

Ecclesiastes 9:1-6 Sermon Notes:

God's Great Providence

Ecclesiastes 8:16-17-9:1(a)

[16] When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night do one's eyes see sleep, [17] then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. [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.

Man cannot find out the work of God done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 9:12

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.

Man does not even know what tomorrow will bring.

James 4:13-14

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

In great contrast, God knows all things and God is providentially working out all things in this life - life under the sun - according to the counsel of His good, eternal will.

Ecclesiastes 3:10-11

[10] I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. [11] He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

God knows the beginning from the end because of this great providence over all things.

God's Providence: God actively guiding, protecting, and sustaining the universe and all life within it.

"The providence of God is his purposeful sovereignty by which he will be completely successful in the achievement of his ultimate goal for the universe. God's providence carries his plans into action, guides all things toward his ultimate goal, and leads to the final consummation." - John Piper

Man's Great Limitations

Ecclesiastes 9:1b

Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him.

What we will receive from God is unknown to man.

Ecclesiastes 8:14

[14] There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

Genesis 50:20

[20] As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

When trials come, don't immediately ask,

"Where is God?"

"If God exists and is good, why are these bad things happening to me?"

Man's scope is so limited!

Remember "...the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God."

Will you trust God when trials come?

Will you trust God even in death?

Ecclesiastes 9:2-3a

[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.

Death, the great equalizer, comes indiscriminately to everyone!

Not only do all men die, but also no man lives as he was created to live.

Ecclesiastes 9:3b

[3(b)] 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.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

[29] See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.

God made man upright - no sin, no death. But because of the fall of man after living a life full of evil and madness every person dies. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun.

But, to the praise of His glorious grace, God does not leave us in a state of hopelessness!

Great Hope for the Living

Ecclesiastes 9:4-6

[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.

Why is there hope for the living who know they will die?

The living, who know they will die, have hope because...

1) They can continue to enjoy life under the sun as a gift from God.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20

[18] Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. [19] Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. [20] For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

Ecclesiastes 9:7–10

[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.

The living, who know they will die, have hope because...

2) They can consider the day of their death to find purpose for their life under the sun.

"Ecclesiastes teaches us to live life backward. It encourages us to take the one thing in the future that is certain—our death—and work backward from that point into all the details and decisions and heartaches of our lives, and to think about them from the perspective of the end. It is the destination that makes sense of the journey. If we know for sure where we are heading, then we can know for sure what we need to do before we get there. Ecclesiastes invites us to let the end sculpt our priorities and goals, our greatest ambitions and our strongest desires.

I want to persuade you that only if you prepare to die can you really learn how to live."

The living, who know they will die, have hope because...

3) They have an opportunity to consider life *after* life under the sun.

Hebrews 9:27

[27] And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,

Ecclesiastes 9:5b-6, 10b

...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. ...for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

2 Corinthians 5:6–10

[6] So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. [8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. [9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. [10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.