



This Sunday we continued our series in Ecclesiastes in chapter 9v1-12.

1 – Look death in the face (9v1-6)

It has been lurking in the background for the entire book, but in these verses the teacher faces the subject of death head-on. It is such a leveller. All of us are on the same path towards it, and it strips everything away. Take the time to consider it now, says the teacher, before life's circumstances force you to.

2 – Choose to live a simple life with the lot that God has given you (9v7-10)

The teacher takes a different turn here, giving a string of instructions. Although it may feel like a cynical mickey-take or desperate clutching at straws, we are to take it seriously as the teacher brings in the character of God here as giver (v9) and as judge (v7). There is a beautiful humility in accepting the life God has given us and living it well. As Christians we can all too often feel guilty about or be too scared of sinning to enjoy earthly pleasures. God tells us in v7 that he takes pleasure when we enjoy the pleasures he gives us!

3 – But know that evil times will catch you in the end (9v11-12)

But the tension is still there. We feel it as v7-10 reach their climax, and then see it very clearly in v11-12. Though we may live well in our simple lives, evil will come to us in the end. We will never feel ready for it and it will never feel fair.

But what is the gospel's answers to this bleak picture?

1 – Look death in the face ...but know that Christ has conquered it

Death is still terrible, as Christians, but we can look at it knowing that it will not win. Christ has put death to death on the cross (1 Corinthians 15v55-58). This transforms how we see death. While it is still to be faced soberly, we can have a quiet confidence that God will bring his people through it.

2 – Choose to live a simple life with the lot that God has given you ...but know that he has given you resurrection life

Our human lots may be humble, but Ephesians 2v5-6 tells us that we are also already seated with Christ! As well as God coming down to live with us under the sun, he has also raised us up to live with him. Our resurrection lives have spiritually already begun! Every good thing in our little lot now functions as a foretaste of the much greater glory we will one day enjoy.

3 – Know that evil times will come ...but that God will soon bring evil to an end

Christ has defeated evil as well as death on the cross. Evil will not, we know as Christians, win in the end. There will be no evil awaiting us when we reach the new creation (Revelation 21v1-4). We will be completely safe in our loving saviour's arms.

Here are a few questions you might want to use with your group or for personal reflection...

1. What things do we live in fear of as humans, and as believers?
2. Why do you think that the teacher is so keen that we consider the topic of death? How does death look different when we look at it through the lens of what Christ has achieved?
3. Why as Christians are we not always very good at enjoying God's good gifts in the present? How can we keep God's command to live with our minds set on Christ (eg. Col3v2, Phil 4v8) and also enjoy his earthly gifts to us?
4. How does it change our perspective on our earthly lots to know that Christ has already raised us up to resurrection life with him, as well as coming down to live under the sun with us?
5. How does it help us to face the uncertainty of life and the existence of evil knowing that Christ has already defeated it and will one day wipe it out entirely?