

Studies in Ecclesiastes (30)
The One Thing That Happens to All
Ecclesiastes 9:1-10

Tonight, we continue our study of Ecclesiastes. We are looking at various aspects of life through the eyes of Solomon who has been extolling the virtues of wisdom, even in a world that sometimes is unwise and an enigma. We have devoted the past few lessons to leaders and those who follow them as well as how life (this life) can be unfair. Tonight, we revisit a theme that keeps it all in perspective and ought to keep us humble – the one thing that happens to all. Let us notice what Solomon says in these verses about death and how to respond to it.

I. God is in control (1)

- a. "I considered all this in my heart" – all that has been addressed up to this point – the vanities of life, how there is inequity and so much that man does not know (but God does) – Solomons considers it and declares it. Some describe this text as the turning point in this book – Solomon begins to look to the answer. And what is that answer?
- b. God is in control. The righteous and wise and their works are in His hands.
God knows what is going on and will determine our final destiny – based upon our conduct.
Revelation 20:12ff – standing before God in judgment, books were opened including the Book of Life..
The dead are judged according to their works. Matthew 25:31-46 also describes this. God takes note. He knows what you are going through and HOW you are managing life – 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10
The godly live with confidence that God does care – 1 Peter 5:6-7, Hebrews 13:5-6.
- c. **People know neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them**. While God is in control, man is not. We do not know motives. While we have a pretty good idea of what love and hatred are and involve, we know we can be deceived. God is not!

II. All are going to die (2-3)

- a. Hebrews 9:27 – it has been appointed.
This has been a recurring theme in this book, and one reason why worldly pursuits are vanity.
This is Solomon had said, it is better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4)
- b. NONE are exempt! One event happens to:
- The righteous and the wicked (those right before God)
- The good & clean and the unclean (living godly lives)
- Those who sacrifice and those who don't (worshipping God)
- The good and the sinner
- He who takes and oath and he who will not take an oath (commitment)
- c. It happens to all! Solomon describes it as "an evil" – and from this life's standpoint, it is as it brings all things to an end.
- d. Even so, men set their hearts on evil (3b) – even though we are going to do, so many live wicked and selfish lives. They live recklessly as if they have all the time in the world.
The atheist wants to convince you there is no God so that there will be no guilt in how you live your life (not REAL guilt, just temporary consequences that are arbitrarily decided), and thus more and more wickedness prevails. A society that rejects God will NOT thrive in peace!
BUT, how many are who DO profess belief in God and live evil lives anyways. And how many have been lied to about it by so-called proclaimers of God?

HOW many believe in God and INTEND to make correction in a little while, only to have their lives cut short, OR become more hardened and hopeless, before they can make that correction?

III. **But in life there is hope (4-6) –**

- a. Solomon here notes that **as long as there is life, there is hope**. In life there can be changes to make yourself right with God. Those living in sinful misery and without hope need to know that as long as they live there is STILL hope. And is it not our goal to seek for those desperately searching (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11)?

Ephesians 2:1-3 speaks of those once dead in trespasses. Vs. 11-12 described them as “having no hope and without God in the world.” And BETWEEN these thoughts we see the grace of God made available to all. Let us praise God for His longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9)

- b. **For a living dog is better than a dead lion** – Lions have been considered the king of the jungle, while dogs (here wild scavengers) were despised. Here Solomon notes it is better to be alive than dead. There are advantages to life, even in an evil and cruel world, as we have seen above.
- c. **For the living know they will die** – may we ALWAYS live with the realization that physical life is not forever. We are going to die and thus we make preparations for that.
- d. **The dead know nothing** – there has been much false teaching about this, including some who advocate annihilation (cessation to exist, either for the wicked or all). That is contrary to so many passages of scripture (Hebrews 11:13-16, Psalm 16:10 – not leave my soul in Sheol (hades), Luke 16:19-31 – the rich man and Lazarus).

IN CONTEXT, the point is that once you die, there ceases being hope. There is no longer an opportunity to turn your life around and repent. Again consider Hebrews 9:27, John 5:28-29 – the hour is coming...

He further elaborates noting “**they have no more reward**” (in this world). People may profit from their efforts, but what good will it do them?

The memory of them is soon forgotten – the general rule is that after a short while, man is forgotten about. Only close family remember their passed on loved ones, but what happens when they die?

- e. **Also, their love, hatred and envy have now perished** – they have no more control. This is comfort to the oppressed knowing that when the evil and cruel die, they will cease being cruel. They no longer have control. Even evil dictators, when they die, are often survived by those who make things better. And they will enjoy NOTHING more of this life!

IV. **Therefore enjoy life (responsibly) (7-10)**

- a. So what is Solomon’s solution to this?

- b. **Eat and drink with a merry heart** – make the best of your life now.

God has accepted your works. He knows that you have served Him (if you have).

- c. **Let your garments be white** - White is often associated with purity. Solomon’s point could be that while you enjoy life, make sure you do so righteously. He will revisit this later in this book. But it is also observed that the white robe could be reference to light and comfortable clothing, and the oil a reference the soothing of the skin – in other words, taking care of yourself to be comfortable.

- d. **Live joyfully with the wife you have** – a godly spouse is a blessing from God -

Proverbs 5:18-19 - *Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love.*

Proverbs 18:22, *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the Lord.*

A godly spouse is there, even in the evil times. She who loves you will stand by you and help to lift you up in those times.

NOTE also how Solomon emphasizes the permanency of marriage in this text – all the days of your earthly (vain) life. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Divorce is so terrible to God that He only allows

remarriage if the spouse has been unfaithful (Matthew 19:8-9), and that is because someone has broken the vow they made to God and their spouse.

- e. ***Whatever you do, do it with all your might*** – here Solomon challenges us. Do your best with what you have. That is the secret to a peaceful life. Remember again Ecclesiastes 5:12 – *the sleep of a laboring man is sweet...* In the NT this is taught in Colossians 3:23 spoken to servants.

Why? ***For there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.*** This life is the only change you have – it is your stewardship. Something you WILL BE returning to God.

And thus Solomon challenges us to live our lives to the best of our abilities. Live with faith and trusting God, serving Him. Your life here may not be the most pleasant, but you have made the best of it and God will reward you when you stand before Him. May it be our desire to have it said of us, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”* (Matthew 25:21, 23). Since you are still here, let me remind you of what Solomon said – you still have hope. If you are lacking in some way, make it right. And if there is some way I can help you, I stand ready. Just let me know. Think about it!