

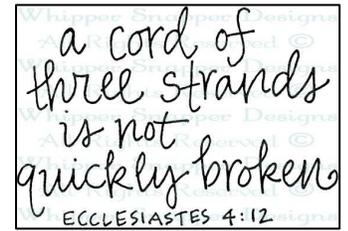
A BIBLE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Theme: **Solomon and Jesus,**

**Both Sons of David, say: "Fear God and keep his commandments,
For this is the whole duty of man!"**

Trinity Lutheran Church- Norman, Oklahoma

Pastor David Nehrenz Date: 9-27-15 Lesson: 4



A. TEXT (Chapter 4)

[1] Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. [2] And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. [3] But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

[4] Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[5] The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

[6] Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

[7] Again, I saw vanity under the sun: [8] one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

[9] Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. [10] For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! [11] Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? [12] And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

[13] Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. [14] For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. [15] I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. [16] There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

STUDY NOTES

1. The oppression and cruelty in the world is bitter and depressing to observe and adds to the tragedy of the human condition. **(Ps 12:5; Lam 1:16; Hab 1:1-4)**
2. When someone has experienced such oppression, he or she can feel like they were better off dead than alive. **(Job 3:16,17,22; 10:18; Jer 20:14-18; 22:10; Ac 20:24; 2 Cor 1:8; Heb 12:1-3)**
Only through faith in God through Jesus can a person see the bigger picture **(Rom 8:35-39)**.
3. When we are motivated by envy only, then neither hard work nor laziness will have any meaning. Envy is breaking of the Second Table of the Law, Commandments 4-10.
4. Without God's blessing, labor and achievement are also meaningless vanity.
5. The lazy, shiftless and useless life of an idle person is pictured many places in the Bible **(Prov 6:6-11; 24:30-34; 2 Th 3:6-13)**
6. If we really want tranquility, it is found not inside ourselves, but outside of ourselves in God and through the work of His Son **(Prov 15:16,17; 16:8; 30:7-9; Php 4:11-13)**
7. An unbelieving loner who lives as a recluse and a hermit, will also not truly find happiness **(Prov 27:20; 1 Jn 2:16)**
8. "One...two...three..." is a way to come to an obvious conclusion when making an observation for other people making your own life better and stronger. "Many hands make for light work..." If you are going to dig a ditch, ten people can get it done much quicker than one. Life was created to be lived in community with spouse, children, parents, family, friends, co-workers, congregation, neighbor and nation. We encourage one another and help each other in mercy and love. **(Mt 5:23,24; 18:15-18; Gal 6:1,2)**
9. You might advance in the secular world without God, but in the end, what is the point of it all?

The Songs: "Is That All There Is?" (originally by Dan Daniels)

1. I remember when I was a very little girl, our house caught on fire.
I'll never forget the look on my father's face as he gathered me up
In his arms and raced through the burning building out to the pavement.
I stood there shivering in my pajamas and watched the whole world go up in flames.
And when it was all over I said to myself,
"Is that all there is to a fire?" Is that all there is?
Is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, Then let's keep dancing
Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is...

2. And when I was 12 years old, my daddy took me to a circus. "The Greatest Show On Earth."
There were clowns and elephants and dancing bears.
And a beautiful lady in pink tights flew high above our heads.
And as I sat there watching, I had the feeling that something was missing.
I don't know what, but when it was over, I said to myself,
"Is that all there is to a circus?" Is that all there is?
Is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, Then let's keep dancing
Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is...

3. And then I fell in love, with the most wonderful boy in the world.
We would take long walks by the river
Or just sit for hours gazing into each other's eyes. We were so very much in love.
Then one day, he went away and I thought I'd die. But I didn't.
And when I didn't I said to myself, "Is that all there is to love?" Is that all there is?
Is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, Then let's keep dancing
Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is...

4. I know what you must be saying to yourselves.
"If that's the way she feels about it why doesn't she just end it all?" Oh, no, not me.
I'm in no hurry for that final disappointment.
'Cause I know just as well as I'm standing here talking to you,
That when that final moment comes and I'm breathing my last breath I'll be saying to myself-
Is that all there is? Is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, Then let's keep dancing
Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is...

10. (Vv. 13-16) describe Joseph, who as a young man in (Gen 39-41) understood that true happiness comes in selfless care of others. He started out as a nobody, but with wisdom from God, he accepted admonition and accountability. In the end he became the leader who served with equity and justice.

Luther quote in AE 15:69 "He introduces an excellent proverb, as he often does below, and does so after the fashion of a good preacher. The meaning is: It is better to be in association with others and to enjoy things in common than to be a solitary miser who only cares about himself and grabs things for himself. In society there is mutual help, common work, common solace; meanwhile, the life of the miser is a sorry one, useless and afflicted, and finally he must come to a miserable end. This, then, he establishes with a proverb, which seems to be taken from this source:
A certain wise father, when he was about to die, commands his sons to be present. He gives them a bundle of of sticks to break. Although they could not break them all at the same time, they did break them individually. In this way he taught his sons that their riches would be secure if they were in concord with one another and mutually assisted one another. For through concord small things grow, but through discord they are scattered and brought to naught.¹"

¹ Luther, M. (1999). *Luther's works, vol. 15: Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Last Words of David, 2 Samuel 23:1-7*. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald, & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.) (Vol. 15, p. 69). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.