

Ecclesiastes 6: The Tragedy of Never Finding Contentment

Summary of the Preacher's Main Points So Far:

1. **The Whole of Life is *vanity* – a mere breath in which none of our personal accomplishments or legacies will survive or be remembered** (Ecclesiastes 1).
2. **Even those specific things that are precious to us, that we hold onto so tightly and invest so much in, also have little or no lasting satisfaction** (Ecclesiastes 2).
3. **Life is not about struggling to gain; but rather letting go, and learning to simply receive and enjoy life as a gift -- accepting this is the beginning of true Joy, Hope, and Freedom** (Ecclesiastes 3).
4. **A) Making life about “ME” is the source of most pain.**
B) Making life about others -- you will find true joy and contentment that cannot be matched elsewhere under the sun (Ecclesiastes 4).
5. **Religion, like any other pursuit, is vanity if approached for personal gain, rather than as a platform for giving** (Ecclesiastes 5).

5:18-20

Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. ¹⁹And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. ²⁰God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

Angi's Friend's Story

Ecclesiastes 6:1-6

There is another serious tragedy I have seen under the sun, and it weighs heavily on humanity. ² God gives some people great wealth and honor and everything they could ever want, but then he doesn't give them the chance to enjoy these things. They die, and someone else, even a stranger, ends up enjoying their wealth! This is meaningless—a sickening tragedy.

³A man might have a hundred children and live to be very old. But if he finds no satisfaction in life and doesn't even get a decent burial, it would have been better for him to be born dead. ⁴ His birth would have been meaningless, and he would have ended in darkness. He wouldn't even have had a name, ⁵ and he would never have seen the sun or known of its existence. Yet he would have had more peace than in growing up to be an unhappy man. ⁶ He might live a thousand years twice over but still not find contentment. And since he must die like everyone else—what's the use?

- Wealth
- Honor
- 100 Children
- Long Life

What is the “Sickening Tragedy” the Preacher is Eluding To?

Never Finding Contentment

- **5:10**
Those who love money will **never have enough**. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness!
 - **Desire for More**
 - **Life Becomes About “Getting” and “Gain”**
- **5:12**
The 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.
 - **Anxiety Deprives One of Rest**
- **5:16-17**
...Like working for the wind. **Throughout their lives, they live under a cloud – frustrated, discouraged, and angry.**
 - **The Struggle to Protect What is “Mine” Ruins What Was Meant to be Enjoyed as a Gift**
 - **Fear**
 - **Frustration**
 - **Discouragement**
 - **Anger**
- **5:13** **Hoarding riches harms the saver...**
 - **Hoarding “Gain” Ruins the Joy of “Gifts” to be Shared**

Ecclesiastes 6:7-9

⁷All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied. ⁸For what advantage does the wise man have over the fool? What *advantage* does the poor man have, knowing *how* to walk before the living? ⁹**What the eyes see is better than what the soul desires.** This too is futility and a striving after wind.

- **Greed & Lust Prevail – But Never Satisfy**
- **The Issue is NOT RICH or POOR – But the Way You View and Approach Life**
 - **An Opportunity to “Gain”**
 - **A “Gift” to Enjoy and Share**
- **Better to Enjoy What You Have Then Spending Your Life Desiring and Pursuing What You Don't Have**

- You May Say, “That’s Easy for the RICH, They Have All They Need and More...”

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷Teach those who are rich in this world **not to be proud and not to trust in their money**, which is so unreliable. Their **trust should be in God**, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. ¹⁸**Tell them to use their money to do good.** They should be **rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others.** ¹⁹**By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.**

- Increased Responsibility
- Increased Temptation (1 Tim. 6:9-11)

Contentment is Accepting that God is in Control, and Trusting Him in How He Allows Life Under the Sun to Be

Ecclesiastes 6:10-12

¹⁰Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there’s no use arguing with God about your destiny.

¹¹The more words you speak, the less they mean. So what good are they?

¹²In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we are gone?

Zacchaeus: From Gain to Gift

Luke 19:8-9

⁸Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

⁹Jesus responded, “**Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.**”

The Secret of Living Well

Philippians 4:11-12

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.¹²I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. **I have learned the secret of living** in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.