



INTRODUCTION:

- Over the past few weeks we've been looking at LIFE WORTH LIVING a series that is being taken from our mid-week study in the Book of Ecclesiastes
- For those of you who desire a greater understanding of God's Word, we are going through the Bible on Thursday nights at 7 PM at the HUB
- Our Sunday morning series is taken from the Book that we are studying at the time and thus we are looking at LIFE WORTH LIVING
- Over the past few weeks, we've said that a LIFE WORTH LIVING is a life that is lived with eternity in mind
- It lives in the awareness that what we do in this life will determine the quality of life that we will live for eternity
- That if the greatest desire of your life is to live in the Presence of God then you will spend eternity living in His Presence where there is pleasures evermore... the Bible says
- But if the greatest desire of your life is to live apart from God, then you will spend eternity in that place where the Bible says there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- We also said that a LIFE WORTH LIVING is a life that embraces all the seasons of life
- It's a life that enjoys the excitement of spring and summer, but understands the wisdom of the slower pace of fall and winter
- We talked about necessary endings in our life as part of the fall and winter seasons that God has ordained for us to go through
- Even our entire lives can be seen as a season in time
- Last time we said that a LIFE WORTH LIVING is a life that embraces JOY in friendships, in our work and in the blessings that God gives to us
- Sometimes we forget that God blesses us so that we can enjoy the blessing and it's really a gift from God to be able to enjoy His blessing
- Today as we continue looking at LIFE WORTH LIVING, I want to look at living a life of WISDOM
- A LIFE WORTH LIVING is a LIFE that embraces WISDOM

For our text, I want to look at Ecclesiastes 8:1

Ecclesiastes 8:1 (NKJV)

8 Who is like a wise *man*? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed.



Wisdom changes life

- It gives you insight into people and circumstances
- It helps you understand what is really going on
- It changes your countenance
- In place of worry and anxiety, harshness or sternness, it brings a lightness to life that causes a man's face to shine
- Why? Allow me to offer a simple definition for wisdom
- Wisdom is looking at life from God's point of view
- When we see life from God's point of view, it takes the stern look off your face and causes you to shine... lighten up, enjoy life
- So Solomon asks the question... who is like a wise man?
- What does wisdom look like when it's lived out?

First, WISDOM ALLOWS YOU TO DISCERN THE TIMES

Ecclesiastes 8:4–9 (NKJV)

⁵ A wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, ⁶ Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly. ⁷ For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur? ⁸ No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death. *There is* no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it. ⁹ All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

The wise know that there is a time when God will judge every matter

- So when he is oppressed by the unjust, he can patiently submit himself knowing that the day will come when God will make all things right
- And Solomon list two scenarios that no man can escape

Vs. 8: No man has power over his spirit meaning you don't have the authority to keep your spirit in your body

- So when the day of judgment comes and you're trying to keep your spirit in your body to avoid what's coming... you won't be able to
- You won't be able to stop judgment from coming
- I think of the Indiana Jones movie – the Last Crusader
- They have to choose which cup is the Holy Grail
- The guy chooses the wrong cup and the look of terror on his face when he realizes he choose poorly
- He couldn't keep his spirit in his body and avert judgment



- There is only one person who demonstrated that authority and it was Jesus when He died on the cross He said... into Your hands I commend my Spirit
- Jesus had the authority to release His spirit from His body
- But we can't do that... just try... tell your spirit to take a hike... You can't

Vs 8 No man has power in the day of death meaning you can't stop death from coming

- When the times comes to meet and do battle with that great foe, death you can't get out of it
- There is no release from that war
- It doesn't matter how bad you think you are, you can't fight your way out of that one
- You can be like Bad Bad Leroy Brown, Badder than old King Kong, meaner than a junkyard dog...
- Your wicked schemes won't deliver you from your appointment with destiny
- Thus, knowing that every injustice will be punished Solomon realizes that even if they treat me bad, they're only hurting themselves

Paul talked about the importance of discerning the times

Romans 13:11–14 (NKJV)

¹¹ And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

Paul reminds us... listen guys, we don't have much time

- The day is at hand... now is the time
- We thought we had time, but now our salvation is nearer than we believed
- It's time to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light
- It's time to walk in the daylight, not live in the twilight
- That's what I call those who like to live in the gray areas of life
- They're twilight Christians... they don't want to talk in the darkness, but they don't want to walk in the light... they want to live on the fringe



- Paul exhorts us... look at what time it is
- Solomon tells us a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment

Second, WISDOM ALLOWS YOU TO SEE GOD IN EVERYTHING

- Now, before you freak out and say... oh no, here it comes
- Holland's a tree hugger and he's going to tell us God is in the tree so go and give the tree a good hug
- Solomon says... our lives are in the hand of God and so God is at work in every area of our lives... including the not so happy areas

Turn to Ecclesiastes 9:1

Ecclesiastes 9:1 (NKJV)

9 For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works *are* in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred *by* anything *they* see before them.

Solomon has a dilemma and the dilemma is this...

- God seems to treat sinners and saints equally...
- But even more confusing than that... God seems to treat sinners better than He does saints
- Haven't you felt that? God I'm down here doing the best I can
- I'm trying to be a good Christian, keeping my nose clean
- But then that sinner over there cheats on his wife, gets drunk on the weekends, not very honest and he just got promoted instead of me
- Why am I trying so hard here?

Here's the difference... that guy is on his own and he has no future

Ecclesiastes 9:3–4 (NKJV)

³ This *is* an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead. ⁴ But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

Listen, the advantage you have according to vs. 1 is everything you do is in the hand of God

- It might seem like the other guy is doing better than you and if this life was all that mattered... you might have a case



- But the truth is this... there is more to life than the short time we live on earth
- And if I've entrusted my life to Christ, I am His and He is mine then my life is in the hand of God and everything I do is in the hand of God and because my life is in His hands I have hope
- Because good or bad I win...
- If I experience good then praise the Lord, I can enjoy the blessing
- If I experience bad then praise the Lord, because God will make all things work together for my good and His glory... you see I win
- The person whose on his own, he has no hope because the only thing that awaits him is judgment
- I may not feel like I'm as blessed as someone else, it doesn't matter because my life is in God's hands
- It's like that commercial... you're in good hands with allstate
- Well you're in good hands with Yahweh
- And if we are truly in God's hands, then shouldn't we seek to see life from His perspective?

Third, WISDOM GIVES ME AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

Ecclesiastes 9:16–17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Then I said: "Wisdom *is* better than strength. Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, And his words are not heard. ¹⁷ Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly, *should be* heard Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools.

- ***Someone once said, a wise statesman can do more than a mighty general***
- The problem Solomon had was wisdom proved itself to be more powerful than physical might, yet it often went unrecognized... like the poor man whose wisdom is despised
- Instead, the shout of fools drowned out the strength of wisdom
- Unfortunately, we tend to listen to those who seem to shout the loudest
- The ones that dominate the conversation

There's a story about two teachers who apply for the same job

- They both applied to be the Vice Principal of the school
- One had been teaching 8 years, the other 20



- Everyone expected the teacher with 20 years to get the job because of they're obvious advantage due to experience
- But the decision was made to give the job to the teacher who had only taught for 8 years
- The 20 year veteran was outraged... I'm vastly more qualified, I should have gotten the job, I've got 20 years teaching experience
- The School Board's reply went like this...
- Yes, you do have 20 years teaching over the other teacher's 8
- But she has 8 years of experience and you only have 1 year of experience repeated 20 times

That's the difference wisdom makes

- Wisdom gives you the unfair advantage because instead of repeating life's lessons over and over again...
- Wisdom causes you to grow and learn
- Wisdom keeps you from becoming obsolete
- Wisdom keeps you moving forward into the future instead of relishing in the past
- Wisdom keeps you from making the same mistakes over and over again
- Wisdom keeps mind in heaven while your hands are busy on earth
- Ecclesiastes 10:10 says... wisdom brings success

So where do we get wisdom?

James 1:5 (NKJV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Solomon tells us

Ecclesiastes 2:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ For *God* gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight;

- You need wisdom today? Ask Go and he will give it to you liberally