

Sunday Evening June 17, 2018

“Testing Pleasure, Laughter, Mirth” Ecclesiastes 2:1-17

I. The grand experiment, pleasure testing –

I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also was vanity. (Ecclesiastes 2:1 NKJ)

1. What we are seeing here is a “test” an experiment, a study –

נָסַח *nacah* {naw-saw'} **Meaning:** 1) to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test

2. It is an exhaustive test, Solomon had the means and the will to try everything –

A. Wine – Ecclesiastes 2:3

B. Solomon applied his wisdom to folly – Ecclesiastes 2:3 B

C. Houses (Plural)

D. Vineyards, Gardens, Orchards, all kinds of trees – Ecclesiastes 2:4-6

E. Male & Female servants (born in his house, implying this test took some time) Ecclesiastes 2:7A

F. Herds & Flocks, the MOST! – Ecclesiastes 2:7B

G. Silver & Gold – Ecclesiastes 2:8A

H. Special treasures of kings / provinces – Ecclesiastes 2:8B

I. Singers, music – all kinds – Ecclesiastes 2:8C

J. ¹⁰Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure – Ecclesiastes 2:10 A

K. He liked his work – Ecclesiastes 2:10 B

3. See his conclusion (below), remembering too at the end of chapter 1 he had “tried” wisdom – Ecclesiastes 1:17-18

... indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. ...¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly As light excels darkness. ¹⁴ The wise man's eyes are in his head, But the fool walks in darkness. ...

Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.

A. He uses the word “vanity” 8 times in this chapter –

הֶבֶל *hebel* {heh'bel} or (rarely in the abs.) **הַבֵּל** *habel* {hab-ale'}

Meaning: 1) vapor, vanity, emptiness, almost NOTHING

Though wisdom clearly excels folly -

¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. (Ecclesiastes 2:13 NKJ)

*This word **הֶבֶל** *hebel* {heh'bel} is used to describe both wisdom and folly, both are vanity ...*

B. Madness is another word used here to describe folly, pleasure, why is seeking pleasure MAD?

What is in view here is not anger, but a sort of insanity WHY? Because PLEASURE, FOLLY has the same impact on a man as does wine or strong drink it keeps us from THINKING –

Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart. ³ Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better. ⁴ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 NKJ)

A funeral is better than a party, why? Because a funeral makes you think and think deeply, a funeral can be life-changing, life-improving!

C. Consider, folly, pleasure to be like a drug –

A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones. (Proverbs 17:22 NKJ)

- Understand a medicine is not a staple, bread and the Word of God are staples, medicine pleasures are not –

"So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. (Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJ)

But He answered and said, "It is written, `Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4 NKJ)

- *Medicine / Pleasure / Wine should be taken in doses –*

Limited amounts –

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (Ephesians 5:18 NKJ)

II. *God is not against our enjoying ourselves –*

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. (Ecclesiastes 11:9 NKJ)

1. *But we need to remember, God sees and judges –*

But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. (Ecclesiastes 11:9 NKJ)

2. *We should and can “rejoice” during special occasions –*

Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this day is holy* to our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10 NKJ)

What was the occasion -

- *Wall around Jerusalem had been built – Nehemiah 7:1*
- *Ezra the scribe read from the Law from morning until midday – Nehemiah 8:1-3*
- *Their “joy” was a great, God-given joy -*

Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off. (Nehemiah 12:43 NKJ)

3. *A wedding is also such an occasion, where even our LORD provides the wine –*

Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" (John 2:7-10 NKJ)

4. *We also may rejoice in the LORD, always –*

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4 NKJ)

A. *Even in jails after being beaten –*

And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. (Acts 16:23-26 NKJ)

B. *Jesus tells us we will rejoice when persecuted –*

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² "**Rejoice and be exceedingly glad**, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:10-12 NKJ)

C. *Real pleasure is closeness to God, not dependent upon things, or perfect circumstances –*

You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 NKJ)

D. *This is a great distance from the pleasures of sin and worldly stuff & status –*

See Psalm 16:11 *godly pleasures are forever, sinful pleasures are passing -*

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, (Hebrews 11:25 NKJ)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that *is* in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NKJ)

E. *Beware of selling your soul for something far below its worth –*

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (Mark 8:36 NKJ)

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJ)

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