

THE WISDOM AND FOLLY OF MAN

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As we study the book of Ecclesiastes, we should bear in mind that the teacher is making comparisons between the life of a person without God and one with God centred focus. From chapter 1 even up to last Sunday we have seen that Solomon is saying that self-seeking efforts (pleasure), earthly wisdom and pursuit, and arrogant behaviours are meaningless.

What are the results of human efforts in life finding joy?

Solomon soon found out that pleasure seeking is nothing but worthless way of living. ***Eccl 2:1***. The time you are supposed to spend with God your creator you are drinking and clubbing make out with friends. Time and tide they say waits for no one. Make good use of your time with God is better. The plenty thought of man to get satisfaction from the world make man look restless, busy like the ant looking for food.

Solomon said he have tried all that including giving himself to wine, ***Eccl 2:3***, drink and be merry but he finds all that to be waste of time and energy. Every earthly pleasure, when not connected with God's blessings, leaves the mind as eager and unsatisfied as before seeking it. It is only through Jesus Christ that blessed pleasure and happiness can be attained which comes with peace of mind. ***John 16:33*** in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation.

The Wise and the Foolish ***Eccl 2:12-17***.

In the upper verses, Solomon was disappointed in pursuit of pleasure, he could not find satisfaction and happiness in that, so he turned from it to consider human wisdom. Solomon's Heart Turns from the Lord (***1 Kings 11:1-2***)

Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? ***Ecclesiastes 2:12***

So, he considered human wisdom and madness (*offensive behaviour, psychiatric disorder*), and folly (*reckless behaviour*). He decided to make this trial and see whether here he could find happiness.

As for wisdom: James said there are two wisdoms. ***James 3:14-17*** (one is earthly the other is from above). God gave Solomon the wisdom from above but at this point he desire the earthly wisdom. And the earthly wisdom harbours bitter envy and selfish ambition it is unspiritual and demonic. Many things draw us away from God to follow the way of this path.

Ecclesiastes 2:13 And I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. (The amplified version puts it) Then I saw that even [human] wisdom [that brings sorrow] is better than [the pleasures of] folly as far as light is better than darkness. After a review of things Solomon concluded that though there is no true happiness and

satisfaction in human wisdom, yet it is far better than folly and madness.

The wise have eyes in the head, fool has eyes in the head, but the way you use them determine your level of thinking and acting. The wise walking in light while the fool walks in darkness but I came to realize that the same fate happen to them both. **Ecclesiastes 2:15**. Then I said to myself the fate of the fool will also happen to me. Since such is the case why do I pursuit worldly wisdom, it can never fill the place of the true wisdom. This too is meaningless. **Job 28:28**. Job said Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. **James 3:17** But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. This is the wisdom we should ask for from God.

Solomon said in his heart, this worldly wisdom has nothing solid and good in it, just like pleasure, that this also is vanity. **James 3:15**. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

The worst-case scenario:

Solomon's experience proved, that the same things befall wise men and fools, they are liable to the same diseases of body, and disasters of life, to poverty and distress, to loss of estate, and to death itself. All those things you struggled for and acquired under the sun as your wisdom directed you are vanity (at death). Naked I come naked I go said **Job 1:21**. Lay up your treasure in heaven, **Matt 6:19-20**. The fact that the wise and the fool share the same fate is senseless to Solomon. So why am I anxious to become wise. Solomon asked for wisdom

to judge his people. 2 Ch 1:10, at this point he abandon it.

Romans 1:28 Those who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

The Futility of Work: **Eccl 2:18-23**

Life is the gift of God but Solomon said he hate life, why? because the work that is done under the sun was important to him but after the struggle, he will leave them for someone else. I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. **Ecclesiastes 1:14, 2:17**.

A man needs to enjoy the fruit of his labor but can you build a house and live in it until the house old and collapse before you die. Being in the flesh, Solomon was not happy for using his wisdom to build estate that he will leave for God knows who. **Psalms 49:10** For he sees wise men die; Likewise, the fool and the senseless person perish and leave their wealth to others.

Solomon has great possessions houses; vineyards, gardens, riches and wealth which he cannot carry with him when he dies; he cannot finish them before he dies. This is thinking outside the box.



How can a man build this mansion and died living it for another person to inherit.

Who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish to have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. ***Ecclesiastes 2:19***

Solomon thinking of his successor and heir; whether he will make a good or bad use of what was left; whether he would keep and improve it or squander it away; if he is sure that the next king will be a wise man it would be some satisfaction to him for all that he had laboured for. And his son Rehoboam, his successor and heir, what was not friendly to his people. ***1 Kings 12:11***

Some children will sell all their father's property after his demise including landed properties. But some will modify for better. As he reasons that no one will take care as he did, he concluded that all his labour putting things in place is meaningless. and he said there is no happiness in all that a man does, or has, or enjoys; and this circumstance, adds to his vexation and unhappiness.

Ecclesiastes 2:20 *So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labour under the sun.*

Ecclesiastes 2:21 *For a person may labour with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.*

Ecclesiastes 2:22 *What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labour under the sun?*

Ecclesiastes 2:23 *For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.*

A man who works hard to maintain his status does not sleep well at night, his mind is distressed with dreams and frightful apprehensions of things, so that his sleep is not sweet and refreshing to him. This is also vanity. When you, pursuit work and abandon Christ your pursuit is vanity.

God's Providence: *Eccl 2:24-26*

The Preacher often ends sections by supporting the enjoyment of life because he knows that God gives. ***Ecclesiastes 5:19*** As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labour—this is the gift of God. ***Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, 8:15, 9:7, 9:8-10, 11:8-10.***

A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God. ***Ecclesiastes 2:24*** .

To Eat and drink in a moderate way, enjoying in a cheerful and comfortable manner the good things God have provided. You should be contented with them, thankful for them, and look upon them as the blessings coming from God to you. Therefore, you should use them judiciously and not abusing them. This is not vanity; this is the child of God. If you abuse them, that is madness, psychiatric disorder, reckless behaviour.

For who can eat and freely enjoy the good things of life he has worked for, more than I. ***Ecclesiastes 2:25***. For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases

God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. ***Ecclesiastes 2:26.***

God gives to those who have a good work of grace upon their hearts and live by faith on Jesus Christ. To such a man God gives wisdom, and knowledge, and joy;

wisdom to acquire knowledge, to keep, use, and improve; and joy, to be cheerful and thankful for the good things of life: This is the wisdom that comes from above.

Conclusion:

Solomon enquires how far the business and wealth of this world will go towards making men happy and concludes from his own experience that to those who set their hearts upon it, *"it is vanity and vexation of spirit"*.

Life without God is suffering for nothing, but with God man must enjoy the fruit of his labor.

There is dignity in labor, God told Adam now you have to till the ground to feed yourself, but when you begin to act like Cain you did not recognize God in dignity. Here Solomon experimented on both and presented to us the reality of it. Life with God is better.

May God add blessings to these words in Jesus Name, Amen.