

Ecclesiastes 7:17-29

The last time on It's a Good Life, we left off with verse 16 of Ecclesiastes chapter 7. And once again I would ask you, if it's at all possible, for you to have your Bible open and read along as we study the Scriptures together.

Ecclesiastes chapter 7, once again, is where we are today. It's so good to be able to open God's Word and see what He has for us. Remember, it's not man's Word that we're looking at, but it's God's Word. It's His wisdom and His knowledge that we want to gain, and as we look at verse 16, it says, *Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?* The last time we saw this verse, verse 16 of chapter 7 of Ecclesiastes, I said it means don't go to extremes. Don't go too far in trying to be righteous and wise, lest you defeat yourself.

In other words, we can wear ourselves out and, as the old saying goes, work our fingers to the bone trying to be righteous, but there's only one way to be righteous, and we'll talk about that in just a moment.

Verse 17 of Ecclesiastes 7 says: *Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?* Don't devote yourself to being wicked and foolish lest you die before your time is what that verse is saying. It's pretty straightforward there. Natural wisdom says this: Be moderately religious and moderately wicked. Have you ever heard someone say, "Well, I'm not as bad as that person down the street, and I hope I'm going to Heaven. I haven't been that bad." Well, that's trying to be moderately religious and moderately wicked.

In other words, the Bible says that there's none righteous, that all we like sheep have gone

astray and we've turned everyone to his own way, and the verse goes on to say God hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

God has placed our sins upon Jesus Christ, and the way we take advantage of that, not the sense that we look at in our language of taking advantage of someone, but the way that we can do good and the way that we can become righteous is by trusting Jesus Christ with what He has done.

God has placed our sins upon Him if we will trust Him as our Savior. But some people think that simply because in their sight and sometimes in the world's sight that they're not too bad, that something is going to take place later on, that God's either going to say, "You're going to Heaven because you've been such a good person," or "You haven't been too bad." Well, the Bible says that there is none righteous, no, not one. The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Bible goes on to say in Ephesians 2:8-9 that it's by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

So it makes no difference how righteous a person thinks he or she is. They're not righteous enough without trusting the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is the only righteous person who ever lived on this Earth. He's the only sinless person who ever lived, and Jesus is God and Jesus was man. I can't comprehend that as a human being. He was God-man. He was as much God had He never been man, and he was as much man had He never been God. Now my finite mind cannot put all that together, but I know the Word of God tells me that Jesus Christ died for me. He died for my sin that one day I could go to

Heaven. I don't have to be religious to go to Heaven. I simply need to trust the religious one, the righteous one, and that person is Jesus Christ.

Well, that verse, those verses, once again, verse 17: Don't devote yourself to being wicked and foolish, lest you die before your time. Natural wisdom says this: Be moderately religious and moderately wicked. Don't be really bad and you don't have to be really good to go to Heaven. That's what people think. But it must be that we go to Heaven through Jesus Christ.

Look at verses 18-19 now of Ecclesiastes 7:
¹⁸It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this... What? Of the verses we've just read...
yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. In other words, pay attention to what's been said in verses 15-17 there. And the first part of verse 18 talks about *It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this.* Don't avoid true righteousness and wisdom. Work at it. Put your hand to it... *yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand...* In other words, do your diligence to realize that everything comes from God and that your righteousness that's going to get you to Heaven comes from God, and that righteousness is only through Jesus Christ. And as we read on, it's... don't avoid true righteousness and wisdom. Work at it with thine hand. Fearing God will help you make right decisions... *for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.* If you place your trust in the Lord, He's going to help you make the right decisions in your life, and especially for the life to come.

Ecclesiastes 7:19 says: *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.* The wise are stronger through wisdom than ten strong, powerful men, in other words, who are earthly minded, and we represent earthly things as human beings, but

when we trust in the wisdom of God, we become stronger than any ten men on this Earth, not necessarily physically, but we become stronger trusting in the Lord.

Remember, Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived and he was the richest man who ever lived, and God gave him all of those things, and he's trying to let us know that we may not leave this world with riches, and in fact, we're not going to take anything with us. We've already seen that. But we could live in this life and be prosperous, not necessarily in riches, but we can live this life prosperous in the things of God, in the knowledge of God, in knowing where we're going to spend eternity, and if you have riches, He's going to let you know how to spend those riches.

Verse 20 says this: *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.* And there it is again. I've already mentioned that to you, that all are sinners. All are sinners according to verse 20.

In Galatians 3:22, it says, *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.* The Bible tells us that we're to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

And I thank God for those of you who have trusted Him as your Savior, and I pray that you're living for Him and doing what He wants you to do, gaining from His wisdom by studying the Word of God, and if you haven't done that, you can become wise. If you haven't trusted Christ, you too become that wise person when you place your trust in the Lord.

Now, Ecclesiastes 7:21: *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.* Don't pay attention to everything you hear. We hear a lot of rumors.

Don't pay attention to rumors. Because why? You may hear something that's going to hurt you emotionally, and it could be said by someone that is close to you, a servant or a friend or a family member even. And many other people could hurt you if you listen to rumors. In other words, this person said this about you or that person says this about you. Don't listen to those rumors, and it says *lest thou hear thy servant curse thee*. Don't pay attention to everything you hear. Why? Verse 22 says this: *For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others*. If you listen to others, you could possibly be reminded that you have likely cursed or said something to hurt someone at some time yourself, and that's going to bring it back to your memory.

And that's going to be just like the Bible teaches us that the devil is an accuser of the brethren. He will cause things to come up in your mind and try to confuse you and say, "You're no better than that other guy." Well, you're really not better than another human being, but once again, he'll do that to defeat you as a Christian. He'll get you to thinking that you're no good, that you cannot serve God, but you need to quit listening to what people say and what the devil says. You need to keep going and you need to do what God says and serve Him.

Verses 23-29 talk about wisdom alone is not the answer. Verse 23 says: *All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me*. There are questions wisdom can't answer. There's just certain things that wisdom can't answer, and I look especially at man's wisdom. Man's wisdom doesn't have all the answers.

Ecclesiastes 7:24 says: *That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?*
Verse 25: *I applied mine heart to know, and*

to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. Some things are beyond one's ability to find, no matter how hard and long you search, according to verses 24-25.

Ecclesiastes 7:26 says: *And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her*. A wicked woman is certainly to be avoided, according to these verses. In his search for wisdom, Solomon found the wicked woman and he found that the wicked woman is colder and more bitter than death, and she desires... and this is her heart... to capture or snare... spread a net to hold onto hands, and he says, *I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands*. And the person who does what God says will escape the results of sin according to verse 26. It says, *whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her*. The Bible here is not putting women down, but the Bible here is speaking of sin, of taking hold of sin and letting sin overtake your life and take over your life.

The person who does not listen to God, and that's the wisdom of God, is the man who ignores the wickedness of folly, foolishness and madness, according to verse 25. It says that the man who gives into the woman, this is sin, will be captured, but the sinner shall be taken by her, according to that verse.

Ecclesiastes 7:27-29 says: *²⁷Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account. ²⁸Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. ²⁹Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

May the Lord bless you as we study His Word together.

Father, I pray for those listening. May You touch their hearts. Save those who are lost. Help those who are saved to serve You. In Jesus' name.

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