

Wisdom for Living Life Well

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- [0 : 0 0] The book of Ecclesiastes. We will have four chapters left in Ecclesiastes after this morning.! And so far in the book, the author of Ecclesiastes, who refers to himself as the preacher, he's looked at many different aspects of life.
- He's looked at life in a fallen and a broken world and the conclusion that he has come to is something that we have all, I believe, lived long enough to experience and to know.
- And that is that life in this world is broken and many aspects of it are hard to understand. We've all experienced hardships and trials for which we have no answers.
- And we have observed life that perplexes us. Just this past week, I'm sure like me, you heard about a man on our island who unfortunately responded to his difficult life by ending his life.
- And just a few months prior, we heard of a similar man who responded in a similar way. Well, Ecclesiastes brings us face to face with these realities, this brokenness, the problems of life that cause some people to lose hope and to give up.
- [1 : 3 4] But that's not all that Ecclesiastes does. Ecclesiastes is a wisdom book. So its primary function is to teach us wisdom for living life in a fallen, broken world that is confusing at times and for which we have no answers for the things we see and for the things that we experience.
- And I believe this morning that all around this room, all over this room, every single one of us deeply desires to live life well.
- Even though we may not express that, even though we may not say that, every single one of us wants to live life.
- No matter how difficult it is, we want to live it well. I don't think there's anyone who wants to end his or her life and have regret about how life was lived.
- And if we hear and heed the words of the preacher in Ecclesiastes, 8 in particular, since that's what we're focused on this morning, I believe that we will not regret how we have lived our lives at the end of our lives.
- [2 : 5 2] So if you've not yet done so, please turn to Ecclesiastes chapter 8. And we begin reading this morning at verse 1. We will conclude at verse 15 instead of verse 17 as noted in your bulletin.
- Next week, the Lord willing, we will pick up at verse 16. But this morning we conclude at verse 15. Ecclesiastes chapter 8 starting at verse 1.
- Who is like the wise? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine and the hardness of his face is changed.
- I say, keep the king's command because of God's oath to him. Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause.
- For he does whatever he pleases. For the word of the king is supreme. And who may say to him, what are you doing?

- [4 : 07] Whoever keeps the command will know no evil thing. And the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way.
- For there is a time and a way for everything. Although man's troubles lie heavy on him.
- For he does not know what is to be. For who can tell him how it will be? No man has power to retain the spirit or power over the day of death.
- There is no discharge from war. Nor will wickedness deliver those who are given to it. All this I observed while applying my heart to all that is done under the sun.
- When man had power over man to his hurt. Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place.
- [5 : 13] And were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily.
- The heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life.
- Yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God. Because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked.
- Neither will he prolong his days like a shadow. Because he does not fear before God. There is a vanity that takes place on earth.
- That there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. And there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous.
- [6 : 20] I said that this also is vanity. And I commend joy for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful.
- For this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun. Let's pray together.
- Father we thank you for your word this morning. And Lord your word that has been preserved for us is an expression of your care.
- Lord your word that has been preserved for us. It is a reminder to us that you have not left us to ourselves as we live life in a world that has fallen and broken.
- And where there are many contradictions. There are things that perplex us. There are things that trouble us. Lord you have given us your word.
- [7 : 23] And in particular you have given us the wisdom that is found in Ecclesiastes. To help us. To navigate this life. To live it well.
- Even though we may not understand. Everything. That we confront in this fallen world. I pray. That you would speak to our hearts. And Lord you know the different ways in which we need to hear your word this morning.
- From this passage of scripture before us. And so I ask Lord that by the power of your spirit that you would apply your word to our hearts. I pray that you would quicken truth to our minds.
- And I ask Lord that you would grant me much grace to be faithful. To proclaim your word and care for these. Who have gathered this morning. Would you speak to our hearts we ask.
- In Jesus name. Amen. So how do we live. Life well.
- [8 : 27] In a world that is broken. And for which we have. No answers for many of the things. That we face. Well the very simple answer is it requires wisdom.
- It requires wisdom for us to be able to live life in this fallen world. And to live it well. And it's interesting that the preacher begins.

By talking about wisdom. Because time and time again. Through the book up to this point. He has reminded us that wisdom is good. But wisdom has limitations.

We saw last week. How the preacher sought to understand things in the past. And he said that they were deep, deep. Very deep.

And he just could not fathom them. Wisdom can only take us so far. Yet. In this section. The preacher commends wisdom to us. As the means for living life well.

[9 : 27] And when we consider what the preacher says. In this section of scripture that we have just read. In light of what he has said up to this point. Here's what the preacher. Is saying to us.

This is the point that he seems to be making. Despite its limitations. Wisdom enables us to live life well.

In this passage before us.

The preacher uses his own wisdom. To teach us three particular ways. In which life can be lived well. And in our remaining time.

I want us to consider them. The first way is found in verses 2 through 9. And it is this. Obey authority. You want to live life well.

[10 : 35] You want to live life well. In this fallen broken world. The preacher says. Obey authority. But notice how he begins. He begins in verse 1.

By commending wisdom. He asks this question. Who is like the wise? Who is like the wise?

The preacher is addressing his original audience. And he is asking them this question. Who is like the wise? Who knows the interpretation of a thing?

And then he answers and he says. A man's wisdom makes his face shine. And the hardness of his face is changed.

The preacher seems to be pointing out that wisdom is rare. It is kind of like walking in a room and saying. Okay. Who is wise? Who knows the answer to this? And very few would offer themselves as being wise.

[11 : 35] And he commands wisdom by saying. That a man's wisdom will make the hardness of his face shine. It is kind of like. A person who is perplexed about something.

Confused. And doesn't know what to do. What the preacher says. When wisdom comes. It will make your face shine. It will lighten the load.

It will brighten your appearance. And what the preacher is saying. Is that the wise obey authority. They obey the king.

In the days of the preacher. It is very different from what we know today. The authority in that day was autocratic. It was a king. It was not a democracy.

You didn't vote for the king. You didn't vote against the king. Your only involvement was to obey the king. And the preacher is saying.

[12 : 33] Keep to his original audience. Keep the king's command. And the first reason that the preacher gives to. Keep the king's command. Is a divine reason.

He says obey the king because. Of God's oath to him. This would have been at a time. When the king of Israel was God's representative. When he would have been appointed.

And delegated as. God's divine authority. For the nation. And there were special promises. That were given to him. As. God's anointed king.

And so the clear point that the. Preacher is making is that the king is to be obeyed. Because he is in a position of authority. He is. God's authority. And the second reason that the preacher gives.

To obey the king. Is that the king could hurt you. He counsels against any attitude or action. In opposition to the king.

[13 : 32] Notice what he says. This statement. Be not hasty to go from the presence. Of the king. It speaks about. This loyalty. It speaks about.

A person being an eye servant. Really not. Valuing the king. And respecting the king. And wants to get out of the king's sight. So that he can do whatever he.

Wants to do. Can't wait to leave the king's sight. Because he wants to do. His own thing. And the counsel is. Don't be hasty. To leave.

The king's. Presence. And the reason is that. An attitude of rebellion. Will eventually manifest. In some action.

That will put you in trouble. With the king. So notice. It's further warning. In verses. Three and four. Do not take your stand. In any evil. Cause.

[14 : 25] For he does what he pleases. For the word of the king is supreme. And who can say to him. What. Are you doing. So what the.

What the preacher is. Is. Commending. Is he's commending. He's commending. Wisdom. He's commending. Relating to. The king.

Relating to authority. In a very wise way. Look at verse five. He says. Whoever. Whoever. Keeps a command. Will know. No evil. Thing. And the wise heart.

Will know. The proper time. And the just way. The point. That the preacher is making. Is that even when dealing with. A king. Whose. Authority. Is consolidated.

Whose authority. Cannot be questioned. The wise person. Can be preserved. From a king's wrath. By simply. Obeying the commands.

[15 : 23] The preacher is also making the point. That the wise person. Knows how to behave. He says. In verse five. Wisdom teaches. The wise person.

What to do. The just way. And when to do it. The proper time. And. This is true.

Despite the fact that. The wise man. Like everyone else. Faces. Troubles. He faces. Hardships. Notice he says.

In verse five. For there's a time. And a way. For everything. Although. Man's trouble. Lies heavy on him. He's saying. Even though you face. Difficulties.

And you face. Trials. And all the stresses. Of life. And all the other things. That are going on. The wise person. Knows the just way.

[16 : 18] The wise person. Knows the proper time. Wisdom will teach. And show you. How to act. And when to act. And one of the.

Issues that we see. That the preacher is. Is raising. That can bring some of these. Troubles and stresses. And difficulties. That we face. Is that. We. We have uncertainty.

We don't know the future. We don't know. What is to be. And there's no one to tell us. What. It will be. And how it will be. He reminds us.

We don't have. Power over our spirit. In other words. We. We can't preserve our lives. We can't stop ourselves. From dying. We don't know the day. Of our death. All these are issues.

That. Are well beyond our control. And you know. Many times. We. Make decisions. And we do things. Trying to preserve our lives. Trying to protect.

[17 : 19] Ourselves. And we run afoul. Of. What is the right thing to do. We run afoul. Of the authority. And so. The preachers instead.

Recommending. Wisdom. Recommending. Obedience. To the authority. Of. The king. He tells us. In verse.

In verse. Eight. It's pretty dark up here now. That no man. Has power. To retain his spirit.

Or power. Over the day. Of death. There's no discharge. From war. You can't say. I'm not going to war. Those things. Are beyond. And out of your control.

And he says. Wickedness. Will not deliver. Those. Who practice it. Notice. What he says. In verse nine. He says. I've observed all of this.

[18 : 15] While applying my heart. To all that is done. Under the sun. When man had power. Over. Man. To his hurt. If that's too. If that's not good.

You can certainly turn it off. I just had a difficulty. A short while ago. I should be fine. So. The preacher. Is speaking.

In a day. When. The king. Wielded absolute power. And authority. And his counselors. Live wisely. Obey. Authority. Even when life is hard.

Even when life is difficult. Wisdom will teach you. What to do. And how to act. And how you to respond. But we don't live in a country like the.

One that the king. Describes. We don't have a king. We have a prime minister. But he is not supreme. In our context. The constitution is supreme. And our constitution gives us rights. And gives us protections.

[19 : 13] Against the prime minister. And against. The government. But the words of the preacher. As they relate to. How we relate to authority.

So that we may live well. Those words are relevant to us. This morning. They. Apply. To every single one of us. This morning. And we may want to consider it.

More broadly. To say. Obey. Authority. Or. To put it another way. Submit to authority. And that refers to all authority. Whether it's government. Whether it's a boss.

Whether it's a teacher. Or parents. Or police officers. All persons. Who are in. Authority. This is how we live life.

Well. This is how we live. Wisely. In a world. That has fallen. And broken. Now. I won't make a case.

[20 : 09] For why the preacher. Started. At this. Particular point. But here's what I would say. This is God's. Inspired. Word. To us. And.

This is where. The preacher starts. When he is saying. Who is wise. Who is the wise one. Well see. The wise ones.

Will obey. Authority. So this. Has to be critical. As we navigate life. As we go through the world. That we have an attitude. If we're going to be wise.

To understand. That it is important. To obey authority. To submit to authority. If we are going to live. Life. Well. And brothers and sisters.

It is not as important. For us to know. Why. Scripture says this. As much. As the fact. That scripture. Says this. And therefore. We need to.

[21 : 06] Embrace it. As an expression. Of living. Life. Well. Listen to the words. Of the apostle Paul. In Romans 13.

Verses 1 through 5. Let every person. Be subject. To the governing authorities. For there is no authority. Except from God. And those that exist.

Have been instituted. By God. Therefore. Whoever resists. The authorities. Resists. What God. Has appointed. And those who resist.

Will incur judgment. For rulers. Are not. A terror. To good. Conduct. But to bad. Would you have.

No fear. Of the one. Who is in authority. Then do. What is good. And you will receive. His approval. For he is God's servant. For your good. But if you are wrong.

[22 : 02] If you do wrong. Be afraid. For he does not. Bear the sword. In vain. For he is the servant. Of God. An avenger. Who carries out. God's wrath. On the wrongdoer.

Therefore. One must be in subjection. Not only to avoid. God's wrath. But also. For the sake. Of conscience. The wise.

Will obey. And submit. To authority. Even under difficult. Circumstances. They will know. How. And when. To act. And so.

Since we all desire. To live. Well. Live this life. Well. We need to consider. Our attitude. Towards authority. Do you rebel. Against authority. Do you disrespect.

Authority. Is your attitude. Towards authority. To try to see. What you can get away with. How much. You can get away with. How far. You are able to go.

[23 : 00] And again. This includes. Any authority. Children. Who are present. This morning. Recognize. That your main authority. In your life. At this time. Is your parents.

And the question is. How do you view. Their authority. How do you see them. Do you see them. As the authority. Figures. That God. Has placed. In your life. For your good. God.

And if not. You should. Because that's. What scripture teaches. The authority. That your parents.

Have. Is a. Delegated authority. From God. There's no authority. Except God's authority. So anyone. Who has authority.

Has delegated. Authority. And therefore. You're not really. Dealing with your parents. Authority. Ultimately. Dealing with God. And his authority. So you shouldn't.

[23 : 56] Think for a moment. That when you disobey. Your parents. You're disobeying. Just your parents. No. When you disobey. Your parents. You're disobeying. God. Ultimately.

And you shouldn't. Think. That. Well. I'll disobey. My parents. And get away with stuff. And then you're going to. Obey the police. And obey. The government. No. How we relate.

To authority. At home. Is dress rehearsal. For how we're going to. Relate to authority. Outside of our homes. And parents.

This should be a reminder. To us. That God has given us. Authority. And therefore. It's not our authority. It's God's authority. It's a delegated authority. And therefore. We need to steward it.

Because we will be. Accountable to God. For how we. Steward it. And I know. How easy it is. As a parent. To sometimes forget that. To think that the authority. Is our authority.

[24 : 54] That we're exercising. Now we're exercising. God's authority. And therefore. We need to do it. In a way. That represents him. And not us. Because when we forget that.

The authority. Becomes sinful. And looks more like us. Than it looks. Like God. But that's the first. That's the preacher's.

First bit of counsel. For those. Of us. Who want to live life well. He says. Submit to authority. And in short. What he's calling us to do. Is to refrain from evil.

Because ultimately. That's what. That's what authority. In our lives. Is designed for. We need authority. Could you imagine. For a moment. If.

The cabinet resigns. Resigns. All the members. Of parliament. Just resign. All the judges. Just quit. All the civil servants.

- [25 : 52] Just go home. The police officers. Say man. Okay. I'm done. And they all go. Just imagine. Imagine the country. No one obeys traffic lights.
- No one respects people's property. No one respects people's rights. We need authority. Because we're sinful. And otherwise. Left to ourselves. We devour one another.
- And so. If we want to live life well. We need to have this appreciation. For authority. And for the way things are structured. And we need to. Obey.
- Authority. The second part. To the preacher's. Counsel for living life well. Is. Fear God. He gives us this counsel. In verses.
- 10 through 13. Notice how he begins. In verse 10. He begins with a sobering statement. Then I saw. The wicked.
- [26 : 50] Buried. This is a sober reminder. That even though the wicked live long. They will eventually die. But what's interesting about these.
- Wicked people. That the preacher has in view. Is that they frequented the temple. They were praised in the city. Where they committed. Their wickedness. Now.
- What kind of people were these? I mean. They are wicked people. But they. Frequented. The holy place. They were in and out. Of the holy place.
- And even though they were wicked people. They were. They were praised. Like. I can almost guarantee. That these were not. Your run of the mill.
- Wicked people. These were not. The rapists. And the robbers. And the murderers. And I say that. Because those kinds of people. Hardly. Enjoy.
- [27 : 52] Going to church. Back and forth. They are busy doing. Other things. But instead. They were people who committed.
- What we would call. Accepted wickedness. Wickedness. That we tend to overlook. Wickedness. That we. Countenance.
- And we. Do not condemn. Wickedness. Like stealing land. And charging unjust prices. And cheating employees.
- And not paying customs duties. And. Financially raping the poor. Through gambling. And other kinds of. What we would call. White collar. Wickedness.
- These kinds of. Wicked people. Instead of being. Condemned. They are often praised. And in our context. Of the Mohammed. Sometimes they have been. Knighted. By the Queen. And the whole thing.
- [28 : 55] Is a contradiction. And what the preacher says. This makes no sense. It is not supposed to be. This way he says. It is vanity.
- It is vanity. And we. We have seen. As we have worked through. Ecclesiastes. That vanity is. It is a myth. It is a myth. Vapor. It is something. That just disappears.
- It is something. You just can't wrap your. Hand around. You cannot. Grasp it. It says. It makes no sense. How can that be?
- How can it be. That people. Who are wicked. Are frequenting. The house of God. And they are praised. By others. Verse 11.
- Tells us. How it can be. Verse 11. Gives us the answer. Here is the answer. Because. The sentence of evil. The sentence against evil. An evil deed. Is not executed speedily.
- [29 : 52] The heart. Of the children of man. Is fully set. To do. Evil. This is why. People. People can be. Steeped in wickedness. In an ongoing way.
- And they can be praised. By others. Who observe them. And perhaps even benefit. From. Their wickedness. Now this is true on two levels.

The first level is what we would call the divine level. God allows wicked people to continue in wickedness for a long time. And I think you would agree.

If. If you were God. If I was God. I wouldn't let wickedness go on this long. I shouldn't say that. Because. I've heard it said. If you were God. You do the same thing that God does. So.

If Cedric was God. I would do it. Different than if you. And your own self. Were. Yourself. Overlooking these things. You would stop it. See.

[30 : 48] God is not like us. He is unlike us. He allows wickedness to go on for a long time. Not because he condones wickedness. He doesn't condone wickedness.

But God allows it to go on for a long time. Because he is long suffering. And he is not willing for any to perish. But for all to come to repentance. But what happens is. We sinners.

Count God's long suffering as slackness. Or that we are special. Or God understands our situation. He understands our little unique things. So he gives us an exception.

From the rule. And we confuse. God's long suffering. And so what we do. Is we set our hearts. To continue in the direction. That God's long suffering.

Is designed. To bring us away from. And so because. The punishment doesn't happen. Right away. We set our hearts. To do evil.

[31 : 44] We and also. Those who observe us. In what we are doing. And we are even praised. People are even praised. As they do so.

And the second level. That verse 11 is true. Is on a human level. For example. If we think about our own country. Crime in our country. Is multifaceted.

It is complex in many ways. But I will tell you. That the main reason. The primary reason. The biggest reason. For the crime epidemic. In this country.

Is found right in verse 11. And if we had a government. Or minister of national security. Who was convinced of this. Who was persuaded. That the reason.

That. We have people. Who are set. To do evil. And who. Just. Wanting. Wanting. Wanting. Step out. Somebody's life. They do it.

[32 : 41] Because. Evil deeds. Are not punished. In any speedy. Or in any. Predictable way. It takes too long. To bring criminals. To justice.

And too many of our laws. Are just not being enforced. They're just there. For decoration. And. And. People who are evil. They. Recognize. That pretty soon. It's kind of like. The parent.

Who threatens. A child. With punishment. And never follows through. And so the hearts. Of criminals. Are filled.

With schemes. When you have the counsel. Of the preacher. In verse 12. He says. Though a sinner. Does evil. A hundred times.

And prolongs his life. Yet I know. That it will be well. With those. Who fear God. Because they fear. Before him. And he goes on.

[33 : 36] In verse 13. He says. But it will not go well. With the wicked. Neither. Will he prolong his days. Like a shadow. Because he does not fear.

Before God. What's the preacher's point? The preacher's point. Is not simply. That the wicked. Will eventually die. That's not his.

That's not his point. Because. The righteous. Will eventually. Die as well. The preacher. Is speaking about something. Beyond death. The preacher.

Seems to be speaking. About accountability. Before God. After death. What he's saying. About the wicked. Is. After death. It will not go well. And about the righteous.

After death. It will go well. It will go well. For them. And the difference. Is. The righteous. Fared. This is the preacher's words.

[34 : 31] He said. They feared. Before God. On the other hand. The wicked. Did not fear. Before God. In his commentary. On Ecclesiastes.

Michael Eaton. Describes. The fear of God. As the awe. And holy caution. That arises. From the realization.

Of the greatness. Of God. That's what it means. To fear before God. What it means. To fear before God. Is to have this. Conscious. Awareness. You are aware. Of who God is.

The realization. Of who he is. His greatness. His power. And the result is. Awe. And a holy caution. As you live life. You're living life.

Mindful. But you're dealing. Ultimately. With this. Powerful God. God. And those who. Don't have that awareness.

[35 : 28] Those who do not. Live with the awareness. Of the greatness of God. Are the ones. Who will set their hearts.

On evil. The ones who will do. Whatever they want to do. Because. There's no reference. For God. They don't fear. Before God. But brothers and sisters.

When we realize. The awesome greatness of God. We fear before him. In other words. We live with this. God consciousness. With awe.

And holy caution. When we realize. His greatness. When we realize. The greatness of God. We aren't able. To live. One way.

In public. And another way. In private. Because we are aware. Of the same. Awesome God. Who watches over all. And who knows all. Who is omnipresent.

[36 : 23] Who is omniscient. Who knows everything. And therefore. We don't play games. With a private. And a public life. We fear before him. We fear in private.

We fear in public. Friends. The preacher's point. Is that. If we are going to live life. Well.

We will fear before God. And see. This is all encompassing. This is all encompassing. Because it. It touches.

So many facets. Of life. It tempers. So many facets. Of life. It will affect. How we live life. When we live. With this fear.

Before. The Lord. We do so mindful. Of the end. We do so mindful. That this. Life is not it. After this life. We will all.

[37 : 19] Stand before God. And we will give. An account for our lives. The Bible says. That we will. Answer to him. Before whom. All things are naked.

And nothing. Is hid. So there is accountability. Now. And there will be accountability. In the very end. And it will go well.

For those. Who fear before. God. Do you fear God? Are you.

Fearing before God? Are you living. Life. Fearing before God. Aware. Of his awesome greatness. And therefore. Who are living. With awe.

And holy caution. In all that you do. I pray that you are. Because that is the reality. That we all face.

[38 : 16] All of life. Is lived before the face of God. All of life. Is lived before the holy gaze. Of God. The holy awareness. Of God. Or are you living.

Like the wicked. Are you living. Like the wicked people. That the preacher. Observed. In his time. Those who trafficked. In the holy place.

Those who trafficked. In the house of God. While living in wickedness. Being praised. And being. Well spoken of. And being well thought of. Even as they lived.

In wickedness. In wickedness. Well the preacher says. There is going to come a day. When they die. When the wicked. Die. He says. And in the end.

It will not. Go well. For them. And so friend. If that's you this morning. If you're. Like these. The preacher observed. Trafficking in the house of God.

[39 : 15] But living. A resolutely. Wicked life. Unaware. And indifferent. To the holy. Awesome God. Who oversees. All things. In this. Life.

And in this world. Then it will not go well. With you. And I urge you this morning. To turn from your sin.

And to turn to Christ. The only one who can transform our lives. To fear before God. It's the only reason we fear before God.

We don't fear before God. Because we are. In and of ourselves. Wise and holy. We fear before God. That we've had an encounter with Jesus Christ. And he opens our eyes. To the truth.

And he opens our eyes. To things that we thought. Were good and right. And when our eyes are open. They grieve us. Because we now see.

[40 : 11] As we. Ought to see. And I urge you. That's you this morning. And you're aware. That you really are. Like the ones. That the preacher observed. Who are living that way.

I urge you to turn. This morning. To Jesus Christ. Otherwise. If you do not. You may live a long life. God's long suffering.

May preserve you. In this life. But in the end. It will not go well. With you. Because. You're not fearing. Before. The Lord.

And then third. And finally. The preacher. Counsels us. To. Enjoy life. He counsels us. To. Enjoy life.

He does that. In verses. 14 and 15. Notice. In verse 14. The preacher. Again. Picks up. This troubling. Occurrence.

[41 : 10] That takes place. In our broken world. He says. There's a vanity. That takes place. On the earth. That there are. Righteous people. To whom it happens.

According to the deeds. Of the wicked. And there are wicked. People. To whom it happens. According to the deeds. Of the righteous. I say. This is also vanity. This weighed heavily.

On the preacher's heart. Because the preacher. Just. Touched this issue. A few verses earlier. In chapter 7. That we considered. Last week. But it's a recurring issue.

It is a. It is a recurring issue. Not just for the preacher. But for us as well. This is a reality. That we as believers. Face. Even though we believe. That in the end. God will vindicate the righteous.

And condemn the wicked. We struggle in between. Because we observe. And experience. Wicked people. Getting good outcomes. In this life. And righteous people.

[42 : 12] Getting bad outcomes. That the wicked should get. In this life. And like the preacher. We wrestle. And it's an ongoing theme.

That we will never fully resolve. In this life. And it should caution us. That when we see misfortune. In the lives of people. That we should not automatically assume.

That oh. They must have done something wrong. And when we also see evident blessings. On the life of a person. We must not assume. That they must be doing something right.

And see. We must read. A lot of things. By going on those surface. Kinds of experiences. But the preacher tells us. No. Sometimes it's a contradiction.

Sometimes it happens. In reverse. In the opposite way. That it should happen. The preacher doesn't say more than that.

[43 : 10] All he says is. You know what. This is meaningless. I don't understand it. I can't wrap my mind around it. This is vanity.

Two times in verse 14. He tells us. That this occurrence. Is vanity. He opens by saying. It's vanity. And he closes the verse. By saying. This is vanity.

Meaning it. It is meaningless. You can't comprehend it. You don't understand why. Why is it. Yesterday. There were people grieving for.

Loved ones. Young people. Husbands. Wives. Who were in the prime of their lives. And leaving loved ones. Even as.

Others who were more deserving. From a human perspective. Of just being rid from the earth. Continued on. In their wickedness. We don't understand.

[44 : 10] It's like a vapor. You can't. You can't wrap your. Hand. Around it. It's a kind of injustice. That escapes us. The preacher does not offer us.

A philosophy to deal with that. But instead. What he says to us. Is in verse 15. In response to it. He doesn't call us to try to understand it. He simply says.

You know what? I commend joy. For man has no good thing. Under the sun. But to eat. And drink. And be joyful. For this will go with him.

In his toil. Through the days. Of his life. That God has given him. Under the sun. The preacher is reminding us. That though life is hard. And though life is broken.

And though things are contradictory. And many times don't make sense. In the midst of it. We can have joy. And he commends us. To have joy. In the face of all the perplexity.

[45 : 09] The preacher gives us this divine advice. He says to us. Enjoy life. Because there's nothing better to do.

In this fallen world. Than to eat. And drink. And be joyful. Brothers and sisters. We live life well. When we enjoy.

The good gifts. That God has given. To us. The gifts of food. And drink. And other gifts. That make us joyful. Gifts like marriage.

And family. And friends. And the created world. These gifts. Will make life's contradictions. And life's hardships. Easier to bear.

And that's why the preacher says. At the end of the verse. At the end of this section. For.

[46 : 08] This will go. With him. In his toil. Through the days of his life. That God has given. To him. Under the sun.

I think it's very helpful. For us to notice. That. The preacher calls us. To be joyful.

And to. And to enjoy life. With the very basic things of life. Food and drink. God gave them to us.

As gifts to be enjoyed. And food is to be enjoyed. Drink is to be enjoyed. And yet.

Sometimes. In the midst of abundance of food. In the midst of abundance of drink. We complain. I mean. The preacher doesn't even.

- [47 : 02] Talk about shelter. He doesn't even talk about clothing. And although. Those are. Those are things as well. That we. Need. We don't need them as much as we need. Food and drink.
- But we have those as well. And sometimes we. We complain. I think the point is. The point is that. Finding joy. In this life. Is far simpler.
- Than we make it. Many times. We're not happy. Unless we get. All of these. Non necessities. All of these. What we can actually call. In light of this. Luxuries of life.
- These extras. That God. In his kindness. Bestows upon us. But we forget. That. We don't need. Those things. To have joy.
- And to enjoy. Life. The preacher. Is in essence. Calling us. To wise. And joyful. Living.
- [48 : 00] By enjoying. God's basic gifts. That he gives to us. And how easy is it. For us to. Overlook. The essentials. For joy.
- And. Crave. Other things. That will never. Bring us joy. I'll give an example. I guarantee.
- No doubt. There's somebody here. This morning. Who's probably thinking. Boy. I could use a vacation. I just love. To go on vacation. That'd be a wonderful thing. No doubt. But you know what?
- It will not bring you joy. It will not bring you joy. It will not bring you joy. The basic.
- The basic. The basic. The basic. The basic. The basic. Good gifts of God. But let me do this. Let me stand you on vacation. With no food. Put you in a room. You go on your vacation. And no food for you. No joy.
- [49 : 04] No. Joy. The joy. The joy that God calls us to. These basic. Things. In life. What's quite interesting is.
- For the. Unbeliever. When they hear joy. They hear. Joyful. All those things.
- A totally different. Kind of. Reality. Comes to them. They have sinful pleasures. In view. They have foolish pleasures. In view. But the preacher.
- Gives us. Sound advice. Even though life is broken and hard. Let us enjoy. The life. That God. Providentially. Allots to us.
- And I would say this. I. I. I. I can say. Almost without. Fear of being contradicted. Contradicted. That all of us. Today. Are going to leave this place.
- [50 : 01] And we will at least have food. And drink. Let us. Embrace. The gifts of God. Let us.
- Entrust all those questions. And the contradictions. And the other things. That we don't understand. To God. And let us. Take the. Counsel of the preacher. And let us.
- Enjoy. Life. That God. Providentially. Allots to us. So how can we live life well? We live life well.
- By obeying authority. By fearing God. And by enjoying life. I think a logical question. Must be. Why does this escape most people?
- If it's. If it's. That simple. Doing these three things. Obeying authority. And. Fearing God.
- [51 : 01] And. Enjoying life. Why does it escape. Most people. And I say that because many of us know. Many people.
- Who are not living life well. They resent authority. They don't like being told what to do. They live their lives to please themselves. And not God.
- And really. They are not. Enjoying. Life. They're missing out on life. In many ways. So what's the problem? Well the problem is they lack wisdom.
- That's the problem. The problem is they lack wisdom. They don't. Have. Wisdom. They don't have the wisdom that the preacher is commending. When he says who's wise.

It's the way the wise person lives. They don't have this wisdom. They have another kind of wisdom. A worldly wisdom. A wisdom that leads to sorrow and pain and heartache and heartbreak.

[52 : 02] But they don't have the wisdom that the preacher commends. Here. They need wisdom. And we need this wisdom to live. Well.

So what is wisdom? Is wisdom the ability to make good decisions? And I imagine to some degree it is. But it is so much more than that.

Is it the kind of ideas that D. Paul Riley talks about every day? And other motivational speakers like him? No. Is it the kind of wisdom? No. Is it the kind of wisdom? No. I don't think so.

Because many people listen to him and their lives don't reflect the wisdom that we see being a spouse in the book of Ecclesiastes. Is it found in some philosophy that we need to learn?

No. No. No. Wisdom is not found in a philosophy. But wisdom is found in a person. Who we need to know personally.

[53 : 09] And that person is Jesus Christ. And we come to know Jesus through obeying the gospel. We come to know Jesus through hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel.

Listen to these words from the Apostle Paul as he was writing to the church at Corinth as he introduced his letter. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 starting in verse 17.

Paul says, For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel. And not with words of eloquent wisdom.

Lest the cross of Christ be emptied of his power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing. But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. And the discernment of the discerning, I will thwart. Where is the one who is wise? Someone is asking the same question that the preacher is asking.

[54 : 19] In Ecclesiastes 8. Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified. A stumbling block to the Jews and folly to the Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

See, all that we talked about this morning, commending those three ways of living life well, in a vacuum, don't help us. They only help us as we come to know God through the person of Jesus Christ.

The one who is the power of God to transform our lives and the wisdom of God by which we are able to live life.

[55 : 36] And see, brothers and sisters, this is the difference. This is why so many live this life and they don't live it well. We live this life and live it well when we live by the wisdom of God that comes to us through the person of Jesus Christ.

And so, brothers and sisters, we need this wisdom to obey authority. This wisdom teaches us to fear God.

This is the wisdom that we need if we're going to enjoy this sometimes difficult life, this sometimes confusing life.

This is how we live it and we live it well. Let's pray together.