

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

29th Aug. - 3rd Sept. 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

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading

Ecclesiastes 2:1-10 - Pleasure and Laughter

notes

That the search for satisfaction and meaning was extensive and thorough can be seen in verses 3 to 10 in which Solomon gives the specific details of his investigation. Looking at everything that he experienced and possessed it might be thought that his life was ideal and the kind of life that people would aspire to.

He was creative and made things of great beauty - houses and vineyards, gardens and orchards, water pools to water fruit trees verses 6,7. Improving the environment was a good thing to do and might be thought to be something that would give great satisfaction and bring meaning to a person's life. He obtained great wealth - something that seems to be so important to so many men and women - the longing expressed by 'If only I had more I would be content', was not part of Solomon's life for he had all that his heart desired v. 10. He availed himself of all the entertainment that was available to him - he enjoyed everything that 'delights the heart of man' v. 8. If Solomon was dissatisfied with his life it was not because he lacked diversion! He had position and status in society - 'greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem' v.9. There was nothing that money, power, and influence could obtain that was denied to him. Indeed, he says, 'I denied myself nothing my eyes desired'. v. 10 There is no doubt that Solomon dedicated himself to the investigation that he carried out with great diligence and delight. He states that his 'heart took delight in all (his) work' v. 10 This was no cursory or superficial examination, but a genuine desire to seek for meaning in the things that he was familiar with. Here is the picture of a man who would be the object of great envy and jealousy - just as people who have money and influence today are envied. If that is the case, Solomon will very quickly point out the foolishness of believing that these things could ever bring real happiness, contentment, and meaning to life.

questions

1. What did the preacher try first?
2. Did he find meaning in it?

praise pray

Ps.148A:all

1. Pray that those around us would find what makes life truly meaningful.
2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3 Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading

Ecclesiastes 2:24-28 - The Sovereignty of God

notes

We have seen how the preacher originally looked at things from a human perspective, which left him disillusioned and depressed, but now he begins to look at matters taking God into account! He realises that it God who gives to men the ability to enjoy good things or to find satisfaction in his work. When God is left out of the equation even the sweetest food can seem sour and the most interesting of work a chore! Solomon comes to the conclusion that no-one can truly enjoy life without God.

What the writer stresses in these verses is a doctrine that is often rejected or ignored by even professing Christians - the absolute sovereignty of God. He recognises that even the ability to enjoy food or drink comes from the hand of God v. 24. In an age that highly regards self-sufficiency and the ability of fallen man to do whatsoever he pleases by his own power and effort, the idea that even the most basic things of life cannot be accomplished except a sovereign God allows and enables, is sure to be vigorously rejected!

There is a very stark contrast drawn in these verses between the person who pleases God and those described as sinners. The one who pleases God receives from his hand all that makes his life enjoyable and fulfilling - wisdom, knowledge and happiness. As the Scripture says in 1 Tim. 6:6 'Godliness with contentment is great gain'. Once we recognise the hand of God in all things and that all that he does is for our good, we are able to say with the apostle Paul, 'I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances' Phil. 4:11. The sinner, on the other hand accumulates possessions and is always seeking to add more and more - yet in due time he dies and in spite of all the plans that he might make, all that he leaves is at the disposal of the almighty God for "Man proposes but God disposes".

questions

1. Who gives men the ability to accomplish anything?
2. How can we find contentment?

praise pray

Ps. 1A:all

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.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading Genesis 2:8-15 - Work

notes There is a dramatic change seen in the opening words of verse 24 from the despair and futility outlined in verses 17 to 23. The preacher no longer considers life to be meaningless and work to be nothing but useless drudgery.

He recognises, first of all that food and drink are things that are there to be enjoyed! When God created man he placed him in an environment that provided an abundance of food for him, 'the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground - trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food'. Gen. 2:9. If every good and perfect gift comes from God James 1:17, then Christian people should thankfully enjoy what he has provided. Never forgetting, of course, that even the best of God's gifts are to be used with moderation. There is no doubt that our western society has seen a dramatic rise in the levels of obesity in both adults and children in recent years leading to all sorts of health problems, and putting an enormous strain on medical services. As Christians we must never forget that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit 1 Cor. 6:19. Overindulgence in the use of food or drink does not please nor glorify the Lord.

The second change that is seen is with regard to work. In verse 29 he states that 'all his days his work is pain and grief', but now in verse 24 he says that a man can do nothing better than to find satisfaction in his work! It is sometimes wrongly suggested that work entered the world because of the fall. Nothing however, could be further from the truth! As soon as God had made man, he placed him in the Garden of Eden 'to work it and take care of it' Gen. 2:15. God has made man to work and just as God looked at his work of creation and pronounced it 'good', so should we strive to find satisfaction in the work that we do, no matter how ordinary or routine.

- questions**
1. What has God given us to enjoy?
 2. What should our attitude be about work?

- praise pray**
- Ps. 150B:all
1. Give thanks for the work that you have to do.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading Ecclesiastes 2:11; John 6:25-29 - Work

notes Like all good researchers, when Solomon had gathered together all his information, he analysed it and sought to draw out conclusions. He first of all reflected on all the work he had done to try to find the meaning of life. He looks back at all his environmental and building work - his gardens and parks and fountains, his attempts to beautify his surroundings, and he comes to the conclusion that it was all meaningless. It was not that it was a bad thing to create beautiful places, indeed man is responsible to care for the world that God has created, it is simply that to make his environment more beautiful did nothing to answer the question that dominated his thinking, 'What is the meaning of man's life?' 'What is man's purpose here on the earth?'

If he set out on this project with the object of getting a better understanding of life, he found it as elusive as trying to grasp hold of the wind. He expresses his deep frustration when he says that nothing whatsoever was gained from all the hard labour that he had undertaken.

What a great lesson is being taught here! There are many things that would be considered worthwhile and beneficial to society - like improving the environment and caring for the created world - but if all our energies and resources are poured into them, we will ultimately find that they are nothing more than a 'chasing after the wind'.

Neither Solomon, nor men and women today, can find the true meaning of life by throwing themselves into work, no matter how rewarding and beneficial that work may seem to be. It is so sad that for some people work is more important than family and more important than God! The words of the Lord Jesus Christ are appropriate here 'Do not work for food that spoils, but food that endures to eternal life' John 6:27.

- questions**
1. Where had Solomon tried to find the meaning of life?
 2. What will we find work to be if God is not in it?
- Ps. 148B:all

- praise pray**
1. Pray that we would work diligently for the Lord.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
31st Aug.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading Ecclesiastes 2:12-17 - Wisdom and Foolishness

notes

Solomon had been given the great gift of wisdom, and so it should be no surprise that in his evaluation of all the things that he had investigated, he focuses attention on wisdom. He says that he looked at wisdom, madness, and foolishness v. 12 and considered their relative value. His conclusion that the difference between wisdom and folly is like the difference between night and day, and that wisdom is so much better than foolishness seems to be so self-evident that it does not need to be mentioned! And yet, so many people despise education, learning, and the acquisition of wisdom, seeming to delight in their ignorance and foolishness; not that education alone brings wisdom. Many very well educated people are fools because they reject God (Psalm 14:1) and fail to recognise that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' Prov. 9:10. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it is better to act wisely than to act foolishly!

The final assessment of the preacher, however is quite shattering! Although wisdom is infinitely better than foolishness, the same fate awaits both the wise and the foolish. Here we are brought face to face with the reality and certainty of death. He says that if both the wise and the foolish suffer the same ultimate fate, what is the point of striving after wisdom? Both wise and foolish die and are soon forgotten v. 16. What a sad reflection on life and on all the opportunities and challenges that life brings. Solomon's initial evaluation of the meaninglessness of life in the face of death is not at all surprising and could well be shared by many people today. Prosperity, material possessions, and intellectual achievements may indeed be seen as meaningless if life is lived without God. For the believer however, the knowledge that life is lived in the presence of God and for the glory of God, and that death ushers in glory, makes even the most mundane tasks in life truly worthwhile.

questions

1. Is it better to be wise or foolish?
2. For whose glory does the Christian live life?

praise pray

- Ps. 149:all
1. Pray that we would live our lives to God's glory.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Thur.
1st Sept.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

For apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
Ecclesiastes 2:25

reading Ecclesiastes 2:17-23 - Chasing Wealth

notes

The preacher continues to look at life from a human perspective and turns from looking at wisdom and foolishness to reflect upon the acquisition of wealth. This was again something with which he was very familiar, for not only had God given him great wisdom but he had also made him extremely wealthy. 1 Kings 8:13 Nevertheless, reflecting on the two things for which many people in society long for - wealth and wisdom - which Solomon had in abundance, he comes to two astonishing conclusions:

1. Hatred of all of his work and labour because the fruit of it all would be left to somebody else, and you would never know whether the person who inherits all that you have worked for would be wise or foolish. Everything that you had gathered through hard work could be squandered by somebody else.

2. Despair at the futility of all that he had striven to achieve. He looks back on all that he had achieved and considered it all to be meaningless and 'a great misfortune' v. 21, for in spite of all of his wisdom, knowledge, and skill, everything must be left to one who has not worked for it.

The only things achieved through all of his labour were sorrowful days and sleepless nights! v. 23

Society today appears to be in a relentless search for wealth and material prosperity; there are millions of pounds spent every week in the UK on lottery tickets in the hope of winning a fortune that would solve all problems and fulfil all desires. Solomon knew better! From a purely human perspective he saw the futility of striving only to acquire more and more possessions; it truly is a 'chasing after the wind'. The Lord Jesus Christ emphasised the same truth in his own teaching ministry when he urged his disciples not to store up treasures on earth but rather to desire treasure in heaven Matt. 6:19,20, and told a rich man to sell all that he had and give it to the poor if he wanted to have treasure in heaven. Mark 10:21.

questions

1. What does Solomon realise about all of his work?
2. Where does Jesus say to store up treasure?

praise pray

- Ps. 150A:all
1. Pray that you would store up treasure in heaven.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.