everything and Solomon’s perspective is way off because he is trying to look at life apart from God and it will always be skewed!

VERSE 4

1. We all have things that drive us up the wall and Solomon had many. He sees man working hard and for what reason, to keep up with the Joneses you might say. And the reality is we don’t just want to keep up with them, we want to outdo them! And why do we do this? Because we want to be happy and we fight and we work and we do this and we do that just to outdo the other person and we still are not happy!

When Michelangelo and Raphael were commissioned to use their artistic talents at the Vatican, guess what? You got it, they tried to outdo each other and a rivalry broke out! We are told that “Although each had a different job to do, they became so jealous that at last they would not even speak to one another.”

Now before we are too harsh on them, we see this in the church. We see the competition. There is the jockeying for position, trying to outdo the other person. You know what that is? It is an unhealthy body, a body that is not interested in the well-being of the entire body but just of itself! And in the end, as one modern cynic wrote, “I’ve tried everything that life has to offer, but all I see is one guy trying to outdo another in a futile attempt at happiness.” Rest in Christ and do the work that He has called you to do! Be content!

VERSES 5-6

1. We just looked at the person who was envious and it was the thing that drove him but he never found what he was looking for. Now Solomon goes to the other end of the spectrum and speaks of the fool who does nothing, is a sluggard and in the end he is going to starve to death! I think that is the idea behind “**consumes his own flesh.**”

Verse 6 brings us the balance of the whole situation and balance is important. First of all it doesn’t pay to work yourself to death so you can be wealthy, nor not to work and go hungry. Work to provide for yourself and your family and be content with that. The problem is the flesh is never satisfied with just enough. The flesh wants more and more and Solomon is saying it will never be satisfied.

VERSES 7-8

1. I think Solomon is blown away by this person as he saw the emptiness of their lives “**under the sun.**” Here is a person who works very hard, long hours and has gained much wealth. And even then he is not satisfied so he works longer and obtains more and more wealth and for what purpose?

This man is alone; he has no relatives to give this money to when he is gone. So all that he worked for, the long hours that this man has worked are going to amount to nothing because it is going to be given away to someone else when he dies! Thus, he worked for nothing!

Now Solomon sees the emptiness, the futility of a person who works and works, obtains much wealth, and because he still is not satisfied with what he has, he keeps on working. The problem here is this person is all alone, he has no one to give his possessions to, and once he dies, all he has worked for is given away to someone else.

And look at people today, they are working harder and are less satisfied with life, they don't know how to relax and enjoy life. I am not saying we are not to work hard; we are to do our best. But there is a balance and people today are working to obtain more things and they are less satisfied than ever before.

VERSES 9-12

1. Solomon is speaking of the benefit of companionship, how important that is in our lives. Two people working together will get the job done twice as fast as a person working all alone. If a person stumbles his companion is there to lift him up, encourage him, to help get him back on track. But when you are alone there is no one to assist you. You see, there is comfort in companionship; it helps to keep you healthy and strong.

And lastly, companionship can help you fight against an enemy that is coming against you. Now some see this as speaking of a marriage relationship and it could be and I will speak about that in a minute. But I don't think that is what Solomon has in mind.

Here is the wonderful thing for Christians, we have family in every neighborhood, every city, every state, every country, we have family all over the world and as we work together we support each other, help each other. We need each other, never forget that.

Several weeks back, on a Thursday evening while I was teaching my wife was watching the grandkids and they were supposed to be sleeping and they weren't. And whatever they were doing Kaine fell off the bed and put his foot through the glass on a picture, cutting his foot badly. It was bleeding so bad my wife could not drive him to the hospital. So she called Max who said he was at a dance recital. And my wife said, "Max, this is serious." And he said, "No, I am at a dance recital."

Anyway, he was able to get a hold of Conrad who was in the sound room who then went and got Mickey and Angie and they went and picked up Julie and the boys and took them to the emergency room. After study I was talking to people for about 15 minutes and then I went up to Conrad and said, "Conrad, are Mickey and Angie okay? I saw them leave early!" And he said, "Oh, Julie's at the hospital!" It was the funniest thing ever, not that Julie was at the hospital but I guess everything was taken care, don't worry and yes, he did forget to tell me!

The point is this, that is a healthy body and I can't thank everyone enough how you care for each other. That is the way it should be and that is not the way it always is in churches. I am blessed and so are you!

2. This section is often used in marriage ceremonies and that is not necessarily wrong. You see, in a marriage relationship there needs to be that unity, that working together. Now what about this “**threefold cord,**” what is that about? A threefold cord in a marriage relationship is made up of a husband, a wife and Christ. A marriage that is centered in Christ will not be broken by the destroyer, Satan. I think one of the reasons marriages are struggling, and I am speaking of Christian marriages, is because they are trying to make it without Christ, and that is very difficult to do. A threefold cord is more than three times as strong as three separate cords, and with Christ as the binding force, it will not be broken.

VERSES 13-16

1. Solomon’s first thought is that of being poor and wise instead of rich and famous. Why is that? Because of the transitory nature we see in regards to fame and fortune. While you are living you are honored. But after you are gone, you are quickly forgotten.

2. Then he speaks of a person who rises out of poverty and prison to the throne and in spite of all that he went through he is behaving like a fool, he will not listen to his advisors. And the thought is that it is better to have a young man who is poor and teachable to reign in the kingdom than this other man. And the people rejected the first king; they wanted this other man as their king.

But even with all this fame and fortune, Solomon saw that it would be short-lived. Thus, over and over Solomon is seeing that life is empty, the things he is grasping for to bring him joy, happiness seem to be out of his grasp, that he just can’t take hold of it, it is like trying to catch the wind.

3. Now as we move into chapter 5 we are going to deal with religion and please understand that religion has dammed more people to Hell than anything else. Religion is man's attempt to reach up to God and you will never be able to by your own efforts. Throw away the religion and come to Jesus because He is the bridge-builder, He is the only One who can bring us to God the Father. So let's see what Solomon has to say about religion and how short it falls in bringing us to God!

ECCLESIASTES 5

VERSES 1-3

1. Coming to worship God is not some kind of game and yet many today put on the mask of religion and that is all it is. Their heart is far from God. And Solomon is saying that when we come to church we don't come to speak harshly or argue but we come to learn from God.

And that same thought is spoken of in verse 2 as Solomon says that it is far better for us to listen to what God is saying than to speak foolishly. What do I mean by that? I mean that we place our trust, our confidence, our faith in the flesh, in ourselves or someone else instead of the Lord and that will just end in disaster. We do see that today as people will listen to the wisdom of man, the philosophies of this world rather than to the Word of God which they think is foolishness.

Paul reminds us in Colossians 2:8-10, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** The world will rip you off if you listen to what they are telling you and God will make you complete as you rest in Him and His Word!

2. And verse 3 says that if you conduct yourself improperly before God, all kinds of foolish talk, at night it might manifest itself in a nightmare, you will have a restless night’s sleep and not a restful one!

VERSES 4-5

1. Don’t be quick to make foolish vows. Now maybe you are thinking, “We don’t do that anymore!” You are so wrong, what about the marriage vow? You see, that is a vow that you have made to God and you need to honor that. Others say, “Lord get me out of this and I will serve you!” And then once they are freed from the situation they are in they are back to their old ways.

Don’t do that, in fact Jesus tells us, **“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.”** Matthew 5:33-

So then are we not to make vows? What about the marriage vow? We can make a vow and if we do we are to keep them and let our **“‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No.’”** What this is saying is that we are not to boast in our flesh and what we have promised we will do! The bottom line is this, if you truly honor God then you . . .

- Will not be quick to make vows to God.
- Will be serious about fulfilling vows made.
- Will regard broken vows as sins to be confessed and to be repented of.

VERSES 6-7

1. We are still dealing with vows and the point that Solomon is making is that once you make a vow, don't go back on it and don't say that **“it was an error.”** I wish more would take this seriously in regards to their marriage, do not say that it was an error, do not go back on your word because God is displeased with the insincerity of our speech and not just within the marriage vow, but in all our vows we need to honor them. God is displeased by insincerity of speech and thus, may we be truthful in all we do, all we say. Don't say things that will displease Him.

2. Then in verse 7 Solomon is speaking of walking in the fear of God and not in the strength of our dreams or in the loftiness of our speech.

VERSE 8

1. As we look at and see how people are living “**under the sun**” or doing their own thing, do we see corruption, oppression of the poor, are people taken advantage of? You bet they are! But the reality is those that do these things will eventually have to stand before the Judge of the whole earth; the Lord and they will be judged for their actions.

VERSE 9

1. This is a difficult verse to translate for the Hebrew is uncertain. But what seems to be implied is that both the rich and the poor, leaders and the common people are fed from the same land and I think it all looks back upon the providence of God and that we are accountable to Him.

2. Now for those of you who think that money is the answer to life’s problems, Solomon is going to address that and the conclusion he comes to may surprise many people because they think if they had just a little more money all their problems would be over. That is not what Solomon found out!

VERSE 10

1. Wealth does not buy contentment and thus, what Solomon is saying is that if your goal in life is to be rich you will never be satisfied. You will always want more and more. We need to heed the words of Agur from Proverbs 30:7-9 as he said, “**Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, And say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God.**”

In other words, “Lord, give me just enough, not too much so I forget you or too little so I disgrace you.” How much is that? Exactly what you have and thus, be content in What God has given you. It is as Kidner wrote, “If anything is worse than the addiction money brings, it is the emptiness it leaves. Man, with eternity in his heart, needs better nourishment than this.”

Absolutely, may we not forget that!

VERSE 11

1. The more you have the more you spend. The bigger the home that you buy the more people you have to hire to care for it. And when you have more you will find more and more people coming to your side to devour what you have or as Trapp put it, “Servants, friends, flatterers, trencher-men, pensioners, and other hangbys that will flock to a rich man, as crows do to a dead carcass, not to defend, but to devour it.”

VERSE 12

1. Why does the person who works hard and has little or much, sleep well? Because those who are working hard, making an honest living can rest, you are tired. You are not fearful of this happening or that happening with what they have because they are content in the Lord. Those that have much wealth are always worrying, looking over their shoulder to see if anyone is going to take their possessions, wondering what is going on with the Stock Market today, what about this and what about that and they can't sleep.

2. J. Vernon McGee put it like this,

When we were in Hawaii with one of our tours, we were permitted to stay in a lovely hotel because of the size of our tour. I noticed how unhappy the people in the hotel seemed to be. They were people who had come to Hawaii to have a good time, but they were always worrying about their things. One woman spent thirty minutes getting her jewels in a safe-deposit box. When I got to the desk, the girl said, "She's been here before and she'll be back a dozen times to check on them or take out a piece to wear and bring it back again." You know, I was glad my wife didn't have that kind of problem. That rich woman had a real problem - probably one hundred thousand dollars worth of jewels to worry about. Riches multiply anxieties. Maybe that is one reason the Lord didn't let me become rich!

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. III, p. 123

VERSES 13-14

1. Make no mistake about it, wealth brings difficulties into our lives, Solomon knew that very well. What we see here is a man who had a vast amount of wealth and he is hoarding it, not using it to help people but just stashing it away. Then the bottom falls out you might say, the Stock Market crashes, the housing industry hits bottom, he gambled it all away or whatever the case may be. And in the end he has nothing left, nothing to pass on to his son!

2. And look at the next verse and this goes for the person who has lots of money and the person who has nothing, we are all on equal ground here you might say. But for the rich person, all that he obtained in this life, what happens? Look at verse 15.

VERSE 15

1. What a sad picture this is for the person who works and works to obtain more and more and when he dies he goes back naked like he came into this world. He could not take any of his wealth with him! We see that Job also made this point in Job 1:21. “**... ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD.’**”

That is what Solomon is saying and if you still don’t get it, let me explain it like this. There was this wealthy man who died and many came to his funeral. One of the friends of the deceased sat next to this man’s accountant and curiosity got the better of him. He asked this man’s accountant, “How much did he leave behind?” The accountant smiled and said “All of it!” That is just the reality!

2. But in Christ we can send our treasures on ahead by serving the Lord and the rewards, the crowns that He will give us are a result of what we have done for Him down here. This is not speaking of a works salvation but a salvation that works, it is lived out. Maybe you heard this story before but it does drive home the point.

“Cecil Rhodes spent years exploiting the natural resources of South Africa. When he was about to die, he cried out in remorse:

‘I’ve found much in Africa. Diamonds, gold and land are mine, but now I must leave them all behind. Not a thing I’ve gained can be taken with me. I have not sought eternal treasures; therefore I actually have nothing at all.’” May we learn the lesson because man apart from Christ will die a pauper no matter how rich he may be in this life!

VERSES 16-17

1. Instead of using his money, his wealth, his resources for eternal benefits he uses them for himself, he hordes them and in the end he leaves just as empty as when he entered this world!

And as Solomon looked at this life, it was not all that it was cracked up to be. He eats in darkness, there is sorrow, sickness, anger and it just is not worth it. Like I have said, you can't take it with you but you can send it ahead by investing in eternity and what joy, what blessings there are in doing that!

2. Now Solomon is going to give us his conclusion to all of this wealth, what it all boils down to from his perspective, "**under the sun.**"

VERSE 18

1. Keep in mind that Solomon is still looking at life from the perspective of "**under the sun**" and thus his conclusion is that we should eat, drink, enjoy life because we work hard and it is short. Grab for the gusto we might say today! Enjoy life while you can! Now make no mistake about it, God has given us a portion of life to enjoy and thus, don't miss it by grasping for that which is not of God. I think Solomon understood that God gives to us life but God was really not in the picture and the idea here is eat, drink, be merry because tomorrow you die! Wrong attitude, every day is a gift from God and we find our joy, our contentment, our fulfillment in Him. I am not saying we can't enjoy the things in this life, but if that is where you are looking for that contentment, in this life, it will not be found. True contentment is only found in the Lord!

VERSE 19

1. If God has given you wealth, riches, then enjoy it but don't be consumed by it. Paul put it like this in I Timothy 6:17-19, **“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”**

If God has blessed you with money there is nothing wrong with that, Paul tells us this. He also warns though to use what God has blessed you with not for earthly gain but for the building up of God's kingdom. And folks, that truly goes for all of us here. I like what John Wesley said, “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.” It is the CAN-CAN approach to life! Sorry.

It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”** And as I said, that goes for all of us, where is our treasure? May it be in the Lord!

Let me add this little note. If the world's economy collapsed today, and it could, 70% of the people in this world would have absolutely nothing! Again, where is your treasure, where is your faith – in the riches of this world or in the Lord who owns everything and gives to us what we need?

VERSE 20

1. This was Solomon's counsel to the wealthy man who finds no ultimate meaning "**under the sun.**" It is what so many do today, they simply try not to think about it and keep themselves busy. But what about us, what about Christians, what should we do. You need to focus on the Lord doing what He has called you to do. As you do that then you won't worry about the day but you will be satisfied in Him. It is as David said in Psalm 37:4, "**Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.**" You see, the underlying theme of this book is learning to be content in what God has given us, may we learn that lesson because that contentment will not be found "**under the sun**" but only in the *SON OF GOD – JESUS CHRIST!*