

Daily Worship Booklet

23rd – 27th December 2024

“
The words
of the
Preacher,
the son of
David,
king in
Jerusalem.
”

Ecclesiastes

God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law, day after day, and the people of God were filled with joy.

Bible Classes will resume on January 12th, 2025.

Psalm of the Week: Psalm 128A. The words are on page 8.

Please pray for:

Mon - Marcelle Alostá

Tues - Renato & Amparo, Renata & Helena Ayala

Wed - Joy Ayer

Thur - Frank Bond

Frid - Gabe & Maria Braden

Bible Question for the week:

What is the name of the man who has lived the longest? And how many years did he live?

The answer is found in Genesis 5:27.

Dr. Tim Donachie, a retired minister in the RPC of Ireland, has written the notes on Colossians. (They have been lightly edited.)

Pray for the Holy Spirit's help as you study God's Word.

Monday– Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 - Joy in Work.

The preacher realises the best course of action as he seeks to profitably use the time that God has given him in this world. He does not encourage us to be profligate with all that God has given us, or to indulge our sinful appetites; but rather to use wisely all that we have been enabled to obtain for our good, the good of our families, and the glory of God.

Our life is a gift from God, and He has appointed the length of time that we will spend on this earth (Job 14:5), so it is our duty and privilege to use the time allotted to us in a way that pleases God.

It is God's purpose for us that we work, but that work must not become drudgery, nor must we become slaves to our work. We are called upon to find satisfaction in our work and be happy in it. It is a great blessing to be happy in our work, and content to be in the situation in which it pleases God to place us, whether in the enjoyment of material prosperity or not. To 'accept our lot and be happy in our work' is seen by Solomon as being a gift from God. Submitting cheerfully and willingly to God's providence can make even the most unpleasant and arduous tasks a means of glorifying God.

It is hard to imagine that all that the apostle Paul went through in his missionary labours could be described as pleasant or enjoyable. Yet, the knowledge that he was following the path God had planned for him enabled him to say, "for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content." (Philippians 4:11b).

Is it not a great thing to say that God keeps us occupied with gladness of heart (v. 20)?

Questions

1. What should our attitude to work be?
2. How should we see the providence of God?

Memory Verse

"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 5:10

Tuesday – Ecclesiastes 6:1-3; Psalm 37:1-6 – Blessings.

In Ecclesiastes 5, the preacher demonstrated how important it is for people to make good and proper use of all the good gifts that come to men and women in God's providence; now, he shows how wrong it is when you are greatly blessed by God in the provision of good things, and then either abuse them or fail to use them.

One great lesson that comes from the evil the preacher noticed in Psalm 37:1,2 is that we are responsible for the way we use the gifts and graces that God has been pleased to bestow upon us, as the Lord Jesus Christ taught, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more." (Luke 12:48b).

This section in Ecclesiastes highlights four significant blessings; and it would be important for each of us to consider how we receive and deal with the measures of these blessings that we each personally receive.

A. Wealth, possessions, and honour. It may be that very few of us would consider that we have been given great wealth, and yet, when we look at all that we have been granted in the providence of God in comparison with many throughout the world, we have truly been greatly favoured. Most of us have far more possessions than we really need, and often have the respect (honour) of our neighbours or work colleagues. All this comes from the hand of a gracious God who dispenses His gifts as it pleases Him. However, these gifts are to be used for the honour and glory of the giver.

B. How many of us could say with the preacher that we lack nothing we desire? Of course, if the heart is worldly and unsanctified, the desires of the heart will also be worldly and never satisfied. If, however, the heart and the gaze are fixed on God, we will know that our heart's desire is fulfilled.

Questions

1. How can we use our wealth for the glory of God?
2. What should be our heart's desire?

Memory Verse

"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 5:10

Wednesday - Ecclesiastes 6:1-3 - Family and Life.

We considered yesterday two of the blessings that come to us in God's providence. We now want to consider two more mentioned in the opening section of chapter 6—blessings or gifts that must be used properly and wisely.

C. The gift of family. To have children was seen in the Old Testament as evidence of the blessing and favour of God (Psalm 127:3- 4), and the failure to have children was a cause of shame and distress (Genesis 16:1- 2; 1 Samuel 1:10-11). The Scripture pleases the Lord to set the lonely in families; man was never intended to be alone! (Genesis 2:18; Psalm 68:6)

The basic unit of society is husband and wife, most often complemented by the gift of children. In an age when marriage is downplayed or corrupted, Christian men and women need to glorify God in their God-given marriage relationships - husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25), wives are to submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22), children are to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1), and parents are not to exasperate their children (Ephesians 6:4).

D. The gift of a long life. Long life is something that many people would long for - we often hear expressions like a 'life cut tragically short' when somebody dies young. But more important than the length of days is how those days are to be spent. Solomon expresses the absolute futility of life lived without the proper use and enjoyment of all God has provided by speculating on a life span of two thousand years; even such an impossibly long life would be without meaning if the gifts and graces granted are not put to proper use, so much so that he reckoned that it would have been better not to have been born at all!

The years that God, in His mercy, gives us must be used in a way that pleases and glorifies Him. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Questions

1. How does the Bible view children?
2. How can we use our life to glorify God?

Memory Verse

"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 5:10

Thursday – Ecclesiastes 6:4-6 - Death Comes To All.

In a very bleak and dark comment, the preacher considers that the life of a person given much by God, who chooses not to enjoy or use those benefits wisely or profitably, is worse than that of a stillborn child! He reasons that the child that dies at birth has no knowledge of the world and sees nothing of the iniquities and trials of life, and so is better off than the person who has seen much and received much but has nothing of contentment, satisfaction or pleasure in it all.

As far as the preacher is concerned, the less we have to do with this troublesome world, the less trouble we have! He gives the reason for the conclusion that he comes to in the form of a rhetorical question, “do not all go to the one place?”

In one sense, what he says is true, for whatever differences there may be in life, be that in terms of wealth or poverty, wisdom or foolishness, high or low social standing, all ultimately find themselves in the grave.

Death is the only common denominator shared by all, whether long-lived or short-lived, as so succinctly stated in Hebrews 9:27a, “And just as it is appointed for man to die once”. The preacher stops at that point, whereas Hebrews adds a very significant phrase, “and after that comes judgment”. It is true that every man or woman must die and, in that way, go to the same place; but the Bible is very clear that the grave is not the end - all must pass through the same place (death), but the destination of all is by no means the same! All do not end up in the same place! The story told by the Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel of Luke 16:19-31 shows that there are two destinations: heaven for those who trust in the Lord Jesus, and hell for those who continue in rebellion against him.

Questions

1. What happens to each person?
2. What happens after death?

Memory Verse

“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this is also vanity.” Ecclesiastes 5:10

Friday – Ecclesiastes 6:7-9 – Contentment.

If man is to search for happiness in this life, Solomon assures him that he will not find it in accumulating wealth or possessions. If man's whole effort and labour is directed towards appeasing his physical appetites, then life is truly meaningless! There is nothing for the soul, nothing for the mind, and nothing for the heart and the emotions.

Not only so, but Solomon also teaches that such an attitude means that he will always seek more and never be satisfied (v.7). The natural desires that all men have - food, shelter, etc., - return day after day and must be continually satisfied; but all the wealth of the world cannot satisfy the thirsty soul. The Psalmist knew this when he looked back to Israel's complaining in the wilderness and pointed out that God gave them what they asked for "but sent a wasting disease among them" (Psalm 106:15).

This lesson was reinforced by the Lord Jesus Christ in his story about the foolish man, who considered that when his barns were full he could sit back and enjoy himself, not knowing that that very night his soul would be in eternity (Luke 12:20).

Considering material wealth, Solomon observes that it does not matter whether a wise man or a fool possesses it. Matthew Henry puts it well when he says, "what can a wise man, a scholar, a wit, a politician, squeeze out of his estate more than needful supplies? and a half-witted man may do this".

It is not the possession of goods that marks out a man, but rather the contentment that he has in what he possesses, whether much or little, and how he conducts himself before men.

The believer will not have what Solomon describes as a 'roving of the appetite', but will be content with 'what the eye sees'; in other words, what he presently has before him. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.'

Questions

1. Where will we not find contentment?
2. Where will we find contentment?

Memory Verse

"He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this is also vanity." Ecclesiastes 5:10

Psalm 128A

1. How blessed are all who fear the LORD,
And walk within His ways.
You'll eat your labour's fruit with joy,
And prosper all your days.

2. Your wife within your house will be
A vine whose fruits abound;
Your children will as olive plants
Your table gather round.

3. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
Who truly fears the LORD.
The LORD from Zion give to you
His blessing and reward.

4. O may you see, throughout your days,
Jerusalem prosper well.
May you your children's children see.
Peace be on Israel!