

"Go For It"
Ecclesiastes 11:1-6
Pastor Dan Erickson
November 9, 2025

A cultural phenomenon apparently continuing to grow in popularity is "extreme sports." This is people being involved in physical activities which are exciting, challenging, and frequently dangerous. (Sky diving, base jumping, big wave surfing are just some of the extreme sports that are popular.)

It seems many folks become bored and find the adrenaline rush that comes when one jumps out of an airplane very attractive. Some activities, like mountain climbing without ropes, may attract those who have a bit of a death wish. In some ways, extreme sports reflect the emptiness of our culture that results in people searching for fulfillment in more and more extreme ways. Though on the surface there is nothing morally wrong with bungee jumping, the recklessness that sometimes coincides with this type of activity can be a real problem.

Yet, like in many aspects of life, there are ditches on both sides of the road. And while many people may be a bit reckless, probably more are far too cautious. These folks never want to take a risk, always want to play it safe and refuse to venture out of their comfort zones. These people often end up living stable, quiet, boring and ultimately empty lives.

Friends, today our journey through the book of Ecclesiastes brings us to chapter 11:1-6. These are the God-inspired reflections of King Solomon, the very wise ruler of Israel about 1000 years before Christ. Solomon believed that reckless people, and those who are too cautious, both fall into the category of fools. Neither experience life as God intends it to be lived.

In today's text he focuses on the overly cautious and encourages these folks to not hold back from living life. As I read this passage, I kind of felt the Lord was saying, "Hey, I'm talking to you."

By nature, I have always been a rather conservative, cautious person, whether it is politics, religion, finance, music or clothes. Pickleball is about as extreme of a sport that I am interested in. As a kid, my brother, Randy, a year younger than me, was always climbing things. While I stayed on the ground, I thought the best way to fall off a 30-foot

ladder and not get hurt is to fall off the first rung. That is probably why Randy made a few trips to the emergency room while I didn't. I tend to make sure I stay far away from the reckless side of the road, and I am sure I sometimes fall into the ditch of being *too cautious*.

Friends, if you too tend to stay on the cautious side, I encourage you to listen closely to what God has to say in His word today. If you are a little on the reckless side, you probably have an overly cautious friend or family member with whom you could share this message. Or maybe you are adventuresome in certain aspects of life, but overly cautious in others. You might be a sky boarder who is very tight with money.

Or perhaps you are not overly cautious today but are moving in that direction. Many folks tend to get more cautious as they grow older and at some point, if they are not careful, cross the line and start missing out on life because they play it too safe. I am confident God has something to say to each of us today, so let's pause and pray He would enable us to understand and apply His Word.

First, Solomon begins by encouraging generosity. Many people hang on too tightly to the money they have. We can also be too protective of time, energy or privacy. **Ecclesiastes 11:1 Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.** The NLT understands this as investment advice. It reads, **Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow back to you.**

Financial investment usually involves some risk, but it is foolish to always play it safe. It would be silly to be content making a little money selling grain in a neighboring town if 20 times the profit could be made selling it overseas. Matthew 25 records Jesus' parable of the talents or the story of the wise investor, that highlights the folly of burying money in the ground.

Yet, this is not really Solomon's point in this verse. "Cast your bread upon the waters" is apparently an ancient proverb, older than Solomon. I think he uses it to mean "Let go of what you have, don't

hoard it, don't hang on to it, be generous, give it away, and in the end, you will be glad you did."

He continues this thought in verse **Ecclesiastes 11:2 Give portions to seven, yes to eight, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.** Solomon's advice is very practical. Be generous to many different people, because one day you may encounter hard times and will be dependent on their generosity. The more folks you shared with when you had plenty, the better off you will be when you don't have enough. If you are unwilling to share what you have with others, don't be surprised that others are unwilling to share with you.

Friends, I think what Solomon says makes sense. Yet, to be honest, I have not always found it easy to be generous. I learned a pretty cautious attitude about money from my parents. I remember my dad saying, "Don't put money in the stock market because you might lose it. Put it into CDs." He meant certificates of deposit, not compact disks. He knew of folks who had lost lots of money when the stock market crashed.

Yet, in my economics classes I learned that because of inflation, the stock market has often been a much better investment than CDs. Yet I am still very cautious. A guaranteed 5% return usually seems better to me than a projected 10% return that is not guaranteed.

And when it comes to generosity, giving money away, my natural tendency is to be very cautious as well. I can relate to the old Scotsman who, when encouraged to give until it hurt, responded, "The very idea of giving hurts me." No matter how much money I have in my checking account, there is always a thought in the back of my mind that something might come up where I would need that cash or maybe there is something I should buy with that money which will make my family more comfortable.

Solomon says that is foolish. When you have money, especially more money than necessary for your basic needs, *invest it*. And the best way to invest money is not the stock market or CDs, but by giving it away, casting your bread upon the water. If you do that, Solomon says you can be sure other people will be willing to help you when you need it.

And most importantly, Jesus says God will see that your investment reaps a big dividend. **Matthew 6:19-20 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves, treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."**

Friends, slowly but surely, I have been learning that Solomon and Jesus and the rest of the Bible writers are right. Generosity is the way to live. Whether it is money, time, energy, or anything else I have, it is in giving that I truly receive. It took many years to realize that my other was right when she would quote the Lord Jesus, Acts 20:36 "It is more blessed to give than receive."

Friends, what I have just said is not an appeal for you to give money to this church. If that is what you choose to do, that is great. We can certainly put the money to good use. And if you are part of Chisholm Baptist church, you should be financially supporting this ministry as God enables.

But...whether or not you ever give a dime to this church, the important thing is that you learn to be a generous person, generous with your money, your time, and any other resources with which God has entrusted you. If you are not generous you will miss out on many good things in life. And so, for your sake, and more importantly for the glory of God, I encourage you to be generous.

And remember materialism is measured not by how much you have, but by how much you love what you have. And in the same way, generosity is not measured by how much you give, but by how willing you are to be a giver.

Second, Solomon encourages us to avoid drifting through life. Instead, we need to focus on doing what God has called us to do **Ecclesiastes 11:3-4 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.**

Solomon seems to be describing people occupied with the obvious and focused on the inevitable. Talking about the weather is a big part of their lives. Their thoughts are focused on things that are either

trivial or that they have no control over. Day after day they drift through life, usually following a rut they have been in for a long time. These folks often get up in the morning, go to work, come home at night, watch TV, got to bed, get up in the morning... It is a shallow existence. And it is not how God intends life to be lived. The Lord Jesus said **John 10:10 I cam that they (my followers) may have life and have it abundantly.**

Friends, when we stop focusing so much on tomorrows, the latest deal on Amazon, the score of last night's football game or on what people are saying of Facebook, and instead, turn our attention to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and on ways, He is calling us to express our love for Him and other people, we will start experiencing more of that abundant life.

These verses also point to the folly of procrastination, of drifting along and never quite getting around to what you know the Lord wants you to do. The NLT translates **Ecclesiastes 11:4 Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.** Do you know people like that? That is not how the Lord wants us to be. We need to determine what He wants us to do and then do it. And let me say, this is true for every one of us, no matter what age we are, or what situation we may be in.

If you are a young person and believe God is calling you to be a nurse, or a teacher, or an engineer, or a pastor or a missionary, that is something you should pursue. And don't keep waiting for tomorrow. Go for it! Do what you can today to move toward that goal.

Your goal may not seem real practical, your goal might take you well outside of your comfort zone. Other people may discourage you from pursuing that goal. But if you are convinced that is what God is calling you to do, you need to do it. Go for it. And older folks need to do that same thing.

As we hit middle age and beyond, many of us feel a bit frustrated because life has not quite turned out as we hoped it would. We may feel stuck in ruts in which we have traveled for a long time. And often we decide it is too late to do anything about it. We allow our dreams to fade, and we struggle to be content with a rather shallow and empty existence. But... it doesn't have to be that way.

No matter what situation you are in, you can choose to do what God is calling you to do today. And friends, it's not late for Him to do some pretty amazing things through you. Did you realize Colonel Sanders was 63 when he sold his first KFC franchise? Michaelangelo was 66 when he painted his famous work "The Last Judgment." Incidentally, someone said, "If no one ever took risks, Michelangelo would have painted the Sistine floor, not the Sistine ceiling."

William Gladstone was 83 when he became Prime Minister of Great Britain. John Wesley was still traveling on horseback and preaching at age 88. Frank Lloyd Wright designed the Guggenheim Museum when he was 89, while George Bernard Shaw produced his last play at age 94. And Roger Johnson is still going strong, even though he will be 97 next month.

Oh friends, for your own sake, and most importantly for the glory of God, Solomon says, don't drift through life, or as John Piper says, don't waste your life. When God calls you to do something, by His grace you need to do it.

Even if it doesn't seem really practical, even if it seems kind of risky, even if it takes you way out of your comfort zone, even if others might make fun of you, go for it. Don't be too cautious. We are meant to live life, not try to coast through it.

For most of us this doesn't mean going to Africa as a missionary or writing a play at age 94. It may just involve calling up your next-door neighbors and inviting them to church on Thanksgiving Eve. It may mean volunteering to work in the church nursery. It may involve going to visit someone at the nursing home. It might mean just sitting down with your teenager and having a conversation. It may involve simply checking a book out of the church library and reading it. But don't just drift through life. Focus on really living, by doing, through His grace, what God is calling you to do.

Third, Solomon encourages us to trust the Lord. **Ecclesiastes 11:5-6 As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your lands be idle for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both**

will do equally well. Solomon's point is that there are many things we don't understand and many things about the future that we simply don't know. I see this more and more clearly as each year goes by. My perspective is very narrow. Only God sees the whole picture. My wisdom is very limited, while His is infinite. That is why it only makes sense to trust Him. He knows the answers to all the "why?" questions which I cannot answer. He knows the future, what is up ahead for you and me as individuals, for us as a church, and for this whole planet.

And friends, it is trusting the Lord that enables us to do what we have talked about today. It is not easy to be generous. It is a lot easier to hang on to what we have. It is not easy to seek to do what God wants us to do. It is a lot easier just to drift through life.

Yet, when we are trusting the Lord, we can do these things. We can be generous. We can share money we have with someone else knowing that if there is an unexpected car repair bill, for example, the Lord will provide, in some way, for our need.

Oh friends, I'm all for insurance, savings accounts and retirement plans. Living wisely, living as God intends, may involve all of these, but...don't try to find your security in money. The term "financial security" is really a poor choice of words. God is the only source of true security.

When we learn to trust Him, we are free to be generous. And when we are trusting the Lord, we are free to do what He is calling us to do. We are free to take risks. We are free to leave our comfort zones. We are free to live life based not on what other people may think. We are free to focus on what will bring honor to God.

So, friends, trust the Lord and you will be able to live as God intends and enjoy an abundant life. It is that simple, trust the Lord. Yet even though it is simple, it is not easy. Most of us tend to trust ourselves more than God. We want to be in control of our lives. And instead of admitting we are not, we often opt for the illusion of being in control, because that makes us feel better.

Yet the only way to really live life is to stop trusting in ourselves and trust the Lord. How can we learn to do that? By going back to our earlier focus: God's amazing grace. You see friends, not only is

God all wise, He is also perfectly good. He demonstrated, proved, His goodness when Jesus gave his life for us. **Romans 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

Friends, if we wonder whether God can be trusted. If we ever question whether we can trust Him enough to be generous with money we could maybe use for ourselves someday. If we ever wonder if the Lord can be trusted enough so that we can step out of our comfort zone, take some risks, face the laughter and criticism of others, if we ever wonder if God can be trusted that much... All we have to do is look at the cross. It proves He can be trusted.

So, friends, if for some reason you are not trusting the Lord today, I encourage you to do so. The first step in doing this is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Maybe you have never done that. Oh, you believe the stories about Jesus, you come to church, you are a nice person, but you are not trusting the Lord Jesus to forgive your sins, make you a child of God, enable you to conquer death and experience eternal life in God's kingdom.

If you are still trusting in yourself or someone or something else, instead of Jesus as your Savior and Lord, I encourage you to turn to Him today. If you are not sure what I mean, give me a call.

Friends, if, like me, you are a Christian, a believer in Jesus, then I would simply say, it only makes sense that you trust the Lord enough to go for it. Whatever He is calling you to do, whatever risks are involved, however far outside of your comfort zone it may take you, by God's grace you need to go for it. You need to go for it because that is the way to live, the way to experience joy, and the way to bring glory to God.