

Ecclesiastes 5:1-20

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. 2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool’s voice *is known* by multitude of words. 4 When thy vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. 6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but fear thou God. 8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth: and *there be* higher than they. 9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field. 10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity. 11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes? 12 The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. 13 There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. 14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing in his hand. 15 As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. 16 And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that

hath laboured for the wind? 17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and *he hath* much sorrow and wrath with his sickness. 18 Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for *it is* his portion. 19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; *this is* the gift of God. 20 For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.”

*‘Be More Ready To Hear, Listen, Than Talk
When You Go Into The House of God’*

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, and a fool’s voice *is known* by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but fear thou God.” (verses 1-7) “As you’re reading through the Book of Ecclesiastes, you’ve got to remember, this is written by a man, the wisest man, and certainly the wealthiest, but a man without the measure of light that was given to his father, who was a shepherd, and God would even say to Solomon ***‘your heart is not perfect towards me like the heart of your father David.’***”

Solomon, incredible wisdom in regards to government, the natural world around him, but he's writing about his frustration through this Book of Ecclesiastes, as he says in regards to things "under the sun." He looks at human existence, in and of itself, and he says ***'as I watch one generation come and go, I realize this is vanity, it's emptiness, there's a constant parade of cradles and coffins, and what do you have when you're done? You can't take anything with you, you leave go of it,'*** ...he's kind of down. So as we read through, don't let your heart go there, look, we have the Gospel, we have the Blessed Hope, we have the Truth, Solomon is not walking in the light of those things, he gives us those things, but they are certainly true in this culture, true in his time, true in his perspective. So, let's look at these things this evening as we begin, **chapter 5**, he says **"Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."** (verse 1) Solomon now will give us in these first seven verses something that he looks at, and he says, he's been telling us over and over, ***'Well this is vanity, all of this amounts to nothing, vanity and frustration under the sun,'*** but he looks at the house of God now. This is later in his life, his heart has become hardened, Solomon ends up with 700 wives and 300 concubines, and they take his heart away. And he's writing these things, no doubt it is in his older years and there was a level of frustration and truth. Solomon, no doubt, is watching the Temple that he built, watching the crowds go in and out. And he's not, in the sense he's a pastor's kid, but he was a Psalmist's kid, he's a shepherd's kid, he's a pastor's kid in the sense he was living with the shepherd of Israel. Lots of times kids that grow up in ministry, pastor's kids, and kids who just grow up in the church, now I appreciate certain things, though I can not prescribe them, because I got saved out of the world. I was in Egypt, I know the task-master's whip, and I appreciate being set free, I remember the years of drugs and alcohol and insanity. [what he's saying is that kids that grow up in the Church, Body of Christ, don't appreciate being set free from Satan's world.] So there's a line of demarcation for me, coming out of Egypt and I appreciate that. But often, p-k's and kids that grow up in ministry, they do a funny thing,

there's enough truth invested in them, as there was in Solomon, that as he pulled away, he became kind of cynical, and particularly cynical of hypocrites. And we'll see that, you know, we'll see people who go away from the church, backslide, or they go AWOL, young people that go looking for a cooler church, a drinking church or something, and what they do is they'll stand at a distance and become cynical of every hypocritical thing that they see. It doesn't mean that they're wrong. The time comes in your life when you realize, *'Lord, I only see these things because you're allowing me to see them, so either I'm going to come and build your Kingdom, or I'm going to stand outside of it and be a critic. Because it could be somebody else that I think is hypocritical standing out here with clearer vision, and I could be in there blind as a bat.'* Solomon's kind of standing on the outside of the Temple, watching people who come to worship, knowing his father's flaws and weaknesses, but that God told him **'Your father is a man after my heart.'** Knowing his father was a genuine worshipper, Solomon says these things. He says, **'Now look, watch your step'** is the idea, **'when you go'** he doesn't say "if" **'when you go to the house of God. There's something I'm going to warn you about, watch your step when you do that.'** And here's what he challenges worshippers as they go to the house of God, he says **"be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."** (verse 1b) and of course, I am sure that he had heard, no doubt from his father, **"behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, to listen, better than the fat of lambs, for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as the iniquity of idolatry, because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD."** No doubt he had heard his father David talk about the reality of those things, so he says to the worshipper, **'Look, when you go to the house of God, you're not going there because it's your routine, you're not going there because you're supposed to go there, watch your step when you go, spiritually, take some inventory. But when you go there, be more ready to hear, because God will speak to you, if you come and your heart is open. If you go and play the game every week, and offer the sacrifice of fools, 'Ah, I raised my hands, put my ten bucks in the offering, me and God**

are cool.' He says **'Don't come offering the sacrifice of fools, come ready to hear.'** God will speak to everybody in this room tonight, including this fool, every single one of us, if our hearts are open. He's not a respecter of persons, the Bible says. Now he has no desire to "play church" or play religious games, he pays the oldest price in the death of his Son, so he can gather us to himself, and he doesn't want that to be some routine or some Sunday-go-to-meetin' Jesus club for an hour a week. He wants to speak to us, he wants to walk with us, he wants to gather those he paid for, and that was the fellowship he had with Adam in the cool of the day before Adam sinned and that fellowship was broken. And in the context of that fellowship, he tells his people **'be ready to hear, I'm going to speak to you.'** I raised four kids, I got grandkids now, I can't imagine if they were never, an attitude of heart, that's what determines how you listen. If there were never an attitude of heart to hear, to listen [it would be a sad thing]. He says **'Watch your step,'** taking for granted they're going to do it, **'when you go to the house of the LORD,'** **"and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools:"** here's why **"for they consider not that they do evil."** (verse 1c) it doesn't say they don't know. No doubt he's watching people go in and out of the Temple, just like it's some religious turn-style, and knowing they give the blood of lambs, but their heart is not there. God will say in the beginning of Isaiah, **'I don't want this,'** David will say **"Sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired, but a broken and contrite spirit thou wilt not despise."** So, Solomon just kind of watching what's taking place. And he says in **verse 2,** as you get there, the idea is as the worshipper is approaching, the worshipper arriving, he says **"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God:"** (verse 2a) you know, don't just walk in and say *'I promise God, I'm gonna huff and puff, and blow the house down, I'll do this, and I'll do that, and you can depend on me,'* he says **'Don't do that, watch your step, come more ready to hear, than to offer something, the sacrifice of fools, not considering the human heart. And don't be rash with your mouth, don't let your heart be hasty to utter anything, don't be there out of emotion before God,'** he says, here's why, **"for God is in heaven, and thou upon**

earth: therefore let thy words be few.” (verse 2b) God’s in heaven, and you’re on earth, that’s very important. Sometimes we need to remember, this is earth, it ain’t heaven. When things go wrong and things are difficult, this is earth. He says God is in heaven, now look, the interesting thing there, is this is one of the places where his perspective is “over the sun.” All through the Book he’s saying “under the sun,” here he says **‘God is in heaven, and you’re upon the earth.’** Because of that, **“therefore let thy words be few.”** Jesus, of course, would reaffirm those very things, he would say **“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues/Temple, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, your secret place, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which seest in secret, shall reward thee openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the unbelievers do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”** or for their many words. Solomon, in his wisdom, says, **‘don’t speak rashly, don’t just let anything bubble out of your mouth, because God’s in heaven, you’re on earth, therefore let your words be few.’** He doesn’t say don’t say anything, **“let your words be few.”** Verse 3, **“For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words.”** better to keep silent, he says, and let people think you’re wise, than to open your mouth and remove all doubts [that you’re a fool]. He says a fool’s voice is known by his multitude of words, now he’s going to go down to verse 7, back in normal everyday experiences of life as a worshipper, don’t speak rashly, **“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not [don’t allow] thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?” (verses 4-6)** “the angel,” the messenger, and it’s non-specific here, the Hebrew is “the

messenger,” we don’t know if it’s the priest or if it’s a Levite. Don’t try to say that what you vowed, *‘Oh I made a mistake,’* **“wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?”** the idea is, you’re lying. **“For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.*”** (verse 7) Look, you and I are told that we shouldn’t make a vow. I mean, it isn’t really for the Christian, we make a vow when we get saved, in the sense that we give our lives to the Lord, again, Jesus said **“*Again you have heard it hath been said of them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, don’t make a vow, that shall perform unto the LORD thine oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king, neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*”** that was before Clairol of course, and so forth. **“*but let your yes be yes and your no be no, for whatsoever more of these comes evil.*”** (cf. Matthew 5) Jesus says **‘Don’t do it,’** because when you get before God and you make a vow, what you’re doing is you’re trusting in the flesh. You know, I want to come before the LORD as a child and say *‘Take me by the hand, and lead me the way of everlasting, shepherd me LORD.’* I don’t want this journey to depend on my promises and my faithfulness, that’s the Old Testament. *‘I want this journey to depend on your promise and your faithfulness to me,’* that’s the only way we’re going to make it. And Solomon doesn’t have that perspective, you know, you and I should be able to look at these things and understand what the Lord is saying to us.

*‘Don’t Be Staggered If You See Injustice In Human
Government, God’s Watching’*

Ah, **verse 8**, he says **“If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for *he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.*”** He goes on, and then he’s going to make a transition

in verse 10, he warns about watching your step as you worship, letting that be genuine, don't just sit there and say this or say that, offering the sacrifice of fools, but come ready to listen to the Word of God. So, **"If thou seest the oppression of the poor,"** so government has not changed, **"and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter:"** you know, you see oppression, you see the perversion of justice, he said, don't be staggered by that, you have a human problem. **"marvel not at the matter:"** King James says **"for he that is higher than the highest regardeth;"** the sense of it in the Hebrew is *'every official has a superior,'* so if a policeman does something you think isn't fair, he's got a main officer, and he's got the mayor to deal with, and he's got the governor to deal with, and then he's got the President to deal with, the problem is, if the whole thing has got dry rot from stem to stern, the Lord would say about Israel, *'from the head to the devil, everything's sick.'* Solomon says **'don't be staggered if you see injustice in human government,'** he says, **'because every official has their superior, somebody's watching, regarding,'** and then he says, **'There is One that's higher than them all.'** Aren't we glad of that? You know, we hear of the Supreme Court, that's a religion, that ain't the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court only has one Judge, not five. And we know he isn't Liberal. But he is in love and grace...but you can appeal to that Supreme Court. So he says there is one that's higher than all that. You look at human government, you're frustrated, you're watching an election year...we're looking at the economy, we're looking at injustice, racism, we're looking at all of these things. He says don't be shocked by that, it's human structure, everybody you might be mad at, they got a superior, they're human too, but Solomon says there's somebody whose on top of all of that. **"Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field."** (verse 9) the king is as dependent on grain as the poorest guy in the world, Solomon says, so he has in the final analysis, and that's what he keeps looking at here, no benefit.

What Money, Wealth Can't Do For You, Don't Believe Wealth Brings Satisfaction, Security Or Peace Of Mind

Now, he comes to money, moola, kaching, verse 10, and he's going to give us a series of exhortations, he's gonna say **'wealth can't bring satisfaction, that's a myth, doesn't happen.'** Then he's going to say **'Wealth can't give you peace of mind,'** then he's going to say **'Wealth can't provide security.'** Understand, this is not a guy whose writing his thesis, this is a guy whose the richest guy in the world, who knows this from life experience. He's going to start in **verse 10** by saying, the idea is that wealth can't bring satisfaction, he says **"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity."** (verse 10) the person that loves silver is never going to be satisfied with silver, Solomon says. It tells us in **1st Kings**, it says **"And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold, none were of silver, it was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars he made as sycamore trees."** He had so much gold, his silver was accounted as nothing, it was counted as rocks. And Solomon says here, **'you think you're somebody who loves silver, I'm telling you, you're not going to be satisfied,'** he's talking about something internal. We'll told the same thing in the New Testament, we have in **Timothy**, it says this to us, **'The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, they have pierced themselves through with many sorrows, but thou O man of God, flee from these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, patience'** and so forth. So Paul says the same thing. It doesn't say money is wrong. Money is a great tool to use against the devil, money is a means to an end, it's never an end in itself. And God gives people a gift to accumulate wealth, it's God-given. Some people just have it. He says it's the love of money, it's the heart being there, not the intellect

deciding what wise things you can do with it, but it's the heart. He says here, **"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver"** that's why in the Law, Moses warns about covetousness, it's something that's not ever satisfied, you can't ever deal with it. And with silver, he's not going to be satisfied, **"nor he that loveth abundance with increase"** he says **"this is also vanity."** (verse 10b) He says, **Jesus says "Beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."** Nobody knew that more than Solomon, he's got more money than anybody can imagine. He had 700 wives, 300 concubines, Lord knows what else he had going on, and he's just saying **'You think you're going to be satisfied, let me tell you, from where I sit, on my pile of gold, and the rocky mountain is just silver, if you love silver you're never going to be satisfied, or gold, nor if you love abundance, increase is never going to satisfy you,'** he says **'it's an illusion, don't believe that wealth brings satisfaction.'** Number 2, **verse 11,** he's going to say now wealth doesn't solve problems, necessarily. I know you're thinking *'It would solve a few right now, I'd like to try this out and prove it wrong for a week, anyway.'* But, **"When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?"** (verse 11) Again, we read before, Solomon's table, with the thousands of pounds of bread, 600 bushels, and a hundred sheep everyday. He said, you know, you get wealthier, you need more people to take care of your stuff, the more people you need to feed, you think that your wealth is going to remove your problems, and he said the more wealth you have, the more problems you have. It's like, we thought, technology is going to give us more time, *'ah, the computer, it's gonna save time.'* It eats up more time, it crashes, it goes out, you have to hire people to wrestle with it, they really don't know what it's doing, they're giving you answers because you're paying them to be there, but they can't figure it out either, and they're getting more ornery, and ornery, and more and more of their own mind, and I don't know if they save time at all. [ya, they do, at the scientific level, computing things that would take years to figure out. Look at, buy the movie *The Imitation Game*, about Alan Turing, and his computer that on a daily basis solved

the German Enigma code, reading daily encrypted messages from the German military, messages which would have taken thousands of years to decode. No, if used properly, computers save time. But home computers, iPhones (basically a laptop imbedded into a cell-phone), they take up more of our time which we could use doing more useful things in life. In that case, computers are time-thieves, they steal time from us, and out of our lives.] But they certainly do some good things. The daily provision at the table of Cyrus, I love this, 400 sheep, now this is every day, 400 sheep, 300 lambs, 100 oxen, 30 horses, even so, people have different preferences [i.e. he was serving horsemeat at his table], 30 deer, 400 geese, 100 young geese, 300 pigeons, 600 small fowl, 3,750 gallons of wine, 75 gallons of new milk, and 75 gallons of sour milk (just some people have strange tastes). Imagine, Solomon says, you know, when goods increase, they are increased that eat them. Imagine being at that table every day. **“and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?”** (verse 11b) i.e. *‘what good is it therefore to the owners, except they stand back and watch everybody eating all their food?’* He says, you think money provides peace of mind? **Verse 12**, he says look, **“The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.”** Solomon says, *‘Look, I’m the richest man that ever lived, and the farmer’s got one up on me, because he goes to bed at night, and he falls asleep. I toss and turn.’* Because he’s got more to worry about, he’s got insomnia, he says the sleep of the laboring man is sweet, hits the bed, snoring, he’s gone. It doesn’t matter whether he eats a big dinner or a small dinner, he can sleep. **“But the abundance of the rich, will not suffer them to sleep.”** So it doesn’t provide peace of mind, it’s more to think about, it doesn’t provide security. **Verse 13**, **“There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.”** They hold onto it, and it becomes a problem for them, he says, **“But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.”** (verse 14) You know, money talks, mine does, it says *‘Good-bye!’* and he begetteth a son, and **“As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall**

he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.” (verse 15)

So he says, you look at this, and somebody has wealth, they think it provides security, they become stingy, they hold onto it, it doesn't produce anything, they have a kid, the kid shows up out of his mother's womb, he's not holding Legos in his hand when he shows up, he shows up with nothing, naked, and by the time he's done his run at this thing, he ain't taking anything with him either, no matter what his father left him, he's leaving naked too, with his hands empty. Solomon says this is frustration, this is, because he's thinking, *'Am I going to leave all of my wealth to Rehoboam,'* he's no doubt aware of his own son and his rebellious nature. Interesting, look, this is what we think sometimes. We think *'If I had more money, I could be more generous, Lord, give me a raise so I can support missionaries, Lord let me hit the lottery, I'll make a deal with you. If I hit this million-dollar lottery, I'll give you 20 percent instead of 10 percent, because if I had 80 million bucks, I could be much nicer to people.'* **The truth is, if you're not generous when you're squeaking by, you ain't gonna be generous when you got money piled up in your garage. Generosity is an attitude of heart.** In fact Paul said in the New Testament, to those in Philippi, he said those who were less fortunate were the ones who really contributed to his work, possibly because they understood what it meant to be without. Solomon says, you know, it's an evil for somebody whose wealthy to try to horde everything to himself, instead of investing [in others]. Hey look, money is a great servant, but it is a poor master. And you can tell when money is your servant or your master by whether you're willing to give it away. If you're willing to give, it's your servant, if you ain't willing to give, it's your master...I watched this thing about John Rockefeller, John D. Rockefeller, he was the world's first billionaire, when John D. Rockefeller became a billionaire there wasn't a billionaire on the planet earth. And that's when a billion bucks was worth a billion bucks. He was the first billionaire there ever was, but at 53 years old he was so sick, he couldn't sleep, he lost weight, he had insomnia, and all he could eat was crackers and milk during the day, he had so many ulcers, his stomach was so bad, 53, his health was declining, his life was falling apart. And for

some reason, around that age, he decided to start to give money away. As he became a philanthropist and built hospitals and orphanages, he gave money away, he began to sleep, he gained weight, his health improved, and he died at 98 years old. And if he was here tonight, he would say "Amen" to this. It's a sore evil to try take it and hold onto it, and think you're more secure that way, he was way more secure as he let go it, and no doubt it went to the places, no doubt, where the Lord wanted it to go. He says, you know, you have a child, what do you think, you're going to give it to him, he comes into the world with nothing, and when he's done his course, he's leaving naked, and he doesn't have anything in his hand when he goes. **"And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness."** (verses 16-17) he's struggling also. Whatever we have, we're going to be separated from it in the end, the idea is, unless we send it ahead. Solomon had said in the Book of Proverbs, he said, ***'Two things have I required of thee, deny me not with them before I die,'*** now this is Agur, some argue this is Solomon, but it's from the LORD, ***'Two things I require of thee, deny me not before I die, remove far from me vanity and lies,'*** and that's the first thing, get vanity and lies out of my life, don't let me have to worry about that. Then he says, ***'and give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with the necessary food for me, let me have what's in moderation, what's necessary,'*** and he said, ***'give me that, lest I be full, and deny thee, or forget thee, and say 'Whose the LORD?' or lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my God in vain.'*** Solomon had said, ***'two things I want you to do for me, one, remove vanity and lies from me, just get that away from me, and the other thing is, give me moderation, just give me what's necessary,'*** Jesus said, ***'Give us this day our daily bread.'*** He says, ***'don't give me so much that I forget you, and not depend on you, and say 'Whose the LORD, don't give me so little I'm tempted to steal, and that would bring reproach to your name.'*** He says, don't do those things. Again, Paul would say in the New Testament, Paul will say ***'Godliness with contentment is***

great gain, for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain,' amen, Solomon? **'that we can take nothing out. And having food and clothing, let us be therewith content,'** as you look in the news, there are people all around us that don't have either one of those things. So, you're warm, you're fed, he said you're doing ok. If you have godliness and contentment with that, you're thriving. Be thankful, your heart is blessed, you've got clothes on your back, you've got food in your belly, this is a pilgrimage, we're not staying, we're not setting up shop here, you can't take nothing, you come in with nothing, you take nothing out. So Paul agrees completely with what Solomon says in regards to these things.

It's Good For One To Enjoy The Fruit Of His Labour

Verse 18, he says, **"Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion."** He wants to tell us what he's seen, so do it anyway, tell us what you've seen. This is one thing he says, I can say, it is a good thing, you work hard, he said it's good for someone to enjoy the fruit of his labour, that he could eat, he could drink, and he could enjoy the good of his labour under the sun all the days of his life. That's a good thing. He says **"which God giveth him: for it is his portion."** That's why Paul said if you can be satisfied, contentment, godliness, that's a good thing. And he says **"Every man also to whom God giveth riches and wealth,"** Solomon realizes that in his own life, **"and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God."** (verse 19) You know, if you have money, and you're enjoying it, and you're eating and you're drinking, and you're using up your kid's inheritance, he says just enjoy it. He says they come with nothing and leave with nothing anyway. **"For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart."** (verse 20) he says, he's not going to be overconsumed with the days of his

life, because God, King James says “**answereth him**”, the Hebrew says “**God will keep him occupied with the joys of his heart.**” God will let him live out his days in that...wealthy or just enough to get by, he’s content in God, he enjoys the process of life, and he’ll let him live out his days, you know, hopefully a long life. We just lost Yogi Barer, he said “*the person who has the most birthdays has the longest life.*” that’s just in case you’re wondering, philosopher there.

Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

“There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: 2 a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. 3 If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. 4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. 5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. 6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place? 7 All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. 8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? 9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit. 10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he. 11 See there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? 12 For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a

shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?"

Riches With No Enjoyment

Solomon then says, **There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease." (verses 1-2)** he's going to talk about riches with no enjoyment. He says I've seen this, but a stranger, foreigner ends up eating it, this is vanity, he says, this is an evil disease. Probably it reminds him of his own life. He says, you see a man, God's given him riches and honour and wealth, all of these things, and yet God doesn't give him the ability to enjoy it, to eat it, to enjoy it. He says, what good is all this, if you can't enjoy it, if God hasn't granted that capacity, which is something internal, what does it all mean? He says it's an evil disease, then you sit around and watch other people partaking of it. He says **"If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he."** (verse 3) now that sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? unless you have 700 wives and 300 concubines. You have no idea what his house was like. His son, Rehoboam, had 18 wives and 60 concubines, he turned way back from his father. His father had 700 wives, he had 18 wives, his father has 300 concubines, he had 60 concubines, but he had 88 children, he had 28 sons and 60 daughters. He had 88 children, with less than a fourth of, so Solomon, who knows how many kids were running around there. But he says, **'I'll tell you this, if a man has a hundred children,'** and please understand in this culture, that was a sign of blessing. You're thinking *'This is not good, a hundred children,'* I did see it once, there was one of these TV shows, but there was a woman in South America who had 52 children, there were a lot of twins and triplets in

the mix. And they were interviewing her and her husband, they were farmers, and she was like 47 or something, and the interviewer said *“Are you satisfied with 52 children?”* and the interpreter said *“They said they’d like to have one more.”* [laughter] And she didn’t remember their names, of course, *‘no, no, I can’t remember all their names.’* But it’s another world, I’m telling you. **“If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.” (verse 3)** if he has a hundred children and lives, that’s a good thing right there, i.e. either he gets killed on the battlefield, or he has a funeral and nobody shows up, he’s got a hundred kids, which is supposed to be a blessing, and he has his funeral and none of them show, he says **“I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.”** i.e. *‘a miscarriage is better than that man.’* You know, Solomon gets really down here, you know, he’s really just kind of negative. He says, *‘If you have a hundred kids, and they’re supposed to be a blessing, you live a long life, and then you die and nobody shows up at your funeral, you might as well have been a miscarriage,’* he says, *‘because you’re better off than a guy who went through that.’* **“For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.” (verse 4)** speaking of the miscarried child. **“Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.” (verse 5)** in his idea, that makes him better off than the one who has been born and seen all the pain. He says **“this hath more rest than the other.”** Now, by the way, this is Solomon’s opinion, without the new-birth, without Jesus Christ, without heaven. Because we believe, I believe and you believe, should believe, that life begins at conception. And if life begins at conception, then every miscarried child is in glory. Every miscarried child does have life after this, and you’re going to a reunion. It’s the same for anybody here whose had an abortion, and you’ve gotten saved, that child is secure, with the Lord. You are forgiven, that’s the power of the cross of Christ. [Comment: now understand, different parts of the Body of Christ have differing interpretations about the “unsaved dead.” I tend to agree with Pastor Joe,

that all the unborn and aborted children, babies, have not lost out on salvation, however and through whatever agencies God brings that about. Big point, we don't know how God is going to bring that about, there are varying ideas on how this might be brought about. For some of those other interpretations about heaven, hell and the spirit in man,

see <https://unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm>] Jesus said if you're angry at somebody, you're already guilty of murder in your heart. How many of us haven't done that? If that's happened to you, you're the only one who knows what's going on, he's waiting for you, and you're going to meet them someday and spend eternity with them. Understand, if we stopped abortion in America, and we should, 57 million abortions, think of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, it's 500 feet long, it's got 54,000 names on it, you think of those 57,000,000 kids and you write their names the same size on the same wall, it's over 100 miles long, instead of 500 feet...Foxnews, said if all those kids were alive today, they would have generated between 35 and 70 trillion dollars, Social Security would be solvent, Medicare would be solvent, and there'd be no national debt. We're reaping. But the little ones go on ahead of us, children, the same thing. God says, you know, people say that, when they're children of unbelievers, you know, if the child goes before they're baptized, you know...Jesus says they're innocent before proven guilty, trust me. In the **Book of Deuteronomy** the LORD says **'The little ones, whom you said would be a prey, they're going to go in, when your carcasses fall in the Wilderness, because they didn't know right from wrong or good from evil, and they're going to take the land and they're going to possess it.'** David, when Bathsheba gets pregnant, in adultery, before Uriah's death, and they get married before Solomon's born, the first child is born, David is fasting and praying, refuses to eat, the child is languishing, sick, the child dies, and the servants are afraid to tell him, because he's already so miserable, so worn. He says **'What's wrong with you guys? I see you talking,'** they say **'The child is gone.'** David gets up, he eats, he shaves, they say **'We don't get it, while the child was alive you were miserable, now you hear the child is dead, you're up, you're washed.'** He

said, **'Well, when the child was alive, and I prayed, and I thought, 'Who can tell whether God might be gracious,'** he said, **'Now that the child is gone, I know he's no longer going to come and be with me, but I will go to be with him.'** Just, David says **'I know where he is.'** Jonah, he's mad at God, he wants to curse Nineveh, he goes through the city bleached looking, like a cue ball from the inside of the whale's stomach, he actually should have been glad, there were only, practically only two ways out of there, and he actually got the better one. It shows you can't keep a good man down. [laughter] But he walks into Nineveh, bleached, looked like *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, he told them God was mad at them (Jonah hated the Assyrians), he said in 40 days judgment was coming, and the whole place repented. So he's sitting out there mad, under his gourd, he's got a little shade, hoping that God's going to bring down fire on Nineveh, and his gourd dies. And then he's got a bad attitude, God says **'What kind of prophet are you?'** Jonah says **'I knew if I went in there and preached that message they would repent, because I knew you were gracious and forgiving, makes me sick'** this is God's prophet. God says **'Are you kidding me, Jonah, you're bugged because your gourd is dead, aren't there 120,000 little ones there, plus cattle, who don't know their right hand from their left hand.'** God draws a difference. Jesus said **'Suffer the little children to come to me, for such is the kingdom of God,'** Paul says **'When I was a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things,'** so God draws a line between the little ones. Solomon doesn't have that down here. [David showed in Psalm 139 that God is actually weaving the unborn children into what they will become as human beings after their birth, both physically and their personality, what it will become. Solomon seems to have missed the vertical that David had hold of in his spiritual understanding.] You know, I believe one of the great testimonies of the Rapture, around the world, every culture, every system, is the kids are going to be gone, they're going to be gone. It's going to blow the mind of the whole world, the little ones, they're gonna be gone. [Comment: Now that is a denominational belief of the Calvary Chapels about the Rapture.] But Solomon here is kind of depressed, he says

‘Better to be a miscarriage than to be somebody who comes, can’t enjoy anything, got a hundred kids, and none of those kids show up at your funeral, better to be just a miscarried person, because you never see the light of day, never have to go through all that heartache, you end up at the same place, but one’s better off because he never went through all that stuff.’ He says, look at **verse 6**, **“Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?”** ***‘twice as old as Methuselah, if you live to be 2,000 years old, yet hath he seen no good, don’t they both go to one place, do not they go to the same place?’*** Which is wrong, they don’t all go to the same place. Jesus of course told us about Lazarus and the rich man, we’re not going to the same place everybody else is going, I ain’t going to where everybody [unsaved] is going, there’s two destinations.

‘A Man Can Labour His Whole Life To Feed His Mouth, But The Soul Is Never Satisfied’

He says **“All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.” (verse 7)** sustenance, so he can eat. **“and yet the appetite”** literally, **“the soul”** is not filled, it might say “desire,” the Hebrew says **“the soul not is full,”** the idea is, it’s never full. So all the labour of man is so he can eat, for his mouth, and yet the thing that really hungers, the soul, is never satisfied. You guys know that. I love to go to *The Brazilian Steakhouse*. I can do it twice a year without a cardiac, you get there, you turn your card up green, as long as it’s green they keep bringing you barbequed meat, and when you surrender you turn it over (it’s red side) they leave you alone, then you turn it back over again (to the green side), they come back again. You look around and you can tell the rookies, because they’re eating sausage, chicken, people who know what they’re doing, just bring the red meat, just bring that over here, bring the lamb, few things, just. But you get to the point, you’re uncomfortable, you cross some line, you’re loosening your belt under the table, hoping nobody’s noticing, wishing you were home with your sweats

on. You're thinking *'It's going to take me a few days to get over this meat-hangover,'* and yet the guy walks by with something else, sizzling, your human frame is unable to take more, but because the soul is never satisfied, *'Kick, over here, make it green,'* you're turning green by then...I'm gonna try it again, and your body's saying *'Eat it, I hope you die, you'll burst and I'll be done.'* Just because there's something in us that's beyond the physical frame, he says man works his whole life for his mouth, but the soul is never satisfied. Then they bring desert on a table, and you can see all of that, the eyes are bigger than the stomach, because there's no more room, so you say to somebody *'Let's split one.'* [laughter]...but we do that same thing with sex, we do the same thing with money, we do the same thing with power, we do the same thing with drugs, the soul is never satisfied. That's the deepest part of the human being, that's why it says ***"Guard your heart with all diligence, because from it flow the issues of life."*** Desire is a much stronger force than intellect. That's why smart people do stupid things. Wonderfully, is that when you're born-again and regeneration is taking place, that changes, and there's a new nature within. That's why we're not to let the old nature reign, there's a traitor there, yup, there's a traitor there. And the more committed to the Lord we get, the more it rages, the less happy it is. A friend of mine, a very good friend of Charles Fuller, he says you would find him at 6 o'clock in the morning on his face, and he was saying, *"the more time goes on, he says, the less I sin, but the more I repent. I just find in my life I'm sinning less than I ever have, and I'm repenting more."* And Solomon says, look, man can labour his whole life for his mouth, but the problem is, the soul is never satisfied. ***"For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?" (verse 8)*** the poor man knows how to survive in the land of the living. ***"Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit." (verse 9)*** or the wandering of the soul. What he says here, it's better for you to see, better is the sight of the eyes, ***'ok this is what we have, this is the car we have, this is the sight of the eyes, than the wandering of the soul, the longing, 'If I only had this, if***

I only had that,’ all of that, he said that is part of the soul that is never satisfied.

Watch Out For Spiritual Ruts & Spiritual Routines

“That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.” (verse 10) Now look, he’s probably talking about what we just read through tonight. **‘You go into the house of the LORD, watch your step,’** Solomon says, **‘I know what humans are, because I’m one of them, I remember when the glory of the LORD fell on this place, I remember when this wasn’t religious, everybody’s mind was blown, this whole nation was touched. Now people come and go, it’s years later, we’ve gotten into Christian Rock, Christian routine...so this is our routine, you go home for a Kick-off, there’s more important things.’** He says, **‘Be careful, watch your step, because human beings can get in the frame of mind where they can get into a rut, a spiritual rut, a spiritual routine, and you’re no longer coming to hear, you’re coming to offer the sacrifice of fools, and you’re not considering the fact that you’re a sinner. Don’t go in there and make all kinds of vows and say all kinds of foolish stuff, because God knows. Don’t make vows that you can’t keep.’** And he says, **‘Understand, the things you have security in, what you have then is coming into the Temple, hearing the Word of the LORD, and obeying, that’s where all of your security is.’** He’s saying here **“That which hath been is named already,”** money won’t provide, satisfaction, less work, it doesn’t provide rest, he goes through the whole thing, he says **“That which hath been is named already”** we’re going through the list, he says, **“and it is know that it is man”** he says you know what man is has been known, we understand what man is, **“neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.”** that should be a capital “H” there, he says in the final analysis, coming back to the first verse of chapter 5, man can contend with God, *Isaiah* would say **‘Woe unto him that strives with his Maker.’** *Jeremiah*

would say ***‘What, is the clay going to complain and say to the potter, why am I on the wheel? it’s foolishness.’*** He says, alright, we know what man is, we’ve gone through all of that, we know what’s in man, we’ve come to know all these things, and he says ***‘Understand, he can not contend with Him that is mightier than he is.’***

In Closing: Solomon Asks Three Questions

Verse 11 and 12 he asks several questions as he wraps things up in this section, he says, ***“Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?”*** (verse 11) there are all kinds of things that end up to be wind, end up being nothing, dust in the final analysis. He said, ***“what is man the better?”*** that ends the question. Understanding all the vanity of life, if you think properly, you take that into consideration, what is man better by any of those things we think we need to strive at? Secondly he says, ***“For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?”*** (verse 12) who knows what is good for man? That’s where he started in the Temple, go there, take heed how you hear, go there to listen and not to speak. Because there is somebody who knows, he knows what is good for man, all the days of his vain life which he spends as a shadow, until something goes ***snap!*** it goes like that, goes like that. ***“for who can tell”*** the third question, ***“for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?”*** (verse 12c) who can tell anybody what is coming, Solomon the wisest man that ever lived, says ***‘Who can tell us what’s coming?’*** I would say, Solomon, you mean, besides Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, all the Minor prophets, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John whom Jesus revealed the Book of Revelation to, besides them, who can tell us what’s coming? [Comment: Solomon lived before God prophecied to all those other prophets. Only David prophecied about what was coming in the Psalms, but David’s Psalms didn’t have any of the future prophecies of those prophets to anchor his prophecies to, so their meaning before the

Prophets was obscured.] We enjoy so much more light than Solomon did, though he lived in incredible wisdom. Who can tell us what's coming, the rest of the Book, Solomon. The rest of the Book tells us what's coming [see https://unityinchrist.com/Prophets_Prophecy.html].

And we know this for sure, Jesus Christ is coming, we know that for sure. Listen, are you watching the news? I mean, Jesus Christ is coming, I didn't finish the sentence and you all rejoiced. Jesus Christ is coming soon, now clap [applause]. Really, really, you just look at it and you think '*It just can't rumble on,*' and it certainly can't rumble on and he come as a thief in the night, **'be sober, be vigilant, in an hour you think not, I'm coming like a thief in the night.'** I mean, those who believe are already, if he waits much longer everybody's going to be sitting around looking up. If there's an element of surprise to it. Is there anybody here ever been robbed? your house? Feel kind of violated, right? That's how Jesus is coming. Everybody's thinking '*It can never happen to me,*' that's what you think about a thief in the night, and that's what's going to happen, it's going to go **snap!** and we're going to be outa here...it's going to have an element of surprise to it, I'm excited. Solomon's sitting back there saying **'Who can tell us what's coming anyway?'** I can tell you what's coming. He should have said '*Joe could tell you what's coming.*' The whole Bible can tell you what's coming. Right? So we live in a wonderful amount of light. Listen, you read through, the rest of Ecclesiastes, you should be reading through. Here's the brightest man whose ever lived, and he talks about the genuine frustration of just living on the human level, measuring all of life humanly [the horizontal, not the vertical], "under the sun" he says, nothing over the sun. This is what, the ultimate amount of wisdom and the ultimate amount of wealth, 700 wives, 300 concubines, money and pleasure, living beyond measure, everything that our carnal nature thinks that it could want, he has it stacked up. And he says, **'You know what, it's nothing but vanity [Hebrew: "emptiness"] and frustration, nothing but vanity and frustration.'** So it isn't so much...what he does do though, is he puts out the warning sign, he says **'Trust me, I've been there, you ain't never been there. You have never been the wisest guy that ever lived, and you ain't never been the richest**

man that's ever lived, I've gone there for you. Let me talk to you from that position and tell you 'This really can be frustrating, this can really be a bummer.' Again, **'I had 700 wives, 300 concubines, 1,000 mother-in-laws, there's no peace in the house, I walk by some guy and I see him sitting with his kids, his three kids, they're holding hands and they're saying grace, got some mealy old chicken and some corn on the cob on the table, and they've got more than I have in my palace, I look on their faces, I see they're thankful. And it's a gift that God's given, and it's good for a man to enjoy his labour and to do that, it's the gift of God.'** Let's stand, let's pray...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Ecclesiastes 5:1-20 and Ecclesiastes 6:1-12, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

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