

## The Hand of God – Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

This passage shows us the danger of having our experiences shape our view of God, rather than letting God's revelation of himself shape how we see life. In Ecclesiastes 9, we can see how Solomon has gotten this wrong:

*Ecclesiastes 9:1 But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. 2 It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. 3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. 4 But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.*

- 1) **What troubles Solomon as he looks at life in the world under the sun? How does this shape his view of God?**
- 2) **What experiences in life make it hard for you to trust who God is? What attributes of his do you tend to doubt or lose sight of?**
- 3) **It's not just Solomon's view of God that has some holes – there are shifts that need to happen when it comes to people as well. What mistake does he make and how does it start to change?**
- 4) **How do these things we have seen of God and ourselves change the way we interpret the experiences of life?**

Solomon goes on to give us guidance on how we ought to live the life God has gifted us:

*7 Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. 8 Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. 9 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun. 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going. 11 Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. 12 For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.*

- 5) **Is the encouragement to enjoyment here (that we have seen elsewhere in Ecclesiastes) correct? Why or why not?**
- 6) **Why is God's approval essential to enjoying His good gifts?**

### PRAYER

Pray that God would give us and right view of the things we go through and help us to properly enjoy the gifts He gives.