

Living with the End in Mind: Enjoying Life's Simple Pleasures

Ecclesiastes 9:1-18

April 19, 2020

1. Embrace Life's One Certainty (1-6).
 - a. Death is life's one certainty (1-3).
 - i. Though we don't know whether or not we will experience love or hatred in our life, all of us will experience death (1-2).
 - ii. Death comes to both the good and the bad (2-3).
 1. Death takes the good along with the bad, which seems unjust.
 2. To us here on earth, "under the sun," it seems unjust and evil.
 - b. There is hope for those who live in this perplexing world (4-6).
 - i. To be alive is to have opportunity in our hands in a way that we do not have when we're dead (4).
 1. The believer has hope found in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3-16)
 2. Every living person on this earth must make the most of the opportunity to trust Christ and walk with Him!
 - ii. To be alive is to learn to live well and die well (5-6).
 1. The living know that they are going to die.
 2. The wise learn to face their coming death and live in the light of it.
 - a. The wise realize every time they see a coffin, it's pointing to their own mortality.
 - b. The wise realize that God does not owe them a long life.
 - c. The wise realize that they are under the curse of death, and every day is a gift.
 - d. The wise realize that this life is a precious opportunity to lay up treasure in heaven.
 - e. The wise realize that everything in this world should be held with an open hand because we love Jesus more than anything else and want to be with Him.
2. Accept Life's Many Uncertainties (11-18)
 - a. Life under the sun is uncertain.
 - i. As much as we should seek to be swift, strong, wise, understanding, and skillful, unexpected reversals are common in this life (11).
 - ii. Men and women often have their lives turned upside down by a disaster they never saw coming and which they always thought would happen to someone else (12).
 - iii. This is illustrated by the poor wise man who delivered his city by his wisdom, but he was forgotten and unrewarded by those he delivered (13-18).
 - b. Don't put your faith in that which lies under the sun!
 - i. We don't know when God will call us home (12).
 - ii. James 4:13-15 "Go to now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
3. Enjoy Life's Simple Pleasures (7-10).
 - a. Enjoy the many blessings that God has created you to enjoy (7).
 - i. God takes pleasure when you take pleasure in the gifts that He has given you.
 - ii. Our pleasure in God's gifts is a gift to God (i.e. giving gifts at Christmas or birthdays).
 - b. Celebrate every moment as a gift from God (8).
 - i. White garments and oil vs. sackcloth and ashes – let the gratitude you feel on the inside radiate to those around you on the outside!
 - ii. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).
 - c. Enjoy your marriage (9).
 - i. Don't just get along with your spouse; enjoy life with your spouse as God's gift (Prov. 18:22; 19:14)!
 - ii. Daren Hardy's gratitude journal changed his marriage.

- d. Enjoy your work (10).
 - i. Work is not a curse; God created us to work, therefore throw yourself into it wholeheartedly!
 - ii. God has a work for each of us to accomplish.
 - 1. Adam was a farmer.
 - 2. Moses was a shepherd.
 - 3. Jesus was a carpenter.
 - 4. Paul was a tentmaker.
 - iii. The day is coming when we will have to lay down our tools and meet our Maker, so put your heart into your work!
- e. Application:
 - i. You can only enjoy God's gifts when you do not worship them.
 - ii. You can only enjoy God's gifts when you receive them with gratitude.
 - iii. God is not a killjoy; instead He is like a host who welcomes us to the most lavish of banquets to enjoy.
 - iv. God uses different tools to make us homesick for heaven.
 - 1. Death, sickness, uncertainty, disaster, sorrow and grief are means God uses to dislodge us from seeking security here.
 - 2. His gifts are also means to make us homesick for heaven precisely because they're so good.
 - 3. Verses 7-10 are full of wedding imagery: food, drink, white garments, oil, husband and wife.
 - 4. The best that life can offer us is simply a foretaste of a wedding banquet still to come!
 - 5. Every meal is a foretaste for the banquet yet to come (Isaiah 25; Revelation 19:6-10).

Conclusion:

- 1. Have you fully embraced your mortality? Have you made peace with God through Christ? If you have, have you discovered the most important things you should be doing every day?
- 2. Have you placed your faith in your gifts than you have in the Giver of those gifts? Are you okay with God taking back those gifts? If so, how are you demonstrating that?
- 3. Are you enjoying life's simple pleasures as a gift from God (food and drink, present in the moment, your marriage, your work)?