

- 3) Though we will die as a beast dies, the spirit of man will go upward to stand before the Almighty. The spirit of the beast simply goes to the grave (v.18-21).
 - a) From an earthly perspective, both men and animals die alike. Both return to dust. That is vanity.
 - b) However, from God's perspective, the spirit of man and beast is very distinct. God created man in His own image. That is not true of the animals. Every human will live eternally somewhere – either in heaven with God or in the Lake of Fire separated from God. (John 3:36) "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

b. Preparing for our appointment with God is wise.

- 1) Rejoice in the works that God has given you to do (v.22).
- 2) God has given you a *portion* (i.e., a share, a part) in this life. Your portion includes your finances, your health, your abilities, and your opportunities. Your portion is not exactly the same as that of anyone else, but it is the gift God has given you. Be content with that portion. (Hebrews 13:5) "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"
- 3) Focus on today. On Judgment Day, God will hold you accountable for what you did with the portion He has given you. (2 Corinthians 5:10) "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"

Conclusion: God limits you in at least three ways. **God limits our control of life.** There is very little in life that you can control. **God limits our grasp of the future.** You can comprehend eternity, but you can only see a tiny section of the present. **God limits our independence.** You will die like other creatures, but then you will give account to God. These three limitations ought to goad you to think about your need for God. If you do not know the Lord as Saviour, please come talk to me.

Song: Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus - 204

Man is Limited

22 March 2020 AM – Ecclesiastes 3:1-22 – Ecc20 – Scott Childs

Introduction: When we read a sign, “Wet paint! Do not touch!” we often desire to touch it anyway. Our human nature hates being limited.

Transition: In Ecclesiastes 3, we are going to see that God limits man in at least three areas to get us to see our need for Him.

1. God Limits our Control of Life (v.1-8)

a. The times and seasons are out of man's control

- 1) Solomon lists 14 opposites in life.
- 2) For every **positive** in life, there is a **negative**.
 - a) You had no control over the time you were born and you will not stay alive one second longer than God permits.
 - b) You have no control over the time to plant. You cannot get beans to grow outside in mid-winter.
 - c) We would like it if life was all laughter, but in reality, there will be times of weeping.
 - d) There will be times when we get gain, but there will also be times when we lose.
- 3) Since every **positive** in life has a **negative**, you may be able to have a little influence on them, but ultimately you cannot control these events.
- 4) Presently, God is using global epidemic of the Covid-19 virus to show man that he is not in control. The virus is harder to stop than a bushfire.
- 5) The fact that man cannot control life is a **goad** to get us to think about our desperate need for God.

b. God alone controls life (v.1)

- 1) Everything has a season and a time.
 - a) While there are many unpleasant events in life that, if given the choice, we would opt to avoid, each has a purpose. **All sunshine makes a desert.**
 - b) Like a good cook, God is able to blend the right portions of life's ingredients to produce something good.

- 2) God in heaven is in control of all. (Romans 8:28) "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" If you love God and have answered His call to salvation, He will work out life's events for your good.

2. God Limits our Grasp of the Future (v.9-15)

a. We are limited in our understanding.

- 1) We struggle to understand the profit of working in this empty life (v.9). Dunagan states, "Since man is subject to many circumstances which he has no real control over, circumstances which can completely erase a whole life's work (such as war and death), that certainly strips man of any security in this life."
- 2) God has given man travail (a difficult task) to be exercised (i.e., afflicted or humbled) by it (v.10). God wants the difficult times in life to humble us so that we will rely upon Him.
- 3) Read **verse 11**. The word "*world*" refers not to the earth but to eternity. The same word in **verse 14** is translated "*forever*".
- 4) God has given us the ability to comprehend eternity; however, He has not given us the ability to know all that he is doing in our lives from the beginning to the end.
- 5) *We cannot help but wonder what the end of our current crisis will be. Going to the shops these days gives you an eerie feeling that you just stepped into a science fiction story. It also makes me think of the events that will transpire after the Rapture. The coronavirus is one of the biggest worldwide crisis in history, yet it is nothing compared to having millions of people disappear from off the earth. It is no wonder that it will take the Antichrist to calm and unite the world after the Rapture.*
- 6) We have a partial understanding of our past but no idea what our future holds. That can be frustrating!
 - a) God limits our understanding to increase our dependence on Him. That is a **goad!**
 - b) He **also** limits our understanding to enable us to

enjoy life (v.12). Can you imagine how miserable life would be if you knew every the painful event you will encounter yet you could do nothing to avoid them?

- 7) **NAIL:** God oversees all from the beginning to the end! Remember, the nails in this book are like tent stakes that keep the tent stable in the storms of life. These nails are stabilizing truths from God.
- 8) The ability to enjoy life is a gift from God (v.13). Only God can give us peace and joy in the midst of the storms of life. We do not know what tomorrow may bring, but the Bible does tell us the end of the story.

b. God alone knows and plans the future.

- 1) God alone unfolds His "*for ever*" or eternal plan in your life (v.14). You can add nothing to His eternal plan nor can you take anything away from it. God controls our future so that we will fear before Him.
- 2) **NAIL:** We should fear God because He is fulfilling His eternal plan that never changes (v.14).
- 3) The Scripture clearly teaches both sovereignty of God and the freewill of man. From a human perspective, they seem to conflict. How can God be in control, yet allow man to make choices? Somehow, God is able to weave both of them together in His unlimited ability so that they do not conflict.
- 4) Verse **15** reminds us that though we are subject to time, God is eternal. God sees the future as clearly as he sees the past. One day God will require an accounting of all that is past.

3. God Limits Our Independence (v.16-22)

a. We will have an accounting before God.

- 1) Our world is often unjust (v.16). Places of judgment often excuse wickedness. Places where righteousness should prevail are often corrupt. This is a problem today just as it was in Solomon's day. Only God is the perfect judge.
- 2) **Nail:** God will one day properly judge the righteous and the wicked (v.17). Solomon knew this in his heart. It is a stabilizing truth. You can depend on it.