

I. The Sorrow of Solitude (vv 7-8)

- A.** *Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun*
- B.** *There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother*
 - 1) This is not talking about the unmarried person
 - 2) This does not mean married persons without children (1 Sam 1:8).
 - 3) This does not necessarily mean the widow or the orphan
 - 4) This refers, rather, to the one who will have nothing to do with others, apart from the serving of his own ends.
- C.** The Sorrows of Solitude Enumerated
 - 1) The separation itself is a sorrow, as it is —
 - a) Contrary to nature (Gen 2:18)
 - b) Contrary to the Law
 - c) Contrary to grace (Rom 12:5)
 - 2) There is no reduction of toil
 - 3) There is no real reward
 - 4) There is no reflection
 - 5) Solitude is unsustainable (WCF 25.2).
- D.** Answering Objections to the Text
 - 1) Objection 1: I am an introvert!
 - 2) Objection 2: But I have not any companions, though I greatly desire such!
- E.** Uses from the Text
 - 1) Do not call *good* what God has called *not good*.
 - 2) Beware common temptations for isolation, which are all rooted in the sin of pride.
 - a) Hiding sin (Gal 6:1)
 - b) Hiding suffering (Gal 6:2)
 - c) Being over-scrupulous (Gal 6:3)
 - 3) Beware common over-corrections.
 - a) Settling for bad company (1 Cor 15:33)
 - b) Lack of decency and temperance.
 - c) Desiring fellowship with others at the neglect of our other duties, or being cumbersome upon the lives of others.

II. The Blessing of Companionship (vv 9-12)

- A.** The Doctrine Stated Simply — *Two are better than one* (v 9)
 - 1) To whom does this apply?
 - 2) Two points of clarification, which are often overlooked:
 - a) The expectation is few, not many
 - b) There is no expectation set for the age of this companion in the Scriptures, as there is unnecessarily in our society
- B.** The Blessings of Companionship
 - 1) They have a better reward
 - a) The reward is better in their prosperous successes (1 Thes 1:3; Psa 118:15)
 - b) The reward is better in their piteous sufferings (1 Sam 14:6-7; Job 2:11-13)
 - 2) They are better supported
 - 3) They are better sustained
 - a) Naturally — The blessing of marriage (Heb 13:4a)
 - b) Spiritually — The necessity of the Church and our mutual duties together (Heidelberg Catechism 55)
 - 4) They are better protected (Hebrews 12:23-28)
- C.** Uses from the Text
 - 1) Let us call *good* what God has called *good*, and hold it, in our hearts and lives, in word and deed, as indeed *better* than all else.
 - 2) Love one another!
 - 3) Fulfill your duties of church membership, especially to seek and receive counsel of elders.
 - 4) Let us look to Christ Jesus.
 - a) His example (Jn 21:7).
 - b) His redemptive work (1 Jn 1:3)
 - c) In the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16-17)
 - 5) Let us consider this passage in the light of the resurrection of the body (Pr 18:1; Psa 133:1)