

'All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.'
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Chapter 5



Kerrville Bible Church

Fall Semester 2023

Ken Johnson



Ecclesiastes

Review – Reflections on his long life ...

- ❑ Solomon - wisest, richest, most powerful, most protected
- ❑ Frustrated, tried everything
- ❑ But no satisfaction, no yitron, and no meaning “under the sun”
- ❑ “Hebel”
- ❑ Yet on reflection ... Life is God’s gift to men
- ❑ Joy, peace and contentment come as direct gifts from God to men of faith – that is, to those who fear Him
- ❑ Savor life in the moment ... one apple at a time!





Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

¹Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND**. Solomon warns worshippers in the house of God – the very Temple that he built
- ❑ “Guard your steps” – Be reverent, sober, prepared
- ❑ Draw near to “listen” – that is, to obey God’s Word
 - God will not tolerate perfunctory, insincere worship
 - Offerings from hands without obedient faith become the “sacrifice of fools” because only a fool thinks he can deceive God
 - The fool thinks he can fool God, but he is only doing evil.



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

²Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few.

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND**. A second warning: Prayer is a serious undertaking.
- ❑ It must be entered into soberly and in the fear of God.
 - If you were privileged to present your requests to the White House, you would certainly prepare quite carefully
 - How much more care should you give when you come to the throne of Almighty God?
- ❑ God rules from heaven ... You are but a finite, powerless, tiny, speck on the earth



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

³For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.

- **LOOK AROUND.** V2b *“let your words be few”* is the lead to the following analogy:
 - Just as a dream is brought to reality through much hard work
 - The voice of a fool is revealed through many words
- If we pray lengthy and eloquent prayers - only to impress people, we will not get through to God!
- John Bunyan wrote, “In prayer, it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart.”

*“God, be merciful to me,
the sinner!”* Luke 18:13



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

⁴When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! ⁵It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND.** A third warning about making vows or promises to the Lord
- ❑ God does not require vows to be accepted by him. But if you are considering making a vow to God:
 - **STOP** ... if you are making the vow to impress others, or to “bribe” the Lord, and you have no **unshakable commitment** to keep the vow! That is a serious sin with serious consequences.
 - If you do make that vow, **keep it without delay!** Only a **fool** would delay, or **not pay!**



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

⁶Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND.** More on vows.
- ❑ The point here is you've made a vow and not kept it ... now you're digging your hole deeper and deeper
- ❑ Don't start making up excuses or lies. That would be foolish and a sin.
- ❑ Confess. Don't be Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)
- ❑ Seek forgiveness – lest God destroy the work of your hands.
- ❑ He is not kidding around.



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

⁷For in many dreams and in many words, there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND**. A warning about Empty Vows.
- ❑ Some people make empty vows because they live in a religious “dream world”.
- ❑ They think their words are the same as deeds.
- ❑ They enjoy “good feelings” when they make promises to God, and they dream about fulfilling those promises, but they never get around to doing them. “Hebel”
- ❑ **“FEAR God”**
“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather **fear Him** who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (MATT 10:28)



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

⁷For in many dreams and in many words, there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

What do Americans Fear?

Speaking in public

Snakes

Heights

Spiders

Flying

Death

Confined spaces

Tunnels & bridges

Crowds

Storms

Drowning

Cancer

Rats

Wild Animals

Darkness

Noise

Pain

Choking

Being Alone

Certain Colors



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What About GOD?



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

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- ❑ **LOOK AROUND.** Solomon establishes his dominant theme: “Fear God”
- ❑ The “Fear of God” is not an attitude of terror. It is:
 - A commitment of the total being
 - To trust, believe and obey the living God, and
 - To give God all reverence, honor and glory
 - As Sovereign Lord, who reigns over the whole creation
- ❑ Man must FIRST be a believer and worshiper if he is ever to enjoy living as God created and intended him to live.



Ecclesiastes

The Monotony of Life (3:1 – 5:9)

⁸If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them. ⁹After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

- ❑ **LOOK AROUND.** Solomon once again looks at corrupt politicians oppressing the poor.
- ❑ Corruption should not be shocking – much is “misplaced” in the bureaucracy.
- ❑ But, in spite of the corruption an organized government (king) is better than anarchy.
- ❑ Everyone benefits from organized authority, which can correct some of the abuses of man.



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁰He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH.** Here Solomon demolishes the myths people hold about wealth that prevent them from enjoying the blessings God has for them.
- ❑ Myth: Satisfaction. If I just had more money/stuff, I could finally be Satisfied
- ❑ “Satisfied” is Hebrew for “that’s enough” or “I’m content”
- ❑ Phil 4:11, “I have **learned** to be content” shows being “content” is not natural
- ❑ He who **loves money** is insatiable ... his desire outruns his acquisitions. Meaningless ... empty ... “hebel”



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁰He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

□ EMPLOYING WEALTH.

⁶Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment. ⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils.” (1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10)



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁰He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.

EMPLOYING WEALTH.

¹⁷Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."

(1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10)

- Not to be Conceited – Money puffs up pride
- Uncertainty of Riches – Fortunes can disappear in an instant
- Things to enjoy - Money is only a means to enjoyment. If one loves only money ... he misses out on all the other things God wants him to enjoy



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹¹When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So, what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH.** Myth: Friends - Wealth gives me Friends
- ❑ An increase in wealth creates an increase in claims on that wealth:
 - Staff to manage it
 - All sorts of parasites
- ❑ Everyone has a “need” ... including the tax man
- ❑ Watch all those people “eat your wealth”!
- ❑ Can you know who are your real friends?



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹²The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH**. Myth: No Worries - if I were wealthy, all my stress and problems would disappear
- ❑ Solomon says common laborer enjoys peaceful sleep
- ❑ But wealth brings worry, sleeplessness, stress and the fear of loss
- ❑ Study on stress
 - 60% of Doctor visits are for stress
 - Most highly-prescribed drugs are "tranquilizers"



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹³There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt. ¹⁴When those riches were lost through a bad investment, and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH**. Myth: Security – My wealth will keep me secure.
- ❑ Cannot rely on money – Security is only in the Lord
- ❑ Hoarding offers no protection
- ❑ Risking all on one investment offers no protection
- ❑ The money one makes and keeps is completely under God's control
- ❑ A grievous evil ... "hebel"



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁵As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand. ¹⁶This also is a grievous evil, exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So, what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH.** Myth: Security – My wealth will keep me secure.
- ❑ The wealthy man returns to his maker devoid of all his riches
- ❑ Nevertheless, men spend all their days in distressing labor, great risk and stress just getting money
- ❑ They inevitably lose it **ALL**
- ❑ An empty goal ... no advantage ... “hebel”



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

Nine Financiers

1923 - Chicago	
Charles Schwab	Pres - Largest steel company
Samuel Insoll	Pres - Largest utility
Howard Hobson	Pres - Largest gas company
Arthur Cotton	Greatest grain speculator
Richard Whitney	Pres - NYSE
Albert Fall	President Harding's Cabinet
Leon Frasier	Pres - Bank of Intl Settlements
Jessie Livermore	Greatest Bear on Wall St
Ivar Kreuger	Worldwide match monopoly



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

Nine Financiers

1923 - Chicago		1948
Charles Schwab	Pres - Largest steel company	Died bankrupt - lived on borrowed \$\$ 5 years
Samuel Insoll	Pres - Largest utility	Died fugitive, penniless, in exile
Howard Hobson	Pres - Largest gas company	Died insane
Arthur Cotton	Greatest grain speculator	Died abroad insolvent
Richard Whitney	Pres - NYSE	Served time in Sing Sing
Albert Fall	President Harding's Cabinet	Pardoned - so he could die at home
Leon Frasier	Pres - Bank of Intl Settlements	Suicide
Jessie Livermore	Greatest Bear on Wall St	Suicide
Ivar Kreuger	Worldwide match monopoly	Suicide

They all knew how to make a living ... not how to live



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁷Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.

- ❑ **EMPLOYING WEALTH.** Solomon summarizes the results from those four myths about wealth:
 - Satisfaction ... Vexation because not enough
 - Friends ... Angry at those consuming
 - No Worries ... Sickness from stress
 - Security ... In darkness and fear
- ❑ Wealth ... in itself ... won't bring satisfaction
- ❑ So ... how can one find satisfaction?



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁸Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

- ❑ **ENJOYING WEALTH.** How can one find satisfaction?
 - Solomon gives God's perfect plan for life "under the sun"
 - It is "good" and "fitting" "to eat, to drink," which can only be enjoyed in the moment – one apple at a time
 - And "enjoy oneself in all one's labor" ... which in Hebrew means to "**see the good**"
 - During the "few years of life" – so don't waste time



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

¹⁹Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

- ❑ **ENJOYING WEALTH.** How does one “see the good”?
- ❑ The capacity to see the good is a gift from God given to men of faith – those who fear Him (believers)
- ❑ God does not promise to give the best things to believers
- ❑ God gives believers:
 - The gift to completely enjoy whatever they receive from God (their apple)
 - The gift to gratefully give thanks to God in every circumstance (*1 Thess 5:16-18*)



Ecclesiastes

The Futility of Wealth (5:10 – 6:12)

²⁰For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

- ❑ The one who fears God (believer) fears nothing else ... not even death
- ❑ He delights in this very moment ... this very day ... the apple before him
- ❑ He has no time to be concerned with death
- ❑ And when death comes ... this life has been so satisfying that he is ready to go home to the Lord

The Book of Ecclesiastes



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10
