

# The End of the Matter – Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

“Enjoy Life God has Given” – November 17, 2019



## Introduction

As Paul models for us, the Christian life involves such a thing as being 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' ([2 Cor. 6:10](#)). God gives us Himself and good gifts, even in this sinful, broken world, *to enjoy*. Ecclesiastes doesn't ignore real pain, sorrow, tears and confusion that exist in this world; nor does the Preacher *remove* pain. Instead, Ecclesiastes helps us find enjoyment in the *midst* of a broken world – to be *sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*.

## Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

## Sermon Outline

- I. Stop trying to control what's in God's hands (9:1-6)
- II. Sit at the table and enjoy life as gift from God (9:7-12)

## Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Ecclesiastes 9:1-6](#)

In reflecting on the difficult question of why good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people, the Preacher bumped up against the limits of wisdom ([Ecc. 8:17](#)). It is painful not knowing...but the Preacher reminds us that our deeds are in the hand of God – another way of saying that God is in control, sovereign even over events that are painful and don't make sense. For those who refuse Christ and assume they can stand before God on their own merit, being in God's hand is a fearful thing (see [Heb. 10:31](#)). For those who take refuge in Him, He is able to work all things together *for good* ([Rom. 8:28](#)). When we try to pick up the burden of *being* God and controlling the things around us, we pick up a burden too heavy for us. That's why we are to trust rather than try to control. The Psalmist's way of saying it is to cast your burdens on the Lord who cares for you ([Psalm 55:22](#)).

When we run around trying to find happiness outside of God, we are in a pursuit of madness and miss the opportunities for joy God provides in everyday life. In v4, the Preacher uses a parable to make a point, a parable that contrasts a *dead* lion (an animal of nobility and strength) and a *living* dog (a despised animal in that day). Why does the preacher say the living dog has hope? What does that mean for us today?

Additional Reading: Proverbs 21:1, Psalm 16:11

## 2) Read [Ecclesiastes 9:7-12](#)

Joy (this side of heaven) is not necessarily the absence of sorrow. Joy is not a pasted on smile – it runs deeper than mere emotion. Joy is a contentment, a satisfaction no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. Joy is found in a relationship with the living God who alone can satisfy. When we see His beauty, worth, and glory, we (like the Apostle Paul) are able to say, *I count all things as trash in comparison to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. In fact, I suffer the loss of all things to gain Him – the treasure of infinite worth* (see [Phil. 3:7-9](#)). When we know something of the joy of this relationship with God, we're set free from expecting God's gifts to deliver what only He can and finally able to enjoy them rather than crush them under the weight of worship. Here, the Preacher calls us to enjoy:

- 1) Supper (v7) – Don't just wolf down supper or eat alone. Eat *with joy* and drink with a merry heart. Do this because God already approves – He delights in our delight!
- 2) The moment (v8) – White clothes and anointing your head are a sign of joy (Esther 8:15, Ps. 23:5). But we're called to do this *always*, to make normal moments special by taking notice of God's gracious provision and giving thanks!
- 3) Your marriage (v9) – If you're married, don't take your spouse for granted but enjoy the life God has given you together. Marriage takes work and humility...but it's worth it!
- 4) Your work (and whatever your hand finds to do – v10) – Take advantage of the opportunities God provides for joy and enjoy them while you can. In Sheol (the place of the dead...the grave) those opportunities will vanish. Love! Share! Serve! Do so while you can.

How does the gospel move us from overlooking God's gifts as things that are owed us to actually enjoying them as *gifts* to be *thankful* for?

Additional Reading: John 10:10, Psalm 118:24

### **Prayer of Response**

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <b>Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20 "Good and bad kings"</b>
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