



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
11:7-12:8

Pastor's Notes

V. 7 The rising of the sun brings hope – a new day. When good days fall upon us, they bring joy because life under the sun is unpredictable and often dark. Just think if these happy days never came – oh, dread!

V. 8 Even though we don't like to admit it, the days of tragedy in this life under the sun outnumber the days of light. Yes, days of light are gifts – not what we are entitled to. In our current day and age of entitlement, verses 7-8 can be of help to show how to approach life. We should not stomp our feet demanding days of light, like a spoiled child, but rather, see days of light as gifts that we do not deserve.

V. 9 Youth are to enjoy the days of their youth because they are young! Young people should make the most of their energy and enthusiasm while they still can. They should pursue their dreams, strive for those big goals, and use up that energy... while he or she still can. Youth should realize though that youthfulness does not last forever. Contrary to what our society says, 40 is not the new 30. With age, we grow closer to death. Therefore, youth need to realize that their energy and excitement only lasts a while and that they should not be so foolish to try to imagine that they will stay youthful. Also, youth also need to remember that their youthfulness is not a license to sow their wild oats, as they say. Too often adults excuse stupid and foolish things youth do as if it is permissible because they are youth, when in reality youth are simply being stupid and foolish. Positively stated though, there are many morally good things youth can do with their energy and should be done. Play soccer instead of defacing property! Go on a mission trip instead of partying. Do a year of college overseas, don't go on a wild road trip.

V. 1 Old age has a way of catching up with a person without them knowing it. We see others age around us and we see their struggles of getting old, but we often live in a state of denial that we are getting old ourselves. Modern medical science often clouds the reality of age. Medicine removes the aches and pains of age. Makeup and Rogaine cover our wrinkles and reverse hair loss. Yes, age is a great enemy to mankind for it reveals that we are on a journey of death. Perhaps this is why so many people hate their birthdays?

Also, the fact that Solomon labels older age as being 'evil' is worth noting. We come into this life helpless and weak, and we leave this life helpless and weak. And as we know, our society and humanity 'hates' the idea of being weak and helpless. Weakness and helplessness can be seen as evil. Indeed, we pride ourselves on being strong and in charge. We pride ourselves in pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps.

Tragically though, the independent and strong disposition can have adverse effects on the Christian faith. The Lord wants us to have childlike faith, not independent, rebellious spirits. But regardless of our own perceived strength, everyone dies – everyone becomes weak. Even though it offends us to become weaker with age, many pastors rejoice in this because age has a way of removing smug self-sufficiency from delinquent members. In summary, as Christians, we know that when we are weak, the Lord is strong. Even though we age and become weaker, we can have the sure confidence in a loving Creator who can be relied upon.

V. 3 "Grinder cease" means that teeth fall out. Those who "look through dimmed windows" is the loss of eyesight.

V. 4 The doors on the street are shut refers to the mouth of a person with no teeth, how the lips curl inward. The songs of daughters are brought low refers to the loss of hearing.

V. 5 Age is further described here. One is afraid of heights when they are older because their balance is not what it quite used to be. Terror is before a person who is older – only one fall can be their ruin. When one is youthful, they do not think about the falls and bruises of life – they do not threaten them. However, old age makes one terrified of things that he or she once never feared. Regarding grasshoppers, when we get old, our appearances often turn to skin and bones – much like a grasshopper looks. Regarding desires? Those decrease with age. Sexual desire decreases, and desire for hobbies decrease as well, limiting a person to just a few things.

V. 6 This verse depicts the moment of death. They are well-known expressions during Solomon's time. They show the quickness of death – going from life to death.

V. 7 This verse is simple. At death, the human body, which God had originally fashioned from 'dust' returns to the earth (at burial), and the human spirit returns to God, who had bestowed the soul when the person was created at conception in the womb.

V. 8 A world without God is frankly, meaningless. A world without God is empty and sad and pointless. A world without God demands that mankind simply survive the best they can. From a strictly human perspective under the sun, no one can argue their way out of this diagnosis.

There was no one who lived in greater luxury or higher glory than Solomon. There was no one so wise or powerful, no one who saw all things. And what was his conclusion? He had no joy. What does he say at the end of his life after tasting all that life had to offer? Vanity of vanities!

Can we simply stop here? No! Verses 9-13 give us a great conclusion and understanding of how we can understand life under the sun. And those verses are the topic of next week's study.