Riches Are Earned, but Contentment Is a Gift October 23, 2022

*Ecclesiastes 5:10-20 Series: Israel’s Greatest Philosopher*

Contentment is the joyful art of making the most of what you have. – Jeremy McKeen

Intro: All for the “inexplicable desire to grasp even more”

1. Satisfaction isn’t found in MORE money
2. Money is a terrible lover

v. 10 *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

Ecclesiastes 6:7 *All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.*

1. The more you have, the more expenses you have

v. 11 *When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?*

1. More just leads to indigestion

v. 12 *Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

* Do you think your life would be better with another $50,000/year of income? Why/why not?
* What are some signs that you might “love money”?
* What are the dangers that come with “desiring to be rich”?
1. Satisfaction isn’t found in MY money
2. Hoarded money becomes toxic

v. 13 *There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt …*

1. The tighter you hold it, the easier its slips through your fingers

v. 14 *those riches were lost in a bad venture*

v. 14 *he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand*

v. 15 *As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand.*

v. 16 *This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind?*

Proverbs 23:4–5 *Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.*

1. People who live to hoard ruin the lives they might have enjoyed

v. 17 *Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.*

Proverbs 28:22 *A stingy man hastens after wealth and does not know that poverty will come upon him.*

Matthew 13:22 *As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*

* What makes people defensive with their money? Why does that “hurt” them?
* Why does Proverbs warn that wealth suddenly sprouts wings and flies away? How does it do that?
* What are some of the dangers of money in Scripture of which we should warn our children and remind ourselves?
1. Satisfaction is found in God’s gift of contentment
2. Find enjoyment in what God has given you now

v. 18 *Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot.*

1 Timothy 6:6–8 *But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.*

1. Seek God for the power to enjoy what you have

v. 19 *Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God.*

Jn 6:27 *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.*

1. God can fill you with joy whether you have little or much

v. 20 *For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.*

Job 1:21 *And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”*

* The world says that beauty with riches is great gain. How would you live if you believed that “godliness with contentment is great gain”?
* Children spend a lot of time learning how to one day earn money. How do we teach them to find contentment?
* What’s difficult for you in applying a message like this?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Ecclesiastes 7:1-24

Notes