

Ecclesiastes 1

2-17-16

Life is not a Bowl of Cherry's...it's the Pits!

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide2 City Serve:** We are partnering with local churches in our 1st annual community service projects in the Temecula/Murrieta/Menifee/Wildomar/Elsinore.
1. So get signed up **NOW** at cityserve16.com. Only 17 days away!

II. **Intro:**

- A. **Title:** I titled my message what Solomon *wanted* to call this book, **Slide3 *Life is not a bowl of cherry's...it's the pits!***
- B. **Slide4-7** Solomon devoted his life to answering life questions like, **What is the meaning of life? What is existence all about? Is life worth living?**
1. *Maybe you've asked the same questions?* Solomon yielded some pretty **depressing** results. **So** depressing that you'll be able to slide under the back doors when you leave. **And** many a *sage, philosopher, guru* have come to similar conclusions.
 2. But before you start **singing**, *All we are is Dust in the Wind*...know that this is not just another man's journal, **but the Word of God**. As if God was saying, *this is good for all man to read, know, understand*.
 - a) This is the answer **if** you hold to a *worldview of Humanism*.
 - b) This is a *negative argument* to demonstrate a **profound truth**.
 - c) This is **not** a *pessimistic* book **but** a **realistic** book.
 - d) **To** learn the true meaning of life you must...**1st** view life **apart from** God in all its futility. **Then**, fold in *God-connectedness* & then life will mean something.

III. Slide8 **SOLOMON LOOKS AROUND (3-8) CIRCLES & CYCLES**

- A. First, Solomon *looks around* & sees **nature** functioning as it has since creation.
- B. (3) The highest reward for man's toil is **not** what he **gets** for it, **but** what he *becomes by it*.
- C. (4) Gives the basic premise: *people come & go but nature remains unchanged*.

1. **Nature** keeps going & going like the *Ever-Ready-Bunny*, **but man** can't find a fixed point of reference for his own meaning.

a) **Story:** (explain in Jr.H. showing Dobie's) *Luther*, a doberman, that every time he barked he spun once chasing his tail. *Solomon*, seemed to be doing this same dance.

2. Instead of asking, **what is man that you are mindful of him, he's been made a little lower than the angels...**he seems to be asking, *what is man...he doesn't seem like much?*

D. **Slide9a** Just look at Nature & see how monotonous life is.

1. **The Earth's Longevity** (4). 1st, Solomon looks to **the world he stands on**.

a) **Man** seems so *temporary* while the **earth** seems so *permanent*.

2. **Slide9b The Sun's Course** (5). 2nd, Solomon looks to **the heavens around him**, looking **East to West**.

a) Look at Ps.19:1-6 for a description of the sun rising.

(1) The sun is seen panting/*hastens* eager to get to the other side of the horizon

b) As far as the heavens are concerned, one day is just like another. The heavens remain the same.

3. **Slide9c The Wind Patterns** (6). Now Solomon looks **North to South**.

a) He's thinking about its *constant motion*. It follows its *circuits* that man can't fully understand or chart (*simply watch the Weather Report on the 11pm News, they sure can't!*)

(1) Jn.3:8 **The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes.**

b) **Solomon's Point?** **Man** comes & goes, **but** the **wind cycles/circuits** do not change.

4. **Slide9d The Water Cycle** (7).

a) **Scientist** tell us that, at any given time, 99% of all water on earth is in the ocean; & only .0001% is in the atmosphere, available for rain. (enough for about 10 days of rain)

b) The **sun & wind cooperating**, makes the evaporation & movement of moisture **circulating...but** the **sea** never changes.

E. **Slide9e** (8) And so, mans laborious works move in a changeless cycle.

1. **The eye & ear** being **2 taskmasters** for which man toils, **yet** are never satisfied.

a) Prov.27:20 **Hell & Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied**

- b) Our ears & eyes constantly look for *the nicer house in our neighborhood, the greener lawn on our street, & for the faster lane on the freeway.*
- c) We need not grumble because Roses have thorns, but rejoice that thorns have Roses
- F. All that Solomon says here is true... **IF** you leave **God** out of the equation. **If** your only perspective is *under the sun*, then yes, *Life is not a bowl of cherry's...it's the pits!*
1. This viewpoint sees our world as *a closed uniform system, predictable & unchangeable.*
 2. But this leaves no room for *prayer, supernatural occurrences, nor providence.*
 - a) If there is a God, He is imprisoned under *the Laws of Nature.*
 3. **Yet** I can think of many places where God has interrupted the routine of nature:
 - a) **Slide10 Earth** – opened up & swallowed people. Earthquakes.
 - b) **Sun** – stood still for Joshua & king Hez.
 - c) **Wind** – ceased for Jesus. The 2 winds brought by God in Jonah.
 - d) **Water** – parted (both Red Sea, Jordan). Bitter to sweet (Elisha/Jericho). Rian was turned on & off for Elijah. God promised rain/no rain, for blessing/cursing.
 - e) **Remember, we believers live in this world as PILGRIMS not PRISONERS.**
 - (1) **Slide11a The Confession of Faith** put it best: God the creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, & govern all creatures, actions & things, from the greatest to the least, by His most wise, & holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, & the free & immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, & mercy. Providence, pg.91. [drawn up at Westminster in 1646 by over 100 Puritan divines/theologian, presenting *one of the most concise statements* of the Christian faith]
- G. **Slide11b Man wants something New. Why?** Because this world ultimately brings weariness. For some *tragedy*, for others *boredom*.
1. People look for something to **distract** them **or deliver** them.
 2. The Athenians of Paul's day spent their time **in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.** Acts 17:21
 3. The **entertainment industry** plays off this very human hunger for novelty.

4. The **Eye** cannot be satisfied until it **sees** the hand of God, **and**
The **Ear** cannot be satisfied until it **hears** the voice of God.

IV. Slide12 **SOLOMON LOOKS BACK (9-11)**

- A. Next, Solomon *looks back* & sees **history** only repeating itself.
- B. Slide13 H.A.Ironside (pastor Chicago's Moody church) *If it's new it's not true; & if it's true it's not new.*
- C. Slide14 **Edison** said that his inventions were only *bringing out the secrets of nature & applying them for the happiness of mankind.*
1. Man cannot **create**...He simply puts together elements that have always existed, into different forms & contraptions.
- D. It's been well said that *the ancients* have stolen all of **our best ideas**.
1. Slide15a/b Like their ability to move huge stones to the Temple sight making up its retaining wall (largest is 43' long, 570 tons). **Or what about the Pyramids?**
- E. As the familiar phrase says, *Methods are many, principles are few – Methods always change, principles never do.*
1. **Make sure you don't mistake novelty for originality.**

V. Slide16 **SOLOMON LOOKS WITHIN (12-18)**

- A. Next, Solomon *looks within* & realizes your **wisdom & experience** cannot explain the mysteries of life or solve life's problems.
- B. Now Solomon gets *philosophical* on us.
- C. Solomon is going to give us a detailed map to *all the dead end streets* in life.
1. He's writing about *how to live in a world of contradictions & seeming futility.*
- D. Remember he had **all** the resources for *experimenting* to see if life was worth living.
1. Before all of his experiments in ch.2 he thinks them through 1st.
- E. **His conclusions:**
- F. (13,14) It's a heavy burden...*alone.*
1. Slide17a Life can be a heavy burden...Alone. *That's why we need to take our cares & concerns to Jesus who makes burdens light.*

G. (15) Not everything can be changed.

1. NLT What is wrong cannot be made right. What is missing cannot be recovered. MSG Life's a corkscrew that can't be straightened, A minus that won't add up.
2. The past **can't** always be changed & it's foolish to fret over what you **might have done**.
3. Slide17b Remember however **God can** straighten the twisted & supply what's lacking.
 - a) He won't change the past, **but** He can change the way the past affects us.
 - b) Slide18 Is your **past** an **iceberg** that **sinks** you, **or** an **anchor** that **hinders** you, **or** a **rudder** that **guides** you forward?

H. Slide19 (16-18) If you go through life looking for *explanations on everything* you'll have **2 frustrations**:

1. Explanations do not exist for everything. [And even if God did show you **why**, you probably still wouldn't understand]
 2. God has ordained people to live by **promises** not **explanations**, by **faith** & not **by sight**.
 - a) Jn. 20:9 **Blessed** are those who have **not** seen and yet have believed.
- I. Not only did this wisest of men not find all the answers he was seeking...they only added to his difficulties (grief & sorrow).
1. Knowledge can increase sorrow, **IF** you leave out the **God** of Wisdom & the **Wisdom** of God.