



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
2:24-26

Pastor's Notes

V. 24 What a neat gem of a verse! Go ahead, and enjoy everything good that comes from God's hand! Yes, enjoy the simple things God gives to you, and leave the significant problems (those big things you can't handle) to God. Yes, enjoy the simple things—a good meal, the flower in the field, the beauty of a sunset. Even though these are small things, they are gifts from our creator. God be praised for these little gifts in this life under the sun.

Think of it this way: verse 24 is like parents who shield their children from the big problems in life so that they can play Legos in peace. In other words, we can enjoy the small and simple free life under God's grace, because in the end, God takes care of the big things like death, sin, and the devil.

There is more; we can remember not to take ourselves so seriously in this life under the sun. But instead, we take God's grace seriously.

V. 25 This verse is a continuation of the verse before. Simply stated, without God in the picture, life under the sun is vanity, circular, and purposeless. However, with God, everything changes. Externally nothing changes. We still work. We still die. We still struggle. We still anguish. But with the knowledge of the Lord, this life is experienced with hope. Furthermore, with the Lord, we are not moving towards futility, but towards glory. And in this circularity of life? Yes, because we know there is a God who created us, we see the small gifts as gifts from God. The bread that we eat—God be praised! The crying sound of a baby—God be praised! The sip of a good coffee or a delicious red wine—God be praised! With God, life under the sun can have small glimpses of joy—gifts. But the key is this: we can't see these things as gifts unless we know that there is a God and that He is a God who cares for us.

V. 26 This verse is tricky. What does it mean? Well, it means just this: God gives gifts to His redeemed. These gifts are not material things, but true wisdom, knowledge, and joy. But what are true wisdom, knowledge, and joy?

True Wisdom and Knowledge are not book smarts. But instead, they are the wisdom and knowledge of redemption, forgiveness, and life everlasting. While the world clamors for wisdom and knowledge that only extends to life under the sun, the Christian is given wisdom and knowledge about things that are 'outside' and 'beyond' life under the sun.

And what of Joy? Joy must be distinguished from our culture's understanding of happiness and pleasure. Happiness and pleasure tend to be seen within an individual's power—something that people can attempt to force and manipulate and conjure up. Joy though is not. Surely joy is similar to happiness and pleasure, but at the same time, it is vastly different. While happiness and pleasure turn to themselves, joy does not. That is to say; joy does not point you or anchor you in joy itself, but rather, biblical joy is a mental state or emotional gratitude for 'good things received.' That's right; joy points to something else, something outside of you; it points and longs for something grand that is given. In a word, joy is not fixated to an artificial feeling or an emotion; it does not chase after itself. Joy desires, anticipates, and receives 'gifts.' (See Article on the back)

To Consider:

This section is a confession of Solomon. With the Lord, there is something. Without the Lord, there is nothing under the sun. Thus, being a child of Grace—a child of the Lord—is something for a person living this life under the sun.