

Ecclesiastes 4:7-16

Today on "It's a Good Life," we want to continue our study in the book of Ecclesiastes. We're in Chapter 4 and we're looking at verses 7-8. I believe this section of Ecclesiastes could be divided like this: verses 7-12, the vanity of isolation; and then in verses 7-8 we see the vanity of being alone. Those verses say this: *⁷Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. ⁸There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.*

I believe what Solomon is saying here in verse 7 is there is more vanity under the sun... in other words, on the Earth. He is seeing more and more and more. Some people are all alone, according to verse 8 in the first part of that verse, and there are people who have no companion, children, or siblings. However, I believe this verse 8 is also teaching that these people never stopped working. You know what that's called? That's called greed.

Now, it's not wrong to work, and it's not wrong to work hard, but there needs to be a reason for that work. There was no end to these people's labors and they had no satisfaction with riches. I think that's the point... they're never satisfied. These people are never satisfied. They don't even know why they're working. All their hard work and travail means nothing. According to this, the last part of that verse 8 says, *This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.*

Now, in verses 9-12, Ecclesiastes Chapter 4, we see the value of friends. This is important. *⁹Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰For if they fall,*

the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? ¹²And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Verse 9, I believe, is saying this. Two working together can accomplish more than one who works alone, and if you've been in this life very long, you know that is the truth. It's easier to do something if you've got help.

In verse 10, it says in essence if they both fall they can help each other up. They can help each other when there is a problem. And verse 10 also tells us that there's no one to help in time of need if we're alone, and this is grief. We are grieved if we are left alone and we need something and we need help and there's no one to help us.

We also see in verse 11 that two together can stay warm. One who is alone has no one to keep him warm. There is no way that that person is going to... especially, when we read about people who are trapped sometimes in the mountains and it's snowing and their body temperature falls. They perish and they die because there was no one there to help them stay warm. They can't stay warm. And, of course, we know that in certain situations that both people die because it's so cold, but I've also read and heard and seen evidence that, if there's another person there, that these two people can help each other stay warm. And that's what Solomon is talking about here.

It also goes on to tell us in verse 12 that a strong person who overcomes a weaker person can be subdued by two people. There's power in numbers. There's strength in numbers, and

we need to learn that. If you haven't learned it, you need to learn it, because we need to work together.

There's a Biblical principle seen here in verse 12. In II Samuel 10:9-11. It says, ⁹*When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians: ¹⁰And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon. ¹¹And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.*

Working together, helping each other as two are better than one, so three or more united together is still better and they are able to conquer an enemy. There needs to be fellowship, friendship, and working together in this life to accomplish more. It's not just accomplishing more in this life for this life; it's accomplishing more for the Lord, to serve Him, to get things done so that more people will know Jesus Christ as Savior, and so that other Christians can grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. That's the reason it's so important for an older Christian who is versed in the Scriptures to help a younger Christian, to help disciple that person, to help nurture and bring along that person as a newborn babe, helping them to get into the Word of God and feed upon the milk of the Word until they're able to take on, as the Bible puts it, the "meat" of the Word. In other words, they grow and keep growing until they're able to absorb and gain more and more knowledge of what God wants them to have.

Now, in I Corinthians 12:20, the Bible says, ²⁰*But now are they many members, yet but one body.* This is speaking of the body of

Christ. It says, ²¹*And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.*

It makes no difference how weak we think a brother in Christ is or a sister in Christ is. That person is necessary. In verse 23 of I Corinthians 12 goes on to say this, ²³*And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: ²⁵That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*

We're to help each other, and where one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Where one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. When someone is exalted and lifted up for good work, we need to rejoice with that person. And verse 27 says, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

In Genesis 2:18, all the way back in Genesis, God gives us a blueprint here. He gives us what is necessary in this life, and it says, *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* And of course, that's speaking of a wife, but it's also speaking of not being alone in the work God has given us as children of God and also as people who are living in this life, making a living and doing things in this life. We need helpers. We need to be a help meet. We need to help other people to do the job that God has given us to do while in this life.

We look on now in verses 13-16 of Ecclesiastes Chapter 4, and we see the vanity of popularity. Did you ever want to be popular? Well, look at the vanity of it now. We see first of all in verses 13-16 a narrative of two men. Verse 13 says, *Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.*

I believe what Solomon is saying here, a poor, wise child is happier than an old unwise king because the king now refuses to accept criticism. In other words, "I'm better than anybody else. I know everything. I just don't need anybody." That seems to be what's being said here. The older the king becomes, the dumber he gets. It appears the king once listened to constructive criticism, but now he will no more be admonished. You can't help him.

In Ecclesiastes 4:14 it says: *For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.* And the poor, wise young man is elevated from prison. In other words, he's brought up from poverty to a throne, according to verse 14, and the rest of the verse says, *whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.* I believe that it's saying here he who is born to be king becomes the poorest. That person who comes up through the ranks, we might say, that person who is part of the people, that person can represent the people better than the person who is brought up with that silver spoon, shall we say, in their mouth. Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that that person who is rich can't do a good job. I'm saying the Bible says here that many times this happens, that the person who has experienced what the normal person experiences can do a better job than that person who is rich as they take a throne.

Now look at Ecclesiastes 4:15. Solomon says, *I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.* Well, out of all the living on Earth, the wise young man in verse 13, the second child in verse 15 shall rule in the place of the one who was born to rule, according to verse 15.

In Genesis 41:14, it says, *Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.* We know that Joseph was sold into slavery. He was the poorest of the poor at one time, but God exalted him because he was the one who was willing to serve God and he was the one whom God wanted to use because he didn't make of himself any more than what he was, but God used him mightily. And we know that the people of Israel survived because of Joseph later on in years. We read about that in the book of Genesis.

We continue on and there's much more that could be said. In Psalm 113:7-8, it says, *⁷He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; ⁸That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.* And we see that as we've already read about Joseph.

Verse 16 talks about popularity and it does not last long. Verse 16: *There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.* The past, present, and future generations will find fault as to how the king ruled, according to verse 16, and the result of the king's rule – worthlessness and frustration. Everybody has an answer. Everybody has something to say. Nobody's satisfied.

Are you satisfied? Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior today? I pray that you'll do that right now. "Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as my Savior."

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