

Ecclesiastes 8:14-17

It's a pleasure once again to be able to speak to you about the Word of God and speak to you from the Word of God. We're studying right now in the book of Ecclesiastes on "It's a Good Life," and if it's possible for you to have your Bible, I'd ask you to turn to Chapter 8 of Ecclesiastes.

In Ecclesiastes 8:14, we see perplexity. Expect perplexity. And that verse says, *There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.* Of course, that's Solomon speaking there under the inspiration of the Lord.

Well, there are some righteous men who are affected by what the wicked do, and sometimes wicked men are affected by what righteous men do. And I think particularly that the wicked are affected by righteous men, the righteous person who tells that person who is unsaved how to be saved, that you call upon the name of the Lord; you're sorry for your sin; you're sorry that you haven't been living for the Lord; that you have not known Him before this time. And that righteous person is able to... if you would witness and tell that unsaved person, "Look, you need to get saved."

And this is certainly an effect that can be had upon that person who is unsaved, and prayerfully and hopefully that person who has never trusted Christ will come to that saving knowledge. But also, the righteous can be affected by the wicked. The wicked can bring the person down, in other words cause the saved person to feel bad, can cause that person

to have a bad attitude even towards other unsaved people.

But as we look on in verses 16 and 17 we're going to see something here. It says, ¹⁶*When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)* ¹⁷*Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*

A person cannot always understand why things happen the way they do, and Solomon says, "I said that this also is vanity," verses 16-17.

Remember Job? Now, I mentioned earlier that this section of Scripture has to do with Job. I think back of Job and sometimes things simply do not make sense to us and it just doesn't add up. And I think of Job, how that even his so-called friends turned on him. They blamed Job for all that was happening to him, and sometimes we have a tendency even as saved people, pointing our finger at someone who has a difficult time. We say, "Aha, there's the chastisement of God coming down on this person." Well, that's not the case. And that's what Job's friends did to him. They said, "It's your fault that all this is happening."

Now, of course, Job had problems. He was a man. But the point is here that we don't always understand why things happen, and God allows things to come into our lives, I believe, in order to make us a little stronger.

Now, looking at verse 15, it says, *Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.* And I see in this verse that we're to enjoy life. We're not to go around feeling sorry for ourselves.

And we need to realize that God has given us certain things in this life that would help us enjoy life. I believe that what Solomon is saying here is that we need to delight in the fruits of our own labor. In other words, we need to take pride, not to be puffed up and saying, "Look what I've done," or anything like that, but we need to delight in the fruits or the results of our own labor. Eat and drink and be merry as you labor at the days God has given you in your life on the Earth, according to verse 15.

In Psalms 16:11, it says, *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Enjoy life. How? Psalms 16:11 tells us that, that we're to realize that it comes from God. And notice the advice given throughout this book of Ecclesiastes, and it's this: Remember who gives us what we have.

In Ecclesiastes 2:24-27 it says, ²⁴*There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.* ²⁵*For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?* ²⁶*For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

In other words, the person ends up with nothing who does not respect God and does not listen to the Word of God. In Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, we've already studied these verses but these are important to tie in with Chapter 8. It says, ¹²*I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.* ¹³*And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*

And Solomon goes on in Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 where it says, ¹⁸*Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.* ¹⁹*Every man also to whom God hath given riches....*

Now, let me go back here just a moment and say that verse says *which God giveth him: for it is his portion....* The man works for it. The man has worked and he wants to have something and he works for it. He's not lazy. And God blesses that person.

And verse 19 says, *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth... God gives it to the person... and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.* Everything we have is a gift of God. And it goes on to say, ²⁰*For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.*

That person who acknowledges who God really is, that person is the one who is really going to enjoy what God has given him. And it's so important for us to realize that we need to respect what God has given us. We need to take care of what God has given us. And once we remember that everything actually belongs to God anyway, we suddenly start realizing

that everything we have belongs to God and He's letting us borrow that for a time. But in the meantime, we're to work. And as we work, He gives us more.

And some people say, "Well, you know, I'm not rich. God has not made me rich." Well, once again, I think of that. I used to ask myself that question. "Why hasn't God made me rich?" Well, maybe He couldn't give it to me because I couldn't handle it. Maybe I'm not ready for it. Maybe I wouldn't handle it the way I should handle it. And I've found that I can't out give God, and God gives me exactly what I need in this life, and He wants to give you what you need in this life. And what you need right now is the Son of God. You need Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you've never trusted Him to save you, you need to ask Him to come into your heart.

You need to realize that one of these days, life is going to be over. This life. And you need, right now, to be serving God. And sometimes we get to that point and we say, "Well, I don't know how to serve God." Well, that's the reason you join a good Bible-believing, Bible-preaching church, and that's the reason you get into the Word of God so God can lead you and guide you as a saved person. Right now, you need to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

And if you are saved, you need to trust Him, not to be saved, but because you are saved. You need to trust Him and let Him use you and take what's He's given you in this life and use it for His honor and His glory. You can't out give God.

I want to look on for a few moments here in Chapter 9. In Chapter 9 of the book of Ecclesiastes, I want to look at the objectives in studying this chapter. First, it's to reflect upon the inevitability of death and the uncertainty of life and also to consider how time and

opportunity is offered to everyone. And then to appreciate the importance of a joyful, diligent life in heeding the words of the wise. We've looked at this throughout the chapter and we saw this in the last chapter, Chapter 8 that we looked at, that everything comes from God, and we're to be happy. God doesn't want any one of us to be unhappy here.

But notice in verses 1-10 of Chapter 9... we're not going to get very far in this chapter right now, but I want you to notice that verses 1-10 talk about enduring the uncertainty of death. You'll notice that Solomon contrasts here throughout this book. He contrasts life and death. That's what we have as human beings. We have life and we have death. In these verses 1-10 he tells us about that we're to endure the certainty of death. It's coming.

And you know, when someone calls me to do a funeral service, I always pray, "God, do not take away their grief. Help them. Make them understand, Lord, and ease their pain. Don't take their grief away, Lord, because I know that is a part of this life." That's something that we all need to face... is death. And to face death, first of all, the right way is to know Jesus as your Savior.

In verses 1-6 of Chapter 9 of Ecclesiastes, it tells us that death happens to all. It happens to every person. Death happens to both the righteous and the wicked, according to verses 1-3 and the righteous are in God's hands, according to verses 1-2. Next time, we'll pick up with these verses and we'll look at them closer.

Father, thank You today for salvation. Thank You for saving us. Thank you for giving each one of us the opportunity to know Your Son personally. I pray for that person listening today who needs Jesus as Savior. May that person come to a saving knowledge by saying,

“God, I know I can’t save myself. I receive Jesus as my Savior right now. Save me for Jesus’ sake.” For that person who is saved, I pray that they will work for You and help others find Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, for it’s in Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

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