

What's the Difference Ecclesiastes 8:15-9:12

Introduction:

Theme: Gaining a proper perspective on life.

What does that look like?

I. Learn to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. This will help to ease the difficult days that are coming.

A. There are certain simple pleasures in life that are to be enjoyed.

Ecclesiastes 8:15 (ESV) **And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful**, for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

B. These simple pleasures help to reduce the stress associated with the difficult days.

Ecclesiastes 8:15 (ESV) And I commend joy, for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful, **for this will go with him in his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.**

C. Enjoy the forgiveness that you have experienced from God.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (ESV) Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

D. Enjoy getting spruced up.

Ecclesiastes 9:8 (ESV) Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.

E. Enjoy the blessings of a faithful marriage

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (ESV) Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

F. Enjoy your hard work while you are able.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (ESV) Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

II. Solomon spent day and night trying to figure out life's mysteries especially as it relates to the righteous and the unrighteous.

Ecclesiastes 8:16 (ESV) **When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on earth, how neither day nor night do one's eyes see sleep,**

A. Then he realized that the answers were not there.

Ecclesiastes 8:17 (ESV) **then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun.** However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

B. It is beyond human ability to figure out life's complexities.

Ecclesiastes 8:17 (ESV) then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. **However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out.** Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

C. Anyone claiming to have all the answers is just fooling himself and others.

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D. Application

1. The age old questions are still the age old questions.

2. Why is there evil?

3. Why do bad things happen to good people?
4. Why do the evil prosper?

III. Solomon reports his findings.

- A. We do not know what it is that we are going to face in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:1 (ESV) But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. **Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him.**

- B. What we encounter in life is not under our control but God's control.

Ecclesiastes 9:1 (ESV) But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, **how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God.** Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him.

- C. The righteous and the unrighteous encounter the same events in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:2 (ESV) **It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked,** to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.

1. Consider the all inclusive and emphatic manner in which Solomon expresses the thought that there is no difference between the righteous and unrighteous in the course of life's events.

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2. The all inclusive nature of the statement is to drive home the truth of the statement that both the righteous and the unrighteous encounter the same events in life.

This speaks directly to the question, "Why did this happen to me?"

3. This flies in the face of what many people are taught about the Christian life.

- a. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB95) 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

- b. Many Christians sound like Job's 3 friends, Job you must have done something wrong for all these terrible things to have happened to you,

4. Jesus teaches that both the good and evil receive God's benefits.

Matthew 5:43 (ESV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

Matthew 5:44 (ESV) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:45 (ESV) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. **For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

5. Jesus teaches that both the good and evil encounter the storms of life.

Matthew 7:24 (ESV) "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Matthew 7:25 (ESV) **And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house**, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

Matthew 7:26 (ESV) And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

Matthew 7:27 (ESV) **And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house**, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

6. The difference between the righteous and the unrighteous is not whether they experience the storms of life, but rather, how the storms of life are weathered.

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- D. Life often turns out in an unexpected manner.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 (ESV) Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.

- IV. Man's perspective is that it is wrong that the evil and the just experience the same events in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 (ESV) **This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all.** Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

- V. The fact that the righteous and unrighteous experience the same events emboldens the unrighteous to live wickedly.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 (ESV) This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, **the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.**

- VI. While we are alive there is still hope that we can make a difference.

Ecclesiastes 9:4 (ESV) But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

- VII. Life is to be lived with death in view.

- A. Now is the time for decision making.

Ecclesiastes 9:5 (ESV) **For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing,** and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

- B. Now is the time to make a difference in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:6 (ESV) Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and **forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.**

- C. No one knows how long they have to live.

Ecclesiastes 9:12 (ESV) For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.

- D. Now is the time to live for God's glory.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (ESV) The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.**

E. Now is not the time for judgment whether for good or evil that judgment is yet future.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (ESV) **For God will bring every deed into judgment,** with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

John 3:17 (ESV) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

VIII. Conclusion:

