



## ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

*Ecclesiastes*  
9:1-10

### **Pastor's Notes**

V. 1 Solomon says that the righteous and the wise are in the hands of God. However, isn't this a bad thing? Hebrews chapter 10 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Well, we must understand that true wisdom is the fear of God. That is to say; fear of God means that we confess our sin unto God and lay ourselves before Him.

So, when we confess that we are sinners in thought, word, and deed, we are essentially saying that we deserve hell and God's wrath. This is terrifying for foolish people. However, the wise know that this is exactly where the Lord wants us to be—empty, dead, confessing, etc. The reason why? When we are broken, crushed, and dead in our sins before God (not making excuses) but confessing, then the Lord is gracious to forgive. Remember the story of the Tax Collector and the Pharisee in the Gospel of Luke? Also, remember Psalm 51:17? To the point; confessing that we are sinners and knowing that we are in the Lord's hands is comforting, for we then cling to the Lord's mercy and not our righteousness. We should fear God's hands, though, if we think that we have it all together.

V. 2-4 There is a great equalizer for everyone in life, and it is called 'death.' Everyone is lumped together in this world leading to the same end of death. Doesn't that seem unfair? Well, to our old Adam it does. However, according to the new man in Christ, there is a positive outlook to life. If pagans and unbelievers can muster up enough encouragement through coffee mug clichés, positive bumper stickers, and sappy self-help books, then the Christian (who has real hope) has more reason to live this life than the pagan. We do not have silly coffee mug clichés. We do not need sappy self-help books. We do not need silly in-

spiring memes. We do not need little pious pep talks to give us fake smiles. NO! We have the hope of Christ. We have the hope of the resurrection! We know that this life is temporary and that we live this life by the grace of God!

V. 5-6 These verses are basically affirming that it is good to be alive. Life is a gift. Life is to be valued. From conception to the grave, we cherish life, for we are created in the image of God.

V. 7 Didn't Solomon say that wine, women, property, and song were empty? Yes, if you are trying to make these things into idols! However, when we treat these things with moderation and allow them in their proper context, we get to see them as divine gifts!

Think of it this way. A pastor and church cannot create and fabricate happiness in the church, for that is exactly what Solomon was trying to do in chapter 2. Pushing programs, hammering people with the law to 'be happy,' and telling people to put a smile on, do not cut it. It makes things worse. However, if a pastor and church want joy, don't talk about joy, but rather, talk about Jesus and the forgiveness of sins so that joy happens. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit! You can't force fruit.

V. 8 This verse seems very festive. However, is this verse calling us to be optimistic? No! Optimism is the exact of pessimism—and both of these miss the reality of what Solomon is teaching us. As Christians, we are not optimists or pessimists because both optimism and pessimism are our opinions on this life under the sun. Life under the sun 'just is.' Rather, we are theologians of the cross. We call life under the sun what it is. We call a spade a spade. However, we do so in a way knowing the message of the Gospel that is for us. We know the hope of the cross and empty tomb.