

Refuge City Church — April 23, 2023 “Live Life” (Ecclesiastes 11)

Introduction

- **LAST TIME:** Wisdom vs. Folly. Live wise according to God’s will and word, or live the life of a fool.
- **TODAY:** Solomon begins his conclusion to this sermon on the meaning, or meaninglessness of life.
 - If we look at the reality of life, the experience of those who have gone before us, how we live isn’t that complicated to figure out.
 - It takes just a little bit of common sense and reasoning to see the gift that God has given us.

“Live!” [Ecclesiastes 11:1-2]

“Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.”

- **Chapters 1-6:** work is futile. Nothing is permanent under the sun. There is no certainty that you’ll be able to enjoy the fruit/results of your labor.
- **Chapters 6-11:** we can not assure success under the sun. God is sovereign and in control. Everything that happens is a part of His plan that will ultimately prevail.
 - Therefore we ought to live, and do so acceptably according to His standards.
 - **QUOTE:** We don’t know what the future holds, so “...we should use wisdom boldly and carefully, cannily [good judgement] yet humbly, taking joy from life while remembering that our days of joy are limited by the certainty of death.” [David A. Hubbard]
- “Cast your bread upon the waters” [ref. to shipping] = Do the work that God has given you to do, and stop worrying about what the future *might* hold.
 - When you do what God has given you to do, and *give* willingly, freely, and generously, He will bless you; either in this life or in glory.
 - **Proverbs 11:24-25,** “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”
 - You don’t get to choose when you receive His blessing. Just be obedient to how you are supposed to live.
 - **Hebrews 6:10,** “For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.”

“What are you waiting for?” [Verses 3-6]

“If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.”

- Elon Musk tweeted praise to the SpaceX team after their most recent rocket exploded after lift off.

- He congratulated the launch team by saying, “Success comes from what we learn.”
- We can not sit and contemplate what may or may not happen!
 - Stop waiting for the ‘perfect conditions’ to present themselves before you act on what God has given to you!
 - There will never be a *right* time. You will never have the *right* amount of money. Your children will never be the *right* age.
 - There will always be something you can point at to keep you from taking a step of faith, and placing your trust in Sovereign God!
 - Some look at the wind as a symbol of the future = trying to dictate what will be.
 - Some look at the fallen tree as the past = what’s done is done and cannot be changed.
 - This is why we “walk by faith, and not by sight” [2 Corinthians 5:7].
- **Verse 5:** “As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.”
 - God has given us this life. What for? Why were we created?
 - *Last week:* When we come in to a relationship with God, He promises that He will give us a new heart and spirit... **Ezekiel 36:27**, “And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”
 - When we live by the Spirit, we keep in step with the Spirit [Galatians 5:25]. We then bear fruit from the Spirit = love, joy, and peace.
 - We are to love God with all of our heart. We are to love others.
 - We were created for relationship!
 - The joy of the Lord is our strength.
 - So we live, move, breathe, and labor in that joy.
 - Jesus is our Prince of Peace.
- **Philippians 4:4-9**, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”
 - **QUESTION:** What do you do the moment you begin to feel anxious?
 - You grab those thoughts with ‘both hands’ and ring it’s neck!
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5**, “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,”
 - **QUOTE:** “Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one’s heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend. Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes, that He may help you to conquer them; talk to Him of your temptations, that He may shield you from them; show Him the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them.” (Francois Fenelon)

- We can feel His peace knowing we've placed our life in His hands. We can have that confidence.
- We do this *so* we can live! We do this *as* we live!
- *Last week*: "A president's hardest task is not to *do* what's right, but to *know* what's right." [President Lyndon B. Johnson]
- The wisdom of God allows us to know right from left [sinister; wrong].
- **QUOTE**: "... maturity in the Christian life is not measured by what a man knows but by what he does." [Dwight J. Pentecost]
- God does not withhold His wisdom from those who ask.
 - **James 1:5**, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."
 - **Proverbs 2:6**, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."
 - **Philippians 4:9**, "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the *God of peace* will be with you."
- Ignorance should lead us to understanding. Understanding should lead us to action.

"Young and Free" [Verses 7-10]

"Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity."

- Common sense = Responsible living
- **Verse 8a**: "So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all."
 - Tomorrow is not guaranteed, so live today as if you've lived them all.
 - Read the verse backwards for a depressed view of life:
 - "Many are the days of darkness, so be so careful how you live, that you question every single decision to the point of anxiety, and leave no room for rejoicing."
 - I don't know too many people who on their death bed have ever given the advice that they should have worried more, or lived in more anxiety about their life.
 - **Psalm 118:24**, "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."
- **Verse 8b**: "...but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many."
 - We understand that we will go through tough seasons, storms, and trials.
 - Our goal, continuously seeking the wisdom of God, is to know that He is still sovereign and in control.
 - **Psalm 90:12**, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."

Conclusion

- So we ought to live in a way that seeks His way, His holiness and righteousness on a daily basis.

- We can confidently walk in the way of our heart, because we live with the promise that God has given us a new heart and a new spirit.
 - **2 Corinthians 3:17**, "...where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
 - **2 Corinthians 7:1**, "...let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God."
 - **2 Timothy 2:22**, "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." [we need to be in community]
- We don't live ignorantly or dangerously, because we know that we will stand before the Lord and give an answer for how we lived.
 - **Revelation 20:12**, "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done."
 - **Ecclesiastes 12:14**, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."
 - **John 5:28-29**, "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment."
- As for me, I want to stand on His right side, not His left.