

LEAD SHEET

ECCLESIASTES - WEEK 8

FEAR GOD

MAY 22, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

WORSHIP WITH YOUR LIFE

If you want to know God better, give back to Him!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- Is fear a bad thing or a good thing?
- How can fear be a good thing?

Today we're going to finish our study of Ecclesiastes by talking about wisdom, foolishness, and fearing God. Let's get to it!

DIGGING IN

Read Ecclesiastes 10:1-20

In chapter 10, Solomon compares wisdom and folly in numerous ways.

Discussion Questions:

1. According to verse 1, what outweighs wisdom? (*Folly*)
2. Do fools always lose according to verse 6?
(*No, sometimes they are in high positions.*)
3. Why do you think Solomon spends so much time comparing the wise and foolish? (*He was trying to figure out the meaning of life.*)

One of the reasons is that chapter 10 is followed by chapter 11, and he is about to give some advice that the wise person will embrace.

Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-10

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to remember God while you are young? *(If you forget God while young it is easy for your heart to become hardened to the things of God over time.)*
2. What are some things that get in the way of your pursuit of God now?

Some people try to turn this passage in the end of this book into an excuse to live anyway one chooses and simply live a selfish life. However, the teacher points out in verse nine our responsibility to God.

3. How do the teacher's words in verse 9 relate to the judgment of those actions?

Solomon obviously believes in following your desires and seeking happiness during this life. However, he does not forget the importance of keeping God in the center. The reminder that we will be judged keeps us from frugally throwing away the youth of our lives.

Read Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

Solomon's metaphor section is a description of how we are basically wasting away. The days of youth are short-lived.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would Solomon feel the need to warn young people about staying close to the Lord?
2. Why would he bring up how brief youthfulness is?
3. Can you think of someone who was dominant when they were young but lost that dominance with age?

Young people often feel indestructible and think that their youthfulness will last forever. However, we know that this is

not true. Solomon thought it was important to help keep people from making the same mistakes in their youth that he made.

Many people live their youthful lives doing whatever they feel like doing without considering God and the consequences, and end up paying for it later. When confronted about doing something that a person knows is wrong, I have often heard responses like, “you have to live while you are young” or “this is just for fun for right now.”

The painful part is that many of the consequences that people bring on themselves during high school, college, or young adulthood stay with them the rest of their lives. I bet that Solomon was living a life plagued by painful consequences that he had given himself during his youth. Think about it. He was young, rich, handsome (son of David and Bathsheba, I think you can assume that), powerful, and “unstoppable.” Ultimately, Solomon’s downfall was himself. He finally recognized that even though other people might not be able to touch him, he was destroying his own life.

His warning to us is that we do not get to our old age and have to say, “I wish I had that to do over again.” The often-used Latin phrase: “Carpe Diem” is probably overused, but is a great rule to live by. If we can truly “Seize the Day” every day of our lives, we will never look back on things and think, “if I only would have acted differently.”

God truly wants the best years of our lives. The main way to have true fulfillment in life is not to fill life with useless and meaningless things. Instead, we need to recognize Christ’s importance in our lives and keep Him first.

Read Matthew 6:33

Discussion Question:

1. How does this verse relate to Solomon's message?
(To be truly happy, live a life that pleases God.)

Perhaps this should be the theme verse for all of us--especially while we are young.

MAKING IT REAL

Solomon, like every good writer, finishes his work with a brief summary. Silencing all of the critics that think the teacher says that life is worthless, Solomon gives the true meaning of life: fear God and keep His commandments.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean for us today to “fear God”?
(Recognizing the power and position of God and giving Him proper respect.)
2. How does keeping His commandments demonstrate our love of God? *(We want to please those whom we love.)*

Even though Solomon dealt so much with the mortality and ignorance of man, his conclusion is that humanity is truly made up of one thing: its dependence on God.

In Genesis 2-3, humanity tried to become like God by disobeying Him. Instead, they lost the one thing that made them truly human. We are made to need and depend on God. If you try to live your life without Him, you will end up nowhere. Life is made with a God-shaped hole in the middle.

Important Things Come First

Imagine we have a clear pitcher, rocks, gravel, sand, and water handy. If we put the rocks into the pitcher first, so that the pitcher appears full we can still fit other things into the pitcher. We could still add gravel and sand. At that point it would look completely full, but its not. We could still add water. The water will seep in around the rocks, gravel, and sand. If you were to start this in reverse order, there would be no room for the rocks. Adding only one rock would cause some of the water to overflow.

Just like this, our lives need God in them first. If you don't put Him in your life first, at the root, your life will hold little value and you will never reach true peace and fulfillment. Let's learn from Solomon--through his mistakes and his wisdom.

CLOSING PRAYER #CRAZYFORCHRIST