Living Life Without the Answer Key October 30, 2022

*Ecclesiastes 7:1-14 Series: Israel’s Greatest Philosopher*

Death is an evangelist. He looks us in the eye and asks us to look him right back with a steady gaze and allow him to do his work in us. – David Gibson

Intro: I'm gonna live forever. I'm gonna learn how to fly, high.

1. Don’t live in denial of your death
2. Death is a sober reality check

v. 1 *A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.*

1. Death is a powerful preacher

v. 2 *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.*

Matthew 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn …*

Psalm 90:12 *teach us to number our days*

Luke 6:21 *Blessed are you who weep now …*

2 Corinthians 7:10 *godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret*

1. Cat memes never taught anyone how to cope

v. 3 *Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.*

v. 4 *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

* What are some ways that we tend to deny the reality of death?
* What are some lessons that death can teach us?
* What can we do to embrace the inevitability of death?

1. Don’t live in denial of your faults
2. A wise friend’s correction can be life-changing

v. 5 *It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools …*

Psalm 141:5 *Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it.*

Proverbs 13:1 *A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.*

Proverbs 15:31 *The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.*

1. A life of empty laughter leads to an empty life

v. 6 *For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools; this also is vanity.*

Ecclesiastes 3:4 *a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance*

Proverbs 14:13 *Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief.*

1. No one’s immune from the dangers of unaddressed sin

v. 7 *Surely oppression drives the wise into madness, and a bribe corrupts the heart.*

Proverbs 13:18 *Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.*

* What are some strategies we employ to avoid hearing people correct us or tell us that we’re wrong?
* How can we invite the negative feedback that we need to grow?
* How can the heart “ache” “even in laughter” (Proverbs 14:13)?

1. Don’t live in denial of your pride
2. We want it now!

v. 8 *Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.*

1. We want our way!

v. 9 *Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.*

1. We want it the way it was!

v. 10 *Say not, “Why were the former days better than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.*

1. Seek wisdom and you’ll stop fighting against God

v. 11 *Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun.*

v. 12 *For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.*

v. 13 *Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?*

v. 14 *In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.*

Job 2:10 *“You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.*

* Why is patience so crucial to a life of wisdom?
* What’s wrong with asking why the past was better than now?
* How does it change things to know that God made “the day of adversity” as well as the “day of prosperity”?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

Notes