

Solomon's Christmas Challenge

Text: Ecclesiastes 6

Many will be celebrating Christmas as a family.

The Christmas lists has been shared.

The Christmas Gifts have been purchased.

The majority of them have been wrapped.

The majority of them have been shaken & guessed.

Do you think you will get all you asked for?

Do you hope you will get all you asked for?

What will you do if you don't?

AFTER CHRISTMAS SALES!!!!

If you can't return them, there is always RE-Gifting!

Illus: As we get older, Christmas transitions from

- Boxes & Wrapping Paper
- Toys
- Electronics
- Tools & Car Accessories
- Sox, Underwear, & Handkerchiefs

I am the 1st to admit, My desires for Christmas has changed.

- Excited about presents.
- Excited about who come to spend time with us.
- Excited about that special person I was giving too.
- Actually, I proposed to Sara on Christmas eve, 1987.
- Excited to share my love w/my kids & see ther faces
- Excited to communicate God's love to others.

Christmas had changed for Solomon too

Solomon started out, serving & Obeying God.

After he received Fame & Fortune He allowed it to
Turn His heart from God.

He was not a happy person when he wrote Ecclesiast

Sin has TAKEN Solomon father than he wanted to Go

Sin has Cost Solomon far more than he wanted to Pay

Sin has KEPT Solomon longer that he wanted to Stay

Solomon was Jaded.

Sin will leave you Empty, Bitter, & Full of Regret.

Hoping to make some good come out of his mess,
Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes.

His Message to us is timely at this time of the year, &
all year round.

I. ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE: (Vs 1-6)

Solomon discusses the 3 measurements of success in
Jewish society: Wealth, Long Life, & Lots of Children

As wonderful as these good gifts are, unless God is in
the midst we cannot enjoy them.

How tragic to have riches and a long life but not be
able to enjoy them!

The poor man wishes for more while the rich man
wishes he could enjoy even a part of what he has.

THE VANITY OF LUXURY

6:1-2 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: 2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

It was an evil, in his estimation.

He complains about a man to whom God has given wealth & honor, yet cannot enjoy it.

Implied is that he dies prematurely, or that someone stronger than him steals his wealth, or is miserable in his prosperity.

Solomon quite evidently was speaking of himself.

God had given to him great wealth and honor, yet he was utterly miserable.

So often is the case of the affluent.

Illus: He who dies with the most toys, is still DEAD!

Illus: The Arkansas Mindset vs. New York

They spend so much effort learning how to get Wealth
Then spend so much effort working to get it, but they don't know how to enjoy it.

They are no more happy than men of modest means.

(Ps 39:6; Lu 12:16-20).

MORE does not Equate to HAPPINESS.

Illus: I remember my 1st \$100 bill, had to break it for a snicker bar.

Illus: Howard Hughes, died alone, a recluse germafob
ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE!

THE VANITY OF LEGACY

6:3-5 If a man who has a large family and long life.

(He again is speaking of his own miserable estate)

If a man should beget an hundred children,

Live many years w/o his life being filled with good,
then suffer the disgrace to die without burial;
Solomon suggests it would have been better to have been miscarried rather than be born & live for this life
(Ps 58:8; Ps 127:3; Mark 10:14).

Solomon's outlook was of Hopelessness & despair.
Because He lived His life for THIS Life, not the Next.
Solomon lived his life for this earthly life, not His
Eternal Life.

You're going to live in heaven longer than here.

What are you living for?

Why did you have kids?

So you wont be alone? Or to Invest in Heaven?

Maybe we would be serious about our life if we viewed it as an eternal investment, instead of an earthly sacrifice.

Solomon viewed life itself as empty.

Because of His backslidden condition.

Such is often the perspective of one far from God.

Is your life being lived for the NEXT or NOW.

1 brings JOY out of Despair, Wealth while in Poverty
ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE!

THE VANITY OF LONGEVITY

6:6 *Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?*

Verse 6 suggests that though the man indicated in verse 3, should live a thousand years twice, his life would be prolonged misery; followed by entry into the unseen world of the dead, (Ec 8:12-13; Pr 14:32).

He speaks of one living a thousand years and then double that.

Yet, as far as he was concerned, there was no virtue in that either.

One having great length of life would eventually go to the same place as the one miscarried at birth.

Evident is a hopelessness and futility of life.

Solomon had it all, yet he had nothing.

Such is often the case of those who are far from God.

They may be prosperous outwardly, but they are empty on the inside.

What is Solomon's Lesson from vs 1-6?

What do we learn from the Vanity of Luxury, Legacy, Longevity?

ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE!

Even with the three measuring sticks of success: Wealth, Long Life, and Lots of Children.

As wonderful as these good gifts are, unless God is our Purpose; we cannot enjoy them.

How tragic to have riches and a long life but not be able to enjoy them!

The poor man wishes for more while the rich man wishes he could enjoy even a part of what he has.

(Prov 15:16-17) Solomon should have taken His own advice.

SO ENJOY WHAT YOU HAVE!

II. **ACCEPT WHAT YOU HAVE**

Be Contentment with all that God gives you!

THE DESIRE TO AQUIRE IS VANITY

6:7 *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.*

Solomon now speaks of his view of work.

As far as he was concerned it was not of great value.

In a matter of months, our current knowledge is obsolete.

All mankind works for is to feed his mouth.

And, his appetite is never satisfied.

We get up Tomorrow and we do it all over again.

Wash, Rinse, Repeat.

Illus: In the dead of Winter, its dark at 5, didn't know whether I was coming or going.

Evident is the pessimism & depression of one living out of God's will.

To a person, who lives for the fulfillment of their appetites, Life has no meaning.

Verse 7 suggests that all the labor of man under the sun is for his own preservation & enjoyment, yet his desires are not satisfied,

(Pr 16:26) *He that laboreth laboreth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.*

Be Contentment with all that God gives you!

THE DESIRE TO ASPIRE IS VANITY

6:8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

As far as Solomon was concerned, a wise man fared no better than a fool.

What does a poor man enjoy that anyone can't? Solomon saw no more happiness in the Successful than the average.

Both suffer, Both have Joys, What has all the extra worry, fretting, Stress gotten them?

(Ec 11:8) *But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.*

Whether you Die as the former President, or the Janitor.

You both were tasked with cleaning up the Whitehouse.

Only One of you actually got it done.

You both worked at the White House.
You both are just as dead.

Wether Buried @ Arlington, or Potters Field.
Be Contentment with all that God gives you!

THE DESIRE TO BE ADMIRERD IS VANITY
6:9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit

It is better to **Accept what you have,**

“in the sight of the eyes”

Instead of looking around for something different
(*“wandering of desire”*)

Accept what you now have as God's gift.

Illus: The Second you drive that new car off the lot, it is officially referred to as USED?

It's only NEW when it sits on the lot.

To say otherwise is just us Conning ourselves into feeling important & fulfilled: Its Vanity, Empty.

The thought here is that we need to appreciate what we presently have than yearning for something we don't have.

This does not suggest laziness or resignation because God expects you to make good use of what He gives you (Matt. 25:14-30). God expects a ROI

BUT All of the Stress, all of the Fretting, what will you have when you reach the top?

The Realization that it is a lonely trip down the mountain, especially by yourself.

LOVE YOUR WIFE NOW!

700 wives, 300 concubines (IDIOT)
The Attention of another is fleeting, destructive.

LOVE YOUR KIDS NOW!

One day your Kids will be GONE!
You will have all the Career time you can handle

Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs to help his son,
Then Solomon, felt empowered to live contrary to it.
His son rejected his father's wisdom & became the
IDIOT who split the kingdom!

Solomon Amassed wealth to fulfill his need to be
Admired.

We are no different, We spend money we don't have to buy things we don't need, to impress people who will not cry at our funeral.

A man, envious of his friend b/c they had a more luxurious home.
So he listed his house with a real estate firm, planning to sell it & to purchase a more impressive home.
Shortly afterward, as he was reading the classified section of the newspaper, he saw an ad for a house that seemed just right.

He promptly called the realtor and said, "*The house described in today's paper is exactly what I'm looking for. I would like to go through it as soon as possible!*"

The agent asked him several questions about it and then replied, "*But sir, that's your house your describing.*"

He who amasses stuff in his life, must spend the rest of his life caring for his stuff.

*Illus: I used to want a big house and property.
Till I realized how much of my life is spent taking care of it.*

When your life is over, wouldn't you like to recoup the time you spent...
Cleaning the house & spend it with your kids?
Cleaning that truck & spend it serving the Lord?

When your spouse is dying of cancer, wouldn't you like to recoup the time you spent, Mowing that stupid yard & spend it with your wife?

Will it matter then, that you were the Yard of the Month?

THE DESIRE TO BE ADMIRER IS VANITY

6:9 Better is the sight of the eyes (Accept what you have) than the wandering of the desire: (Fretting/ Stressing/Pining for what you don't have) this is also vanity and vexation of spirit

SERVE THE LORD NOW!

W.A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he'd promised God a tithe of his income.

They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00.

In a few years his income increased and he was now, tithing \$500.00 per week.

He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise, it was too costly now.

The pastor replied, "I don't see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40.00 a week, then you'd have no problem tithing \$4.00."

Solomon was miserable in his backslidden condition and even he realized that yearning for something better was useless.

(Eccl 6:9) declares that present enjoyment of what has been given to us, is better than longing for that beyond reach.

Instead of looking around for something different (vs 9) accept what you now have as God's gift.

III. MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE:

6:10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

The word translated as "man" is the name for Adam. Adam already had named all the creatures of creation.

No man can win a fight with one stronger than he.

Solomon had God in mind.

A Man cannot pick a fight with God and Win!

His view of life was utterly depressed because He learned this the hard way.

There was nothing which the first man Adam did not already know. He had Dominion over everything. With all that knowledge, Adam went against God and LOST!

Verse 10 reaffirms that man is a mere creature of God and cannot contend with his maker, (Gen 2:9; Job 9:32).

No One was as Wise as Solomon: (1 Kings 4:29-334)
But, Solomon, in All His wisdom, had to learn this the hard way.

Illus: Cancer has a way of redefining our priorities.

6:11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?

Solomon's view was that many things were useless.
How was man any better for them?

Be content with what you have, but never content with what you Are, because you will not take to heaven what you HAVE, but what you ARE in Christ.

6:12 For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Solomon closes the chapter with the conclusion that life was useless.

It was not worth living.
Who knew what would come to pass after one's life was over?

Such is the depressed, discouraged, empty outlook of a man, who is FAR from God.

Life passes by like a shadow, and you do not know the future. (v. 12).

(James 4:14) Our lives are but a vapor.

In the will of God, make the most of today's opportunities & blessings, and you will be ready for what lies ahead.

You probably won't get all you asked for this Christmas.

None of need all the things we will get this Christmas.

Solomon, paid dearly for this final piece of wisdom

Enjoy what you have

Accept what you have

Make the most of what you have

WHAT A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT!!

WHAT A thought for the entire year!!