

Message #8

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

Neglect your relationship with God and you will never be happy—ever! That is a promise of God!

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR MAN TO FIND HAPPINESS WITHOUT GOD , FOR GOD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE LIFE ENJOYABLE .

I love the words of Kenneth Gangel on this text—here is “the first shining gleam of light” in the book of Ecclesiastes (Gangel, p. 44). In these verses we learn that meaning, joy, fulfillment are a real possibility but they are not an automatic guarantee. It is possible for one to live life and enjoy life. But in order for this to happen, God must be in the center of the life.

POINT #1 – A life that is enjoyable and meaningful is possible . **2:24a**

There is nothing better than for a man to enjoy life. The word “better” means there is nothing anymore beautiful, cheerful and agreeable than for a man to be able to enjoy his life (Gesenius, p. 319). Enjoying life is a beautiful thing. It is a real blessing.

The Hiphil stem of the verb “tell himself” indicates that there is nothing any better than when a man comes to the point or brings himself to the point where he can see, in himself, that his own life is good (*Gesenius Grammar*, p. 144).

When a man can enjoy his labor, when a man can sit down and eat and drink truly happy in life, there is nothing better than that. By virtue of this statement we learn that it is possible for a man to be miserable with life or to be happy with life.

It isn't an automatic guarantee that we will enjoy life. As we shall see in a moment, the determining factor to this is God. Solomon had, as a believer “hated life” (2:17-18), but he had also learned that one could potentially “enjoy” life.

POINT #2 – A life that is enjoyable and meaningful is from God . **2:24b-25**

Now watch this carefully—the ability to have a true enjoyable life lies in our relationship with God. It does not lie in our job, it does not lie in our income, it does not lie in our achievements, it does not lie in our abilities. The ability to enjoy life lies in our relationship with God. Life will be good when God is at the center of it.

Observation #1 - An enjoyable life is from the hand of God. **2:24b**

God is the one who can hand out an enjoyable life. The word “enjoyment” (**2:25**) is one that speaks of an internal perspective that is happy and excited with life (Gesenius, p. 267). If enjoyment of life were something external, then perhaps man could figure out some way to get it. But enjoyment of life is internal and it can only come from God.

Observation #2 - An enjoyable life is impossible without God. **2:25**

There are many times in Ecclesiastes where the theme of enjoying life is a real tangible possibility: 3:12-13, 22; 5:18-19; 8:15; 9:7-10. In every one of these passages, Solomon emphasizes this is only possible if God is giving one an enjoyable life.

In other words, leave God out of the center of your life and you cannot possibly wind up enjoying life. There will be an internal emptiness no matter what you do, who you know or how much you have.

The words of the famed scholar H. C. Leupold are worth hearing: "...true enjoyment is possible but it does not lie within man's power to bestow it upon himself" (Leupold, p. 76).

POINT #3 – A life that is enjoyable and meaningful is given by God to one He classifies as good. **2:26**

(Observation #1) - This verse proves God does make judicial evaluations of an individual's life.

God does classify one as good, God does classify one as sinful.

(Observation #2) - This verse proves God does not judge nor treat all believers equally.

Let us remember that Solomon is a believer. He knew what it was like to have God judge him good and give him blessing. He also knew what it was like to have God judge him sinful and make his life so miserable that he "hated life."

Message #1 - God grants an enjoyable and meaningful life to one He judges to be good. **2:26a**

Now I want you to carefully see what God gives to one He deems as good. It isn't anything tangible. There are three specific things He will give to one He deems as good that ultimately lead one to have a meaningful, fulfilled and happy life:

(Grant #1) - God will grant one good His wisdom.

To the one who pleases God, God will give wisdom. This wisdom (chokmah) is the kind of wisdom that is intelligent to the point of making crafty and wise choices and decisions (Gesenius, p. 277).

(Grant #2) - God will grant one good His knowledge.

The word "knowledge" (dayath) is one that speaks of an ability to understand and to know. God grants those He deems good a supernatural ability to see things and understand things that others do not see nor understand.

(Grant #3) - God will grant one good His joy.

The word “joy” is one that refers to a joyful and cheerful mindset that is happy internally and externally (p. 791).

It describes a happiness in which one actually leaps for joy in his soul and demonstrates joy in his countenance. This is joy at an abundant level.

Every N. T. believer has been commanded to rejoice. Paul said, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). Notice carefully where the joy is “in the Lord!”

Without a proper relationship with the Lord, there won’t be this great level of joy. Life will be a “long and winding road” that will lead you nowhere and leave you empty.

Message #2 - God does not grant an enjoyable and meaningful life to one He judges to be sinful . **2:26b**

The word “sin” is one the archer’s term that means to miss the mark by not even reaching the target (Gesenius, p. 271). Now the tense of the participle “sinning” (Qal in its Poel form) indicates the action is continuous. In other words, if God sees that one of His people is continually missing the mark of what He wants him to do, He will not grant happiness or meaning to life.

Walter Kaiser said, “All the things that we call the ‘goods’ of life—health, riches, possessions, position, sensual pleasures, honors, and prestige—slip through man’s hands unless they are received as a gift from God and until God gives man the ability to enjoy them and obtain satisfaction from them” (Kaiser, p. 59).

The sinning believer cannot ever get happiness. It will be “gone like the wind!”

Closing Questions:

1. Is your life meaningful, fulfilling and joyful?
2. Have you been trying to find happiness your own way without God?
3. Does God classify you as good because you continually obey Him?
4. Does God classify you as sinning because you continually disobey Him?

If you want meaning and joy, keep your focus “above the sun.”