



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
4:7-16

Pastor's Notes

Summary: Verses 7-12

have the common theme of 'loneliness' and the blessing of having companions.

Vs. 7-8 It has been a while since we have seen the word, 'vanity,' but it appears again in verse 7. So what is empty now? Well, simply stated, we have an appetite to work and make money. Now, this is not bad if we are attempting to provide for our loved ones. However, in verse 8, we are considering a person who is all alone. He has no reason to keep working because he has no one to provide for and no one to inherit his wealthy; however, he keeps working to get stuff. Why?

From Bollhagen's Commentary on Ecclesiastes: "Westerners in particular, waving the banner of national independence, have brought independence down to the personal level in some unhealthy ways. Society glamorizes personal freedom and independence to the point that many pride themselves in being islands and in not belonging to any cause, organization, culture, value system, family, faith, or church! . . . But belonging only to oneself in a sinful world like ours is not glamorous; it is devastating. Loneliness hurts on two accounts: 1) No one can bear life's problems on his own 2) No one can truly enjoy life's simple pleasures on his own."

Keep in mind that Ecclesiastes is pretty hard on material goods. In other words, when we chase stuff, we will never be fulfilled. There is a very bad cycle that we can get caught up in. We see it all the time. We work... work... work... to get something special. Then we get that something special, and then we want something more special. And so, we work... work.... work.... some more. And in the end, we are never satisfied, because material goods are like a carrot on a stick. And, to make things worse? If we are all alone working, who will enjoy the stuff that we have? No one!

If we sacrifice everything to get everything, what is the trade-off? Well, quite simply, they cancel each other out. Ever meet someone that has all sorts of toys, but has no time to enjoy them? Bluntly stated, if all we do is work to get things to make us happy, we won't have time to enjoy these things that will

supposedly make us happy, and in the meantime, we are working ourselves to death with no Sabbath rest.

V. 9-12 We see an alternative to the lonely life of working for self.

V. 9 Two people get more work done than just one. Besides, isn't it great to eat together with someone else after a long job is done! Who likes to celebrate big accomplishment alone?

V. 10 Falling and failing with another person is better than doing it alone. Together you can lift each other up.

V. 11 Two people together can keep each other warm during the cold. This verse is not necessarily referring to sex, though.

V. 12 This verse is heard at weddings a lot of time. The third strand is often referred to as God in a relationship between a husband and wife. Old Testament interpretations rarely took this view of the text referring to marriage. However, in the last couple hundred of years, it has been used a lot to refer to marriage.

V. 13 Verses 13 and following talk about a Foolish King. Verse 13 sounds like a personal confession. A king and ruler surrounded by 'yes men' is a poor king. A young child is wiser because a child will at least council others to get the best advice possible.

V. 14 A leader is wise when he remembers his roots—where he came from.

V. 15-16 People want the government and kings to fix all their problems. And, sometimes government/kings do fix things. However, the next generation won't understand because the king will soon become out of touch and most likely corrupt. Power always corrupts, especially when one forgets his roots. And so, the next generation will forget the great works of the king/government. And the next ruler? He will most likely rewrite history in his favor. But this won't matter, because the new leadership's power is short lived. Thank God that Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords—that His reign and dominion are everlasting.