

I. The Dilemma Under the Sun (v 1)

- A.** Remember how it is we are to read Ecclesiastes (Eccl 12:13-14)
- B.** The Two-Fold Dilemma:
 - 1) That this world is filled with calamity and evil
 - 2) That this calamity and evil seems to come upon all persons
- C.** Uses from the Text
 - 1) A part of wisdom is being able to take our circumstances and put them in context with others throughout history.
 - 2) We need to examine ourselves.
 - 3) We need to have the humility of not knowing why God's providence is such as it is.

II. The Answer to the Question (v 9)

- A.** Solomon moves on from his dilemma to four case studies
 - 1) We may note the particular questions (vv 6, 8a, 8b)
 - 2) We may then summarize the questions into one: *What is the point of virtue in this life?*
 - a) Why is this question is important to all people (Heb 11:6)
 - b) Why is this question is important in the Visible Church in particular?
- B.** He gives the answer through a contrast
 - 1) *Better is the sight of the eyes*
 - 2) *The wandering of desire*
 - a) This is contrasted with knowing the love of God in Christ (Eph 3:17-19)
 - b) We are to know ourselves as wanderers in this world, but not as wanderers in our souls, in our affections (Psa 90:14-17)
- C.** Uses from the Text
 - 1) How seriously do you take the chief end of man?
 - 2) How rigorously do you apply the Scriptures to your lives?

III. Four Case Studies in Vanity (vv 2-8)

- A.** Not being able to enjoy the gifts of life (v 2)

- 1) Explanation: This has been taken away from him, either thru — **a)** Infirmity and Disease (2 Chr 26:21); **b)** War and Oppression (2 Kgs 25:7); **c)** Death (Psa 49:9-10)
- 2) Conclusion: *This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.*
- 3) Remedy, to have the sight of the eyes of faith
- B.** Not being willing to enjoy the gifts of life (vv 3-6)
 - 1) Explanation (v 3a) — his gifts and sins
 - 2) Why so many are not satisfied with goodness? — **a)** Ingratitude; **b)** Entitlement; **c)** Bitterness (1 Kgs 11:14-22); **d)** Discontentment (Num 11:1-15); **e)** Misplaced desire Pr 13:12)
 - 3) Conclusion and Curse
 - 4) Remedy, to have the sight of the eyes of faith (Psa 16:4-5)
- C.** Not being satisfied in your work (v 7)
 - 1) Exposition of this point
 - 2) Why do we often find our work unfulfilling?
 - a)** Circumstances, which are not inherently sinful — **i.** Because of the vanity and vexation inherent to every vocation and station; **ii.** Because of the toil and trouble of the work itself or those whom you encounter in your work; **iii.** Because you have feel you have no more to offer; **iv.** Because it would be wise for you to pursue a more challenging or greater improvement to your situation
 - b)** Sinful reasons why we may find our work unfulfilling — **i.** Because of laziness in our work; **ii.** Because of persistent discontentment; **iii.** Because of a complaining and murmuring spirit; **iv.** Because of foolishness in having unrealistic expectations; **v.** Because of a prideful overestimation yourself and your abilities
 - 3) How this is often the case in the Christian life as well
 - 4) Remedy, to have the sight of the eyes of faith:
- D.** The death of the wise and the fool alike (v 8)
 - 1) Exposition
 - 2) Remedy, to have the sight of the eyes of faith: To know you shall die, and to live in light of the resurrection (Phil 1:21-24)