

Life Lessons Ecclesiastes 7:1-6

1. Introduction.
 - a. First proverbial wisdom in Ecclesiastes.
 - b. Typically work thematically through traditional, proverbial wisdom.
2. V.1.
 - a. V.1a.
 - i. The Hebrew word for “name” and “ointment” are very similar. Solomon’s making a play on words that comes across sarcastic.
 - ii. The meaning of the proverb is that the inward character of a person is far more important than mere externals.
 1. This is an incredibly important lesson for the church.
 2. What motivates you? What controls your decisions? What do you want to be known for?
 - a. Do you live for the benefit of other people’s faith?
 - b. Or do you live for other people’s approval?
 - b. V.1b.
 - i. The key to understanding this proverb is to remember that it is being written to God’s people, who very much understand the concept of an afterlife.
 1. Birth is about potential, but death is about fulfillment.
 2. A wise person lives with reference to what’s to come in death.
 - ii. The implication, then, is how do you view life and death?
 1. Do you view death as the loss of what was still left to experience?

2. Or do you view death like Paul, who sees it as gain because he gets Christ (Phil. 1)?

3. V.2.

- a. The point of the proverb is that a wise person doesn't hide from the ensuing reality of death.
 - i. A reflection on death forces a wise person to think on the brevity of their own existence.
 - ii. Reflecting on death also causes a wise person to think beyond this life and to think on what awaits them in death.
- b. Poem by Charles Studd.
- c. What should motivate every Christian is the hope of being able to lay on your death bed and have the fullness of assurance that your life was not wasted.
 - i. The only thing that will last is a life that's been broken for Christ.
 - ii. So what are you living for?

4. V.3.

- a. A continuation from the previous theme in v.2.
- b. The meaning of the proverb is that it's often times good to feel the weight of sorrow, especially if it leads to a reflection on a person's own folly. This, then, can lead to a sustaining joy.

5. V.4.

- a. Within the context, this proverb is a reference to a person that tries to ignore death by pursuing momentary, superficial pleasure.
- b. At a greater level, the proverb also speaks of that person who simply refuses to see their own folly.
- c. "House of mirth" is a reference to the fact that fools run to different kinds of pleasure to numb themselves.

d. On the other hand, a wise person goes to the “house of mourning” where they can reflect on the sorrows of life, and even learn from their own folly.

i. The heart of this verse teaches us that sometimes God uses pain to point us to something beyond the sun.

ii. Luke 13:1-5

6. V.5

a. A commentary on the nature of true, biblical relationships.

b. A true friend is not merely interested in trying to make you laugh, but concerned with your well-being and soul.

i. Prov. 27:6

ii. A true friend is not afraid to lose you as a friend.

7. V. 6.

a. An expansion on v.5.

b. This proverb is statement on the superficial nature that completely defines the life of a fool.

i. A fool responds to the complexities of life with laughter because they can't actually handle the hardships of life.

ii. This mindset creeps into the Church in subtle ways.

8. Conclusion

a. Draw attention to the word “better” in vss. 1, 2, 3, and 5.

b. Life doesn't have to be so difficult—there's just a better way.

Small Group Questions:

1. What stood out to you in this sermon?
2. What are the “ointments” in your life? In other words, what are some ways you might be more focused on externals, rather than on your internal character (i.e., godliness)?

3. What are some ways you might be viewing life and death wrongly? Are there things or experiences in your life for which, if you were to die today, you might feel like you were robbed? What might this be saying about what you truly treasure?
4. Have you ever rejected the words of someone who was trying to speak wisdom into your life? If so, why do you think this was the case?
5. Who do you have in your life that is not afraid to speak truth? Are you in the habit of surrounding yourself with more godly, more mature people? If not, what's your plan?