

Ecclesiastes: "Learning to Live for Christ"  
 Ecclesiastes 2:1-26 (*Can Anything Make You Happy?*)

*I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure, enjoy yourself. (Ecclesiastes 2:1)*

### I. I Can't Get No Satisfaction

- a. Solomon presented three areas of life that he believed should have brought him satisfaction, but he did not find it.
- b. **Pleasure** – *I said in my heart, Come now, I will test you with pleasure, enjoy yourself.*
  1. Ancient Jews believed that God made man to enjoy creation. (Psalm 104)
  2. Solomon laughed, ate good food, drank the best wine and was entertained by top talent.
  3. When the party was over, Solomon found himself dissatisfied and empty.
  4. Pleasure seeking usually becomes a selfish endeavor, and selfishness destroys joy. For example, the more people drink the less enjoyment they get out of it.
- c. **Work** – *I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards...gardens and parks.* Solomon had works and workers (two kinds of slaves and those born in his household).
  1. Solomon found delight in his labor but afterward he saw only vanity (*hevel*, emptiness).
  2. To Solomon, work became empty, because whatever you work for and accumulate you can take nothing with you. It must be left behind for someone who did not work for it. (vv.18-21)(Pro 13:22)
  3. Work is a blessing from God, but a "dream job" cannot satisfy the human heart.(Isaiah 55:2)
  4. When workaholics retire, they often feel useless and sometimes die from a lack of meaningful activity. Unfortunately, their identity was attached to their work.
- d. **Wisdom** – *What happens to the fool will happen to me also...the wise dies like the fool. (v.12-17)*
  1. We can leave our wisdom to guide the next generation, but how can we be sure they will follow it. We are supposed to learn from our forefathers, but we often repeat the same mistakes.
- e. Solomon concluded by saying, *I hated life. (v. He found nothing in life worth keeping.*
- f. He found no contentment with pleasure, work or wisdom. He was not content.
- g. The Christian should always love life and the Giver of Life. We may not enjoy everything in life, but we know that our labor *is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor 15:58)*

### II. In the Midst of the Mess

- a. "Life is a mess most of the time, and theology [**Jesus**] must be lived in the midst of the mess"-Chuck Colson.
- b. *Contentment* in the Bible means *the satisfaction of one's needs* (2 Cor. 9:8) or *the control of one's desires* (1 Tim. 6:6, 8). Are you *content*?
- c. Contentment rests on the positive assurance that God has supplied your needs.
- d. How are we to be content and store up treasures in heaven? (Matthew 6:19-21)
  1. Remember that being content is directly tied to the condition of the heart.
  2. We are to treasure Jesus. When Jesus is our treasure, we will commit our resources—our money, our time, our talents—to His work in this world without discontent or malcontent.
- e. The treasures that await the child of God will far outweigh any trouble we may face in life). We can serve the Lord wholeheartedly, knowing that God is the One keeping score
- f. The eye wants it, but the heart desires it. We have to align our desires with God's will. (Psalm 37:4)

### III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action

- a. Read verse 24. Whenever you bring God into the picture, everything changes.
- b. There is something to be said about living each day so that it will count.
- c. As we live we should count every blessing, be thankful for every breath, and consider every smile.
- d. Remember each day God gives us the ability to laugh and cry, but He gives us the choice.