



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
3:10-15

Pastor's Notes

Overview: In our previous study we learned how God orders the universe—that there is a time for every season. Now, considering this, what part does mankind have in the day-to-day life? The following unpacks this theme.

V. 10 If God is the big mover and shaker in life, what role does mankind play? To be honest, we are not as important as we think. In the grand scheme of life, we are mere consumers. Everything that we do and have is dependent on the good Lord. But what are we left to do? Well, we are left to do the mundane, the small things in life. HOWEVER, just because these things are little, it does not mean that they are not important. For example, there is a really healthy perspective on life when we are occupied by the mundane. Cutting grass, washing dishes, washing clothes, changing oil, sweeping the sidewalk, changing diapers, and so forth—are needed! And, they help keep us from being overwhelmed by the big picture—that which the Lord takes care of Himself.

In a very positive way, the Lord wants us to become forgetful with the great problems of the world and focus on the mundane, for it is in the mundane that we can indeed serve our neighbor. Besides, when we are too busy with the mundane, we don't have enough energy to worry about the big problems.

V. 11 Thank goodness that we don't know the future! Has anything good come from those futuristic movies where people go into the future into a time machine? If we can learn anything from time-travel movies, it is this... it is best not to know the future. That is essentially what Solomon is sharing in verse 11. If we knew when bad things would occur, we would worry ourselves

sick. And if we knew when good things would happen, we would be consumed with excitement to the point that we neglect others. That is why God doesn't allow us to know the future (except for the great eschaton). God keeps us guessing, which keeps us trusting in Him.

What does it mean to have eternity in one's heart? Well, simply this: we are temporal creatures but have an appetite for the infinite. That is why atheism is very uncommon. Finding a true atheist is tough. They don't exist. Why, because we are hard-wired to think about eternity. Everyone in the world has a sense within themselves about life after death. Just go downtown and ask any pagan about life after death. You will be hard pressed to find someone who believes in the complete annihilation of the body and soul.

V. 12-13 What on earth? Are these verses telling us that God wants us to be joyful and have a good time? How does that work, especially when Ecclesiastes has been such a sober book? It is like this: God takes care of the big stuff, and as His children, we get to be like a young child. That is where 'faith' comes into the picture. Even though life is tough, even though things are pointless under the sun; we have faith that there is a Good God who cares for us, sustains us, and will make things right in the end. And so, what is there left for us to do, except rejoice! So, rejoice in God's good grace—grace that we don't deserve. Rejoice in the Gospel and the small mundane things that we have been given. Rejoice that we can't and are unable to tackle the big stuff in life—we can't fix death, sin, and the devil.

The Hedonist will eat, drink, and be merry because tomorrow we die. However, the Christian will eat, drink, and be merry because we will feast forever with Christ. We do not eat, drink, and be merry because we are trying to squeeze happiness out of things, but because we have joy in a gracious God who loves and gave himself for us.