



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
4:1-6

Pastor's Notes

Vs. 1 People in control can abuse power. Tragically what happens is that some people in power will take advantage of the less fortunate. This will leave the less fortunate with tears and no one to comfort them. (At times like this—when it is impossible to fix and correct the powers-at-be—the comfort of the Gospel is the only solace.

Even though this is often so, government is still a necessity in a sinful world. Yes, government is needed—as the left-hand kingdom—to use the sword in keeping peace and order in society.

Now, considering this, we must state that the exact type of government is not necessarily stated in this verse. Indeed, the form of government is not the real focus of these verses.

Vs. 2-3 Wow, these are tough verses to read. So, what is the point of these verses? It is rather simple; sin should shock us. We should be horrified by sin—our sin, our neighbor's sin, and the world's sin. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil." In other words, we Christians must guard ourselves against becoming either desensitized or conditions with sin. That is to say; we Christians should never lose our grief, shock, and horror against sin. We should detest sin so much that we could say, "It would be better not to be born and see all this sin."

It should also be noted that the evil deeds of mankind are the pinnacle of badness for Solomon. Sickness, poverty, etc. are distant seconds compared to the sin of mankind.

The problem of life is 'sin.' Yes, sin is at the root of every problem in life. Divorce—sin. Sickness—sin. Abuse—sin. Suicide—sin. Adultery—sin. And on and on the list could go. This is why any solution other than Jesus Christ is simply not sufficient. No self-help book can deal with sin. No 10-step program can overcome sin. No ideology of mankind can triumph over sin. We are sin-sick, and the only solution to sin is Jesus.

V. 4– 6 It must be pointed out that verses 4-6 are not connected. They are pithy phrases.

V. 6 When we try to keep up with the Joneses we become enslaved. Ever been enslaved in a task/job/mission to get to a certain point to be like everyone else? Guess what? You are a slave. It is like this: we work to get a paycheck. With that paycheck, we use money to support our spouse, children, and neighbor. However, as soon as our eyes begin to wander to other people's stuff, we go the way of coveting. And coveting destroys contentment. And when there is no contentment, we believe the lie that if we only get "XYZ" that we will be awesome and everything will be grand. And so, we work... work... work... to get that final 'thing.' However, this kind of thinking does not get us closer to contentment but entraps us in slavery. We become slaves to our sinful appetites of getting more stuff. And we also become slaves to the credit cards, financing, marketing ploys, and so forth.

We do not work to get happiness. We work because we already have joy—and in that joy, we can happily serve our families and neighbors in our vocations.

V. 5 Fools are often lazy. Fools twiddle their thumbs and starve to death. It is important to note that the Bible has a lot to say about being generous to the poor. However, the Bible has a lot to say about laziness. A 25-year old man playing the video game Fortnite in his mom's basement, living off of Cheetos and Lucky Charms, while wearing Star Wars pajamas, is a lazy fool! He is not only mooching off mommy, but setting himself up for utter collapse when mommy is no longer around to do his laundry. God sets times to play and work. Failing to work and being lazy are not acceptable before the Lord, because this mindset is essentially self-destructive. And it is destructive to one's neighbor as well.

V. 6 There is a blessing to a quiet life. A quiet life does not try to outdo one's neighbor. On the other hand, the quiet life does not slack off (i.e., be lazy). In our modern age, we, unfortunately, seem to work too much—we have busy hands and often fail to pause and live the quiet life.