

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

10th-15th October 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

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:1-4 - Obedience

notes The wisdom for which the preacher was searching manifests itself in a variety of ways and as it does not exist in a vacuum, Solomon looks for wisdom being demonstrated and lived out in a person. He looked for somebody who understood 'the interpretation of a thing' and considered that the possession of such wisdom would show itself in the very demeanour and character. 'Wisdom brightens a man's face and changes its hard appearance'. The 'shining' of a person's face in scripture generally speaks of blessing or favour - as in the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:25. The grace of God which gives true wisdom shows itself in the manner in which the believer reacts with both fellow believers as well as those outside the kingdom.

One way in which the believer is to behave wisely is in regard to the civil authorities - described here as the king.

We are to be obedient to the civil authorities in all their legitimate demands. The obedience of the Christian is of course, limited by the teaching of Acts 4:19 which requires our primary obedience to be to God and his Word. Even although the governing authorities may have no regard for the law of the Lord, as long as they do not oblige the believer to break God's law, a Christian should not be a lawbreaker! We are to submit to earthly rulers for the Lord's sake 1 Peter 2:13, Rom. 13:1, Rom. 13:5. The attitude that we have to our earthly rulers may be an indication of our submission to our heavenly king, as C.H. Spurgeon puts it, 'If he be a King, then it is a solemn hazard to your soul if you come short of the least of his commandments. Remember that one treason makes a traitor; one leak sinks a ship; one fly spoils the whole box of ointment. He that bought us with his blood deserves to be obeyed in all things with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.'

questions 1. What was Solomon looking for?

2. How does the Bible say we should treat civil authorities?

Ps. 18:31-36

- 1. Pray for those who are ruling over us.
- 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
- 3. Pray for family matters.

**praise
pray**



Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:16-17 - Sovereignty and Wisdom

notes Solomon now finally acknowledges the truth that the apostle Paul later expresses in Romans 11:33, 'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!' Although he states that man could use all his ingenuity and labour night and day, he would never really be able to understand all that God is pleased to do in the administration of the world He had created!

There are several very important truths brought out in the closing verses of this chapter:

1. God is in sovereign control of all that He has made, 'then I saw all that he had done' To know that everything is in the hand of an almighty God who 'does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. ...' Dan. 4:35, is a tremendous comfort in a confusing and turbulent world.

2. It is not given to man to have full knowledge of all that God does. There is a very clear Biblical principle enunciated in Deut. 29:29, 'The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children'. Our task is to follow what He has revealed and not to be preoccupied with seeking to delve into matters that He has not revealed to us.

3. God's thoughts and God's ways are so far beyond ours that it is futile for even the wisest of men to attempt to comprehend them! Paul summed things up very neatly speaking of those whom God had chosen to be His people, 'God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are'. 1 Cor. 1:27-28. Let us thank God for what he has revealed and trust Him for what He has not!

questions 1. What does this passage teach us about God?

Ps. 20:all

**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.



Fri.
14th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:14-15; Psalm 73:2-14 - Unfair

notes The preacher now delves a little more into the perplexing reality that he saw all around him regarding the seemingly unfair way that life worked out for some people! It was clearly hard for him to understand why righteous people often get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked get what the righteous deserve. V. 14

This inequality is something that troubles many people today and is often used as an excuse for rejecting the concept of gracious and loving God. We often hear comments like 'why does God allow such things to happen?' 'If God is all powerful, why does he not stop wicked things happening?' Such concerns are not new. Indeed, even the psalmist was confused and bewildered when he saw that the wicked prospered and the godly had troubles, Psalm 73:2 - 14.

To have these concerns is quite understandable 'under the sun', but it is viewing things from a wrong perspective. The problem is not with God, but with the sinfulness of man who abuses and misuses all that God has made. It is also true that if we look to the things of this world to make us happy, we are looking in the wrong place! The supposed prosperity of the wicked is only with regard to the things of this world, to time and space. But the time spent on this earth is infinitesimally small compared with eternity. Why should the brief enjoyment of material pleasures concern those who have been granted an eternity of joy in the presence of the Lord?

Solomon's advice is that we should not worry unduly about those whose passage through this world appears to be smoother than ours, but rather 'cheerfully to enjoy what God has given us in the world, to be content with it and make the best of it, though it be much better with others, and such as we think very unworthy'. Eccles. 8:15. (Matthew Henry)

- questions**
1. Why do things in this world sometimes seem unfair?
 2. Why is this the wrong perspective?

praise Ps. 19B:all

- pray**
1. Pray that we would have the right perspective in viewing life.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Tue.
11th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:5-9 - Wise Words

notes As Solomon reflects on how to live most profitably in the world, he comes up with certain suggestions as to how this could be done!

1. He encourages us to be wise as we submit to the lawful demands of the civil authorities so that we will come to no harm v. 1. There may be times when the citizen is obliged to protest against what the authorities want to impose, but the wise man will 'know the proper time and procedure' v. 9.

2. Seeking to look into the future is futile because 'no man knows the future' v. 7. God in His wisdom and kindness has hidden the future from us and it is extremely foolish and wicked to seek to know that which God has hidden. The future cannot be foretold nor foreseen by astrology or fortune telling or any other pretended means of prediction. James speaks of the folly of prognosticating the future when he says, 'you do not even know what will happen tomorrow'. James 4:14.

3. There is one inescapable reality that everyone of us has to face and that is death! Solomon points out that 'no-one has power over the day of his death' v. 8. It is God who gives life and it is God who appoints the hour of death. We cannot prevent it nor escape it, the very best that we can do is to prepare for it by repenting of our sins and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

4. Wickedness carries with it consequences that cannot be avoided. Solomon illustrates this truth by pointing out that no soldier is discharged when the army is fighting a battle, and just as the army holds on to its soldiers, so wickedness has those who practice it in its grip. The awful reality is that the grip of wickedness is not just in this world, but goes on into eternity! The strong grip of sin can only be broken through faith in Christ.

- questions**
1. Why is it useless to try and look into the future?
 2. What reality does each of us have to face?

praise Ps. 18:37-41

- pray**
1. Give thanks for the salvation we have in Christ.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Wed.
12th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:9; Romans 13; 1 Timothy 3:1-10 - Leadership Dangers
notes To have a position of power or influence carries with it a tremendous responsibility and it has to be said, that all too often that responsibility is ignored in the exercise of power or authority. The preacher had undoubtedly witnessed power being used selfishly or unfairly and so he comments that there are times when a person 'lords it over others to his own hurt' v. 9. It may be that the hurt that is mentioned is with regard to those who are ruled. When God permits a person to bear rule, he has the responsibility to govern for the good of those governed. This is especially true with regard to those who rule in the affairs of state. They have a duty to administer justice, preserve peace, protect the liberties of the people, and to promote true religion - this is particularly so when a nation is bound in solemn covenant to God. What is true in the state, is also true in the church. The Word of God teaches that God has appointed elders and deacons to bear responsibility for the oversight of His people, and they must be very careful that all that they do is for the good of the people under their care and for the glory of the sovereign God.

There is another way of looking at the hurt caused by the maladministration or greed of those in positions of influence and power, and that is the hurt that they cause to their own souls. And that seems to be what Solomon is particularly referring to in verse 9. When power or authority is abused it leads to pride, arrogance, and a selfish pursuit of personal ambition. It is impossible for a person to have such attitudes and yet to have a heart that is tender towards God and loving towards his neighbours. It is no wonder that the apostle James warns believers about the perils of leadership when he says, 'not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly'.

questions James 3:1.

1. What is the hurt caused by an abuse of power?

praise Ps. 19A:1-4

- pray**
1. Pray that we would not abuse any power we have.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.



Thur.
13th Oct.

Let's Worship God

Verse To Learn

Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. Ecclesiastes 8:12

reading Ecclesiastes 8:10-13 - Justice

notes It is quite remarkable how quickly the evil and wicked actions of people are forgotten! It occurs at a very basic level when people who were unpleasant and corrupt during their lives are lauded and praised in their funeral eulogies - it appears sometimes that the very act of death seems to purge all the bad things they had done! Solomon saw this too when he asks why it was that the deeds of the wicked were so soon forgotten. As he muses on this he considers some of the factors that should be taken under consideration:

1. He sees as meaningless the fact that if the wicked acts of men are not punished quickly it will only encourage other people to do the same things. V. 11.

2. He recognises that wicked people do often live long lives and seem to suffer no physical consequences of their wickedness, but continue throughout their lives committing 'a hundred crimes' v. 12

3. In spite of the frustration caused by the apparent prosperity of the wicked (Psalm 73:3) Solomon realised that it was far better to go through life in the fear of God. He knew that it would go better for man, both in this life and in the life to come, for man to reverence God. V. 12

4. Although the wicked may not suffer consequences of their wickedness in this life, Solomon came to the conclusion that it would not go well for those who did not fear God in their lives. Human justice may be non-existent or long delayed, but divine retribution was sure and certain. V. 13.

As we look at life and the many injustices and inequalities that there are on every hand, it is good for us to remember and think about the observations made by the preacher and to understand what God has revealed in his word, 'do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord'. Rom. 12:19.

questions

1. What often happens to the wicked?
2. Who will carry out justice in the end?

praise Ps. 19A:5-9

- pray**
1. Give thanks for God's sovereign control.
 2. Pray for a member of your church as per the congregational list.
 3. Pray for family matters.