

# Judgment Is Coming: Remember God

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] in Ecclesiastes, I'll ask you to turn there to chapter 12, the final chapter of this wonderful book. I was talking with Jim earlier this morning, and we were both agreeing on something.

Growing old is hard. Growing old is hard. There are some people in this congregation who have no clue what I'm talking about. We pray you'll get there.

We pray that God will give you many years, and you'll grow to understand what growing old is all about. It's hard, but here is something even harder. Here is something even harder.

Growing old and looking back on a wasted life because you didn't live it as a gift from God in the joy of Jesus.

That's harder. To grow old and look back on your life and be full of regret because of all of the wasted opportunities in your life because you didn't live your life as a gift from the Lord and make the most of it in the joy of Jesus.

[ 1 : 2 3 ] We're going to deal with two major themes running through chapter 12.

The title of the message captures it. Judgment is coming. Remember God. Judgment is coming. Remember God. Now, this isn't a downer message. The judgment that we're talking about here isn't supposed to put us in a dull mood or throw us into the doldrums or anything like that.

It's supposed to spur us on. It's supposed to actually encourage us. Encourage us toward what, Jeff? Encourage us toward what I just talked about. To help us realize that our lives are moving towards something.

Whether we want to acknowledge it or not doesn't take it away or doesn't make it go away or doesn't mean it's not going to happen. We are all marching toward our death.

And upon our death, toward standing before a holy God to give an account of our lives. That is real. That's going to happen to every single human being. And so Solomon comes to chapter 12 to wrap up everything he's been saying.

[ 2 : 3 9 ] And the basic idea is judgment is coming. Remember God. Now, what does that mean? What does that look like? Why should that make a difference in your life?

Well, the very first thing that I want to deal with, there's going to be two parts to this. I'm going to try to take chapter 12 in two sermons. So next Sunday, we'll say goodbye to Ecclesiastes, maybe, if I can let go.

Greg knows I have a hard time letting go of these books. So we'll see. But the first thing that we want to deal with, we'll put up here on the screen for you. Number one, the reality of God's judgment.

That's verses one through eight. The reality of God's judgment. Solomon wants to sober us in the reality that judgment is coming.

Now, what will that look like for different people? Different people. Let's read one through eight. Remember also your creator in the days of your youth.

[ 3 : 40 ] Before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, I have no delight in them. Before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened and clouds return after the rain.

Now, he is not talking about the apocalypse. We'll see what he means by all this. In the day that the watchmen of the house tremble and mighty men stoop.

The grinding ones stand idle because they are few. And those who look through windows grow dim. And the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low.

And one will arise at the sound of the bird. And all the daughters of song will sing softly. Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road.

The almond tree blossoms. The grasshopper drags himself along. And the capyberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street.

[ 4 : 47 ] Remember him. Before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed. The pitcher by the well is shattered.

And the wheel at the cistern is crushed. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was. And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Vanity of vanities says the preacher. All is vanity. Well, whatever is going on here. You can tell by the words that are being used in the pictures being given.

That it doesn't seem like a good time. Things are being broken and crushed. Things are being put aside. People seem to be in terror.

Something's breaking down. Something catastrophic is happening. And we need to figure out what in the world this is talking about.

[ 5 : 49 ] As he comes to say in verses 7 and 8. Then, after all of this has happened, dust returns to dust. And vanity of vanities, it's all vanity.

I just, I don't know. That doesn't sound very uplifting, does it? How are we going to be encouraged by this? Well, it all hinges like chapter 11 on verse 1 of chapter 12.

We'll spend most of our time there. Remember. That's a sermon. Remember also your creator. That's where it starts.

That's where life starts. That's where meaning happens. That's where eternity happens for you and for me.

Remember also your creator. Well, since he starts that way, and that kind of serves as the basis for everything else he's going to say. Who is this creator?

[ 6 : 55 ] Where to remember? Now, I had mentioned to you several times throughout this study that we've been doing in Ecclesiastes. How important, how critically important it is to carefully interpret the book of Ecclesiastes.

Based on the entire context of Solomon's teaching. Now, that is a good hermeneutical principle that we need to hold on to whenever we go to God's word.

And begin to look into it to try and understand what any given verse or passage means. We want to take into consideration the context. The verses prior to and the verses after.

We want to take into consideration the greater context of the chapter it's in. Then the book that it's in. And then in all of scripture. That's a big job. Interpretation's hard work.

A careful student of the Bible is careful about how they go about this process. So that's all true. It's especially true when you come to books in the wisdom literature like Ecclesiastes.

[ 7 : 55 ] That you trace the themes that the author has been hammering throughout the book. To give you perspective on the smaller details. That you're going to look into.

That's what we're going to do this morning. I've been mentioning this to you as we've gone along. And I want to give you an example of interpreting the book. Based on the entire context of what Solomon's been telling us.

The example that I'll start with. Builds on what we did last time in chapter 11 verse 9. You'll look there with me. Rejoice young man. During your childhood.

This sounds very similar to what we're getting in 12. Let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. Follow the impulses of your heart.

And the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment. For all these things. That theme of judgment carries over into chapter 12.

[ 8 : 55 ] So last time remember I told you that this was all about rejoicing. Remembering. And removing. Follow the impulses of your heart.

And the desires. Of your eyes. That's his instruction. But now here's the question as we think about interpreting what he's saying. In light of the context and flow.

Of the book of Ecclesiastes. Here's the question. How are we to understand. What Solomon is instructing here about following our heart. And after the desire of our eyes.

How are we to do that. Given scriptures warnings about our hearts. I didn't do as much with this last time. I want to do it now just to give you an example. How are we to interpret following our hearts.

And following after desires of our eyes. When scripture expressly warns us against doing that. What is what is going on here. Well if you'll go to Jeremiah.

[ 9 : 55 ] 17. 9. Jeremiah 17. 9. Go past Ecclesiastes. Keep going. You'll find the book of Jeremiah. We're going to be here for just a minute.

Now this is very poignant instruction. Jeremiah 17. 9 and 10. The heart is more deceitful than all else.

And is desperately sick. Who can understand it. Now right away. We see several things about our hearts. As human beings. The first is.

Our hearts are deceitful. More deceitful than anything else on the planet. Another thing we see is that they're desperately sick. There's a desperation about this wickedness.

And evil and deceitfulness. And evil and deceitfulness. That is our heart. The human heart. And when we talk about the human heart. We're not talking about the organ that pumps the blood. The heart here refers to the core of who you are.

[ 10 : 59 ] What makes you who you are? The core of your humanity is wicked and desperately sick and deceitful. And that's what drives everything that you are.

Verse 10. I the Lord search the heart. I test the mind. Even to give each man according to his ways. According to the results of his deeds. There's your judgment.

I search the heart. Here's the thing. You don't even know your own heart. I don't know my heart. Who knows our hearts? There's only one. God says I search the heart.

I know what's going on in your heart. You don't. I can't look into your life. And tell you what's in your heart. And you can't do that with me. But we have a God who does that.

And he uses the word to penetrate his truth. To penetrate into our heart. Search it out. And reveal to us what's in our heart. We can come to know what's in our heart.

[ 12 : 02 ] By the fact that God searches it. He knows. And then he lets us know. That's the only way you'll know. You'll find that in Hebrews 4.12. As one place.

Where he uses his word. To drive into the joint and marrow. The depth of your soul. Search out what's there. And make it known. This is why the psalmist could pray.

Search me oh Lord. And try me. See if there be any wicked way in me. Reveal to me what's going on in my heart. Folks. We live out of our heart.

Every attitude. Every thought. Every word. And every deed. Starts in your heart. That's the root. That produces the fruit.

Of your life. So whenever we want to. Get to the. Heart. Of the matter. We have to deal with what's going on.

[ 12 : 58 ] At the core of who we are. Where everything is generated. Okay. And what does God say. About that heart. He says it's deceitful. And desperately sick.

Who can know it. Only God can know it. Now I want you to contrast that. Look at 17. Jeremiah 17. 5 and 6.

Thus says the Lord. Cursed is the man who trusts in. Mankind. And makes flesh his strength. And whose heart.

Turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert. And will not see when prosperity comes. But will live in stony wastes in the wilderness.

A land of salt without. Inhabitant. That's a picture of desolation. And that's what it's like. To live out of your own heart.

[ 13 : 53 ] Apart from the goodness of God. When you're not living in the fear of the Lord. When you're not living your life. As a gift from God. In the joy of Jesus.

We would say as New Testament Christians. You're going to live a life. That is not meaningful. Not fulfilling. It'll be like living in the wasteland. And it feels like that.

And people have this inner sense. Of knowing that about themselves. That they're just kind of bouncing around. They don't have any real aim in life. Even when they try to get a goal in life.

They find that when they get there. It just didn't do it for them. Like they thought it would. And then they repeat the process. And repeat the. Until they get into old age.

And look back and realize. I've wasted my entire life. Chasing after what is not valuable. And that's sad.

[ 14 : 47 ] But now look. Now look at Jeremiah 17, 7 and 8. Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord. And whose trust is the Lord.

Big difference. That's a relationship now. This is a relationship with God. For he will be like. What does this sound like? Excuse me. He will be like a tree planted by the water.

That extends its roots by a stream. And will not fear when the heat comes. But its leaves will be green. And it will not be anxious in a year of drought. Nor cease to yield fruit.

Now did that passage say. Trust the Lord. Become a Christian. Build a relationship with God. And you won't have any problems in your life. No.

It says this drought will come. Doesn't it? That's what it says. Drought will come. It says that. It will not fear when the heat comes.

[ 15 : 50 ] So there will be heat in your life. There will be problems. Hurts. Disappointments. Failures. Weaknesses.

Sin. Sin. But what happens to that person. Because they're trusting in the Lord. And living according to the Lord. The Lord will take care of them. And their life will continue to bear the fruit.

Of that relationship with God. Now what we call that. As New Testament Christians. Is the perseverance of the saints. That God saves you.

And guarantees to keep you holy. To keep you marching on a course. Toward eternity with him. Now he may have to spank you along the way. But spank you he will.

To bring you back in line. And love you well. That's our God. This is something of what I've been trying to tell you. About dealing with.

- [ 16 : 46 ] The entire context of what we're looking at. Again this is. This is scriptures warning about our hearts. I just want to take a few minutes to drive this home. Now look at Ecclesiastes 9.3.

As we continue with scriptures warnings about our hearts. Solomon says. I want you to follow your heart. I want you to fulfill the desires of your eyes.

Scripture is saying. Don't follow your heart. Don't follow the desires of your eyes. Well which is it? What are we supposed to do? In 9. Chapter 9. Of Ecclesiastes.

Verse 3. This is an evil. In all that is done under the sun. That there is one fate for all men. And we talked about this. At the time.

That one fate is death. Alright. Furthermore. The hearts of the sons of men. Are full of evil. And insanity is in their hearts.

- [ 17 : 45 ] Throughout their lives. Now that just doesn't sound great. Does it? Ecclesiastes chapter 9. Verse 3. The hearts.

Of the sons of men. That would be mankind. Men and women. Are full of evil. And insanity is in their hearts. Throughout their lives.

Insanity means. Moving away from God. Turning away from God. As the fool does. It's insane for you to live. By your own wits. And wiles. And reject the wisdom of God.

That's a guaranteed recipe. For a wasted life. For a miserable life. And for making the people around you. Miserable as well. And then in 1st John.

Go all the way back. To the back of the Bible. You're going to go right before. The last book of Revelation. And you'll find 1st, 2nd and 3rd John. Three little letters.

- [ 18 : 42 ] That the apostle John wrote. We're going to 1st John. Chapter 2. And we're looking at verse 16. We'll actually start in verse 15.

To give you a little more of the context. Do not love the world. Nor the things in the world. Now. Realize right away. That we're talking about. When we say love here.

We're talking about. The treasure of your heart. What is it that you find. Most valuable. That you attach the most value to.

Do not love the world. Nor the things. In the world. If anyone loves the world. The love of the father. Is not in him. So it's either or.

Not both and. You need to choose. You're either going to be loyal. To the world. And the things of the world. The ways of the world. Or to the father.

- [ 19 : 39 ] Then verse 16. For all that is in the world. That is. The lust of the flesh. And the lust of the. Eyes. And the boastful. Pride of life.

That emanates from your heart. That is all not. From the father. It is from the world. So we have. Contrasting. Ways of living. And viewing the world.

And relating to the world. And to God. In one. Our hearts are boastful. And proud. And stuck on ourselves. And so we pursue. The way of the world. That's with the current.

The other way. Is to turn away. From the world. As we turn. To the Lord. And begin to love him. And treasure him. And be devoted to him. That puts us. Swimming upstream.

From the world. It's one or the other. Those are the only two ways. To live on this planet. According to the Lord. And you see in here.

- [ 20 : 35 ] That the lust of the eyes. Is something that we want to avoid. The desire of the eyes. Is something we do not want. To order our lives by. Now go back. To Ecclesiastes.

Chapter 11. And look once more with me. At what he says. In the middle of verse 9. Follow the impulses of your heart. And the desires of your eyes.

What are we supposed to do with that? If we do not consider. The fuller context of Solomon's counsel.

In Ecclesiastes. We will conclude one of two things. One that scripture is contradicting itself. And this is the kind of stuff. That you run into.

When you find unbelievers. Who have practiced. Showing you as a Christian. That the Bible is full of nonsense. And contradicts itself. This is the kind of stuff.

[ 21 : 30 ] That they pull up. And put in your face. In the heat of the moment. To make you look bad. And to undermine your confidence. In scripture. So we will either conclude.

That scripture is contradicting itself. Or we will conclude. That Solomon. Is missing the mark. In what he advises. And this is terrible counsel. And that is the kind of stuff.

You find in the Bible. Just ridiculous counsel. About how to live your life. So don't pay any attention to it. But what else.

Does Solomon tell us. About living out of a heart. Of wisdom. In relationship. To the Lord. He has made a big deal. Out of this.

The fear. Of the Lord. And in Proverbs. He told us. And I showed you this. The beginning of. The fear of the Lord. Is the beginning of what. Right.

[ 22 : 26 ] And when we talk about wisdom. We're talking about. The wise. Wiseness. Of God. Being applied. To the way that you live your lives.

The way that you make decisions. And go about. Doing your daily activities. I want to do those. With wisdom. With the counsel. And instruction. And guidance.

Of God. God. Not out here. Flying by the seat of my pants. On my own. That's no way to live. So Solomon.

Tells us. That living out of a heart. Of wisdom. Is all. Listen to me. Please. Carefully. Living out of a heart. Of wisdom. Is all about. Being in relationship. To God.

It is all about. The fear of the Lord. Having a high. And holy reverence. Toward God. Now when we do this. I want you to see. If it makes a big difference.

[ 23 : 20 ] In how we interpret. And understand his counsel. In 11. 9. You know. Because. In 11. 9. He doesn't give us any caveats. There's nothing.

In the context. Of what he gives us. In 11. 9. That really. That really helps us. Understand better. His counsel. About following our heart. And going after the desires.

Of what we see. So we've got to try to. Come to terms with this. Somehow. Well. Follow along. As I trace. This particular theme.

Beginning in. Ecclesiastes 2. I'm taking time. To do this. To show you. How rich. This can be. If we've been. Paying attention. This is the kind of thing.

That starts paying. Dividends. As we close in. On the end of the book. And Solomon. Wants to drive. His point home. As he will say. In chapter 12. Like well driven nails. Well.

[ 24 : 18 ] If. If you don't know. How to hammer. You're not going to drive. Nails well. Been there. Have you ever watched. A guy who really knows. What he's doing. With it. Now they use nail guns.

More than anything. But if you've ever watched. A guy. Who really can wield. A hammer. And he can drive. 20 penny nails. Or whatever it is. I've watched him do that.

Whack. Whack. And the thing is in. While I'm going. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Whack. Make it straight. Whack. Whack. Solomon wants us to come to the end.

And he wants to drive this stuff home to us. So chapter 2. Beginning in verse 24. There is nothing better.

Oh I love that. There is nothing better for a man. Or a woman. Or a woman. Mankind. Than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good.

[ 25 : 16 ] There is a good life. I've got plenty to eat. I enjoy my life. Plenty to drink. I enjoy that. I love my job. I feel purpose in life.

This also I have seen. Notice. It is from the hand of God. Big theme. Living my life in enjoyment is from the hand of God.

Then verse 25. For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without him. There is your relationship. There is the priority of relationship with God.

No relationship with God. You are not going to enjoy your life in a truly meaningful way. It will remain shallow. You may have fun. You may be distracted.

You may go home and lay down that night and think man what a great day. Only to wake up the next day and find that this happens or that happens. And now what do you do?

[ 26 : 14 ] It's like having your feet cut out from underneath you. You can only party and pretend for so long. And then you know what happens? Life. Life slams you in the face.

Life. And then you've got to take stock and ask yourself. Now what do I have to stand on? All right. Let's keep going together. How about chapter 3? Chapter 3 in verse 12.

I know that there is nothing better. There it is again. For them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime.

See he's not a party pooper. He wants you to have a great, enjoyable, meaningful, fulfilling life. He wants that. Verse 13. Moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all of his labor.

It is the gift of God. It can't be more clear. I know that everything God does will remain forever.

[ 27 : 14 ] There is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it. Folks, how God works in your life is perfect. You may not think so, but that doesn't change the reality.

The way that God works in your life and orders your life is perfect. That doesn't mean that you're problem free. It means that what he's doing is perfect. He knows what he's doing.

There's nothing to add to it. There's nothing to take from it. For God has so worked that men should do what, church? Fear him.

Fear him. And again, this isn't the fear of terror that makes you want to go find a hole and hide from God. This is a fear that draws you to God in a high and holy reverence for him.

You're learning to love him. You're learning to be more deeply devoted to him, to trust him in a deeper way. Because he's worthy of that. And then look in chapter 3, verse 22.

[ 28 : 22 ] I have seen that nothing is better. Have you underlined nothing is better yet? I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot.

How about chapter 5, verse 7? For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

Fear God. And then in chapter 5, verse 18. Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting.

That's another way of saying there's nothing better. To eat, to drink, and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him.

For this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, he has also empowered him.

[ 29 : 33 ] To eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor. For this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

Do you see this work of God repeatedly being done? And what is that work? To help you enjoy life. Just to give you the opportunity and make the provision for you to enjoy your life.

The surest recipe for disaster in your life is to ignore this God. To reject this God. And his purpose for your life.

Chapter 6. Chapter 6. There isn't, verse 1. There is an evil which I've seen under the sun. It is prevalent among men. A man to whom God has given riches and wealth.

We just read that up in chapter 5. And honor. So that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires. Do you see that? God has given him all that he desires.

[ 30 : 47 ] Yet, God has not empowered him to eat from them for a foreigner enjoys them. What's the point? This is the contrast. God still provides.

God still gives. But he removes or withholds the ability of that person to enjoy what he has. You guys know this. You see the headlines. People who've reached the pinnacle of wealth.

And they have, you know, the 15,000 square foot home with 14 pools and 16 Ferraris and whatever else. And they are on the movies and on the things.

The lifestyle of the rich and famous. And then you read a little while later that they divorced. Their kids hate them. And that nobody wants to be around them. And that they're miserable.

Trying to live a life with all that stuff that's still a provision from God. And then finding that God withholds the joy from it. Because you're not living in your relationship to the Lord in faithfulness and in honor and in devotion.

[ 31 : 50 ] Chapter 7, verse 18. It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other.

For the one who fears God comes forth with them both. What we're talking about here is enjoying your life and pursuing godliness. He says the person who fears God has both.

An enjoyable life and a godly life. It doesn't have to be one or the other. You can come away with both. That's from the hand of God.

Chapter 8, verse 12. Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and many may lengthen his life. Still I know that it will be well for those who fear God.

Who fear him openly. So this is a way of saying what God says and thinks is what's most important. But it will not be well.

[ 32 : 52 ] Verse 13 of chapter 8. For the evil man. The evil man is someone who isn't living his life with the Lord. That's all it takes for you to live in the evil of your heart that we read about a little while ago.

Is you don't. You don't relate to God in love and devotion and trust and faithfulness and submission. You just live for you. It's all about you.

Verse 13. But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow. Why? Because he does not what? Fear God. And then in verse 15.

So I commended pleasure. For there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry. And this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life.

Look, which God has given him under the sun. And then finally, chapter 9, verse 1.



[ 33 : 55 ] For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. In the hand of God.

And then in chapter 9, verse 7. Go then, eat your bread in happiness, drink your wine with a cheerful heart, for God has already approved your works.

This is the God who is sovereign and purposes your life for good things, good works. Again, that doesn't mean you're problem free.

It means you have a faithful God bringing you through. Oh, man, don't you wonder how people face the adversities of life without the Lord? Let me tell you, they don't.

They don't face it. They run from it. And they hide. And they cope. And they fall apart. And they commit suicide. And they lose themselves in alcohol and sex and drugs.

[ 34 : 59 ] In anything you can name that will distract them from the reality. That's what they do. And they run out and they kill each other and rape each other.

Because they can't face life. Well, this is what Solomon's legacy is for us in these chapters leading up to chapter 12.

When he tells us to follow our hearts and our desires, I hope it's clear by that little survey, he is telling us to live in the fear of the Lord. He is telling us to put a premium on living in a high and holy reverence for God because it's a gift that we have the life we have.

So if we're going to follow the impulses of our heart and the desire of our eyes, we need to realize that he's rooted all of that in the fear of the Lord.

And so we're living out of a heart that fears the Lord and is devoted to the Lord who wants to please the Lord in all things. So by all means, follow your heart.

[ 36 : 08 ] If your heart's following the Lord. All of that means that we act on the wisdom that God puts in our hearts by his truth.

And all of that so that we can honor him in every area of our life. In other words, here's the deal. We are to see life as God's gift. And therefore to enjoy God's gift by living in grateful, humble, obedient wisdom, which God provides.

This is all from the hand of the Lord. And what that will do, folks, is it will allow us to know fulfillment in life. We will never know fulfillment in life chasing fulfillment in life.

It'll go right past us. When we stop chasing fulfillment in life and pursue the Lord, fulfillment happens. Because it happens in the Lord.

What did Jesus say? If you want to save your life, what do you need to do with it? She said, lose it. Now go figure that. How would you like to have been standing there when he said that?

[ 37 : 21 ] Anybody who wants to save his life will lose it. And those who lose their lives will save it. Pursue life and life will pass you by.

You'll grow old, look back and be full of regrets. Pursue the Lord and that changes everything. Simple as that. Straight up. As I look into the eyes of the young people here, I hope you're listening.

I wish I could have heard this 30 years ago. I probably heard stuff like it. You know what I probably said? I have plenty of time. Knowing me.

So going back to what I was originally pointing out to you. When we come then to interpret what Solomon means by creator.

We can also look back into the book of Ecclesiastes for what he said about this. Because everything now as we draw to a conclusion hinges on this. Remember also your creator.

[ 38 : 30 ] Well, what does he say about this creator? If you go to chapter 3 verse 11. These are just several things we're going to look at real quick.

Chapter 3 verse 11. He, that would be God. The antecedent to he would be God up in chapter 10. You see the antecedent there?

God has given. He, God, has made everything appropriate in its time. He has made everything appropriate in its time.

God the creator has done that. The emphasis here is God making. He made everything appropriate to its time.

Do you know there's never a time in your life when stuff's happening. Imagine that God hasn't appointed that to happen in that time as the perfect time for it to happen. Even though you and I say things like this.

[ 39 : 31 ] Oh, I can't believe this is happening right now. Can you believe this? What a terrible time for this to happen. God forgive me. Repent. Repent in the moment. Don't say stuff like that.

And then in chapter 7 verses 13 and 14. Consider the work of God.

Consider the work of God for who is able to straighten what he's bent. Well, you can't. What God purposes and what God does stands. You can't change it.

In the day of prosperity, be happy. In the day of adversity, consider. Notice it didn't say in the day of prosperity, be happy.

In the day of adversity, be sad and grumpy and complaining and bitter and resentful and full of yourself. No. It says this. In the day of adversity, consider.

[ 40 : 30 ] What are the next three words in your Bible? I'll tell you what they are in mind. God has made. There's your creator.

God has made the one as well as the other. What is he talking about? God has made both prosperity and adversity. And they come into your life at just the exact right and perfect time.

Because he appoints all things for its time. And its season. Well, there goes my complaining. There goes my reason to be grumpy.

And full of me. And rail against this stuff happening to me. Oh, goodness. Are you starting to get the flavor of why this wise man, who's at the end of his life looking back full of regret, is saying, remember your creator.

Remember who this person is. Remember what his work is as creator. He makes. He makes.

[ 41 : 40 ] That's his role. Okay. Consider the work of God as creator. What he does stands.

He's the author of both prosperity and calamity. Then in 729. Behold, I have found only this. My text says that God made men upright.

God made men upright. So that was God's good and gracious work before the fall. Right now we can enjoy that blessing of being upright. In the sight of the Lord through a faith relationship with his son, Jesus.

We cannot be made right and put in right standing with God apart from faith in Jesus Christ. He is the object of our trust and our faith.

This person who came to the earth and sacrificed himself in my place. So that he could pay the penalty for what I owe God for my sin.

[ 42 : 46 ] What do I owe God for my sin? Death. What did Jesus take for me as a result of paying that price for me? Death. Jesus died for me.

To pay the penalty for my sin. What did I get in the exchange as I learned to trust him? Look to him and put my faith in him.

As for who he is as a person. Then God transacts with me spiritually. So that Jesus got my sin and I get his righteousness.

That is his right standing with the father. I am made declared righteous, holy, pure, blameless. So I get to stand before the Lord upright. God made men originally upright.

They fell into sin. The answer now to stand before God upright is Jesus Christ alone. Faith in Jesus Christ alone.

[ 43 : 47 ] The point here is God made. And then finally in 11.5. Chapter 11 verse 5. Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman.

So you do not know the activity of God who makes all things. You see the theme here? God made. God makes.

God forms. God fashions. God does. God works. God creates. God creates. He is the God who makes all things.

And Solomon tells us all of this is beyond our being able to fully understand. God draws near for us to know him and to love him. But we can't know all there is to know about him.

And his ways are beyond our full comprehension. Nevertheless, God condescends to help us know about him what he wants us to know. We know enough about God to love him, to be saved by him, and to be in relationship with him.

[ 44 : 55 ] Because all that he does is perfect. In fact, in all of this, folks, creator is plural in the Hebrew here. It's plural in this text.

What does that point to? It points to his, catch this, majesty. It points to the multifaceted splendor of your God. We had to make it plural.

The writer had to make it plural here, Solomon, because he can't capture all of the multifaceted, wonderful splendor of our God. He's splendorous.

If I could just make up a word. He's splendorful. In so many rich ways. And so what does he say?

All of this reveals several rich realities related to remembering our maker. I have done that little exercise with you for one reason. To help you now understand what he says, what he means by what he says, when he tells us to remember.

[ 46 : 01 ] Remember. Is remembering limited to just simply recalling in our mind? Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know there's a God. There's a God. I got it. I remember. Right, right, right.

Don't forget God. It's so much more than that. It's so much more than memory recall. All right. Remember.

Remember. So let's put this first one up there. Remember who formed you. Remember who formed you. I'm telling you now what's involved in remembering.

And I'm going to show you this. For the Hebrew mind, there's only one creator. And every human being is formed by that creator in the creator's image.

That is basic Old Testament theology, isn't it? From Genesis. Every human being was made. Not self-made. God-made.

[ 47 : 01 ] Formed in the womb by God's power. And every single human being bears the image of their creator. You bear the handiwork.

You bear the fingerprints of Almighty God forming you. And there's nothing. Listen. Nothing can scrub that off. You will bear that image.

If you hate God all of your life. And do the most heinous sins all of your life. Live to your 80 years old. And then die and get put in the ground. All of your life. You will still bear the image of God.

You can't wash it off. You can't sin it out of your life. God gave it to you. You can waste it. And malign it. And despise it. But you can't get rid of it. Do you understand what I'm saying? That's what haunts us. When we're living in sinful rebellion.

[ 48 : 00 ] It's the image of God that haunts us. We just can't shake it. We know better. We know we're supposed to be bearing his image as image makers. Right?

As in his image. We're supposed to be living out that image. Living out that character. Revealing it. And we're not. And that dichotomy. That war inside.

Is what people hate and run from. Oh it tears them up. It tore me up. Now if you had asked me. Why are you so angry? Why are you so miserable? Why are you so Mr. Pretend?

I'd have said. I'm not. Because that is what I said. I'm not. I denied it. Can't you see I'm happy?

No. Remember. Who formed you. That's so critical. Everything starts there. This is what we want to tell the transgender movement.

[ 49 : 02 ] Remember who formed you. He made you this way. Stop trying to throw it off and deny it. One of the most ridiculous things I've ever heard in my adult lifetime.

As a minister of the gospel is this. I'm not male or female. I'm not. I'm in my own category. This woke up one day and decided.

So many people now. Just waking up and deciding. Remember where you came from. Remember where you came from.

In chapter 3 verses 19 and 20 of Ecclesiastes. He says this. For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same.

As one dies so dies the other. Indeed they all have the same breath. There's no advantage for man over the beasts. For all is vanity. Now listen to this. You know what? All go to the same place.

[ 50 : 00 ] What is that? They all came from the dust. And all return to the dust. We do share that fate with animals. We all return to the dust.

Then he says in chapter 12 verse 7. We read it earlier. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was. And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

That's the end that we're all facing. We were created from the earth. And we will return to the earth. Now folks hear me. This is humbling. Again this is humbling.

This is the kind of stuff people don't like to listen to. If they don't want to follow the Lord. Because it humbles us. It helps us to know our place in this world. We are not all that.

We were made from dirt. And to dirt we will return. And that humbles Jeff. You know what that tells Jeff?

[ 50 : 59 ] I ain't God. I just ain't. I just ain't all that Greg in a bag of chips. I ain't. And it's humbling. And it keeps me in my place where I need to be.

You know where that place is? On my knees in the dirt. Worshiping my Savior. It was good enough for my Lord to fall down on his face in the dirt in the Garden of Eden.

And speak to his Father. And offer his life. That's good enough for me as an example. And then remember why you were here.

Remember why you were here. You were made. God gave you life. You were made. You were created. God gave you life or you wouldn't be here. God gave you life.

So you owe God everything. Right out of the gate. God made you to know him. To worship him. And to serve him in all of your life.

- [ 52 : 00 ] Not just a part of it. Or not just a season of it. So friends. The fuller context of Ecclesiastes. Helps us take in then. And what Solomon has in mind.
- As he tells us to remember. To remember. Our creator. Dr. Barak pointed out that remembering the Lord as your creator is a spiritual action.
- It's a decisive action that involves. And I quote. Allowing the objects of remembrance. To shape one's perspective in the present.
- I'll say it again. Remembering is a spiritual action. Involving allowing the objects of remembrance. To shape one's perspective in the present.
- Here's the question. Are you allowing your creator to shape your perspectives? Are you allowing your creator to shape your perspectives?
- [ 53 : 01 ] Particularly your perspectives on what life's all about? Why you're here? Walt Kaiser mentioned the example of Hannah.
- In 1 Samuel chapter 1. Now just real quickly. Hannah was barren. And she had.
- What the scriptures call. Arrival. Is that what he. Let me get there.
- 1 Samuel's right after the book of Ruth. Yes. Arrival. So Hannah had a rival. Here's the deal. She had a husband. Elkanah. Elkanah had two wives.
- Hannah was one of those wives. The other wife was Penina. Penina could have children. Hannah was barren. Hannah was barren because the Bible says the Lord had closed her womb.
- [ 54 : 03 ] This was a monumental source of grief for Hannah. In this culture. A shame culture. Not having children for a woman was one of the worst.
- If not the worst shameful things that can happen to you. So Hannah just bore this horribly. It was hard. Hard on Hannah. What made it worse was. Penina never missed an opportunity to goad her about it.
- And to make her miserable. And the Bible says that it just made Hannah miserable. Every time. At a certain time of year. When they would go up the temple. To offer. Make offerings. And worship the Lord.
- Penina would constantly harass. Hannah about being barren. And so Hannah came to this place. Greatly distressed. In 1 Samuel 1 10.
- She prayed to the Lord. And wept bitterly. She made a vow. And said. Oh Lord of hosts. If you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant. And remember me.
- [ 55 : 02 ] And not forget your maidservant. But will give your maidservant a son. I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life. And a razor shall never come upon his head. That's a Nazarite vow.
- Dedicated to the Lord. Set apart to God. A servant of the Lord all of his life. And then the Bible comes to say. This. In verse.
18. She said. Let your maidservant find favor in your sight. So the woman went her way and ate. And her face was no longer sad. Then they arose early in the morning. And worshipped before the Lord. Her and her husband.
- And returned again to their house in Ramah. Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife. And the Lord remembered her. It came about in due time after Hannah had conceived.
- She gave birth to a son. And named him Samuel. And she named him that. Because I have asked him of the Lord. The Lord remembering Hannah was an action.
- [ 56 : 09 ] It was a decisive action. That intervened into her life. Answered a prayer. And produced something. That's the kind of remembering your creator.

That we're being called to here. That's the kind of remembering. Remembering. Let me put this up on the screen for him. Josiah. Remembering God as your creator.

Helps you sort through the hard. Harsh. Hostile realities of life. As God's child. As God's workmanship. Created for good works. Just like Hannah.

Walt Kaiser adds this. Let me put this quote up here for you. To remember our creator. Calls for decisive action. Underline that. Based on the mental recollection of.

And reflection on all that God. Is doing and has done for us. It must result in an action. Appropriate to that recollection. You see. This is a lot more.

[ 57 : 08 ] Than just calling something to mind. Remembering your creator. Is a decisive action on your part. So you can choose to focus on what people.

In life do to you. Or. You can take the perspective of what God is doing. In. And through you. Did you hear that?

You can either focus on what people. In life do to you. Or you can take the perspective of what God. Is doing in and through you. The difference. Will be whether or not you live.

A meaningful life. You focus on people in life. And life will pass you by. And you'll become bitter and cynical. You focus on the Lord.

And what he's doing in you. And it makes all the difference. In what a meaningful life is. Sure. There's going to be suffering. Hardship and heartache.

[ 58 : 05 ] But it is all couched within. Put within. Framed within. Your relationship to God. And so it's purposeful. It means something. It has depth.

And substance. And it's important to heaven. Boy I tell you. You can go through some really really tough stuff. If you know that what you're going through.

Is important to heaven. It goes past you. And matters to heaven. Holy moly. What's happening to me matters to heaven. Why would this God.

This big old creator. God who does all this stuff. Why would he take time to condescend. To care about what happens to me in this moment. Well he does. You say. Gosh Jeff. That's humbling.

Yes. That's right. Boy Jeff. That warms my heart. That's right. Now you're getting to know your God. Now you're getting to know your God. It's a big old God.

[ 59 : 01 ] I'll put this up here for you to see. If it's not up there. When we focus on the hurts. Harms and harsh realities of life.

We can live as if we don't even have. A good creator. Doing a good and gracious work. In and with our lives. So this matter of what. Our hearts are focused on throughout life.

Is the issue in remembering. You're remembering. Your creator. Because you're trying to keep your heart. Focused on where it needs to be focused.

On him. So. Remember also your creator. In the days of your youth. Before.

The evil days come. And the years draw near. When you will say. I have no delight in him. Because then it's too late. There is a too late. Reality to this.

[ 59 : 59 ] Suzanne. Suzanne. How long have I been going? No worries. God appointed. It's perfect in timing.

So. I'm going to. I'm going to quit here.

Draw a line. What this means is. In verse one. Is now Solomon has set the stage. To walk us through.

What is going on. In these next. Six or seven verses or so. Before he gets to the real punch line. At the end of chapter 12.

When he tells us that life is all about. Fearing the Lord and keeping his commandments. We've got. We've got a bunch more stuff. Right here at the end. That's really supposed to just.

[ 60 : 56 ] Peek it up. And then he just. Pow. Drives it home. Now I don't know if I can preach it like that. But I'll try. So hang on. Hang on. To what we hope to do. Maybe next time.

So. Jim. I was a little off. It's not going to be two sermons. It'll be at least three. Maybe four. All right. But we'll get there. I'm so grateful to you guys.

As you pray for Greg and I. As we teach and preach. And. As we serve you. Thank you guys for your ministry to us. As we do all this. Let's pray together. Father. Well father.

We do take to heart. The counsel that Solomon's given us. In chapter 12 verse 1. We are to remember our creator. We are to remember you.

We are to actively seek you. Even as we have been sought. By you. And so now we want to live our lives. As your gift to us.

[ 61 : 51 ] We want to live in the enjoyment. That you give to us. For life. We want to be careful. To fear you God. To have a high and holy reverence. For you. And learn.

Who you are. And learn to walk with you. And to talk to you. And to trust you. And to lean on you. To get to know you. In the times when.

All we can find to do. Is weep. When our hearts are so grieved. And so broken. That we can barely find anything. To say to you. And in the times when.

Our hearts are soaring. And just to look at a blue sky. Makes our hearts beat faster. We just want to know you. In these times. And all the times in between.

Because we want to be able. To be the creature. Making sure that we keep you. Where you're supposed to be. In our hearts. You're our creator. So we just want to honor you.

[ 62 : 47 ] Thank you for the wisdom. Of Solomon. Thank you for the wisdom. Of this book. And thank you for the way. That you are teaching us. To walk with you. And to trust you. And to look to you.

We give you all of the glory. In Christ's precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.