

Ecclesiastes: Work & Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 4

Oppression (v. 1-3)

- Solomon reflects on the oppression he has witnessed in the world
 - Seeing the system as rigged against the poor by those with power
 - Little has changed in 3000 years
- This reality makes him ponder the value of life
 - Using hyperbolic language (see Job 3; Jer 20:14–18)
 - Though earlier he finds hope in God's ultimate justice (3:15c-17)

Wealth (v. 4-8)

- Solomon reflects on how chasing wealth fails to bring satisfaction
 - Especially when it is based in envy and covetousness
- He then reflects on the two hazards of laziness and over-work
 - The lazy person produces nothing
 - And thus “consumes himself”
 - He who has too much stresses over what he owns
 - And thus, his possessions own him
- He also reflects on working hard and having no one to share it with
 - Thus, prioritizing wealth and work over people

Friendship (v. 9-12)

- Reflecting on sharing life with (v. 7-8), leads to a reflection on friendship (v. 9-12)
- Friends can make life better, including:
 - Work (v. 9)
 - Struggles (v. 10)
 - Comfort (v. 11)
 - A traveling or war image
 - Protection (v. 12)
 - Especially when there are three
 - Two friends + God

Position (v. 13-16)

- Even as king, Solomon realizes the vanity of his position
- It is better to be in a position of weakness and be teachable
 - Than to be in a position of strength but being inflexible
- And someday, the king will be replaced by someone younger
 - Position is fleeting

So What?

- Are we focusing on things that endure, like God-centered relationships?

Meditation Verse: Ecclesiastes 4:12