

- a) Using a math equation, on the one side, we may accumulate much (money, possessions, friends, popularity, pleasures, prestige, family) but God is the multiplier and if we do not include God it all equals zero.  $(10 + 6 + 3 + 7 + 12 + 8 + 15) \times 0 = 0$
  - b) On the other hand, the equation for the person who has very little in this life, but who loves the Lord and lives for His glory may look like this.  $(2 + 1 + 3) \times 1000 = 6000$
- 4) It does not matter how much you may accumulate for yourself on your side of the equation, if you do not fear God and keep his commandments, your enjoyment factor in life will = zero. You will say as Solomon, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.
  - 5) In your life, are you working to accumulate much on your side of the equation but focussing very little on God, His will, His work, and His word? If so, your life will be very unfulfilling and empty.
  - 6) God created man to love Him, praise Him, serve Him and fellowship with Him. If that is not your focus in life, your life is supposed to be empty.

**Conclusion:** **Pleasure does not satisfy life's thirsts.** If you are chasing the pleasures and wealth of life, that is a sharp goad. God wants you to think! **Wisdom does not avoid life's frustrations.** Both the fool and the wise man will one day die and leave all they collect to someone else. That is a goad to get us to think! **Enjoyment is impossible without God's gift.** If you do not fear and honour God with your life, God will withhold the gift of joy in your life. If God multiplies your efforts by zero, life will be empty. That is a goad to get you to realise how much you need God.

If you have not trusted Christ to save your soul from hell and give you eternal life, that is your first and greatest need.

Christian, if you are living for yourself and giving God the leftovers, God will withhold the gift of enjoyment. However, if you are giving God first place in your life and seeking to follow His will, His gift of enjoyment can make the little that you have truly satisfying.

**Song:** Have Thine Own Way - **388**

# If I Just Had More!

15 March 2020 AM - Ecclesiastes 2:1-26 - Ecc20 - Scott Childs

**Introduction:** Have you ever thought, "If I just had more \_\_\_ that would really satisfy me." It may be more money, more friends, more popularity, more clothes, more pleasures or anything else you desire. The reality is that having more only leads to wanting more. It does not satisfy the soul. Solomon learned this lesson by experience.

**Transition:** As we move into chapter two, we now find **three more goads** to get us to think about life and our need for God.

*The first goad is that ...*

## 1. **Pleasure does not Satisfy Life's Thirsts** (v.1-11)

### a. **Solomon tested his experiences** (v.1-8)

- 1) Notice the one word that stands out repeatedly in these verses is the word "I". That is living life without God.
- 2) Solomon had fun (v.1-3).
- 3) Solomon built elaborate houses (v.4).
- 4) Solomon planted amazing gardens (v.4-5).
- 5) Solomon dug huge pools for irrigation (v.6). These were three huge pools dug southwest of Bethlehem. Their total water capacity is well over a quarter of a million cubic metres.
- 6) Solomon bought scores of servants, maids and thousands of great and small cattle (animals) (v.7).
- 7) Solomon gathered rich treasures, musical singers, luxuries and wives (v.8).

### b. **Solomon's experiences failed him** (v.9-11)

- 1) He had gathered more than anyone else (v.9)
- 2) He got all that his heart desired. He withheld nothing (v.10).
- 3) Having obtained all that he ever dreamed of having, he was still empty inside (v.11).
- 4) He concluded:
  - a) All is **vanity**. It is empty, nothing but vapour.
  - b) All is **vexation of spirit**. It is chasing the wind.
  - c) All is of **no profit under the sun**. It left him with no

advantage. Life on earth was profitless.

☞ *The things of this life never satisfy the soul. The happiness they give is only short-lived. Money cannot buy peace or forgiveness. Money cannot buy one second of everlasting life in heaven.*

*The second goad is that ...*

## 2. **Wisdom does not Avoid Life's Frustrations** (v.12-23)

### a. **He inspected the philosophies of life** (v.12-17)

- 1) He had tried everything life offered for the rich (v.12). Thus, he decided to inspect life from the standpoint of the **worldly wise**, the **madman** and the **fool**.
- 2) He quickly confirmed that being wise was far better than being a fool (v.13).
  - a) The wise can see but fools walk in the dark (v.14).
  - b) At the same time, one event happens to the wise, the madman and the fool – they all die.
- 3) However, since the fool dies just as the wise, what is the point of being wise? (v.15) That is a goad!
- 4) The wise and the fool will both die alike (v.16). Once they are dead, no one will remember the wise man any more than the fool.
- 5) This inspection caused Solomon to hate life (v.17).
  - a) Life under the sun is a *grief*, an unpleasant miserable existence.
  - b) Again, this too is all *vanity* (emptiness) and *vexation of spirit* (chasing the wind). It leads to nowhere beneficial.

### b. **He pondered preparation for death** (v.18-23)

- 1) All that he had worked to accumulate while living under the sun, he would one day leave to someone else (v.18).
- 2) He found it painful to think that the man who would receive his possessions may be a fool (v.19). I have lived wisely and gathered all that I possess, yet the man who gets it after I die may be a fool and waste it all. That thought is vanity.
- 3) These thoughts caused Solomon to *despair* (v.20). **Despair is sorrow without hope**.
  - a) One man works hard in wisdom, knowledge and

equity (i.e., success, profit) (v.21)

- b) Yet that man will leave it all as the portion of the one who receives it.
- c) Solomon saw this to be vanity and a great evil.
- 4) Solomon asked a rhetorical question (v.22). **The answer is that life under the sun leaves you with nothing**.
- 5) That person works hard all his life, endures the sorrow and grief of work and loses sleep to gain just to leave it all to someone else. That is frustrating!

*The third goad is that ...*

## 3. **Enjoyment is Impossible without God's Gift** (v.24-26)

### a. **It is not bad to enjoy life.**

- 1) In verse 24, Solomon is **not** saying "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die" for he includes God in the statement. Enjoying life is not bad.
- 2) Enjoying life and labour was God's original plan for man and it is still possible if we receive enjoyment from the hand of God. If life is the pits and you are miserable, it is because you are not giving God His rightful place in life.

### b. **Only God can give the gift of enjoyment.**

- 1) To the person who is good in God's sight, God gives wisdom, knowledge and joy. **To be good in God's sight is not just being a nice person**. Solomon qualifies God's expectations at the end of the book (Ecclesiastes 12:13) "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*"
- 2) To the sinner (the one who does not fear and obey God), God gives travail or work to gather up for those God calls good. From a human perspective, that too is vanity and vexation of spirit.
- 3) God controls the enjoyment in life. We may accumulate much but if God does not enable us to enjoy it, life is empty. On the other hand, you may **not** have much in this life, but if God enables you to enjoy the little you have, life can be greatly satisfying. Jim Berg illustrated it similar to this.