

In chap 3 we found Solomon understanding the value of time and the purpose of the seasons we face in this life, both the good and the not so good. God has ordained and organized things so that Everything is going as planned..The result of this foothold leads us to trust God and if we let Him He will guide us in these moments and He will build our faith teaching us to keep our eyes on eternity where they belong.

Everything was was moving in the right direction for Solomon and then he put his eyes back on this earth and it all vanished. We noted last time that dangerous place... “under the sun” this life apart from God and focused on the world is a chaotic mess that will never bring us to a place of peace and rest. Chapter 3 marks a turn of heart in Solomon, there was a glimmer of hope but in chapter 4 it has disappeared all together.

Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed,But they have no comforter — On the side of their oppressors there is power,But they have no comforter. 2 Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead,More than the living who are still alive. 3 Yet, better than both is he who has never existed,Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. There is a popular song that states a profound truth that will keep us from this kind of sad observation.. *Turn your eyes upon Jesus Look full in his wonderful face And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace*

There is such a calm that can come from this kind of fixed stare. We see it in the look of a parent to a child that is suffering in some way. When things get out of control in our kids we sometimes just have to hold their face still for a moment so that we can speak some form of comfort or peace into a situation. Tons of movies have that scene where the hero just needs the eyes for a second so that they can relay a plan or whatever is needed to end the panic. How much more so do we need that kind of focus on Christ. Not looking around or wondering what is coming around the corner but fixed and focused on the eyes of Christ . That's when He really speaks into our lives and That's the most stable place we can put ourselves while “under the sun”. If we begin look to any other place, things can go south real fast.

Solomon took his eyes off of God and placed them on the world and in a very short amount of time noticed a very obvious truth. This world is unfair. It really isn't much different in our world. Just as People were oppressed in all kinds of ways in Solomons day, the same is going on today.

Oppression can come in many shapes and forms, governments, authorities, employments, relationships are common in all points of history. Oppressive taxes, oppressive people and oppressive religions etc. can also make life very unfair for those who fall under these types of weights.

Oppression is not just a one time event, its on going and seems to be without relief. Solomon notes that even though they cry out, they have no comfort, those causing the issues just seem to gain more and more power and the relief seems to never come to those who need it the most.

That's not an insight that was reserved for Solomon, we all see that type of injustice all of the world. Sometimes its a geography issue, places on this earth that are simply difficult to live in, some times its a cultural thing, years and years of wrong patterns, but mostly its a sin issue. Mankind has fallen and evil will show itself if given the chance. Its been going on for a long time and will continue as long as sin has rule and reign in the hearts of man. This out of focus vision leads us to a conclusion we never should find. ***Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead, More than the living who are still alive. 3 Yet, better than both is he who has never existed, Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.***

Solomon states here that its better for you to have never existed at all that to be brought into such an unfair world, The good news is that bible paints a very different picture, the word tells a story of a God loves you and placed you here and even more so has a plan for you. ***Ps 139:13-14 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.***

14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Created and placed into this world for one specific reason.. ***Acts 17:26-28***

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

We were placed here to find God, to know and love the Creator of this universe. God has ordained our time and our path so that eternity with Him can be ours. He is not hiding from us, He wants us to find Him. His attributes are plain to see and the revelation of Christ will bring that God given purpose into your life. I don't understand it, but I love it. The idea that because of all the sin and bad in the world it would be better to just not exist is a terrifying thought.

To the flip side Solomon is kind of right, If we are going to reject the obvious truth that God is real, Jesus is real, the life, death and resurrection are real, heaven and hell are real and Jesus is coming back soon to set things right, when, not if, but when you know this and reject that provision, then yes, it might be best that you never were here. Jesus is at the table with his 12 and He relays this horrible truth concerning Judas.. ***Mark 14:21 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."*** Betrayal, a rejection of Jesus and the unwillingness to repent of sins and be forgiven is going to separate you from God, eternally, If that's the stand your going to make then, yes.. to never be would be would be the best option but if you're here already, its to late for that, there is a urgent choice to be made..

We know and even expect sometimes that life is not going to be fair but we also need to realize that this life, this vapor of time, fairness is not why we are here in the first place. Yes, There are some bad things out there but God is good. **..Ps 31:19 Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men!**

Notice there, God has prepared goodness for us, for those of us who trust Him, in the time given to us, while in the presence of men.. While on this earth, under the sun, this life and all of its flaws, the injustice and unbalance are products of sin and Jesus is the answer the world is looking for. All the goodness of God is available to anyone who will accept it, it can't be taken or diminished in any way, its stored up and sealed just for you, to be released in full at a time TBD...a time BTW that is closer than ever.. Solomon moves on and so do we..

4 Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

5 The fool folds his hands And consumes his own flesh. 6 Better a handful with quietness Than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun:

8 There is one alone, without companion:He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors,Nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks,"For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?"This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.

Its one of those weird funks we get into where nothing is right, nothing is gonna make us feel better and we have set our minds to not be happy. Life is unfair, you should just give up and die and if you don't, the next observation of Solomon reveals that even a successful life, (if you decide not to die) is filled with problems. It is a quirky flaw what we carry, we don't mind you having a little success but lets not get carried away..thats not the way we should life our lives..**Rom 12:15-21 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Love one another, support one another, be happy for one another, Again, yes there are those who will not be satisfied with your success. There are those out there who always look to the bad side of things but that should have no bearing on how we behave as Christians.

To love others is key, Loving God is a start but we need that number 2.. **1 John 4:20-21** *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.* Love to build others up when they need it and love to rejoice in the good times when it comes to them.

Solomon gives us the value of friends that will support us and those who have our back no matter what. **9** *Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

There is such peace in knowing that we are not alone in this world. This "threefold" cord though is even more important. Our friend circles, our co workers and our marriages out side of this third cord(Christ) can bring a ton of confusion and chaos into our lives. Don't be confused here, What I'm not saying is hang out with Christians only, that defeats the purpose of the great Commission and is not going to spread the gospel to the those who need to hear it. We are called to be salt and light and we should know that where ever God has placed us , with our family and our job and the village He has placed us in is for a much greater purpose that we ever could realize. Be a blessing in it.

Jesus Himself knows the reality of the time and place we are called into.. **John 17:13-18** *But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

We have to function in this world and we cant just recuse ourselves into some exclusive Jesus only circle. The caution here is to keep Christ in the middle of all of our dealings. Friends, co workers and relationships. Its not a guarantee that we wont have any disappointments but it does set us up for the best possible chance at peace and stability.

13 *Better a poor and wise youth Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. 14 For he comes out of prison to be king, Although he was born poor in his kingdom. 15 I saw all the living who walk under the sun; They were with the second youth who stands in his place. 16 There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king; Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and grasping for the wind.*

My parents got smarter and smarter as I grew older. I realized that you don't live to be an old man or woman by being stupid. If you would have grabbed my kids as teenagers and asked them how Kim and I were doing, They would most likely say Its really a miracle that we have been able to keep them alive..

For the youth of today the same is true as it has always been, To gain and implement a Godly wisdom is so much more valuable than decisions that lead popularity, financial gain, those are great but without God they are just empty spaces.

Granted, no one wants to be poor and lonely but Solomon is sharing an important truth. The draw of fame and wealth can cause us to lose rational thought. Check out FB for examples.. from Eating stupid stuff to risking life and limb for a few likes is the sign of our times. Listen all you grown ups, we have all been dumb at one point in our lives, I just didn't have the opportunity to record it. Stupid is not just reserved for the youth but there comes a point when I'm not climbing of a 10 foot stack of milk crates to prove I can..I know I can, I just don't have to prove it.

Solomon is kind of right here, all of this chase is futile. Our glory years are fleeting, records are made to be broken and the reality of it all is he who dies with the most toys still dies.

There is a truth to these observations. The world is unfair, sin will cause all kinds of problems in our lives, the chase for money and fame will only leave us empty. Those are very real facts but they can be alleviated by taking our eyes off of this world and placing them upon Jesus. Yes this "under the sun" life is temporary at best. The good news today is that there is so much more to life than the time we have been given. God has prepared eternity for us, Our eyes fixed on Christ allow us to chase and catch a very different life.. ***1 Peter 4:7-14 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. What a day that will be, when Christ exchanges all of this for His glory. The decision for Christ could not be an easier one to make...***Deut 30:19-20 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days;***