



## “Appearances Are Deciving—Fear God!”

Ecclesiastes 4-5

- I. Mankind tends to such oppressive behaviors that \_\_\_\_\_ can be preferable (4:1-3).
- Mankind \_\_\_\_\_, strives and yet can also be lazy (4:4-6).
  - Man finds himself \_\_\_\_\_ in environments where companionship is needed (4:7-12).
  - Even successful man tend towards \_\_\_\_\_ and will be \_\_\_\_\_ in the end (4:13-16).
- II. The aforementioned evil of man might tempt one to see God in a \_\_\_\_\_ light or join the quest for immediate gratification and Qoheleth offers some cautions:
- The apparent rampant evil in the world is not excuse for careless worship—keep your \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1-7).
  - Do not be taken in or tempted by the \_\_\_\_\_ of those who \_\_\_\_\_ the poor—God judges them even through the natural courses of life (5:8-17).

- III. The conclusion to the entire matter is that \_\_\_\_\_ gives man enjoyment (5:18).
- The capacity to enjoy life is not a function of quantity, each must accept his \_\_\_\_\_ from God and rejoice (5:19).
  - Though one observe hardness and oppression in life, God gives the gift of joy as a \_\_\_\_\_ (5:20).

*Psalm 39:4-8*

### Questions for tonight:

- Note that the Hebrew word *hebel*, (lit. breath, metaphorically futile, vain, empty, obscure) appears in the following contexts: 1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26; 3:19; 4:4, 7, 8, 16; 5:7, 10; 6:2, 4, 9, 11; 7:6, 15; 8:10, 14; 9:9; 11:8, 10; and 12:8. Are you immediate struck by the notion that *hebel* might be used in a different sense in 7:15 and 9:9? Does vanity in 2:26 apply to all that has taken place in 2:24-26 or just to the wicked? If to all, would it have a different nuance within its possible range of meanings?
- In the time poem of 3:2-8, can you find a single category of human existence that is missing by design in the poem, telling us that a certain aspect(s) of life is beyond God’s design? OR, do you see anything in the broader context that acts to take away all of this order and leave man the victim of random circumstance?