



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
11:1-6

Pastor's Notes

V. 1 The message of this verse is, "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Although life under the sun is tough, we are encouraged to plunge onward, to take some chances in life, and not be handcuffed by what might go wrong. In other words, we can be free to do business with everyone in the secular world (while still being wise); we don't need a special yellow pages devoted to Christians only. Yes, be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove – and don't forget to take some chances because when nothing is ventured, nothing is gained in this life.

V. 2 It is better to be generous than be a Scrooge. Nobody likes tight-fisted jerks who only look to their pocketbooks. But rather, generosity to all has a way of befriending all. Generosity to a neighbor is most definitely an investment in one's future security because that neighbor will most definitely return the generosity if you get into trouble.

V. 3 Solomon is not giving a nature lesson here or a physic lesson. But rather, he is talking about life under the sun. In other words, while life under the sun is very unpredictable, generally speaking, there is a cause and effect law built into life under the sun. So, we can glean about four things from this verse, they are:

A) We need to think about things we propose to do. What are their consequences? Pretty much every thought, word, and deed have a consequence – good and bad. Thoughts, words, and deeds are not vacuous and empty. B) Some things in life cannot be changed, once they happen. We can't put toothpaste back into its tube once it is squeezed out! So, consider our actions and understand that they may have irreversible consequences. C) Also, we often do not know when a tree is going to fall; however, there can be signs. Clouds full of rain bring lightning. Lightning can strike trees and cause them to fall. In other words, don't be blind to what is around you and what is going on. Single instances can snowball and cause big consequences. D) If you see rain clouds on the horizon, take advantage of the time before the rain falls and before the trees fall. Be ready. Prepare for whatever is coming before you.

V. 4 Life under the sun is bad. And while we need to discern the season and times, if we wait for that perfect moment to undertake a project, it will never happen. The reason being, there is no such thing as a perfect moment under the sun. Sometimes to do the right thing a person will have to walk uphill or swim upstream or sow into the wind.

A very practical way of looking at this is what we tell our young adults. We say, "Go to college first, then when the

time is right, get married. But don't have children right after you are married, because you won't have any money. Yes, hold off and wait until the time is right." Tragically though, a couple will take this advice thinking that those perfect moments are off in the future. However, what then happens is that they will then be in their 40s with no children and unable to conceive because the window of childbearing is closing. So, all that money that they made in their 20s and 30s is then spent on trying to become pregnant, which if they do become pregnant, they will then realize two more things: 1) we should've had kids earlier because we want more than one kid, and 2) how on earth are we going to have enough energy in our 50's to keep up with teenagers? Truly, it is a myth that there is a perfect moment under the sun.

Another example is this. If a farmer is always looking to unpredictable weather, he may never get his tractor out into the field to seed. He will say, "It is supposed to rain this afternoon, I am not going to bother getting the tractor out." This kind of mindset will result in nothing ever getting done. In other words, if the farmer is always looking at the weather, he will never get anything planted. However, sometimes the farmer has to grit his teeth and get 'er done – he will need to get that tractor out and seed as much as he can, knowing that if he doesn't keep his eyes focused on the main task of seeding, it will never happen. The weather never seems to cooperate, but the farmer must work hard in spite of that to be a good farmer.

V. 5 Both the weather (wind) and pregnancy are understandable to a degree. We have "The Weather Channel," and we have "Ultrasounds;" however, the point is that God is painting the big picture. That is to say, the wind and babies in the womb are so very complex and wondrous – they are miracles. Only the Lord God can work everything out with the weather and with the development of a child in the womb. Yes, the Lord governs everything – He is sovereign.

V. 6 We have all had those days where we should've stayed in bed. We woke up and worked hard, but in the evening had nothing to show. So what is a person to do? We have learned from Ecclesiastes that a sure way to have nothing to show for, is to stay in bed. Life under the sun has a way of being cruel to laziness; however, wisdom says that one should wake up and work. Yes, start with work in the morning and the evening when everyone goes home, put that extra hour in. Oh, but not too fast, we also need to know that life under the sun doesn't always reward hard work – so don't get worked up if you are not rewarded for that extra hour. And what about those times in work where you have a fork in the road? Well, wisdom says to pursue both courses, at least as long as you can. Investigate them both and in due time you will be able to make a wise choice as the right path becomes obvious.