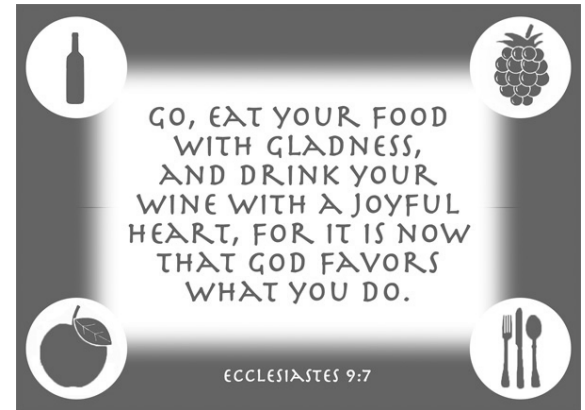


A BIBLE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

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: 11-8-15 Lesson: 9



A. TEXT (Chapter 9)

(1) But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in **the hand of God**. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. (2) It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath. (3) This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

(4) But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. (5) For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. (6) Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

(7) Go, eat your bread in joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for **God** has already approved what you do. (8) Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. (9) Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

(10) Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

(11) Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. (12) For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.

(13) I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me. (14) There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it. (15) But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man. (16) But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

(17) The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

(18) Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

STUDY NOTES:

1. Vv. 7-9 are an example of wisdom literature in the ancient world and it is very similar to the **Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh (10.3.6-14)** which shows the interplay between the major cultures.
(Nu 6:20; 16:33; Rev 3:4; Job 31:2; Ps 6:5; Prov 5:18; Is 38:18; 1 Sam 10:7)
2. V. 10 is a truth also found in (Col 3:23)
3. No one knows what the future will hold, whether good or bad, only God holds the future.
4. All men have the common destiny of death, but God will bring final justice on the Last Day.
(Ps 49:10; Heb 9:27)
5. Once people are dead, they lose all opportunity for enjoyment in this life and have no reward for labor.
6. Time and chance show us that success is not certain in the events of history. We cannot control the universe.
(Amos 2:14,15; Job 32:13; Is 47:10; Jer 9:23; Dt 8:18; Rom 9:16)
7. Like fish and birds we can be trapped in a cruel net when misfortune may overtake us.
(Pr 29:6; Ps 73:22; Lk 21:34; 1 Th 5:3)
8. Even after we may have done a wise and good thing, we will soon be forgotten and nobody will remember us, so we cannot place too high hopes on our own accomplishments, for our reputations soon fade away.
9. The wisdom of one person can defeat a much stronger king or ruler (2 Sam 20:16-22; Mk 6:2,3)
10. Therefore our only hope is in the precious promises of God through our Lord Jesus Christ!
(Josh 21:45; 2 Cor 1:18-24; 2 Pet 1:1-7)

Luther's Works on ch. 9

“Just as Solomon made it a point, after recalling the vanity in the world, to add comfort and exhortation, so that we might have a happy and peaceful spirit, so he does here also. It is as though he were saying: “As long as we are obliged to live in the midst of such perversity, it is best for us to be happy and relaxed.” We cannot change things and we will not accomplish anything, no matter how much we may torture ourselves with worrying. Now, he says *your bread* and *your wine*, namely, that which you have earned by your labor, with the blessing of God. Thus Is. 4:1 says: “We will eat our own bread,” and Paul says to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 3:12): “Let them eat their own bread.”

For God has already approved what you do. This exhortation applies to the godly, to those who fear God, as though he were saying: “You who are godly, do what you can, because you know that God approves what you do.” This is the height of spiritual wisdom, to know that one has a gracious God, who approves our works and actions. Thus Rom. 8:16 says: “It is the Spirit Himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” For unless our heart immerses itself in the will and good pleasure of God, it can never sweeten its bitterness of heart; it will always remain bitter unless the heart is filled with the good pleasure of God.”

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. The righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God.
-Since this is true, how does it give meaning and purpose to our everyday lives?
2. Go, eat your bread in joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for **God** has already approved what you do.
- In what ways does this connect with the Biblical concept of our God-given vocations?
3. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.
-Why is this the best way to live and truly enjoy life?
4. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.
-Without the theology of the cross and saving faith in Jesus as part of a person's life, how would the reality of this statement cause some people to say, “I give up, life has no meaning and God doesn't care what happens to me?”
5. The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.
Wisdom is better than weapons of war.
-From where do we get such wisdom and when is it vital to use it at the right time?