

At the start of the Reformation of the Church in Scotland in 1557, John Knox wrote to his congregation before going into exile and said,

“You are bishops and kings; your wife, children, servants, and family are your bishopric and charge. Of you it shall be required how carefully and diligently you have instructed them in God’s true knowledge . . .

And therefore I say, you must make them partakers in, exhorting, and in making common prayers, which I would in every house were used once a day at least.”

Let's Worship God

7th-12th November 2016
Ecclesiastes



Let's Worship God is a ministry of



Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church

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Family worship, a joy to be experienced every day!



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn
The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes 12:13

reading Ecclesiastes 12:1; Psalm 119:9-16 - Remember

notes The final chapter of Ecclesiastes at last begins to show the fruit of Solomon's meditation upon everything that he saw. Most of the book has been given over to the rather depressing view of life 'under the sun', or rather, life that is lived without God and without the knowledge that man must eventually answer to God, but now he begins his final chapter by drawing attention, not just to the fact of the existence of God but to the fact that He is the creator of everything that is.

He calls upon the young to think about the relationship they should have with the creator whilst they are still young, for he, whilst he surely recognised that young people are often the most likely to dismiss or not think about the reality of eternity and God, also knew that the time of youth was absolutely the best time to seek the Lord. It is so much better to know the Lord in youth when all the energy and enthusiasm can be given in to his service and before experiencing too much of the wickedness of the world. How diligent we should be in teaching and in evangelising the young! In his exhortation to the young Solomon emphasises three things:

1. Because God is our creator, we have no right to ourselves. In times when the common teaching is that young people have the right to please themselves and be answerable to no-one, it is good to remind them that they are a creation of God and depend upon Him for every breath.

2. Because God is our creator we should remember Him. Parents have a great responsibility to seek to instil in their children a knowledge and understanding of the almighty God that permeates every part of life.

Because God is our creator we should remember him as early in our lives as possible so that we can give the very best of our lives in His service.

questions 1. Why is it good to seek God at a young age?

2. What do we depend on God for?

Ps. 31:1-6

praise pray

1. Pray for the covenant children of the church.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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reading Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 - The End

notes After writing much of the Book of Ecclesiastes from a very common but wrong viewpoint, one that excluded the God of eternity and the fact that everyone must answer to that God, now the Preacher comes to what may seem to be a rather surprising conclusion. He says, 'Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all'. Although some translations insert the word 'duty' it is better to render it as 'this is man's all' which gives the sense that this applies to everyone. Every man, whether he likes it or not, whether he knows it or not, is obliged to both fear God and to keep his commandments. It is important to remember that in times when the common view is that the only standards that people have to observe are ones that they themselves set according to their own view of morality.

Solomon shows how dreadfully mistaken this view really is when he says, 'For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil'. There is, and will be, an eternal accounting for everything we do. This is the complete opposite of believing that all is vanity or meaningless; it means that everything has meaning and importance, both for the present and for eternity. 'If God cares as much as this, nothing can be pointless.' (Kidner)

Throughout the book the Preacher examined, studied and researched a life that was lived without any consideration of God, believing that when death came, that would be the end of everything - the kind of life that the majority of people live in the twenty-first century. In his conclusion he now challenges those who continue to hold the same views that he had been expounding throughout the book - in effect, he says, 'what if we are wrong?' He issues a challenge to those who live without God and without a thought of eternity, 'What would it be like, asks the Preacher, if things were utterly different from what you thought? What if this world is not the ultimate one? What if God exists and is a rewarder of those who seek him?' (Eaton)

questions 1. What is man's purpose?

Ps. 32:7-12

praise pray

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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reading Ecclesiastes 12:12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17 - Much Study

notes One further piece of advice that Solomon gives us regarding teaching the Word of God to others is concerning study and the use of books. He had already given a warning about not adding to anything found in the Word of God and now he makes the comment that 'of making of many books there is no end, and much study wears the body'. There are both positive and negative injunctions in this small observation.

1. For the person wishing to teach the truth of God to others, it is obvious that he will first need to learn himself and that will require diligence and application. No matter how many years we study the Scriptures we will never get to the point of knowing it all! Much study can indeed weary both body and mind, but the one who seeks to serve God and to tell others of the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ must be willing to pay that price!

2. There is no doubt at all that good Christian literature is extremely beneficial and helps in the understanding of the Scriptures and teaches us many things that help in our daily walk with the Lord. There is, however a great danger that we rely far more on books than we do on the Word of God. The preacher would caution us here not to believe everything that we read! Indeed, everything must be tested by the 'words of the shepherd'. Many heresies and falsehoods have come by way of cleverly constructed books that have led the unwary into soul - destroying errors. The words recorded in Acts 17:11 concerning the Bereans could also be applied with regard to what we read, 'now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true'.

questions
1. Will we ever know everything there is to know about God?
2. How should we test what we read?

praise pray Ps. 32:1-6
1. Give thanks for all the opportunities we have to study God's Word.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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reading Ecclesiastes 12:2-5 - Old Age

notes To emphasise the plea that he had made to young people in v.1, the preacher now gives a poetic description of the effects of advancing years. The arms and hands that keep the body now begin to tremble (the keepers of the house tremble). The legs and knees begin to sag (the strong men bow down). Teeth are lost and chewing is more difficult (the grinders cease because they are few). The eyes are dimmed (the windows grow dim). The ears become weaker and weaker (the sound of grinding is low). Sleep becomes more difficult and one is easily awakened (one rises up at the sound of a bird). Singing and music are less appreciated (the daughters of music are brought low). One becomes more fearful in life (afraid of height, and of terrors in the way). The hair becomes white (the almond tree blossoms). The once active become weak (the grasshopper is a burden). The passions and desires of life weaken and wane (desire fails).

Solomon then pictures the mourners following the coffin through the street as the man goes on his last earthly journey! There is, however something quite remarkable in what follows. Solomon does not talk about the meaninglessness of death and the grave but rather says, 'man goes to his eternal home'. At the end of man's advancing age is his eternal home - not the unknown grave and darkness. The Preacher has now set man's advancing age in connection with eternity, not vanity.

In all his searching and examination of the life of man in all its variety, many times coming to unhelpful and despairing conclusions, the preacher has come to the right conclusion - that after this life, man goes to his eternal home as the mourners go about the streets.

'So this wonderful book closes with the enunciation of a truth found nowhere else so clearly defined in the Old Testament, and thus opens the way to the clearer light shed upon the awful future by the revelation of the gospel.' (Deane)

questions
1. How does Solomon describe old age?

praise pray Ps. 31:7-12
1. Pray for the elderly in the congregation.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
3. Pray for family matters.



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reading Ecclesiastes 12:6-8 - The End of Life

notes Solomon again pleads with his readers to remember God before this life is over, and he uses a variety of metaphors to describe the ending of this life. He speaks of a silver cord and a golden bowl which speak of the value and preciousness of life, and then of the pitcher and the wheel which speak of the usefulness of life upon the earth, and finally he reminds us of our origin from the hand of God and from the dust. This life, so precious, so useful and given in the sovereign will of God, is so easily and quickly taken away: the thin silver cord is broken, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher and the wheel shattered and once broken, can never be put together again!

Many people are willing to accept what the preacher says about the dust returning to the dust, but are much more sceptical about the second half of the statement, which is, in fact the most important 'the spirit returns to God who gave it'. This statement demonstrates how absolutely vital it is to remember the creator in this life, because when this life is over everyone will have to answer to the eternal God. The spirit returns to God who gave it, but the question must be asked, 'in what condition will it return?' God will receive the spirit/soul of men in one of two ways; either cleansed from sin through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ or still in the same condition as it was when it came into the world, still in rebellion against God and refusing to submit to Christ.

There is much in this life that is indeed meaningless - indeed life lived without God and without eternity in view is the ultimate meaninglessness. It is eternity and the eternal God that make everything matter.

- questions**
1. What happens at the end of life?
 2. What are the two ways in which the spirit will return to God?

- praise pray**
1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 - 3 Pray for family matters.



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reading Ecclesiastes 12:9-12 - Right Teaching

notes Although the preacher had spent a long time searching for knowledge and had studied hard to understand things that sometimes seemed to him impenetrable, he did not give up because he hadn't understood everything the way that he wanted to. Because he had been given wisdom by God, he still continued to teach the people - his own search for knowledge did not leave him less wise!

Solomon gives us some good lessons about how we should seek to teach the truth of God to others. We should teach the people knowledge. In a day when the knowledge of God is almost unknown, when children are no longer taught about God and His Word, either at their mother's knee or in school, there is a tremendous need for God's people to be able to teach the knowledge about God.

We should seek to find acceptable words. When Biblical language is unknown or unintelligible, we must find simple ways of communicating profound Biblical truth.

We should seek to bring forth that which is upright - words of truth. We do not need clever words or to try to convince people with complex arguments, we just need the word of truth.

We should make our words as goads and well-driven nails. Vague generalities are not very useful. The word must be taught with direction and must pierce the heart and conscience. 'Here then are two more qualities that mark the pointed sayings of the wise: they spur the will and stick in the memory.' (Kidner)

We should use the words 'given by one Shepherd' and be very careful not to use anything else. All the words of man will have little effect upon the soul of man, it is only when the words that come from God and the Lord Jesus Christ are used that the enemy of souls is put to flight. Just as Satan left the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness when challenged with the Word of God (Matt. 4:11).

- questions**
1. What should we seek to say to others?
 2. How can our words be like nails?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 31:19-24
1. Pray that God would give us the right words to speak.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 - 3 Pray for family matters.