

God's Grace Sets our Sights Heavenward & Away from the Temporary Pleasures of this World

Sermon Text: Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷ Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. ¹⁸ For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. ^{4:1} Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!

- 1.) Why would people inside and outside the visible church be enemies of the cross of Christ? What do they prefer instead? What should be our attitude towards them? (v. 18-19)
- 2.) Where do we find the strength to set our sight heavenward and keep our minds on heavenly things?

First Lesson: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. ² "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" ³ I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. ⁴ I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. ⁵ I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. ⁶ I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. ⁷ I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. ⁸ I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well—the delights of the heart of man. ⁹ I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. ¹⁰ I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. ¹¹ Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

- 1.) King Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes. What do you know of his life from his description here and elsewhere?
- 2.) "Life under the sun" is Solomon's catchphrase to describe life objectively (as it appears on the outside without regard for the spiritual things of God). Still guided by wisdom ("the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7) he made himself a test case for the meaning and value of life. What sources did he investigate? What did he ultimately discover?

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

¹⁶And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' ¹⁸Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'
²⁰But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

1.) What false expectations do people often attach to possessions? Expose the lies in each.

2.) In some circles it is fashionable to disparage people of wealth as if they have done wrong. Where did and didn't this rich man go wrong?