



## ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

*Ecclesiastes*  
9:11-16

### **Pastor's Notes**

V. 11 there are predictable patterns in life. The fastest person wins the race. The strongest wins the battle. And those who are smart, they tend to get rich. However, there are limitations in life. Things happen. Unforeseen events, tragedies, and being in the right place at the right time, make life unpredictable. This doesn't mean that God is out of control, but rather we cannot forecast everything in life. Life has a way of throwing us curveballs. And so while things are somewhat predictable, there are events, circumstances, tragedies, and good fortunes that come our way when we least expect it.

V. 12 Time shows no mercy. It has a way of imprisoning people. In other words, we cannot harness and control time. That is why we have so much fun watching movies about time travel. But in reality, time marches on. Deadlines approach us whether we like it or not. Birthdays come upon us even when we want to stay young. And the really big problem with time is that nobody can predict the time of their death. Perhaps this is why we resist thinking about our future deaths. Thankfully though, we know that the Lord is the beginning and the end of time. All of our times are in his hands. He knows our beginning and end; therefore we need not fear.

V. 13-15 All things considered, there is an advantage to wisdom in this life under the

sun. Two opponents of equal strength may end in a standstill; however, if one has superior wisdom, they will prevail. And as we read in verses 13 through 15, a small city with a wise man can withstand a superior army with no wisdom.

V. 16 Even though wisdom will prevail in difficult circumstances in this life under the sun, wisdom is often forgotten. The wise man in the city was forgotten, perhaps because the people after the battle became smug in their safety. In times of safety and peace, we humans have this tendency to minimize evil around us. We want to sleep with both eyes closed, not with one eye open. And so we forget the tough times that came before us. And when those with wisdom warn us of potential threats that may come upon us in the future, we often don't want to hear it. In fact, wisdom becomes something bad. In the name of comfort, we curse wisdom and welcome foolishness. Bollhagen comments on this further, saying, "With this mindset, sinners like to blot out from their memories any historical events that do not match up with their warped preferences. Sin infects people with an incredible amnesia for the times when wisdom and righteousness have been present to save them as well as for the times when evil caused their downfall." We have heard it said before that those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat it. And worse, those who rewrite history in a sugarcoated way, will not only repeat it but will do so with a naïve ignorance thinking that they are wise.