

Message #18**Ecclesiastes 5:18-20**

Man, by his own nature, is not free to enjoy life and he never will enjoy life. Leave finite sinful man to himself and he will not make the right choices and he will not be blessed by God.

Enjoyment in life without God is impossible. It doesn't matter who one is or what one has, without God at the center of life, enjoyment is not possible.

As we come to these verses, we may observe that for the first time in the book, God becomes a key part of the discussion. Four times in three verses God is named. We may also point out that the name for God used here is "Elohim," the plural noun for God, and that it is used with the third person masculine singular verb. This is another clear evidence of the Trinity. The point is, unless one has a relationship with the Triune God of the Bible, one will not ever find real joy and meaning.

We must remember that when Solomon experienced these things, he was a believer and he was far removed from a close relationship with God. From all external appearances, Solomon looked and was impressive. He had the look of one who was successful and secure. But behind the scenes, his life was lonely, empty and miserable. He was trying to find meaning to life without God and he found he was "chasing the wind."

GOD IS THE ONE WHO CAN GIVE MEANING, FULFILLMENT AND JOY TO LIFE AND HE WILL GIVE IT TO ONE WHO KEEPS HIM AT THE CENTER OF HIS LIFE.

Without God at the center of life, there will be restlessness in the heart. Deep in one's heart there is an uncertainty and insecurity. There is emptiness and, in many ways, one who is not right with God is just faking his way through life. It isn't real.

The problem with such an individual is not his job, not his achievements, not his possessions; it is his relationship with God.

CONSIDERATION #1 – Solomon saw the positive life God could give to a working person.
5:18

There is nothing more wonderful than for a person to be able to do his job, to make enough to eat and drink and to be able to enjoy life.

Observation #1 - Just because we observe others enjoying a job and life does not mean we will.

As we will see, the amount one has does not determine one's happiness. Happiness is determined by one's relationship with God.

Observation #2 - It really doesn't take much for one to enjoy life.

If we have enough food and shelter, and if we have enough to drink and clothes to wear, we can be happy.

Observation #3 - It is possible to enjoy oneself in “all” one's labor.

Another job is not necessarily a better job or a happier job. It is possible to enjoy your job here and now, no matter how strenuous it is or difficult it is.

Observation #4 - It must be remembered our labor won't last long.

The terms “labor” and “toil” are terms that speak of a heavy, wearisome labor (Gesenius, p. 639). The point is it is possible to enjoy a job no matter how strenuous or difficult it may be. We don't necessarily need an easier job to be happy.

Apparently a key to this is to realize we only have strength to work hard for a few years. Hard work, no matter what the job, glorifies God. Paul wrote these words: “Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye-service, as men pleasers, but as slaves of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free” (Eph. 6:5-8).

Observation #5 - God gives length of life and enjoyment of life.

God can permit a person to live a long life to any age He wants. He can also see to it that a person lives long but never enjoys his work. The determining factor of length of life and enjoyment in life is God.

CONSIDERATION #2 – Solomon saw the positive God could give to a wealthy person.
5:19

Not only can God give meaning to a working person, He can also give it to a wealthy person.

Again, we point out that just because one has wealth does not mean he has happiness. It was Seneca, the Roman philosopher, who said, “Money has never yet made any one rich.”

CONSIDERATION #3 – Solomon saw the carefree life God can give to any person. **5:20**

A God-centered person is not obsessed or oppressed by the thought of his own death. When Solomon was out of step with God, it seems, at times, he was consumed by the thought of death (2:16-17; 3:2, 19-20; 4:2).

Life for one right with God is an exciting expedition, not a depressing drudgery.

One right with God isn't worried about what he does or doesn't have. He doesn't worry about how long he will live. He just enjoys the day and lives in light of the words of Jesus Christ, who said, "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:34).

I want us to carefully observe where happiness, fulfillment and joy are found –in the heart. Nothing material, nothing tangible can produce gladness. God must put it in a man's heart.

Even though we live in dark and evil days, our days can be enjoyable. When God grants job and happiness to a man, man can forget about the brevity of his life.