

I. Exposition of the Text

- A.** Scope of the Text — Comparison (again) of two good things, and which is better for the instruction of the fear of the Lord and the keeping of His commandments (as is the aim of the book).
- B.** Commentary upon the Text
 - 1)** *The day of death [is better] than the day of one's birth* (v 1b)
 - 2)** *Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting*
 - a)** The goodness of both, as seen by the life of our Master, Who adorned both with His presence:
 - b)** The two-fold reason for this better-ness (Pr 14:13; Isa 57:1-2):
 - 3)** *Sorrow is better than laughter*
 - a)** The goodness of both (Pr 17:22; Isa 53:3)
 - b)** The reason for the superiority of sorrow (Isa 40:4)
- C.** Summary of the Text

II. Doctrines from the Text

- A.** The helpfulness of further meditation upon the truth of this text.
- B.** Further Doctrines on the Superiority of Sorrow and Suffering
 - 1)** Christ was a man of sorrows in His humiliation, and we read more of His sufferings than of His feastings (Isa 53:11; Lk 9:58).
 - 2)** It is better to suffer now and feast later, that we may have lasting things last.
 - 3)** Funerals lead us more to meditate on the Word of God than joyous exuberance.
 - 4)** Funerals remind us of our limits.
 - 5)** Funerals cause us to reflect on our lives, whereas feasts are (in an idiomatic sense) just the living of our lives.
 - 6)** Funerals put our minds to the eternal, feasts more so to the imminent (Gen 40:7).
 - 7)** Suffering encourages dependence upon the Lord, while ease can often produce and unseasonable fruit of independence.
 - 8)** Both funerals and feasts are communal, but bereavement requires long-lasting community.

- 9)** Both funerals and feasts reflect on the fruits of our labour: harvests for a year, but funerals for a whole lifetime.
- 10)** In sorrow, we are more obviously comforted by God directly; whereas in abundance we are more obviously comforted by God indirectly through means (Mt 5:4; Psa 56:8; Ezk 11:16).
- 11)** It is more common to grow in sanctification through suffering than through ease.
- 12)** Sorrow and suffering provides more opportunity to show graces neither yet exercised nor yet experienced (Gen 2:16; Phil 4:6-7; Song of Songs 3:4).

III. Answering Objections to the Text

- A.** *Objection 1:* Doesn't this promote a morose and morbid demeanor of the Christian? *Answer:* Certainly not!
- B.** *Objection 2:* But my sufferings are so great! *Answer:*
 - 1)** Your sufferings may be great, but they are not unique.
 - 2)** The sufferings of Christ were far greater.
 - 3)** Your sufferings may be great, but you have access to true comfort.

IV. Uses from the Text

- A.** We must be warned against and repent against common sins committed, which find their remedy in this passage.
 - 1)** Flee from becoming distracted, either in your mirth or your mourning.
 - a)** The distraction of mirth is self-sufficiency, which is remedied with thankfulness and generosity.
 - b)** The distraction of mourning is despair, which is remedied by faith, prayer, perseverance under the means of grace.
 - 2)** Do not confuse the means of mirth or mourning, as if they were the ends.
 - 3)** Do not act as if the means causing mirth or mourning do not exist.
- B.** Consider here the Lord Christ, as signified and sealed to us at His Table, where mourning for our sins and feasting upon grace meet.
- C.** Meditate regularly upon your death and eternity.