

Remember to Rejoice – Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:8

We have come to the conclusion of the teacher of Ecclesiastes. He concludes that, for all the futility he has seen, life is a gift to be rejoiced in. But in order to do that, we must remember our Creator. Read 11:7-8:

⁷ Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. ⁸ So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

Despite the challenges of life under the sun, the Teacher begins his conclusion by affirming that life is a good gift, and it is full of God's gifts.

- 1) Why is it important for us as Christians to recognize the goodness of God's work in creation? What do we lose when we don't?**

Let's keep reading 11:9-12:1:

⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. ¹⁰ Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity. ¹ Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

In light of the goodness of life, the teacher goes on to implore the young man to rejoice.

- 2) Why does the teacher address the young here in particular? What should we understand "young" to mean?**
- 3) In what ways are you "young"? In what areas are you currently blessed to be able to take joy in your life?**

The young man's ability to rejoice in contrast with "evil days" to come (12:1-8):

¹ Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; ² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, ³ in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— ⁶ before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸ Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

Here the teacher paints a rich but sobering picture of the weight of life under the sun. As we walk under this weight, rejoicing gets harder.

- 4) What are some of the realities of life under the sun that the teacher reminds us of?**

5) Where do you feel old – where do you feel the toll of the fallen world the heaviest right now?

At this point, things are bleak. It seems all that is good just gets slowly swallowed up by the bad. But that is not the end of the story if we remember our creator.

6) What does it mean to remember our creator?

7) How does He shape the way we understand rejoicing?

8) We remember him not just as creator, but also redeemer. What does this mean for our rejoicing – especially in the ways we feel old?

PRAYER

Scripture calls us to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. God redeemed us into a church to help each other rejoice well and to help carry the burdens we feel we feel “old”. Let’s do that now as we pray.

Let’s rejoice in the many mercies and kindnesses of God we have received, and also mourn what hurts and what is not well looking to Christ who will make all things new.