

## 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).
6. **Don't try to control your life, or you will suffer the tragedy of never finding contentment** (Ecclesiastes 6).
7. **Let Death be your teacher and learn to live life backwards and choose wisdom over escapism; but know that even wisdom is limited** (Ecclesiastes 7).
8. **Learning to respect authority and doing what's right even when it seems to make no difference has significance beyond life under the sun** (Ecclesiastes 8).

## We Live Like the One Certainty of Life is Uncertain (9:1-6)

This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of godly and wise people are in God's hands, no one knows whether God will show them favor. <sup>2</sup>The same destiny ultimately awaits everyone, whether righteous or wicked, good or bad, ceremonially clean or unclean, religious or irreligious. Good people receive the same treatment as sinners, and people who make promises to God are treated like people who don't.

<sup>3</sup>It seems so wrong that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. Already twisted by evil, people choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. <sup>4</sup>There is hope only for the living. As they say, "It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion!"

<sup>5</sup>The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. <sup>6</sup>Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth.

## We Live Like The Uncertainties of Life Are Certain (9:11-18)

<sup>11</sup> I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. <sup>12</sup> Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

<sup>13</sup> Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me. <sup>14</sup> There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it. <sup>15</sup> But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man. <sup>16</sup> So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded. <sup>17</sup> The words of the wise heard in quietness are *better* than the shouting of a ruler among fools. <sup>18</sup> Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

On the one hand, Death is certain; On the other, the timing of my death is uncertain....  
How should a person then live?

## Living in the In-Between: Life is a Gift, Not Gain (9:7-10)

<sup>7</sup> Go. Eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works. <sup>8</sup> Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head. <sup>9</sup> Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. <sup>10</sup> Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

- "Go...God has approved this..."
- "Enjoy"
- "Whatever your hand finds to do..."

How does one reconcile the Preacher's statements with the sentiments of the New Testament that seem to teach the opposite about loving the things of the world (1 John 2:15-17), or making life about consumption (Romans 14:17) or pleasure (2 Tim. 3:4) Timothy?

How am I supposed to mix these earthly, fleeting things with the idea of being a focused disciple of Jesus who is the "citizen of another world..." "laying up my treasures in heaven" instead of here on earth?

### Enjoying the Gifts of this Life as Gifts & Following Jesus Go Hand-in-Hand

#### 1. Worship God, Not the Gifts.

*The man who makes sex his god, and who worships it, discovers that actually what is normal, pleasurable, soon becomes inadequate, not enough, and he becomes chained to a path whereby he begins to enjoy only perversion—which of course is no enjoyment. The woman who makes her family her god and who worships her children discovers that they fail her and disappoint her and do not achieve all that she wanted them to achieve, and so she is left empty and unfulfilled. You can fill in the blanks with every single one of the good things in this world that are listed above. When you worship God's gifts, they will never ever deliver what they promise and instead will leave you empty and broken. As C. S. Lewis put it, "Natural loves that are allowed to become gods do not remain loves. They are still called so, but can become in fact complicated forms of hatred." – David Gibson*

## 2. The Earthly Gifts Foreshadow the Heavenly Ones.

### Isaiah 25:6-9

The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain;  
A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow,  
And refined, aged wine.

<sup>7</sup> And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples,  
Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death for all time,  
And the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces,  
And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;  
For the Lord has spoken.

<sup>9</sup> And it will be said in that day,  
“Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us.  
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;  
Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”

### Revelation 19:7-9

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he \*said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”

### Luke 7:33-35

For John the Baptist didn't spend his time eating bread or drinking wine, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' <sup>34</sup> The Son of Man, on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' <sup>35</sup> But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it.”

(Also See **Luke 14:15-24**)

## 3. Even Death and Suffering are Good Gifts.