

## **ECCLESIASTES — PART 3**

### **(CHAPTERS 4–6)**

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#### **16.5.26**

Last week ... we saw a couple of serious problems that Solomon suffered from.

He considered life to be tedious ... futile ... at times he “hated” it (sounds suicidal).

Also ... death was the end. Man and beasts of the field were no different. All will die and go to the same place.

A fairly morbid mind-set! And contrary to scripture! Paul told us to “rejoice always”. And the Bible reveals a resurrection to eternal life and immortality.

I suspect that Solomon once knew the Truth ... but his wisdom is now badly corrupted?

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:1-3**

1 **Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun:**

And look! **The tears of the oppressed,**

**But they have no comforter**—

**On the side of their oppressors there is power,**

**But they have no comforter.**

2 **Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead,**

**More than the living who are still alive.**

3 **Yet, better than both is he who has never existed,**

Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Morbid again. **Better to be dead than alive. Even better not to have been born at all (better to have miscarried!)**

**It contradicts God’s very first commandment — be fruitful and multiply.**

And he contradicts himself?

#### **Ecclesiastes 9:4**

4 But **for him who is joined to all the living there is hope**, for **a living dog is better than a dead lion**.

**If you're alive ...you can have hope.**

**At times ... Solomon gets confused — has two-minds. We can't rely on his human opinions.**

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:4**

4 Again, I **saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor**. This also is **vanity** and grasping for the wind.

**Human life often involves “keeping up with the Jones’s”. Rivalry!**

A reasonable observation?!

#### **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

9 **Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.**

10 For **if they fall, one will lift up his companion.**

But woe to him who is alone when he falls,

For he has no one to help him up.

11 Again, **if two lie down together, they will keep warm;**

**But how can one be warm alone?**

12 **Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.**

And **a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**

Having companions is good. It gives strength and resilience. **God created marriage — “not good for a man to be alone”. In marriage ... the “third cord” might be God?**

Another sensible observation?

### **Ecclesiastes 4:13**

13 Better a poor and wise youth

Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. *(He's got a hard-heart. He is arrogant!)*

Who is the old and foolish king who will not receive correction?

**Perhaps a moment of self-awareness?**

### **Ecclesiastes 4:14-16**

14 For **he comes out of prison to be king,**

**Although he was born poor in his kingdom.** *(Refers to another youth — comes out of poverty and obscurity — becomes a great king.)*

15 I saw all the living who walk under the sun;

They were with the second youth who stands in his place.

16 **There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king;**

**Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him.**

Surely this also is **vanity** and grasping for the wind.

But it's so temporary (and depressing?). He dies ... and is eventually forgotten! Vanity!

### **Ecclesiastes 5:1-7**

1 **Walk prudently when you go to the house of God;** and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. *(Go to listen ... go to learn)*

2 **Do not be rash with your mouth,**

**And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.**

For God is in heaven, and you on earth;

Therefore **let your words be few.**

3 For a dream comes through much activity,

And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

4 **When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it;**

For He has no pleasure in fools.

**Pay what you have vowed—**

5 **Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.**

6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?

7 **For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity.** But fear God.

**Be careful if you make promises to God. Don't be impetuous — just blurt it out!**

A vow — or commitment — to God — is a serious matter.

**Better to say nothing — than to promise and not to do!**

**Deuteronomy 23:21-23**

21 **“When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.**

22 But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.

23 **That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.**

**Matthew 12:31-37**

31 “Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32 **Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him,** either in this age or in the age to come.

33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.** (*Leaks under pressure!*)

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for **every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.**

37 **For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”**

**Watch your words!**

### **Ecclesiastes 5:8**

8 **If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter;** for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.

Don't be surprised at injustice (common to man). But someone is watching — and at the very highest — **God is watching** (implied: and will judge!)

### **Ecclesiastes 5:10-12**

10 **He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver;**

Nor **he who loves abundance, with increase.**

**This also is vanity.**

11 When goods increase,  
They increase who eat them;  
So what profit have the owners  
Except to see them with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a labouring man is sweet,  
Whether he eats little or much;

But **the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.**

**Greed and coveting will not satisfy. Being rich brings its own problems!**

A simple labourer might have a better quality of life ... in reality.

### **Ecclesiastes 5:13-17**

13 There is **a severe evil** which I have seen under the sun:

**Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.**

14 But **those riches perish through misfortune;**

When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand.

15 As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return,  
To go as he came;

And he shall take nothing from his labor  
Which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also is a severe evil—

Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.

And what profit has he who has laboured for the wind?

17 All his days he also eats in darkness,

And he has much sorrow and sickness and anger.

**Describes a miser? Accumulates wealth.**

Might disappear in a moment (a stock market crash?) And — you can't take it with you!

**You can be wealthy — and miserable!**

Compare:

**James 5:1-6**

1 **Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!**

2 **Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.**

3 **Your gold and silver are corroded**, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

4 **Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.**

5 **You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury**; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

6 **You have condemned, you have murdered the just**; he does not resist you. (*No one holds you to account*)

Rich people often exploit others. **But judgment is coming!** Then their wealth will be irrelevant!

**Ecclesiastes 5:18-20**

18 Here is what I have seen: **It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.**

19 As **for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God.**

20 For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.

**A moment's clarity for Solomon. It is possible to enjoy a good life — if you see God's blessing in it.**

**Ecclesiastes 6:1-6**

1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.

3 If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he—

4 for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.

5 Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man,

6 even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness.

Do not all go to one place? (*Cannot see God's hand in his blessings*)

**Wealth alone will not satisfy. Many rich people trust in their wealth — not in God who gave it to them.**

**(Remember ... God has “put eternity” in man's heart. Mere material wealth won't satisfy a spiritual vacuum).**

**God wants to give joy — an abundant life (John 10:10). But we have to put first things first!**

**Matthew 6:19-21**

19 “**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but **lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

## Get your relationship with God sorted out first!

### Matthew 6:24-26

24 “**No one can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**”

25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

## Be faithful to the true God!

### Matthew 6:33-34

33 But **seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

## Number 1 priority! Pursue the spiritual.

### Mark 10:17

17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “**Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?**”

(The rich Young Ruler) — His heart looked for eternity — for spiritual life.

### Mark 10:18-22

18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”

20 And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.”

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: **Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.**”

22 **But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**

He had great possessions (or they had him?)

**He turned away from Jesus because of his great wealth.**

### **Mark 10:23-25**

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. **But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!**

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

**It’s not really the possessions. It’s trusting in them!**

### **Ecclesiastes 6:7**

7 **All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied.**

Everybody works to satisfy their physical senses ... or appetites ... but **it doesn’t fulfil our spiritual needs!** (Eternity is in man’s heart ).

### **Ecclesiastes 6:8**

8 For what more has the wise man than the fool?  
What does the poor man have,  
Who knows how to walk before the living?

**A wise man has no more advantage than a poor man. Neither can fill their spiritual needs by acquiring the necessities of life.**

### **Ecclesiastes 6:9**

9 **Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire.**

This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush”. Don’t be a fantasist or an idle dreamer!

**Ecclesiastes 6:10**

10 **Whatever one is, he has been named already.**

**For it is known that he is man;**

And he **cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.**

Solomon seems to think everything is foreordained? So why strive to change it. If God has decided your path ... why contend with Him.

**Very passive and fatalistic! Wrong! We have the power of free choice!**

**Ecclesiastes 6:12**

12 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?**

A futile life ... of shadows and coming darkness? Certainly true for Solomon! BUT —HE WAS FREE TO REPENT!!

**But as believers ... we should have great hope in our lives for eternity and immortality in the Family of God!**

**WE HAVE A GREAT FUTURE!**