

ECCLESIASTES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ecclesiastes chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Before we get into our study this evening let me say this. We need to keep in mind that as Solomon is sharing these things with us regarding life he is doing so from a purely human perspective. It is his view of life “**under the sun**” or we may look at it like this, life apart from God. And as he does look at life “**under the sun**” he is not finding any satisfaction, that void in his life that he is trying to fill is still not filled.

And please don't come to the conclusion that Solomon didn't try, he spent a good part of his life trying to find enjoyment, pleasure, happiness, life “**under the sun**” and in the end he found that life apart from God is just empty, there is still that void that has not been filled even though he tried very hard to fill it. That is life apart from God.

Now we have seen that people can come up with false doctrine, wrong teaching from any book of the Bible if they twist what is being said or leave out other parts of the Bible. But there are two books where false doctrines have arisen that are spoken in these books. If they are spoken of in the Bible then why are they false doctrines? That is a good question and let me explain it like this.

One of the books that false doctrines arise out of is the book of Job, and the big one is soul sleep. But keep in mind that for some 35 chapters Job's friends were trying to explain why this was happening to him and then Job responding to what they were saying. Then, in Job chapter 37 we see God respond and rebuke them for the wrong information that they were sharing, the wrong conclusions that they were coming to. Thus, you can't use that as doctrinal proof that there is for example soul sleep. Look at the totality of the Scriptures and you will find that is not what is taught, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord if you are a Christian.

The same is true with the book of Ecclesiastes as Solomon is writing from a perspective that is apart from God, his experiences without God; it is a human perspective of things. And yes he does get it right at times and the key is that you need to take what is said and compare it with the rest of the Scriptures because truth is not found "under the sun" but only ***IN THE SON OF GOD – JESUS CHRIST!*** So keep that in mind as we go through this book.

In his book, *On Being and Running*, Dr. George Sheehan asks the right questions concerning the ironies and problems of life eloquently, passionately, and insightfully - yet he comes to the wrong answer when he concludes that all of life's problems are solved by jogging. So too, much of what Solomon says is true - yet not everything he says is true, as we shall see.

With that said, let's begin reading in Ecclesiastes chapter 6 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word and Solomon continues to try and fill that void in his life apart from God!

ECCLESIASTES 6**VERSES 1-2**

1. Notice this picture that Solomon is painting for us. Here is this man that God has blessed with all kinds of riches and yet he can't enjoy it and he dies leaving it all to a stranger. And whose fault is this? Solomon is saying that this is God's fault because He is the one who blessed this man with riches and then took his life away so that he could not enjoy them! Again, this is Solomon's perspective of life "**under the sun**" and a life apart from God is not pretty!

Think about those that are rich and how empty their lives are. Was Howard Hughes a very happy man? No! Then how about J. D. Rockefeller? No he wasn't! And we can go on and Solomon has already given to us the answer to wealth and happiness apart from God, "**This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.**"

VERSES 3-6

1. Now he speaks of a person who has many children and yet they don't care for him, there is no love in the home. In fact, they can't wait for him to die so they can get his money. And when he does die they don't even bury him but they are very quick to be in line for the reading of the will. And out of this Solomon feels it is better to be stillborn than to live many years in a home where there is no love. In fact, from his point of view, it is better to be born dead than to have to experience all those years of pain and hurt, only to die anyway. Just bypass life and go right to death, what a sad state to be in.

Kidner put it like this, “One could have the things men dream of – which in Old Testament terms meant children by the score, and years of life by the thousand – and still depart unnoticed, unlamented, and unfulfilled.” This is life “**under the sun.**” It is void; it is empty because the only thing that will bring that joy is the Lord.

You see, when you place God in the center of your life and you look at your life through Biblical lenses then your joy is found in the Lord and what Solomon can’t get any satisfaction from, you can. It is as Paul said 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.**”

Life apart from God can be monotonous, dull, depressing, empty but life in the Lord, finding our contentment in Him causes us to look at life differently and we learn to be content in whatever God has given to us. Something that Solomon is going to learn and we need to learn!

VERSES 7-8

1. You work to eat but the problem comes when you work more to buy more and you are not satisfied with that so you work more to buy even more and in the end, you don’t find the satisfaction that you were looking for, you are not content. It is as one person wrote, “Contentment is the carrot on the stick that forever eludes him.”

It is as Moses said in Deuteronomy 8:3, **“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.”**

And it is what Jesus said in the New Testament in Matthew 4:4, **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”**

That true satisfaction is only filled by God as we feed upon His Word!

2. Solomon also speaks of the wise man not having any advantage over the fool and apart from God they are both fools. You see, true wisdom knows how to walk, in the Lord and not apart from Him even if you are poor.

VERSE 9

1. Solomon speaks a lot about contentment because that is what He is looking for apart from God, **“under the sun”** and he just can’t seem to find it; it is like grasping for the wind, you can’t catch it! And the idea here is that we are not to start to wander with our desire but learn how to be satisfied with what is before us. In other words, be content with what God has given you. Why is that so important? Because if you are not you will wander and you will never be content. Leupold said of this that it is nothing more than, “Lustful straying about from one thing to another in quest of true satisfaction.” That’s why he says it’s better to see what’s before your eyes than to wander in desire.

VERSES 10-12

1. This is kind of a fatalistic view of God's sovereignty. In other words, God is completely in control, that whoever we are, whatever one is it is because God has made us that way and there is nothing we can do about it. Wright put it like this, "Since God is supreme, he has surely predestined everything and has made man too weak to resist. Reasoning, complaining, and arguing bring no answer and lead to further frustration."

Some may argue, "But that is true, God is in control and He has made us who we are!" I believe that we have choices but I also believe that all that we are is because of God and we can follow Him or we can think we know better than Him and do our own thing. Folks, that is sheer folly to think we know better than an all-knowing God. How can we strive against our Maker and win? And if we could actually win, we would really lose!

We need to learn to accept what God has given us, believing He has planned out our life. Our responsibility then is to come before Him so He may show us the steps we need to take in life. Remember what Paul said in II Timothy 1:9, that God, "**who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.**" If you want that abundant joy in your life, do the will of God and you will be satisfied because He has what is best for you!

2. And listen again how Solomon closes this chapter apart from God, "**For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?**" Now you know why he was turned down for that job at Hallmark making greeting cards!

If this is where you are at this evening, seeing life as hopeless, as empty, what is the use, then you need to get out from “under the sun” and back *INTO THE SON OF GOD* because He wants to refresh you and direct you and fill that void in your life that you have tried to fill with so many other things and you just can’t seem to find any satisfaction in that. And the reality is, you won’t apart from God but in Christ you will find that true satisfaction in life as you rest in Him, your life will not be empty any longer because He will fill it!

ECCLESIASTES 7

VERSE 1

1. Solomon ended chapter 6 on kind of a sour note. He saw that man cannot figure out what is best for Him apart from God, the One who is in control. And that life is just futile, it is empty. Here in chapter 7 Solomon is going to show us things that are *good* and things that are *better* as these two thoughts are spoken of over and over again. These are his ideas, those conclusions that he has come to “under the sun.”

2. Solomon starts out by saying that the most expensive ointment or perfume can never replace an honorable life, a good life. We have that reversed today. You see, many in this country have placed character as least important when they look at our leaders. As long as we have good jobs, money in our pockets, we don’t care what our leaders do in their personal lives or even on the job as long as it benefits us. The problem with that kind of logic is this; as our leaders go, so goes the nation, the people. And that is true of anyone in a position of leadership or power; keep that in mind before you do anything!

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 1:17-19, “**And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**” As Christians, our character is important because how people see us is how they see the God we serve. That is the importance of having a good character.

3. As we get to the last half of this verse we see Solomon tells us that the day of a person’s death is better than his birth, why is that? Because there is no more pain, no more suffering, no more sorrow, unless you don’t know the Lord! But Solomon is only seeing things in black and white. That once you die the pain is over, and of course that is not true if you don’t know the Lord! So I guess it all depends on what side you are on if this is a blessing or not!

VERSE 2

1. This is kind of strange. Why does Solomon tell us that it is better to go to a funeral than to a barbecue? I don’t know about you, but I enjoy a barbecue a lot more. Well, I think there is one big reason that Solomon does say this. You see, at a funeral you are faced with your own mortality. You are coming face-to-face with the fact that life won’t continue on forever and are you prepared to meet your maker?

That is why when I do funerals, even for those that don't know the Lord, I bring the people to Jesus, I share with them the Gospel message because they are all thinking about how their time on this earth is coming to an end, it could be today, in a week, a month, a year, ten years or whatever but it is on their minds and they do need to prepare to meet their maker, they need Jesus! And as I share the Gospel I do so with the hope that people will take it to heart and make peace with their Maker. Now I have also been to many funerals and the person who is doing the service often speaks lofty of the dead person, they praise the person but they negate the bigger issue, ***GOD!*** To me that is just a waste of time, you might as well go to a barbecue! As the Lord said through Amos, **“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!”** Amos 4:12c. We need to!

VERSE 3

1. How in the world can Solomon say that **“Sorrow is better than laughter”** when he said in Proverbs 17:22, **“A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones.”** In other words, there is something about laughter that changes our whole countenance. In fact, many times it is like medicine to the body. On the other end of the spectrum, a person who is not full of joy, not full of laughter, one who is of a broken spirit will dry up; there is no life in them. Laughter is a great medicine.

So now why is sorrow better than laughter? I think there is a time for both. Laughter is good but in sorrow, in those difficult times, as much as we may not like it, we grow in the Lord. This is where our spiritual growth is done, in the valley and not on the mountain top. There is a depth of character that comes out of suffering. As Peter said in I Peter 1:6-7, **“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”**

I like this poem by Robert Browning Hamilton, it goes like this,

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
 She chattered all the way,
 But left me none the wiser
 For all she had to say

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
 And not a word said she;
 But oh, the things I learned from her
 When Sorrow walked with me!

- Robert Browning Hamilton

VERSE 4

1. As you face the reality of death and mourn over your sin, you are at the place where God can bring healing into your life. Jesus said in Matthew 5:3-4, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.”**

Being “**poor in spirit**” is speaking about our entrance into the kingdom of God and that will only come as we recognize we are totally bankrupt in working, buying our way into heaven. We can do nothing except receive the gift by faith. But, until you see yourself in the light of Christ, totally helpless and sinful, you will not see your need for a Savior nor will you be poor in spirit! It is as Luke 16:15 says, “**... ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’**” You have to let all that go and be broken before God, coming before Him, being poor in spirit, and asking Him to be Lord and Savior of your life!

And not only do you need to see yourself poor in spirit, but you must mourn over your sinful condition and come to the place where you repent of your sin. And as you do you will be comforted by the Lord and His promises to you. It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 7:10, “**For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**” Not empty sorrow that does nothing in your life, but true sorrow that leads to repentance, a change in your life, turning towards God, and that leads to salvation!

The problem for many today is they laugh at this and mock this because they don’t want to deal with it. When I was a young kid and there was a death in our family, there would be all this weeping and wailing at the funeral, I’m Italian and boy can we wail! And then we would go out to eat and people would be laughing, joking, no more tears, why? Because they did not want to deal with that pain and they thought by laughing it would help them but in reality it took them away from what they needed to focus on, their own mortality and if they were prepared to meet their Maker? The only way you can be prepared to meet God is through Jesus Christ and thus, if you are poor in spirit you will see the kingdom of God. As you mourn over your sinful condition God will comfort you as your sins have been cast as far as the east is from the west in Christ!

VERSE 5

1. Think about that for a minute. When someone gives to you constructive criticism there is something we can learn from it, we can get instructions, corrections for our life. And yes, none of us like to be rebuked, but it is necessary at times in our lives. In fact, it is better to be rebuked for our error than to go around life dancing to the music, like nothing is wrong, and moving farther away from God. Keep in mind that the empty words of a fool accomplishes nothing in our lives that will last.

VERSE 6

1. First look at the picture that Solomon is painting for us and then we will look at the application. Thorns will flame up quickly, they will make a lot of noise but then they will burn out just as quickly. They do not make good fuel. They do not produce much heat. Now for the application, a fool's laughter is nothing more than a momentary sound, leaving nothing of substance behind. This is not a rebuke against laughter, but against vain or empty laughter, things that are not appropriate and things that will not last!

VERSE 7

1. Situations and money can make us do things that are wrong. Be careful! Remember what Paul said to Timothy, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”** I Timothy 6:6-10.

The Greek word for **“fall”** is EMPIPTO, (em-pip’-to) and it is in the present tense, which speaks of a continual falling into temptations and traps so they can be rich. Think about it, all the scams that are out there to make you rich, and as foolish as they sound, people go after them with the hope of making it rich. What can we do to prevent ourselves from going down this path?

Paul goes on to say in I Timothy 6:11-16, **“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate [Leader], the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”**

The idea here is to *FLEE* these ungodly things, these worldly things and *FOLLOW* after godly things, after the Lord. You see, it is hard to be greedy when you are seeking to be righteous, seeking after godliness, trusting in the Lord by faith, loving people unconditionally, patient and having a gentle spirit! Make sure you are walking down the right path!

VERSE 8

1. I guess this all depends on how you look at it if this is good or bad. You see, it is true that it does take a lot of effort to start a project and it is great to finish it. And yes the end for the righteous is better than the beginning because we go to be with the Lord. And we need to keep in mind that it is not always easy in this life, but the Christian walk is one of endurance. It is not how strong you start, but how faithful you finish. Don't give up. At times you may be discouraged, you may get down. The thing you need to do is wait upon the Lord, let Him comfort you, knowing that, as Paul said, "**For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.**" II Corinthians 4:17. And in I Corinthians 15:58 Paul reminds us, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" May we fight the good fight, may we finish the race, may we keep the faith!

But make no mistake about it; the end of sin apart from Christ is worse than the beginning! Remember what Paul said in Hebrews 10:31, "**It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**" If you try to approach God outside of His grace it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! You will be eternally separated from Him in the Lake of Fire. So that end is not better than the beginning!

2. Listen to how Spurgeon put this in his devotional, *Morning and Evening*. He wrote,

Look at David's Lord and Master; see his beginning. He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Would you see the end? He sits at his Father's right hand, expecting until his enemies be made his footstool. "As he is, so are we also in this world." You must bear the cross, or you shall never wear the crown; you must wade through the mire, or you shall never walk the golden pavement. Cheer up, then, poor Christian. "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." See that creeping worm, how contemptible its appearance! It is the beginning of a thing. Mark that insect with gorgeous wings, playing in the sunbeams, sipping at the flower bells, full of happiness and life; that is the end thereof. That caterpillar is yourself, until you are wrapped up in the chrysalis of death; but when Christ shall appear you shall be like him, for you shall see him as he is. Be content to be like him, a worm and no man, that like him you may be satisfied when you wake up in his likeness. That rough-looking diamond is put upon the wheel of the lapidary [One who cuts, polishes, or engraves gems]. He cuts it on all sides. It loses much - much that seemed costly to itself. The king is crowned; the diadem is put upon the monarch's head with trumpet's joyful sound. A glittering ray flashes from that coronet, and it beams from that very diamond which was just now so sorely vexed by the lapidary.

You may venture to compare yourself to such a diamond, for you are one of God's people; and this is the time of the cutting process. Let faith and patience have their perfect work, for in the day when the crown shall be set upon the head of the King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, one ray of glory shall stream from you. "They shall be mine," saith the Lord, "in the day when I make up my jewels." "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."

- Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, Ecclesiastes 7:8

VERSE 9

1. Solomon is speaking of a lack of self-control, flying off the handle because of what someone said or someone did. Someone made this interesting statement about our character in regards to self-control, “You can judge the size of a man by the size of what it takes to make him lose his temper.” Don't let anger get the better of you because its fruit is not pretty. Solomon says you are a fool if you let anger take root in your heart!

VERSE 10

1. Maybe you have heard people talk about those good old days or maybe you have spoken like that before. Let me say this, I think the good old days were better because we forgot what they were really like. There is nothing wrong with learning from the past, but you are not to live in the past. And maybe it was better back then, but you can't go back and all you can do and should do is press on towards the upward calling that you have been given in Christ. Learn from the past but don't live in the past as Paul said in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”**

May we not lose sight of things, may we have a proper perspective of things as Clarke wrote, “In former days men were wicked as they are now, and religion was unfashionable: God also is the same *now* as he was *then*; as just, as merciful, as ready to help: and there is no depravity in the age that will excuse your crimes, your follies, and your carelessness.”

VERSES 11-12

1. Wisdom and money are profitable, but of the two, wisdom is better. Why? Because money is not eternal, but wisdom has eternal benefits when you take the truths of what God has said and apply them to your life. Solomon said in Proverbs 16:16, **“How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.”** And I think the idea that Solomon is making here in Ecclesiastes is that wisdom is more profitable than money.

2. Now here’s the thing. The Bible tells us the Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God. That means those that come to Christ will find life. Our wisdom is found in Him and not apart from Him! Paul said in Colossians 2:3 that in Christ, **“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** So we need to come to Him and He will give us the wisdom we need to live out our lives!

Now how is that manifested in our lives? James tells us, **“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”** James 3:13-18. Wisdom needs to be applied to our lives, we need to live out our faith and that will only happen as we yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit!

VERSES 13-14

1. When we look at life we tend to think prosperity equals blessing while adversity equals sin and judgment. That is not always the case. In fact that was what Job's friends thought and God rebuked them for their error. God uses adversity and prosperity in our lives, He is sovereign. And yes, ultimately God will bring down the wicked and lift up the righteous, but for now we must learn to trust in Him no matter what we are going through.

2. Now as I read this I get the idea that Solomon is throwing up his hands and basically saying, "I give up! How can I contend against God?" In other words, "God is in control, there is nothing I can do about it, thus, I will just go on and then I will die!" As foolish as that sounds we do that. But as Trapp points out, "There is no standing before a lion, no hoisting up a sail in a tempest, no contending with the Almighty." Why would we want to contend with God? He knows what is best for our life and yet, when we are living "**under the sun**" we lose the perspective of what God has for us because we are only interested in self! Be careful and be content in the Lord!

VERSE 15

1. As Solomon looks over the life that he has lived "**under the sun**" and he tells us that he has seen everything and it seems to be a contradiction for him. Solomon looks at life and he sees the righteous die and the wicked prosper, and he is troubled by this. Now from a human perspective of things, this is the conclusion he comes to as we read on in verses 16 and 17.

VERSES 16-17

1. This is purely a human perspective of life; a life lived “**under the sun.**” It doesn’t pay to be good and it doesn’t pay to be bad, just live life in moderation and you will be okay. That may be true to some extent but keep in mind what Jesus said in Revelation 3:14-16, “**And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.’**”

You can’t live a life for God by sitting on the fence. You are either for Him or against Him. You are either living for Him or you are living against Him. If you were to live a life of moderation does that mean you will sin half the time and half the time you won’t? You see how foolish that really is. You can’t live out your life, balance your life according to the standards of the world, you live your life as Peter tells us, “**Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’**” I Peter 1:13-16. So I guess, according to the worlds standards we are living an unbalanced life, but we are not living for this world but for Christ. Have a proper perspective of things and live your life to please the Lord ***IN THE SON OF GOD!***

VERSE 18

1. I think this view is wrong. I realize that there are those that disagree with me on this, but again, Solomon is looking at life “**under the sun**” and yes he sometimes gets it right but more often he gets it wrong, really wrong!

Why do I say that this is wrong? Because Solomon starts out by saying, “**It is good that you grasp this, And also do not remove your hand from the other.**” What is he talking about? He is talking about what he just said. That moderation is the best policy to follow and God is right in the middle of that. He is saying that God agrees with moderation. So does that mean that just a little sex outside of marriage is okay just don’t go beyond the half-way point, don’t do it too often! That is foolishness and that really is the idea here, it is foolish!

This is nothing more than a worldly philosophy and Paul spoke against this in Colossians 2:8-10 when he wrote, “**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.**”

You see, the world’s philosophies are cheating you; they are ripping you off from having a deep relationship with God. You are complete in Him not in the things of this world. But as we look at things “**under the sun**” we become like Solomon and rationalizing away the things of God as we adopt the things of this world into our lives!

VERSES 19-20

1. Wisdom is important and not the wisdom of this world, but the wisdom that is from above, the wisdom of God that we take into our lives and apply to our lives. Thus, wisdom is more powerful than a mighty army in your life.

2. Now why is this wisdom so important? I think verse 20 shows us as it opens up with the word “**For**” and it is connected with what precedes. We need wisdom, the wisdom of God in our lives because we are sinners, we are not good, not one of us!

You see, you must have a proper perspective of God and your own condition, a sinner separated from God. There is no righteousness apart from God. For those that think there are, those that are self-righteous, they will die in their sins.

Paul tells us in Romans chapter 3 that, “. . . **‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.’**” Romans 3:10-18. Also, in Romans 3:23 Paul tells us, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**”

Because we are imperfect people, because we all have sinned, we can't go by what we feel is right because it is jaded, it is discolored. That is why we need the righteousness of Christ imputed into our life by faith and that is why we need the wisdom of God lived out in our lives, the Word of God! Apart from Him we can do nothing that He will accept no matter how good we think it is!

VERSES 21-22

1. In his book, Lectures to My Students, Charles Spurgeon gives us some insight into what Solomon is saying here in a section called "The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear." And the idea is that we need to not only close our ears and shut our eyes in a sense to what people may say about us because sometimes it is done out of anger, spite, hatefulness and-so-on. Why is that? Because of what Solomon just said, "**For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.**" Ecclesiastes 7:20. It is not that we can't learn from others, but there are those that like to put down and crush others instead of build them up.

And we need to be careful in what we say because we too our sinners and what comes out of our mouth may hurt someone, crush them instead of build them up or correct them in love. Spurgeon put it like this in regards to what we say,

Mayow in his "Plain Preaching" very forcibly says, "If you were to see a woman killing a farmer's ducks and geese, for the sake of having one of the feathers, you would see a person acting as we do when we speak evil of anyone, for the sake of the pleasure we feel in evil speaking. For the pleasure we feel is not worth a single feather, and the pain we give is often greater than a man feels at the loss of his property."

- Charles Spurgeon, Lectures to My Students,
"The Blind Eye and the Deaf Ear." p. 112

People may say things that may offend you. Don't be too sensitive. We need to remember that we often are offended by what others say, and yet we see nothing wrong when we say similar things about others.

VERSES 23-25

1. Here we see Solomon seek after wisdom, which there is nothing wrong in that. He probed every area of life in search for this wisdom. But it seemed to get him nowhere. Why is that, why couldn't Solomon find what he was looking for?

Solomon gives to us the reason, "**I applied my heart to know . . .**" In other words, he tried to find wisdom "**under the sun**" and he couldn't find it by his own efforts. And again, the reason is simple as he searches for this wisdom with his own heart, "**For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.**" Ecclesiastes 7:20. That is the reason!

How then do we get this wisdom? James 1:5-8 tells us, "**If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**"

There is the solution and we also see in this section the problem. We ask God for wisdom and then we doubt what God's Word says is true. In a sense this person is double-minded and he is unstable. John Bunyan in his classic allegory, Pilgrim's Progress called this person "Mister facing both ways." Yes, it is physically impossible to do and it is spiritually impossible to do, and yet many try!

You know this person, everything is a crisis, he is tossed to and fro as he goes through various trials and Jesus says that this person will not receive from Him because he is double-minded, he lacks faith. You see, God is looking for people who seek wisdom from His Word and thus, they must believe the Scriptures are from God and they speak to us today!

The Christian life is one of walking in faith. When we were saved we believed by faith in the promises of God. We believed that by His atoning work on the cross of Calvary our sins were paid in full and by asking Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives we are saved. As we go through various trials we need to ask for wisdom in faith, not doubting God's Word or His ability to give us wisdom. You see, if you doubt God's Word, if you don't trust God, then your actions will reflect that attitude and your life will not be better, it will be worse! And the bottom line is this; a search for wisdom apart from God is a futile effort.

VERSE 26

1. Keep in mind that Solomon is still talking about wisdom and in that he speaks of a loose woman, a harlot who seduces men who are not wise, who do not seek the wisdom of God. They get trapped by her and that is worse than death!

You see, if you are wise, if you are walking in the wisdom of God you will not get caught in these traps because you will not be traveling down those roads. When they try to entice you God's wisdom will reveal her true motives and thus, you shall escape her clutches! We can avoid dangerous situations, situations that want to trap us in sin by walking in the light of God and applying His wisdom to our lives!

2. Keep in mind that Solomon may have also been speaking of the wisdom of the world, how they set traps to catch us. Remember what we read in Colossians 2:8 as Paul warned us, **“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.”** May we be wise!

VERSES 27-28

1. As Solomon looked at humanity and what they did in his life, he was not satisfied. He was looking for one good man and as he searched he found only one out of a thousand! Now ladies, don't gloat over that, he looked for a good woman and he didn't find any! I know, Solomon is killing me up here or I am killing myself.

And maybe that is true as we look at this world through worldly glasses, we don't find good people, we are not satisfied with what they bring to our lives. But in Christ we have a huge family, not a perfect family, but a family that is filled with the love of God and it doesn't matter if you are male or female, young or old, tall or short, rich or poor, it doesn't matter what your nationality is, we are one in Christ. That is what Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28 where we read, **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”**

This was a radical statement by Paul for the Rabbis, in their morning prayers, would often pray, “I thank God I was not born a Gentile, a slave or a woman.” Paul says it doesn’t matter your background to God, in Christ we are all on the same playing field! Thus, don’t put up walls of division or draw lines of division because Christ has removed them. This is not some big ecumenical movement that Paul is speaking of but a movement that is based in a common denominator and that being Jesus Christ and our salvation by grace through faith, which is what unites us!

2. Now ladies, before you lynch me, understand that Solomon is writing this from his worldly perspective, “**under the sun.**” I think G. Campbell Morgan gives us a more balanced view of what the reality is regarding women, the good and the bad and remember, we are all sinners, not just women. This is what he wrote,

The influence of women is most powerful for good or for ill. I once heard one of the keenest of observers say that no great movement for the uplifting of humanity has been generated in human history but that woman’s influence had much to do with it.

Whether so superlative [unmatched] a statement is capable of substantiation I do not know; but I believe there is a great element of truth in it. It is equally true that the part that women have taken in corrupting the race has been terrible. When the womanhood of a nation is noble, the national life is held in strength. When it is corrupt, the nation is doomed. Woman is the last stronghold of good or of evil. Compassion and cruelty are superlative [unmatched] in her.

- G. Campbell Morgan, Searchlights from the Word, p. 217

VERSE 29

1. How true this is. God created man without sin, upright. And man tried to circumvent what God had said. Man tried to make himself like God, scheming all the way and has found that it doesn't work. Apart from God we are naked. And man continues to do that today, trying to scheme their way into heaven, but that is not going to happen!

2. So once again we have seen Solomon tells us that life is empty, it is futile, there is nothing to it, you keep grasping for the wind to find that satisfaction and you can't do it. And we have also seen that it is only in Christ that we will find that true satisfaction. Tragically man searches out schemes to reach God, to avoid God, to do so many things contrary to God and God is calling out to them to repent and, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

Matthew 11:28-30. May we rest in Him!