

## Outlines - Ecclesiastes

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**Intro:** Tonight we're studying through the 21st book in the bible, the book of Ecclesiastes.

1. This is the 4th of 5 books in this section of the bible called the wisdom books - "You have Psalms that speak to the emotional heart, Proverbs to the pragmatic heart, Song of Songs that speak to the burning heart, Job and Ecclesiastes that speak to the hurting heart"

II. **Who wrote Ecclesiastes?** Well there seems to be an Author (1:1-2 and 12:9-13) and the subject of the Author's attention is "The Preacher" (1:3-12:8) now most say this Preacher is King Solomon, and I happen to agree with that view

1. It's believed that Solomon wrote Songs in his youth, Proverbs while he reigned, and Ecclesiastes in his old age

III. **The theme of the book** - The theme of this book is found at the beginning and end of it - Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> **Vanity of vanities**, says the Preacher, **vanity of vanities!** All is **vanity**....Ecclesiastes 12:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> **Vanity of vanities**, says the Preacher; **all is vanity**

1. This word Vanity is used 38 times in the book
2. In the Hebrews it's the word "Hevel" - It means smoke or vapor
  - a) Without substance
  - b) Unpredictable

- c) *That's the point the preacher is trying to about life on earth - It's unpredictable and even though it seems solid at times...it really is*

**Our time tonight:**

- A. *The 2 big factors of life that bookend Ecclesiastes - Time and Death*
- B. *The pursuits that Solomon chronicles*
- C. *The Author gives his final conclusion*

**I. The 2 big unchanging factors of life that bookend Ecclesiastes - Time and Death**

**1. Time - 1:3-11**

- A. <sup>3</sup> *What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils **under the sun?***

- 1. *So here we see the location of his great experiment...under the sun...Now remember Who Solomon is - **1 chronicles 1 tells us:** That when David died and Solomon became king, God offered Solomon anything he wanted. What did Solomon want? Wisdom....God, thought it was an honorable request, not only gave him everything else...*

- 2. *Look at his findings...*

- B. <sup>4</sup> *A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. <sup>5</sup> The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. <sup>6</sup> The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. <sup>7</sup> All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.*

1. *Essentially Solomon is saying - "Life is like a treadmill... You run, and you work, and you sweat, and sacrifice, but at the end of your life your gonna die, and sooner or later people will forget about you" Now as harsh as that seems, it has proven to be true over and over again*
  2. *One day you'll be old news...or forgotten*
  3. **Here's the picture:** *Solomon is pulling back the veil and saying what we all feel yet don't want to admit...Life under the Sun fells like a treadmill - running all the time yet going no where*
- C. <sup>8</sup> *All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. <sup>9</sup> What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*
1. *It's like a merry go round never really get off of...Let me see if this resonates with you...Think about what you did when you were 15:  
- Wake up - shower - eat - stress out about something (video game) - sit in school till lunch - eat lunch - sit in school till dinner - eat dinner - talk on the phone to people you like and people hate - watch tv - go to bed*
  2. *Fast forward 15 - 20 years:*
  3. *Wake up - shower - eat - stress out about something (maybe still a video game) - sit at work till lunch - eat lunch - sit at work till dinner - eat dinner - Go on face book to secretly spy on the people you love and hate - watch tv - go to bed*
  4. **Point:** *Your doing the same things you were doing when you were 15...But now your in debt*
- D. <sup>10</sup> *Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.*
1. *This plays out in life over and over and over again...You see that new new gadget on tv - "I've gotta have it...Then you pursue it -*

*work for it, fantasize over it, Spend money you don't have on It  
Then you get it...and initially you have this **weird relief and excitement to life**. it has an emotional effect on you...You want to show it to people...But eventually that gadget loses it's luster...*

*E. <sup>11</sup> There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.*

1. **Example:** Does anybody know their great-great-great grandfather's name?

2. **Here's the point:** Time beats everyone...

## **2. Death (12:1-8)**

*Then he goes on to speak about death...*

*Ecclesiastes 12:1–8 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth,*

*It's important to remember here that Solomon is an old man now...and His closing words are to young men and women to not for*

A. **Remember the Lord** when your looking at the trajectory of your life....when your thinking about your career, about marriage...when your at the cross roads of life...

B. What you might notice: Is that the old and miserable were once the young, proud and stupid...

C. **Here's the point:** The “**now**” will determine the “**than**”...so remember God now....

*Now He poetically speaks about the aging process...*

*before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”; <sup>2</sup> before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, <sup>3</sup> in the day*

*when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, <sup>4</sup> and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— <sup>5</sup> they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— <sup>6</sup> before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, <sup>7</sup> **and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.** <sup>8</sup> Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.*

*Here's a really interesting idea...in a culture that prides itself on beauty... strength and individualism...Solomon is apparently saying that your soul and all that is in it was given to you, loaned to you and will one day be required back by it's owner. It's an interesting thought.*

- A. **So book ending Ecclesiastes are the 2 unchanging facts of life -**  
*Times will always change and death always comes...and everything else just fits in between it...*

## **II. The pursuits of life**

*Here in the middle section of the Ecclesiastes is all about Solomon's journey to find fulfillment in this life, now he look in 4 different directions... did not find fulfillment but he does give little morsels of sound advice for each situation*

### **A. He looks within - Chapters 1-2**

#### **1. Wisdom**

- a) <sup>16</sup> *I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."* <sup>17</sup> *And I applied*

*my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.*

- b) *Solomon is saying "I tried both extremes" I went high brow, I went low brow...and both are Hevel - This dispels the myth that we often perpetuate in our minds that the grass is greener of the other side*
- c) *<sup>18</sup> For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow*
- d) *Solomon finally says...wisdom didn't do it for me...because the more I knew about life...the worse life looked.*

## **2. Pleasure**

- a) *Ecclesiastes 2:10 (ESV) <sup>10</sup> And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil.*
- b) *Think about this - He had 700 wives and 300 concubines... whatever He wanted*

## **3. Look at his insight - Ecclesiastes 2:24 (ESV) <sup>24</sup> There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God...**

- a) *Solomon says...I've tried a lot of things...but one of the greatest riches in the world is contentment...find joy in the little things*

## **B. He looks at the world - Chapters 3-5**

1. *To Solomon, life seems to have a divine behind it all yet there is still what seems like randomness and wickedness and things that he just can't understand*
  
2. **Here's his insight** - *Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (ESV)* <sup>9</sup> *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. <sup>10</sup> For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! <sup>11</sup> Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup> And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*
  - a) *Solomon is saying "In this confusing life...you will get further together then you would alone"*
    - (1) *We need people we can confused and discouraged around...people who will help us through those spiritual winters...some to help our flame not die out*
  
    - (2) **Here's the point:** *When winter comes for you, and it is coming for you, when it gets here, no matter how cold, being truly known by others will keep you warm.*
  
    - (3) *He basically says there's safety in numbers*
      - (a) *Now there are things that will keep you isolated - Pride - Laziness - Jealousy*

## **C. He looks at wisdom - Chapters 6-8**

1. *Here Solomon speaks about fearing the Lord and gives warning about love of money and how it will never satisfy, and how the more you have the people will want it thereby increasing your stress level...and then He goes on to give some great wisdom in chapter 7*

2. *Ecclesiastes 7:1–3 (ESV)* <sup>1</sup> *A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.*

a) *Solomon is speaking of the importance of integrity and Character over looks...*

3. <sup>2</sup> *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.* <sup>3</sup> *Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.*

a) *How can these times be better? because it's the hard times that grow you and push you to Jesus*

b) *Solomon goes on to give this great wisdom but then look at what he says...*

4. **But look at his insight here** - *Ecclesiastes 8:17 (ESV)* <sup>17</sup> *then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.*

a) *Solomon says...be wise...but as long as your under the sun... Wisdom is not a full proof plan to success*

## **D. Chapters 9-12 The conclusion to it all**

1. *Solomon praises wisdom...but reminds us of the inevitability of death...that it's coming for everyone - the wise, the fool, the good and the bad...*

2. *So with that in mind he says this...*

3. *Ecclesiastes 9:7–10 (ESV)* <sup>7</sup> *Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what*

you do. <sup>8</sup> Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. <sup>9</sup> Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. <sup>10</sup> Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

- a) He says death is coming, so live life while you have it to live... don't waste precious moments of your life on pettiness...enjoy your food, enjoy your friends, if your married love your spouse...because time is short, and things are unpredictable
- b) Solomon finishes this chapter speaking to the young
- c) <sup>9</sup> Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. <sup>10</sup> **Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.**
- d) Solomon also goes on to say **“Remove vexation from your heart”**
- e) Solomon says, **“Deal with your junk when you're young, because the older you get, the more it will cost you.”**
- f) **Here's the point:** Now is the time to remove vexation from your heart - Don't wait till the house is burned down to call the fire department...Do war with those things now

### **III. The Author Gives His conclusion on everything Solomon said...**

*So Now the Author gives his final thoughts to all that the preach said and brings it all to a conclusion*

*Ecclesiastes 12:9–14 (ESV) <sup>9</sup> Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. <sup>10</sup> The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. <sup>11</sup> The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.*

*He says take heed to the words of Solomon - Recognize that life is unpredictable and things will rarely work out to plan...so when your in a good place (a meal, a friendship, a sunrise) be content...and enjoy it while it last...don't live for it...but enjoy it as it comes*

*Then he says this...*

*<sup>12</sup> My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*

*Don't spend all your time inside trying to figure everything out...because you wont...embrace the fact that their is some mystery in life and go out and play*

*Here'a the conclusion...*

*<sup>13</sup> The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.*

*The author says "though everything under the Sun is temporary and random, theres one who sits above the the Sun who's judgments are perfect and everlasting...Fear the Lord and keep his commandments*

Tuesday, March 13, 2018

A. *Great wisdom to live by*