

Ecclesiastes– Now is the Time

Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:14

“We pursue being a disciple making family: surrendered to Jesus, transformed by the gospel, and saturated in His word.”

The Teacher closes out the book of Ecclesiastes by pointing out the need to fear God and keep his commandments. We have seen and heard how Solomon has tried everything under the sun. Real meaning and real purpose come from God and being obedient to Him is the only way we can find true satisfaction. In these final chapters we are reminded that we are not able to know all things and, whether we are young or older, the time is now to fear God. The book closes out by bringing us face to face with the reality of life as we age.

Discussion Questions* -- *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. In v. 1-7 we are reminded that “we know not” how things will turn out. Things may not work out. We are reminded that this possibility should not keep us from taking steps of faith. In reality, what we may think are failures will not be since we are stepping forward in obedience. Solomon is pointing out that we should sow our seeds for the kingdom of God regardless of what we think may or may not happen. Solomon points out that waiting on the perfect circumstances or trying to interpret everything before we act or move will lead us to doing nothing for the kingdom. We should sow in faith and wisdom. He is not saying to presume on God but to step out in faith and wisdom. How have you found yourself tempted not to “sow” for the kingdom of God because you were waiting on just the right time? (i.e. maybe sharing the gospel, giving time, talent, or resources to further the kingdom, etc.). What excuses have you used for neglecting this call? How have you tried to direct the circumstances? (i.e. serve when it’s easy, as long as my friends are there, child determines decision, etc.)
2. Solomon begins to show the need to fear God regardless of our age. Whether young or older the call of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. He points out that God will bring all of our deeds into judgment, whether good or evil, public or secret. This lets us know that everything we do has meaning. Ultimately, Christ took the judgment for our penalty for sins on the cross and as a result we should live a life in surrender to Him. Solomon calls us to rejoice in the days of our youth. Why is it so hard to consistently be joyful in our daily lives? How can we be more joyful? What does this really look like in the life of a believer?
3. In v. 10 Solomon calls for us while we are young to remove vexation (a vague unpleasant emotion akin to worry that is experienced in anticipation of some

misfortune, i.e. anger, irritation, worry, grief or sorrow, indignation). Our heart is the wellspring of our life that we should guard. Solomon points out that we need to deal with those vexations now, especially if we are young or it will have great impact 20 or 30 years down the road. Two areas that make it difficult for all of us are in arrogance and ignorance. Young and old both deal with this and often reap the destruction of not dealing with these vexations. How do arrogance and ignorance keep us from removing vexations? How can the different generations help one another with the task of removing vexations? In Titus 2 there is a command for older spiritually mature men to invest into younger men and the same thing for older spiritually mature women to invest into younger women. Why is this so difficult for our culture? How can this help us with removing our vexations?

4. Solomon points out that we should remember our creator. In 12:11 Solomon points out that the words of the wise are like goads (instrument used to direct animals) and they are given by one Shepherd. In John 10:11 Jesus declared he was the good shepherd. The Word of God has been given to us to help direct our lives to Him. Solomon cautioned us on what we read and who we listen to. How has the Word of God been a source of guidance for you? How have you overcome seasons of neglect or lack of desire for the Word? What do you do now when others neglect the wisdom of the Word? Share a time that you neglected the wisdom of God. How does the gospel impact that?