

Message #19**Ecclesiastes 6:1-6**

There is a great misconception in life that all of us have had at one time or another and that is the misconception of judging a book by its cover, not its content. At times, we have all been guilty of looking at someone or some thing and giving some interpretation to it without knowing the facts.

One of the greatest misconceptions people have in this world is the misconception that rich, successful people are happy people. We tend to think if a person rides in a chauffeured limousine and can shop in the most exquisite shops and eat in the most expensive restaurants it automatically means he enjoys life.

NO MATTER WHO ONE IS AND NO MATTER WHAT ONE HAS, IF GOD DOES NOT PERMIT ONE TO ENJOY LIFE, LIFE IS A GRIEVOUS EVIL.

If God is not at the center of life, there cannot ever be real enjoyment of life. Without God, there will not be true happiness no matter what one has or who one is and this is a grievous evil.

SEGMENT #1 – The heavy evil common to man. **6:1**

Here was another evil that Solomon saw “under the sun.” The word “evil” is one that means he perceived this as a common misfortunate adversity. Now we may notice that this evil is “prevalent” among men. What this practically means is that this evil is the customary norm. It is the customary norm for a person with wealth to be miserable when God is not at the center of one’s life. This misery is not an exception among mankind, it is the norm.

Let me state this another way—it is not normal for a wealthy person to enjoy life. The “prevalent” norm for wealthy people is to not enjoy life.

SEGMENT #2 – The unenjoyable life in spite of wealth. **6:2**

Observation #1 - God is the One who gives wealth to a person. **6:2a**

Dr. H. C. Leupold, in his famous commentary on Ecclesiastes, said the acquisition of wealth is, in no instance, merely an outright achievement of man (p. 134).

Observation #2 - Solomon, himself, had everything listed here. II Chron. 1:11-12

Wealth, possessions and honor were all things God gave to Solomon. It is contextually evident that there were times when the same God who gave these things to Solomon did not let him enjoy the things He gave him. When Solomon was not right with God, he was miserable in spite of all his wealth and fame.

Observation #3 - God is the One who can prevent man from enjoying his wealth.

The text does not specifically say how God prevents a man from enjoying his wealth, possessions and honor. It may be a stranger comes on the scene and takes it. It may be God causes some physical or emotional instability that prevents one from enjoying what he has. It may be some personal enemy who gives so much grief one could not enjoy his wealth. It is not stated how God prevents one from enjoying wealth, but what is stated is that it is possible for one to have an abundance of everything and still not be happy.

SEGMENT #3 – The unenjoyable life in spite of many children and old age. **6:3-6**

Having many children is no guarantee one will be happy. Living to a ripe old age is also no guarantee. One could have many children and live many years and have a meaningless existence. In fact, he could have such a meaningless existence that no one will show up to honor him or bury him at his own funeral. A proper burial is one in which family and friends show up to mourn the loss of their loved one.

When David, Solomon’s father, died, he died honorably (I Chron. 29:26-28). But some didn’t even have a proper burial. This is precisely what happened to Jehoiakim, king of Judah. He was a dishonored king who did not even receive a proper burial (Jer. 22:18-19).

Now Solomon sets forth three reasons why a stillborn baby is better off than a miserable rich person:

Reason #1 - Because there was no futility in life or name established. **6:4**

The stillborn baby never saw any difficulty or sensed any futility or emptiness to life. The stillborn baby never earned a bad name or reputation for itself.

Reason #2 - Because there is more rest. **6:5**

The stillborn never sees the sun and never knows anything. The words “it is better off than he,” literally in Hebrew mean the stillborn has more rest than the man who had wealth, many children and old age.

A rich person can have many things, but one thing he cannot have, in and of himself, is peace and tranquility in his soul.

Rest and peace are found in our relationship with God. A stillborn is at peace. The stillborn never has any conflict of life or any knowledge of the sinful world or any choices of failure.

The first part of **verse 6** says that even if man lives 2000 years on earth, if he couldn’t enjoy life, the stillborn is much better off. Some people spend their entire lives in an unfulfilled vacuum.

Reason #3 - Because all end up going to the same place. **6:6**

The point here is that all people end up dying anyway, so if a person cannot enjoy life, it is better to have been stillborn.

No matter who one is, no matter what one has, if God does not permit one to enjoy life, life is a grievous evil.

Parting Questions:

1. Is our life a meaningful existence for God?
2. Is God giving us the ability to enjoy life?
If yes, thank Him.
If no, check our relationship with Him and make any necessary changes.
3. When our life is over, will it have been a God-honoring life that made a difference in our world?