

Our Duty In This Year – Ecclesiastes 12.9-14

⁹ Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. ¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. ¹² My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12.9-14, ESV).¹

Memory Verse – The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. – Ecclesiastes 12.13

Solomon writes for many one of the most perplexing books in the Bible. He begins by sayings; Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after Ecclesiastes (1.2-11, ESV).²

Vanity all is vanity or in other words everything is useless. The sun rises and sets as always, the winds blow, we do what we do, and so on. What is it all about? Solomon, throughout Ecclesiastes, reminds us of our place in this world, of who we are without God, lost, useless, “and the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12.7, CSB).³

So, what is the good news then in this book, why talk about Ecclesiastes if it is such a downer? Great question, Solomon, does want us to understand where we stand in our relation to God, and how life is just a big circle. As he said, “All things continue the way they have been since the beginning. What has happened will happen again; there is nothing new here on earth (Ecclesiastes 1.9, NCV).⁴

Nothing new under the Sun. It might seem like the Covid-19 pandemic was new, but it was not, it is something we have not seen, but to God it has always been. He was not surprised nor is He caught off guard about the outcome of what is happening. This is what Solomon the Preacher means when he says, “Nothing new under the sun.”

We have to learn to roll with the punches, it is hard for us as we seem to be surprised by what comes our way. We get a flat tire, fail a test, have a break up, friends treat us badly, lose a job, kids get sick, trouble in our families, parents yell at us, and so on. As bad as these things are God is not the least bit surprised by them, and neither should we be.

The Preacher said, “And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰ The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was* written was upright, *even* words of truth” (Ecclesiastes 12.9-10, KJV 1900).⁵ Even though it might look like there was no reason to change his ways or the ways of the people,

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ec 12:9–14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² *Ibid.*, (Ec 1:2–11).

³ [Christian Standard Bible](#). (2020). (Ec 12:7). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

⁴ [The Everyday Bible: New Century Version](#). (2005). (Ec 1:9). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: King James Version](#). (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Ec 12:9–10). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Solomon, still taught the people. He still tried to give them the correct wisdom, knowledge and understanding so they could live their lives right before God.

We too must seek out the truth, find out what is acceptable before God and live our lives accordingly. Paul wrote to his young protégé Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth” (II Timothy 2.15, NRSV).⁶

This is what we must strive for, to be men and women who ‘do our best’ to stand before God approved by Him and no one else. When we are looking for approval of men over God then we are looking for the wrong thing (Galatians 1.10). Paul urged Timothy to be a worker, someone in the business of God, and someone who would not be ashamed to share what God has given to him.

We find in Romans a verse which should be each of our life’s verse, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1.16, NIV).⁷ This is what Paul was encouraging Timothy with and us as well, not to be ashamed of having Christ in our life, and then sharing Him with others.

But Paul goes further, by saying we need to examine or study the Word of God so we can divide or rightly understand what it means and hold up its truths. This goes along with what Solomon’s conclusion was about life. He said, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12.13, ESV).⁸

Knowing who God is that’s one thing, but our relationship with Him must be our number one concern. We can do this by having a healthy awe-inspiring fear of Him, honoring Him, showing reverence to Him, worshiping Him with others, lifting our voices in praise to Him, and anything else we can do to show our undying love to our Creator and Savior. Remember the words of Jesus when He said, “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (John 14.15, CSB).⁹

So, in this new year when all seems weird or maybe even new, or life seems to throw something new at us; remember there is nothing new. God has seen it all, take it to Him, allow Him to work through the situation and show His glory to us in it. This will be beneficial to us and to those around us, this is our duty to the Lord, fear Him and obey His commandments.

Application

1. When is the last time you really had an awe-inspiring fear for the Lord?
2. Think about a time or situation when you felt like you were the only one to have ever had that happen to you? What was it? What did you do? How did it turn out?
3. Deeper Thinking: Read Ecclesiastes 2 – What is Solomon contrasting in this chapter? What was his conclusion? What is your number one take away from this chapter about how we should live our lives? You can use scripture or other illustrations to back up your discussion.
4. Commit to learning Ecclesiastes 12.13 and Witnessing to someone about what God has done for you.

Prayer

God of Heaven and Earth, You are the Creator of all things. Many times it seem like life is throwing new things at me each day, but as I have learned today it is not. Lord help me to bring my problems and trials to You, to lay them at Your feet and allow You to take care of them. I might be good in bringing them but I know I am not good at leaving them. Lord forgive my sinfulness and by disobedience in picking up my baggage and taking it with me. In this new year Lord, teach me to trust in You more, give me wisdom to fear You and follow Your commands. Help me have boldness to serve You each and every day and to share Your gospel. Give me boldness and a fearless heart so others will hear and know who You are. This I pray in Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). (2 Ti 2:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

⁷ *The New International Version*. (2011). (Ro 1:16). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ec 12:13). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁹ *Christian Standard Bible*. (2020). (Jn 14:15). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.