



Message Discussion Guide Week of June 11, 2023

Message: Word to the Wise, Part 2: Taking Life as it Comes

Key Scriptures: [Ecclesiastes 9:1-12](#)

Preacher: Pastor Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

Ecclesiastes was written to provide wisdom to the Israelites in a time of economic change. The Persian empire ushered in a consumer-driven economy. For the first time individuals could have ambitions, create opportunities, and experience upward mobility.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, known as The Teacher, was critical of these ambitions.

- He observes that all of life is *hevel*, a Hebrew word means “vapor” or “smoke.” Life is fleeting – every time we try to grab hold of it, it slips through our fingers.
- No matter how hard we work, we cannot control the outcome of our lives. Sometimes good people suffer and people who do evil prevail. Time and chance happen to everyone.
- The only thing that is certain is that we all die.

While this may sound bleak, it is the truth. The key to having wisdom is to accept your limitations.

- We often struggle to accept our limitations.
- We lose out on opportunities to enjoy life because we worry about many things that are out of our control.

Once we accept our limitations, The Teacher advises us to take life as it comes.

- We should not try to grasp or control life, but instead receive life with an open hand.
- We should enjoy the food we have, the job we have, the family we have, and not get so caught up in the circumstances we do not have.

Jesus understood this wisdom, for he taught us not to worry about the future. God holds the future. So instead of trying to hold onto the future, we should instead hold onto the God who holds the future.

Discussion Questions:

- 1.) Have you ever had an experience where your ambitions got in the way of experiencing joy? It's not bad to have ambitions, but what are the warning signs that our ambitions are becoming unhealthy?
- 2.) Why do we tend to try and control so many things? Why is it so hard to accept our limitations? How can accepting our limitations actually be freeing?
- 3.) [Read Ecclesiastes 9:1-12](#)
 - a. What do you hear in these words that resonate with you? What surprises you?
 - b. Do you think these verses are pessimistic?
 - c. What are the primary lessons this passage is trying to convey?
- 4.) What does it mean to "take life as it comes?" Does this mean that we shouldn't have plans or ambitions?
- 5.) What is your primary takeaway from this message? How will this message challenge, inspire, and impact your faith this week?

Abundant Life Tip: Don't allow your ambitions to rob you of joy. Accept your limitations. Let go of what you cannot control. Take life as it comes, opening your hands to receive the blessings of God every day.