

Money is Meaningless Without Jesus

Lesson for Sunday, June 23, 2024

TEXT: Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 & 5:10-6:12

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ What are the biggest lies we have heard in our lifetimes?
 - Ex: Ronald Reagan's quote, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help!"
- ⇒ What are the biggest lies you have once believed in your lifetime?
 - You may want to send this one out to your class before Sunday so they have time to think about it.
- ⇒ Easily, one of the biggest lies of our culture is that to be truly happy we need more than we have right now. The pull for more than we have is strong. No matter our tax bracket, we often think more is the answer.
- ⇒ In today's texts, Solomon exposes the foolishness of seeking meaning and satisfaction in money, and instead he calls us to contentment and joy in what we have.

OUTLINE:

1. Pursuing Satisfaction in Money is Meaningless (PACE YOURSELF)
 - a. Solomon has already shown us that money and possessions will not bring meaning and satisfaction to life. Remember – he would know! He had more money and more stuff than the rest.
 - b. In chapter 4, he condemned both extremes when it comes to money. He condemned the lazy man as a fool, and he condemned the workaholic because working hard to earn more money will not satisfy (see verses 4-7).
 - c. His main point in chapter 5 is to show that the idea of money and possessions bring meaning and satisfaction to life is absurd. In fact, he bookends this passage on wealth with the keyword "hevel" (futile). Solomon provides seven reasons why this is so:
 - i. You will never have enough (5:10).
 1. Notice that the text doesn't mention an amount. His statement has everything to do with the heart.
 2. The issue is failure to be content with what you have.
 3. Someone once as Rockefeller, "Which million that you have earned was your favorite?" He replied, "My next million."
 4. We have all lived long enough to know Solomon is right. We are always looking for the next thing.
 - ii. You will attract leeches (5:11).
 1. Creditors, family, "friends," the IRS and more will try to consume what we have. Like the rapper Notorious BIG once rapped, "More Money, More Problems."
 2. ILL: Bernie Kosar made tens of millions of dollars playing in the NFL, plus other business revenue. Then filed for bankruptcy. He told a reporter that there was a time he was paying 60 cell phone plans, but he only used one. Ex-teammates, an ex-wife, attorneys, etc. all wanted a piece of his fortune and it led to his ruin.
 - iii. You will not sleep well (5:12).
 1. A person's appetite for more and more will not allow them to sleep. They are always thinking of the next deal or get-rich-quick opportunity. Their rewards are anxiety and worry.
 2. In contrast, the common worker sleeps well because he is content with what he has. His work tires him, it provides what he needs, and it rewards him with good sleep.
 - iv. You will hurt yourself (5:13).

1. Solomon next points out that hoarding riches does not help you; it hurts you. It makes you selfish, unhappy and dishonest.
 2. The Bible is clear that the joyful life is the generous life.
 - v. You will never be truly secure (5:14).
 1. This verse describes a man who loses his wealth in a bad venture. He is left with a family to provide for and yet he has nothing to give or leave to them.
 2. Solomon is continuing to build his case that wealth is an insecure basis for happiness.
 - vi. You will leave it all behind (5:15-16).
 1. We brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing out. What we don't lose in a bad business deal we will lose in death.
 2. Paul addresses this in 1 Timothy 6:6, and Jesus did in Luke 12.
 - vii. You will be a miserable person (5:17).
 1. What is better – a normal meal with the family around the table, or a filet mignon alone? We intuitively know the answer.
 2. Jesus came to give us life! But that life is found in Christ – not stuff! Miserable people are usually the result of misplaced affections.
 - d. So, what are we to do? Solomon doesn't leave us without hope...
2. Antidotes to Satisfaction in Money (APPLICATION & DISCUSSION)
- a. There are three practical things Solomon tells us to consider. First, develop meaningful relationships (4:7-12).
 - i. The point is simple: We are made for meaningful relationships.
 - ii. Meaningful relationships bring more joy than any amount of money ever could.
 - iii. DISCUSS: This is a major advantage of the local church! The Christian's best friends should be other believers who share the same values and goals in life, and the church is where they are most likely found. (Insert: importance of faithfulness, hospitality, etc.)
 - b. Contentment in what you already have (5:18-6:9)
 - i. The key is not how much or how little you have but rather how you view what you do have. Instead of craving more, appreciate and enjoy what God has already graciously provided.
 - ii. The end of chapter 5 and beginning of 6 explain that what you have, where you are in life, and the ability to enjoy those things are all from God.
 - iii. Reference 1 Timothy 6:8 and 17-19. Lots to discuss in these verses!
 - c. Prioritize the spiritual (6:10-12)
 - i. The final verses of chapter 6 are a reflection on the early chapters of Genesis and the fall of mankind. It repeatedly references Adam and even the naming of things.
 - ii. Solomon asks a huge question in verse 12, "Who knows what is good for man during his lifetime?" Answer: Only the Lord!
 - iii. One of the big problems with pursuing things is that it takes our attention off the Greatest Thing – the Lord Jesus Christ. What are you doing to pursue Him?

TO DO: What is one tangible thing your class can do this week that would apply one of these three areas?

- ⇒ IDEA: Practice hospitality by inviting someone to your home.
- ⇒ IDEA: Intentionally focus on being grateful for what you have by listing ten things a day that you are thankful for.
- ⇒ IDEA: Prioritize your daily time with God. Work on it and do all you can to improve it. (You can offer to help if they need it!)