

SERIES OVERVIEW

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon sets out to discover if “life under the sun” is truly worth living. He goes on a journey throughout the book and finds himself originally declaring that everything under the sun is meaningless (Hebrew. Hebel—literally translated, vapor or breath. Used 38 times in this book). Solomon is overwhelmed with the truth that death is coming for every person, and that nothing worked for, earned, or pursued seems to have any lasting value. It’s not until Solomon starts focusing his attention on things “beyond the sun” that he recognizes life’s true meaning and purpose.

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CONTEXT

Ecclesiastes 8:2-17 discusses the importance of obeying the king’s command because of the oath before God and recognizing that no one can understand the work of God from beginning to end. The wisdom the Preacher shares teaches that while human understanding is limited, fearing God and trusting in His sovereignty is essential.

THE BIG IDEA

Life is hard and the world is broken, but God is good and gives us good things to enjoy. Embrace the tension and enjoy life while working hard and fighting for justice.

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 8:2-17

2 I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. 3 Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. 4 For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him,

Scripture continued: “What are you doing?”

5 Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way. 6 For there is a time and a way for everything, although man's trouble[d] lies heavy on him. 7 For he does not know what is to be, for who can tell him how it will be? 8 No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. There is no discharge from war, nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. 9 All this I observed while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun, when man had power over man to his hurt. 10 Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. 11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. 12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God. 14 There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. 15 And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun. 16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night do one's eyes see sleep, 17 then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

ICE BREAKER

Pastor James started off his sermon talking about Tug of War. Share your favorite group game when you were a child. (Even the ones that are illegal now like *Red Rover*.)

GROUP DISCUSSION

What is one thing that stood out to you from the sermon and why do you think God wants you to remember this truth?

Read verses 2-6. What's the tension in these verses? Under what circumstances is civil disobedience justified according to God's Word and the sermon outline?

Read verses 7-9. The tension in these verses ask, who is truly in control. What does it mean to truly submit to God, and how does this submission bring freedom in your life? How has your **All To Him** Discipleship Journey impacted this area of your life?

How has your inability to give God total control in your life or your submission of all control to God impacted your anxiety levels?

Read verses 10-14. These verses give 3 examples of another tension that we have all witnessed: wicked people prospering and the righteous suffering. Discuss the 3 examples and share which one is the hardest for you to deal with. (1. Religious hypocrisy, 2. delayed justice and 3. prolonged life)

A key to embracing the tension in verses 10-14 is to remember that "Justice Delayed Is Not Justice Denied". How does this help ease the tension and share a real life example where this truth has played out?

Discussion continued: Read verses 15-17.

What is the tension in these verses and the entire passage in relation to enjoying life?

What does this passage teach us about God, his attributes and character?

PRAYER (In gender based groups)

*Share praises, answered prayers, and prayer requests. Pray for each other's ONE.

Closing Prayer(come back together as a group)
Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to respect and submit to the authorities that You have placed over us, knowing they serve Your divine purpose. Help us to discern the right time and manner to act, honoring Your commandments in all we do. God we submit to you above all things. Help us to enjoy this beautiful life you've given us in this broken world. In Jesus name, amen.

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