

ECC. 6:1-7:14 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

GOOD DAYS, BAD DAYS, - ([SERMON MP3](#))

Reflect on the following paradoxes from our study of Ecclesiastes 6-7 in light of your own experience. When have they proven true in your own life? Write down 1 or 2 instances where you have experienced each lesson.

Prosperous times can be painful. (Ecc. 6:1-9)

Painful times can be prosperous. (Ecc. 7:1-12)

Review Ecc. 6:1–6, then read Ecc. 2:24, 5:19. The ability to find joy and satisfaction in the prosperous times of life isn't automatic. It doesn't just happen. God's gifts and the enjoyment of those gifts are two separate things.

- *Why can't we enjoy the gifts of God apart from God? What does it look like in your own life when you attempt this?*
- *Where can we find contentment? Where should we go for the resources to maintain contentment in trying times? (See 1 Thess. 5:18, Phil. 4:11-13, John 6:27)*

In Ecc. 6:3, we read about a man who has the gifts of God, but doesn't seek God for the enjoyment. Solomon says that a stillborn child is better off than he is.

- *Though this is shocking, it is not a new theme in the Bible. Note the biblical characters who felt similarly. What led to each of these people's struggles? How is their struggle similar to what Solomon describes?*

Moses (Num. 11:15)

Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)

Job (Job 3: 21; 7:15)

Jeremiah (Jer. 8:3, 15:10)

Jonah (Jonah 4:3)

Paul (2 Cor. 1:8–11)

- *Why do so many people give in to a sense of futility and take their lives? How does Solomon speak to this futility? What might he say to those who feel lost and purposeless? What can we do as a church to help people overcome the feelings of futility? **

To the Hebrew, naming something is the same as declaring what that thing is really like. (Ecc 6:10-12) When God created the world, He named what He made, and nothing can change those designations. "Light" is "light" and not "darkness"; "day" is "day" and not "night." (Is. 5:20)

- *What does the name God gave us (Adam - "man") mean? _____ (See Gen. 2:7; 3:19.) What does that teach us about how God designed us? How does this match Solomon's wisdom about the meaning of life?*

Solomon says that God has intentionally limited us so that by ourselves, we cannot know what is after us. (Ecc. 6:10-12) Are there any big questions about your life that you wish you had the answers for?

- *Applying what we are learning in this study, do you think you would be happy if you had answers to all of your difficult questions? Why or why not?*
- *Would it be easier or harder to trust God if you had all the answers? How does God use our limitations to help us grow closer to Him?*

Solomon describes how wisdom enables us to go through pain to find the good that God intends for us. (Ecc. 7:1-10) That is the way of the wise. Fools ignore/deny/numb the painful times of life, or they try to control/manipulate/change them. How do you see yourself doing that in the hard times that Solomon describes? Use the chart below along with the descriptions of folly in the verses to apply God's word to your life.

THE WAY OF WISDOM - "BETTER"	THE WAY OF FOLLY
<i>Hard choices produce character. v1</i>	
<i>Mourning reveals our true end. v2,4</i>	
<i>Sorrow prepares us for joy. v3</i>	
<i>Rebuke points out what we can't see. v5-6</i>	
<i>Patience brings us to the finish line. v7-10</i>	

- *In what ways in your life do you try to control or straighten out what God has made crooked? (v13) In what ways do you deny or ignore that life is crooked? What did God reveal that you need to repent of? How can you seek wisdom in the areas of folly that God revealed to you?*

Solomon says that it is better to experience the pain of loss than to ignore it. (7:1-4) We learn more at funerals than we do at parties.

- *What value is found in considering death, mourning, and sorrow (7:1-4)? How can that shape your current perspective on life? (Ps. 90:12)*
- *If you died today, what phrase would sum up your life thus far? What do you want written on your tombstone? Craft an epitaph in light of what Solomon has taught us thus far in Ecclesiastes.*
- *Are you ready to die? What has dominated your time lately? Will any of that matter 1,000 years from now? How does God want you to focus more time and energy on the things of eternity?*

The painful rebuke of a friend is good for us (7:5-6).

- *Read Prov. 13:20, 20: 30, 27:6, Ps 141:5. Over the last month, when have you seen the "wounds of a friend" as faithful or beneficial?*
- *Is it easier for you to be rebuked or to rebuke? _____ Why do you think that is? How does God want you to grow in your response to friend's rebuke and in your response to a friend's sin?*

Our only hope to live in this chaotic world is found in the wisdom that comes from God. (Ecc. 7:11-14) Read Pr. 2:3-6, Rom. 11:33, Eph. 1:8-9, 3:8-9, Col. 2:2-3, 1 Cor. 1:20-31, Jam. 1:5.

- *Does this wisdom from God guarantee that we will have all the answers? YES or NO As a group come up with a working definition of the wisdom from God. Why do we need it to please Him in life under the sun?te*
- *Where does that wisdom come from? What is the connection between the wisdom that we need to please God in this life and Jesus Himself?*
- *How can we receive this wisdom that we desperately need? How can we cultivate a heart of wisdom?*

PRAYER REQUESTS