

We need God's friendship when ...

4. We have Unfaithful Friends (v.13-16)

a. Self-interested friends may promote you

- 1) Here is a poor young wise child that was in prison and his friends deliver him and crown him king instead of the old foolish king (v.13-14).
- 2) His friends were not faithful friends. They were political friends hoping for some personal gain by making him the king.
- 3) We too must be very prudent when choosing friends. People who use flattery or unrealistic promises want something from us. Beware!

b. Self-interested friends are usually unfaithful

- 1) As time passes, this king loses popularity and people arise who do not rejoice in him. He is about to lose his throne. (Proverbs 19:4) "*Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.*"
- 2) In life, friends may be unfaithful. They may leave you when you need them most. They may choose other friends over you. They may walk away from the Lord and leave you at the same time.
- 3) However, there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. That friend is the Lord.

Conclusion: Each of the four circumstances in life that Solomon highlighted in this chapter work as goads to get us to think about our great need for the Lord's friendship. Friends, even the best of friends, are human and will fail us at times. God is our one friend who will **never** fail us. If you do not know the Lord as your personal Saviour from coming judgment, I urge you to repent of your sins and trust him today.

Christian, if your friendship with the Lord is more distant than it ought to be, now is the time to begin walking in the light and enjoy his fellowship. (1 John 1:7) "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

Song: No, Not One! 445 – There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No, not one! No, not one! None else could heal all our soul's diseases, No, not one! No, not one! Jesus knows all about our struggles, He will guide till the day is done. There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, No, not one! No, not one!

We Need God's Friendship

29 March 2020 AM – Ecclesiastes 4 – Ecc20 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Nothing brings a person to the understanding of his need for God's friendship quicker than a tragic event that seems humanly hopeless. The coronavirus certainly fits that description.

Transition: In Ecclesiastes 4, Solomon describes four other circumstances in life when we need God's friendship.

We need God's friendship when ...

1. We have no Friends (v.1-3)

a. Life is full of oppressions

- 1) Life under the sun (here on earth) is not always fair.
- 2) Many people are oppressed (v.1).
 - a) Oppressors have great power.
 - b) In Solomon's day, slaves were greatly oppressed. They had no rights. They shed many tears. They had no comforters.
 - c) Today, many are oppressed by unjust leaders, by their poor financial decisions, by the troubled economy, by their marriage conflicts, by the coronavirus and by many other oppressions.
- 3) Solomon's human conclusion was that the dead were better off or those who had never been born (v.2-3).

b. The oppressed have no comforter

- 1) The oppressed often have no one to comfort them.
- 2) When a child hurts himself, he naturally runs to his mother for comfort. As adults, when oppressions in life hurt us, we too need comfort.
- 3) When we feel like shedding tears over an oppressing situation, in those times we need a friend. Solomon wrote, (Proverbs 17:17) "*A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*"
- 4) Human friends are very important and helpful, but in times of great oppression, even the best human friends fall short of our need. This goad reminds us that we need God's friendship most of all. Not only does God fully

understand our situation, but He has the ability to comfort us when our friends are unable. Jesus said, (Matthew 11:28) "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

We need God's friendship when ...

2. We have Jealous Friends (v.4-6)

a. People envy prosperous workers

- 1) Solomon describes a man who works hard and succeed (v.4). That is good and commendable.
- 2) However, his neighbour envies him or is jealous of his successes. Instead of being happy for him, he is jealous or even angry. He wishes evil on his prosperous friend.
- 3) On the other extreme, (v.5) we find the lazy fool. He just sits back, folds his hands and eats up all that he has and then starves.
- 4) These two work scenarios troubled Solomon. The person who worked and prospered had jealous friends and the lazy man had nothing at all. Both are negative. Both are bad.

b. It is better to have a little with quietness

- 1) Solomon wisely concluded that having just a handful (enough to get by) with quietness (rest or peace with his neighbours and friends) was far better than having both hands full with travail and an empty spirit.
- 2) Contentment is the key. The Apostle Paul, who had nothing in this world, was able to say confidently, (1 Timothy 6:6) "*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*" Again, he said in (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) If we have God as our friend, **He is all that we need.**

We need God's friendship even when ...

3. We have a Good Friend (v.7-12)

a. Having a good friend is valuable

- 1) Here we read of several benefits of having a friend.
 - a) Together, their work succeeds better (v.9)

- b) They can help each other when they fall (v.10)
- c) They can keep each other warm (v.11)
- d) They can defend each other when attacked (v.12)

- 2) **These particularly describe a good spouse.**
- 3) These are some great reasons for us to have close friends. We need friends in life, but we must be careful to choose only godly good friends. The book of Proverbs contains many warnings about friends.

- a) (Proverbs 13:20) "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*"
- b) (Proverbs 18:24) "*A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*"
- c) (Proverbs 22:24) "*Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:*"
- d) (Proverbs 27:17) "*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*"

- 4) As Christians, we need to stick together as friends. We need to correspond with each other regularly. We need to strive to build each other up spiritually. There is no greater need for this than during our current pandemic.

b. Having a threefold friendship is even better

- 1) Solomon notes that a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ropes are made from strings that are woven together. Obviously, when three strings or small cords are woven into one, the resulting rope is much stronger than the individual cords.
- 2) There are times when even the best human friend can do nothing for our situation. Our need is beyond human resources.
- 3) This threefold cord reminds us that our friendship ought to be woven together and around the Lord. When He is part of our friendship, He adds a strength far greater than our individual cords. (Romans 8:31) "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*"