

# Injustice without Christ is Meaningless

**Series: Finding the Meaning of Life**

**Speaker: Matthew Black**

**Text: Ecclesiastes 3:16-22**

**Date: May 26, 2010**

**Introduction:** Open your Bible to Ecclesiastes 4. Tonight we continue in our series called “Finding the Meaning of Life”. Tonight we are going to find out that “Injustice without Christ are Meaningless”.

Have you ever been wronged? Are you dealing with bitterness in your life? Some people live their whole lives eaten up with bitterness. How are we supposed to live among such evil around us?

Last week we began this beautiful chapter in Ecclesiastes saying that God orders all things, and He makes all things beautiful in His time.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-11**, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. 9 What gain has the worker from his toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

## **I. The truth stated (3:16-17): God will judge evil.**

Did you catch what Solomon said about God? He opens up by saying “God has made all things beautiful in His time.” He has a purpose for everything. Well, the obvious objection is taken up in the rest of chapter 3 and in chapter 4. Ok, so God uses all things for His glory and our good. But what about evil? **What about wickedness?** **3:16**, “Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.”

**Illustration (Unprosecuted murders):** There is a lot of wickedness in the world. Every year, on average in the United States in the year 2010, approximately 10,000 murderers are put in jail. And every year another 10,000 go *unprosecuted*. How can we make sense of this? Solomon is telling the obvious. There’s an incalculable amount of unchecked evil in the world. Are they getting away with it?

What is the obvious answer to all the wickedness in the world? God will judge all people! **Verse 17, “I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.”**

If you want to live life without Christ and live how you want with no accountability, then you have to be able to live with totally unchecked, unjudged wickedness in the world. People are slandered every day with no justice. But as believers in Christ, we know justice is coming.

**Acts 17:31, “[God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”** Without this truth, life becomes meaningless, and we are put on the same plain as animals.

**A. Unchecked evil robs man of his humanity.** Without God human beings are like animals. **3:18, “I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts.”** If God has saved you tonight, be thankful that God is restoring you back to His image. The farther we get away from God, the more we lose His image in us, and the more we act like animals. Animals have no element of self control—only what might be imposed on them. They act according to raw instinct and desire. This is how humanity is without Christ.

**B. Without a God who holds us accountable for our actions, few can see themselves different than animals. 3:19, “For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity”.**

As far as physical dying goes, we have no advantage over the animals. Face it, you are as powerless as an animal to stop death. You are going to die. That’s the point. God gives us all life, and He has ordained that we all expire.

But if this is the only piece of the puzzle you have, you are actually going to live like an animal. You will live a meaningless life without seeing Solomon’s main premise. **3:17, “God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.”** We do have death in common with animals, but there is something after death that animals do not partake of: the judgment. **Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”**

Solomon brings the logic of an unbeliever. If you remove God from your daily thoughts, you begin to think of yourself as an animal. As Solomon says, according to this philosophy, “all is vanity” (**verse 19**). We all die and go into the ground! If that is the end, then life has no meaning! The only purpose in life is to

stay happy and try to stay away from pain. This is where our society is today. Without God we begin living like animals.

1. **Without living in the presence of God, a person will live according to raw instinct, emotion, and desire.** How many times have we heard this? “If it feels good, do it!” People murder because it satisfies their hunger for vengeance at the time. People lie because it covers their shame of reality at the time. People abandon rational thought and the understanding of consequences and responsibility because they are abandoning God. And they, like animals live according to raw emotion and desire and set aside thinking capacities.
2. **The more we go away from God, the less we appreciate the true beauty of this life.** Have you ever heard, “This place looks like a pig sty!” Yes it is true, pigs and dogs and birds could care less about the order and beauty around us. They are just animals. Think about today’s styles. The more our culture gets away from God, the more that “ugly” is in. Mess up your hair. Mess up your jeans. Today, you actually have to pay MORE money to buy old, messed up jeans, or old, messed up furniture! How messed up is that! It’s indicative of our abandoning of God.
3. **If we stray from God, we will become more and more addicted to evil, and be robbed of the image of God in us.** As our love for God in society disappears, His image disappears from our culture. Why is there a rapid decline of reason, language, thoughtfulness, morality, ingenuity, creativity, imagination, aspiration, work ethic, and appreciation for beauty today? Because all of these things remind us of the God who created us. Why do our children have no direction and no ambition? Because they are far from God. Animals have no ambition but to satisfy their natural cravings. They do not think. They act on pure instinct.

C. **The understanding of God’s bringing men into account cannot be attained by natural observation.** We cannot see the spirits of animals and people. As many of us have sometimes thought we have seen a ghost, we must realize that the spirits of people are invisible. Therefore, we cannot know that there is something more, on our own. That’s what Solomon says in **3:20-21**, “All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. 21 Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?” As far as the human eye is concerned, there is no one that can actually observe the souls of people or animals once they die.

Where do we come by the knowledge of God’s judgment of evil? How can we know? There are three sources of revelation.

1. **Creation.** The Wonder of **Creation** tells us that God exists.

Our lost friends and loved ones are hostile to God and blind to His marvelous reminder of His glory—the creation that surrounds us. They are actually suppressing the truth through their sin. Look at **Romans 1:18-22**, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

2. The **Conscience**. **John 3:19** “people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.”

All people know evil will be judged. They know it *outwardly* through creation and *inwardly* through their conscience. **3:17**, “I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.” Solomon is in agreement with the rest of the Bible. Remember what Solomon said in **3:11**, “he has put eternity into man’s heart”. Man knows evil is wrong. But people suppress the coming Day of Accountability because they love evil.

Yet the more evil is surrendered to, the more people suppress God, and the more they cut off the alarm of their conscience.

The only way we can break this cycle so that we may see is by the Word of Christ. Aren’t you thankful for the Bible you hold in your hand?

3. The Word of **Christ**. **Romans 10:17**, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” God’s Word is the mirror that leads us to Jesus!

God will judge evil. Our conscience tells us this. Creation tells us this. The Word of Christ tells us this. If we suppress the knowledge we will live and die with no meaning, and then we will be judged by God.

**Review:** So remember at the beginning of this chapter, Solomon says in **3:11**, “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart”. Well, evil isn’t beautiful. Ok you’re right. But one day “God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work”(verse 17).

**Transition:** So our first point was God is going to judge evil.

Here’s our second point:

**II. The truth applied: If God is going to judge evil, how should we then live a meaningful life in the midst of all this evil?**

Man should accept God's control over his life and live contentedly in those boundaries, but live for that which is beyond this life. **3:22**, "So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?" This verse is packed with good theology. Once we live in the presence and knowledge of God, we have meaning.

1. We can "**rejoice** in [our] work". All that we have is a gift to fulfill the will of God. Remember **Colossians 3:23-24**, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ".
2. We can **rest** in our "lot". Are you content with you lot in life? We cannot order events as we would like. Do you have the IO syndrome? What does **Hebrews 13:5** say? "Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."" Have you come to terms with where you are? Are you content in Christ in your life. "But God, it's not fair!" Let Him be God and rest in Him. But "if only things were different!" Let Him be God and rest in Him!

We are powerless to control where we are born, who our families will be, what our skills will be. We are powerless to control the choices of other people.

### **Example of Joseph**

We second guess the wrongs done to us. Remember Joseph. He always trusted and rested in God, no matter how he was wronged. Are you angry with those who have wronged you? Why? God will make all things beautiful in His time! Even the wrongs and the evils.

Listen to Joseph's words to his evil brothers in **Genesis 50:20**, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. 21 So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus **he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.**" Can you love those who wrong you? Can you trust God to make their wrongs beautiful in His time?

We often live in ignorance of Christ for years until God graciously sends the Gospel to us. Are you second guessing yourself? Don't. Rest in the unique life God has given you. However much or little you have to offer, it is all a gift from God. You are not responsible to do more than you are able. But you are responsible to give your all to God!

3. Yet, we can **resist** the pressure to live only for today. The unsaved person is willingly blind to eternity. "Who can bring him to see what will be after

him?”(vs. 22). So what is the answer to **verse 22**? Who can make blind men to see?

Jesus said in **Luke 4:32** that we cannot heal ourselves. **Jeremiah 17:9**, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” The idea in this verse is that man is incurably sick. He is beyond helping Himself.

Who can help us saints of God? Jesus!

**Conclusion:** So when you observe evil, remember it will be brought into account. What can you do?

1. **With God’s help, endeavor to live a consistent Christian life in this dark world.** **Matthew 5:14**, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
2. **Return good for evil.** **Romans 12:21**, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”
3. **Always do good works.** It is what you were created for. **Ephesians 2:10**, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”. **Titus 2:14**, “who [Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” The word “zealous” means, “one burning with zeal, a zealot”. Are you burning to do good works? There’s so much to be excited about in life. God says we need to be excited to do good works.

Do you have a dream in your heart for how you want to serve the Body of Christ and serve God? Then be zealous, and do it! Serve God. You only have one short life! ***Don’t be overcome by evil, rather, overcome evil with good!***