

Ecclesiastes Series – Part Two – Observations from Life

Pastor Brian Flewelling

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Intro: Ecclesiastes

- *In 2007 Lancaster City rebuilt the entire Watt & Shane building in the city square leaving only the facade front. It was a big enough project that they needed a crane to move things around in the renovation process.*
- **Slide: Picture of Watts & Shand building**
- **Slide: Crane with counterweights**
- Without the counterweight the crane is lopsided and tips over. Without the counterweight it can't go higher, and it can't build bigger. The counterweight is essential to the building process.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

- Poetry—active imagination
- [Read the text](#)
- Poetry, not an endorsement
- Each of these thoughts is balanced by the other (like our crane)—held in check. They have to be accepted together and in tension with one another.
 - God is the God of rationality and order. He is the God of miracles and the supernatural.
 - In his justice God does punish. In his mercy God does forgive.
 - He's the God of life who heals sin, death, and disease. He's the sovereign who uses pain, death, and suffering, trials and affliction to grow us into his image.
- Recognition that there are seasons for these activities...Each has its place. It has to be discerned.

Seasons

- We preach in generalities
- In spiritual coaching we get specific – what specific season are you in? How do you recognize what season you are in? How do you make the most of the season that you are in?
- Don't get lost in a season.
- *Denali climbing disaster of 1967.* In a matter of minutes, it goes from blue skies to whiteout. And all you can see is the rope you are harnessed off to.

- Sometimes God allows this season to reach an extreme limit. God is expanding you, your experiences, your theology, ---so you have broader base, a bigger platform.

Ecclesiastes 3:9-14

Slide:

Thematic Structure:

- A. Activity in Season
- B. Eternity
- A. Activity in Season
- B. Eternity

Ecclesiastes 3:16-17

In Ecclesiastes he's using a specific example to prove his point.

Slide:

- V.16 – (Activity in Season) Injustice is prevailing
- V.17 – (Eternity) God will bring justice

Section Summary:

Let's wrap up this first section by asking again...what season are you in? What extreme lesson are you learning? And what do you think the Lord might be asking you to remember...in the middle of your pain, don't forget I am faithful. In the middle of injustice. I am the good judge who will sort it all out. In the middle of success, I am more satisfying than the blessings you enjoy.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:6-12 Don't be so mission oriented (work, church, sports) that you can't nurture deeply meaningful relationships.

- If you're working 55+, 60 hours a week, my first questions are—Why, and for how long?
- We have these strange notions of hard work, productivity, achievement, financial security.
- What value is it if you build an empire and don't have time to sit on the patio with your loved ones and inhale the cool evening air? Or to go to the lake together with friends.
- This is the only moment you have. Don't just chew your food. Taste it. Let it sit on the tongue and savor the flavor.
- Give yourself permission to slow down.
 - Take the extra 3 minutes with your co-worker and ask them about their family
 - Don't just watch the football game, remember, how much of a blessing it is to do it with your parents or your friends sitting next to you. No guarantee of tomorrow.
 - Parents with young kids: how often have we said to ourselves..." I'm just ready for him to be old enough so he doesn't need to cling to me and be touching me

all the time.” That’s true. But also remember, there will come a day you’ll want to snuggle with him and he’s going to say, “I’m 18, mom!”

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 theme: Don’t overcommit.

Read Ecclesiastes 5:8-11 – (the greed of power and resources)

Scripture is an equal opportunity offender. It’s the prophet that stands outside of the halls of power and speaks truth about humanity and the systems we create.

V.8-9 I see an honest recognition of oppression of the poor by the superiority of the ruling class—the truest indictment against the Socialist Lie. Power, resources, and abuse collects at the top. Deprivation gets pushed to the bottom.

Summarize Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 Unfettered capitalism (the lust for more).

Ecclesiastes 5:15

“naked a man comes from his mother’s womb, and naked he returns.”

Core Theme: 3X – Enjoy the Blesser and his blessings!

Ecclesiastes 3:22 (Ecclesiastes 3:13; Ecclesiastes 5:19)

So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. (Reward--Holman/portion--Darby). Lot—your land, your inheritance. God is called Jacob’s Portion.

Final Assessment

We are Americans. We like to get things done. We are Christians. Jesus gave us a great commission to reach the nations with the gospel. We live in Amish/Mennonite country, we don’t want to look like we’re lazy. We’re an active and restless people. We know how to change the world. We know how to stay busy. That’s the message we preach regularly. Go more. Give more. Do more. Become more.

Ecclesiastes is the counterweight.

Enjoy more. Sabbath more. Abide in Jesus. Learn to recognize the presence of God in this moment. Life is a gift, savor it. Don’t drive so fast through life that you can’t stop and take pictures. Don’t chew so fast you can’t taste your food. God is the secret ingredient that gives savor to everything else. Slow down enough to drink him in all of the moments you have on earth.

The parable from the Alchemist, by Paublo Cealo

Closing Prayer