

Live Life Like You Mean It!
Ecclesiastes 11:1-10
Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

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Lets read chapter 11 of Ecclesiastes together!

Solomon's documentary on *the fulfilled life* has been big on *God's sovereignty!*

E.g. (one of my Eccl fav):

*Consider the work of God,
For who is able to straighten what He has bent?
In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider – God has
made the one as well as the other... (7:13-14)*

The God of the Bible is the **King of the Universe!** He *made* it, He *owns* it, He *controls* it. → God is a *hands-on* ruler!

Ecclesiastes teaches that this theological truth is absolutely essential to experiencing a *fulfilled life*.

Embracing the view of God as **King of the World & King of your life** equips you to *understand* catastrophe, *spend* your paycheck, *face* disappointment, *raise* your kids, *endure* temptation, *pay* your taxes, *resist* anxiety, *honor* authority, *love* your spouse, *silence* complaining, *enjoy* your days, *go* to work in the morning,...*sleep sound* at night.

Solomon's **bottom line** (Eccl 11) is: God is in control of life, including your life (*that's a good thing!*), **so live like it!**

If God is really *in charge* then these two responses just make sense:

1. **Live life (vv.1-6). *Don't just sit there - Git 'er done!***
2. **Love life (vv.7-10)! *Attitude adjustments for old & young.***

Beloved, if God is in charge, then *paralysis*, *bitterness*, & *carelessness* just don't make sense!



...pray...

Live life like you mean it!

1. The problem of *paralysis* casts a shadow over the first half of chap. 11!
Too **cautious** to be *generous*, too **careful** to *get started*, too **worried** to *git 'er done* !
2. **Keep giving (1-2) !** No doubt you know that in the **current financial climate**, *charities, faith-based organizations, para-church ministries, & local congregations* are *struggling financially*. **Giving** is *way down*!
 - a. Solomon says “**Cast your bread on the surface of the waters!**” His opening *verb* – **cast** – literally means *send, let loose*. Solomon’s encouragement is usually seen as a *word picture* for *generous charity*.
 - b. In hard times, generosity can feel like a **big risk**. But Solomon says that **if God is** in control of *everything*, & **if God** commands *generosity*, **then charity** is a risk you have to take!
 - i. God will *reward* you. Maybe not *all at once*; maybe not *right way* → maybe not for *many days*...
 - ii. But the Spirit promises, *the one who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed.* (Pr 19:17) Beloved, the LORD has a **good credit score**!
 - c. But *how generous* is *generous*? When to you *draw the line*? Scripture seems say, be willing to *err* on the side of *generosity*. This idea (v.2) of “*seven, or even to eight,*” was just a way of saying: *don’t be too quick to draw lines & draw back*.
 - i. Guard against the attitude that rationalizes: “*we budgeted to help seven, & so there’s no way we’re going to help eight...*”
 - ii. Our admonition to *generosity* honestly recognizes that you don’t *what tomorrow has in store*. Maybe something *bad*...
 1. But *God knows*! *Trust Him*, and *do what He says*!
 2. **Keep giving**!

3. **Keep moving (3-5)!** Have you ever heard the expression, “*the paralysis of analysis?* My Dad used to say, “**Do something Craig, even if it’s wrong, just do something!**”
- a. Solomon word pictures remind me of the NT letter of *James*; lots of *weather reports & farm news: clouds & trees & wind & sowing & reaping.*
 - i. When will it *rain?* When it’s *good & ready!*
 - ii. Where will that *tree fall?* On my *fence?* My *barn?* It’ll *fall* where it *falls,* & *there* it’ll *be.*

 - b. You spend *too much time* study the weather, you never get out of the *barn & into the field.* Solomon’s is telling you that *there is no such thing as perfect conditions.* But don’t let **life’s windows slam shut** on you while you’re *standing there, staring thru them!*
 - i. *Faint heart never won fair maiden!* (Cervantes)
 - ii. *He who hesitates is lost!* ... (J. Addison)
 - iii. **Snooze, you lose!**

 - c. There’s just a *lot* you don’t know!
 - i. The original Heb grammar (**5**) is difficult to translate but easy to understand: *you don’t know now, & you never will!*
 - ii. *Big winds & little babies... & all God’s ways & all God’s plans.* You can’t *know them* perfectly.
 - iii. But every day brings *opportunities & responsibilities,* & so you **must pursue them.** **Yes** - perhaps at some seeming *risk.*
 - iv. But understand this: **He** knows!

4. So as you *keep moving...keep trusting Him!* (**Read v.6.**)
 - a. The idea is to *get after it early*, & *keep after it* until you're done! Again, spend too much time doing *risk assessment* and you won't get *anything accomplished*.
 - b. There are no *guarantees* about *what works & what doesn't*, but you *can't turn a car that isn't moving*.

5. Solomon has just offered you some very practical wisdom in the pursuit of *making a difference – faith that risks*. The old king is starting to set our perspective *above the sun*. Let's capture two fortifying truths before we move on:
 - a. Fortifying truth #1: *God knows it all*. (Corollary: *you don't*; review **vv.2, 5, 6.**)
 - b. Fortifying truth #2: *God made it all!* He is *almighty*. He is *sovereign* (→ *King of the Universe*).
 - c. → Fortified *conclusion*. Know what to do? *Just do it!* ☺

Paralysis does not promote obedience or reflect faith; live life like you mean it!

Love life (read vv. 7-10)!

1. *God just gave you permission to **smile!*** As we move closer & closer to the conclusion of Solomon's documentary, the focus is turning from *under the sun* (live lived as if God *isn't there* or *doesn't care*), to *life lived in the light!*
 - a. **V.7's upbeat intro** is full of force; the Spirit wants you to hear that *life in the light* is *sweet*.
 - b. Don't just *live live* – ***love life!***
2. Here is encouragement for the *old* – ***rejoice!***
 - a. How many *years* will God *give you?* With ***all*** the things you don't know, you don't know ***that either!*** Maybe you'll live *many years...*
 - b. *Rejoice* in *all* of them. Even the days that were *difficult*. Solomon assures you that *every man's life* (even a *king's*) is filled with *dark times*.
 - c. Yet I can't help but note that Solomon says ***years*** of life vs. ***days*** of *dark*. And God uses those days to strengthen you.
 - i. The *dark days* lend contrast to the *light* – making it seem *brighter*.
 - ii. The *dark days* remind you of God's *mercy & pity* when He *came to your rescue; answering you prayers*.
 - iii. The *dark days* strengthen you faith – *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect & complete, lacking in nothing.*
 - iv. The *dark days* teach us that we can't know everything God *knows or does!*
 - d. As for the *future*, as Solomon has reminded us, we can't know *what it holds*. Don't much *anxiety* over tomorrow is *pointless*.

3. Here is encouragement for the *young* – **rejoice!** (Read vv.9-10.)

- a. Solomon’s lesson here is *not* that you rejoice **because** you’re *young*, the idea is that you **learn** to rejoice **while** you’re young.
 - i. The *joy of the LORD* is the *strength of the godly*. And a lifestyle of *joy* should begin early.
 - ii. Solomon calls children & young people to surrender their hearts to *sweet (pleasant) influences, early on*. Remember that the Bible’s picture of the *heart* is the *control center* of all of life: *emotions, intellect, will* – if your heart is *pleasant*, your days will be *pleasant*.
- b. But did you **see that!?!?** Are you *floored* that God says **do what you want?**
 - i. **V.9** - *Follow the impulses of your heart...follow the desires of your eyes*. Isn’t that **dangerous?** (Parents, are you *squirming?*)
 - ii. Not really! The call to *joy* is not encouragement to indulge in a *moral meltdown!* It is not permission to set off on the path of *foolishness* (just surveyed in **ch.10**).
 - iii. The Bible can’t conceive of *joy* in the absence of a relationship w/ God (Jesus: “*I’ve come that you might have life, & have it more abundantly.*”). Solomon is developing that *idea* right here! → **Joy? Fulfillment?** *Remember your Creator in the days of your youth* (see **12:1**).
 - iv. Young people, **God is for you!**

- c. But there is a *caveat emptor* (*buyer beware*) for you who are young; even as you pursue your *impulses & desires*...
- i. *...you are accountable! God will bring you to judgment.* For *all*. Do you feel the weight of that idea: *He will bring you?* → you won't *escape* Him!
 - ii. Young people! You have *big dreams & many open doors* before you. *God is for you*, but that truth is not a license to sinfulness. **God holds young adults accountable for all their decisions & actions. (2x)**
 - iii. Solomon is welding *joy & holy fear* into one world-changing *worldview*.
- d. Solomon has a *practical application* to help you get started on the *life of joy!* **Read v.10.** That first little word *so*, ties **v.10** back to **v.9** ...
- i. Young women & men, beware: *an angry young man makes for a bitter & lonely old man*...
 - ii. So God says do a little *heart house-cleaning!* Are you prone to *grief & anger?* Put that *off!* Drive it away from your disposition.
 - iii. Are you the target of *evil* temptations & habits (*pain* → *evil*)? Put them *off!* Don't give *in* & don't give *up*. *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*
4. And just one more *gentle warning*: you have your *entire life* ahead of you to *live & love & rejoice*...but your *entire life is slipping away!* Don't ignore the One who will bring you to *judgment*...

Live life...love life!

Look back @ vv.4,5 w/me!

What are you waiting for? (Craig, not w/ an accusatory tone!)

Christian (young & old): Are you waiting some *perfect condition* before you *do something big* (*decisive*) for Christ?

Health, finances, education, family, retirement...

What if “perfect” never happens?

What are you waiting for?

Unbeliever (outside of Christ). Esp you who are young. It seems to me that some of you are *waiting*.

Your *need* won't get any greater than it is today.

God's *grace* won't be any freer.

The *Good News* won't be any clearer (I know you know it).

Repentance won't be any “easier.”

And your **time** is *running away*...

To **one & all** I say, *what are you waiting for – your tomorrow may never come.*

...pray...

Response: how will you respond to the Spirit's call to *live & to love*?

Is there anything that has *paralyzed* you in sinful waiting?

Is there any reason you can't *obey Christ & follow Him*?

If I can help you live a victorious Christian life – *please come and see me!*