



MEANINGLESS

AUDIO DEVOTIONS

ON ECCLESIASTES

Futurism is Meaningless

(Ecclesiastes 7:13-14)

¹³ *Consider what God has done:*

Who can straighten what he has made crooked?

¹⁴ *When times are good, be happy;*

but when times are bad, consider:

God has made the one as well as the other.

Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.

What's going to happen tomorrow? If you could answer that question, you'd have it made. The world would be knocking down your door asking you to predict the weather, pick the next hot stock or industry, and lotteries would go out of business! At first you might think it a huge blessing to know what the future holds. Imagine all the anxiety and uncertainty it would remove from your life! Such an assumption might be true if you saw only good times and bright days ahead, but what if difficult times were on the way—unemployment, sickness, injuries and death—things you couldn't stop or change no matter how you tried? Then knowledge of the future would be more of a curse. You'd feel overwhelmed and helpless, like a captive tied hand and foot to a train track with the locomotive bearing down on you. Such knowledge would be crushing and crippling. In a sin-ruined world it would seem that God has genuinely good reasons for limiting our awareness and agency to the present moment.

With that truth in view, Solomon advises us to resist the pull on either side of the present: one that romanticizes the past or gets fixated on the future. Earlier in Chapter 7 he wrote, "Do not say, 'Why were the old days better than these?' For it is not wise to ask such questions" (v. 10). We humans have a tendency to white-wash the past and make times gone by better than they actually were. As Billy Joel once quipped, "The good old days weren't always good."¹ Since the fall into sin, immorality, oppression, violence, hunger, and war have been woven into the fabric of human history.

On the other hand, it is equally unwise and unproductive to get obsessed with the future. We live at a time when some are convinced that our society is on the brink of a technological eutopia and others are equally certain that doomsday is right around the corner. The real danger is that we let our present lives and outlook be determined by futures that haven't even happened yet. Whether we're personally in a place where it doesn't seem that life can get any better or perhaps any worse, Solomon interjects, "You don't know that! *A man cannot discover anything about his future!*" Later in Chapter 10 he will reiterate, "No one knows what is coming—who can tell [a man] what will happen after him" (Ecclesiastes 10:14)?

Much healthier, wiser, and faith affirming than either of these options, is to simply accept from God's hand what he gives us each day. Whether we label it as "good" or "bad," everything is under God's control, and he does not allow anything to come into our lives without purpose because he is a personal God, who in eternity knows and loves us. Like a perfect Father, he allows crosses and trials to come our way as discipline to shape and strengthen us. As a result, when days are good, we praise our God! When life is hard, we remember that the same good, loving, and saving God has made those days too. In this way the Lord exercises our faith by keeping us in constant

¹ Billy Joel. "Keeping the Faith." *An Innocent Man*, 1983.

dependance on his power and acknowledging his care. So we learn from the past; live in the present; and leave the future in the Lord's hands, all with the confidence that through Jesus Christ, our eternal future—a glorious home in heaven—is perfectly secure. Our eternal outlook is bright!

For your self-reflection:

- 1.) Whether today is a “good” or “bad” day, what reasons do you have to thank God and stand in awe of him?
- 2.) Reflect on a painful episode or season in your life. How did God use that to increase your reliance on him?
- 3.) Do you look to the future with anticipation or dread? How does Solomon's wisdom and our eternal perspective in Christ inform your perception?

Prayer: Good Lord, all my days are in your hands and your ways are beyond my understanding. You plan to guide me through “good” and “bad” to bring me home to you. Make me ever-reliant on your grace, might, and wisdom so that I gladly receive each day as a gift from your loving hands. In Jesus 'name I pray. Amen.