

Topic	Remember Your Creator
Reference	Ecclesiastes 11:7 – 12:8
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Speaker	Ps Mark Tan

Often times we taken this passage and we shuck it straight to the youth, because it says, *remember your creator in the days of your youth*, but hang on was it really what the teacher wanted to end with. We had to understand that in Ecclesiastes, it is the teacher that is speaking to a crowd of people who we are assuming are of mixed ages, preferably most likely those who are mature in age, those who are able to comprehend such philosophy and teaching. So if he had spent 10 chapters over to speak to these people, why suddenly make a 90 degree turn and go to only young people. Unless, the young people were merely a meeting point for both the young and the old together and learn.

Remember Your Creator – Before you Forget Him

The text starts with a climax of hope. Ecclesiastes is a rollercoaster of emotions. It really starts with a jerk, ‘life sucks’, and then as you go up you say, actually it is not so bad. There is a meaning in life, there is fulfillment in our work, there are friends that we can look to, but then all of us will go back to dust and we go back splat. Then we climb back up to talking about how friendships, fellowship, comradery, ethics and the moral values of this world is beyond the sun and can be experienced within the sun and even in everyday life you will be able to see snippets of it and snippets of hope, but always through an up and down emotions of the feeling of how life is meaningless.

The word ‘meaningless’ in Ecclesiastes can mean various personifications of vapor. So it cannot be grasped, cannot be pressed, cannot be lost in, cannot be ignored. There are two times where the teacher says meaningless and it means something quite different from the text before.

We come to a happy point and it is a point of encouragement. The first point is that life on earth is to be enjoyed.

7 Light is sweet, and it pleases the eyes to see the sun. 8 However many years anyone may live, let them enjoy them all.

It is okay to enjoy this life. This life is a gift of God. There are things in life which we can take pleasure and joy in. Life is meant to be enjoyed, the many days you have enjoy it, but there is a note of warning, life on earth is to be enjoyed but life on earth also has sufferings.

But let them remember the days of darkness, for there will be many. Everything to come is meaningless.

The word 'meaningless' has a very interesting place. Your achievements and your pleasures in life would not feel as sweet as it would be unless we would have gone through some challenges in life. If everything was easy, everyone would have done it and then there is no sweetness into it. There are two ways in enjoying a teaspoon of sugar, one is you put that sugar in your mouth and you think it is not sweet enough add some more and you will come to a point where you will feel that the sugar is no more sweet. It is because you have numbed your mouth. So another way to go about it is take a wedge of lemon, stick it in your mouth, lick it, feel it and then take a teaspoon of sugar and put it in your mouth. It will taste awesome; it is a relief.

It is because of that we say that time of struggle is meaningless, meaning it is only for a short while. Like holding your breath when you first plunge into a cold pond then you open your eyes and see the life that is available at the bottom of this lake. The suffering part is meaningless because than later comes the joy. So if life on earth is to be enjoyed, but life on earth also has sufferings what then does it look like in every day experience and so the teacher than brings in the young people where both the young and the old take a very close glance of what it should feel like and we will feel some parts of our lives to resonate with this example. So youth is to be enjoyed while you can experience life but with moderation as God will hold you accountable.

9 You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

So it is focused on the young people, but the advice also resonates very closely to all of our hearts. That life is to be enjoyed, that no matter what station of life that are you, may you be retired, may you be working in your own business, may you be facing the grunt of the economy crisis or may you be actually having a point of relief right now because things are looking up for you. Enjoy them, but enjoy them carefully. So we have to do this balance, life is good, is to be enjoyed but at the same time do it in moderation because the life that is given to us is not really our own, it is given by God.

10 So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless.

So don't be anxious, don't be worried too much about the nitty-gritty details in life, because youth will be but a fleeting moment and life also is like a fleeting moment. So what can we therefore do in application: Whether you are young or old, live daringly, live accountable, remembering God before you forget him in the midst of pain or pleasure. From experience and

philosophy, we can also know for a fact that it is easier to lose God in pleasure than in pain. In every economy crisis that this world has faced, since the great depression in the 1930s and every time when there is a period of depression or recession church attendance increase by 20% on average. But when things get better and when you are at the prime attendance drop by 15%. So it is easier to forget about God in pleasure than in pain and the teacher reminds us to remember God in both.

I also like to highlight an issue that we also face when we make choices in life. There is an era that this world is actually trying to get us into:

1. This whole notion of how we chose our life, how we choose to live our life. The media sells to us that life is short, go on a vacation but at the same time they say buy this detergent that kills 99.9% bacteria. So we want to live but we also are in this danger of bacteria. So you live well but you might die, so go ahead and take these measures.

You think you have control over your life by making these choices about your health. This is meaningless, this is a delusion because there are people who have enjoyed being able to see the world until they are 80 and there are those who are able to have kept a sterile environment in their home, only to trip on a wet floor after you mop with your detergent that kills 99.9% bacteria and you flip down the stairs and fall on your neck. Where then do we find meaningfulness in life? Jesus comes in and says,

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

These words; steal, kill and destroy, actually has very specific meanings. To steal what you value, the kill what you have left and to destroy the hope that you may have for the future. So Jesus comes into the picture and say, I have come that is the confidence that we have that you may have life, that's the promise, and have it to the full that's the hope. This is the promise of Christ that in Christ we may experience the wholeness of life, no matter how long or short that we have on this earth because the amount of time that we have on this earth is not determined by us it is determined by God that is where the media is actually selling us a lie, nothing can really extend or reduce our lives because God already has planned in the background. God has already set it which is why we find a lot of issues where some people live healthy lives but get a heart attack and then people that smokes and drinks and eats cheese burgers every day and live onto 72. Life is not fair, but it is meaningless, it is only for a moment.

What does a fulfilled life look like?

George Phillip Witter is actually known as the Bubble Boy. He was born like his brother with severe combined immunodeficiency. He is allergic to almost everything, his body just reacts

very badly to it. His brother got that and in three days he died and they knew that when George is born he is going to get it too. So as soon as he was born he had to be put into a balloon and he always lived being fed and carried in that balloon with gloves and plastic. All the food had to be carefully prepared for him. His mother picked him for the first time in 1977 when he was 6 years old and that's only because by that time there was enough money and enough technology to prepare a clean environment for him to be carried in such a way. He could never see anything beyond a piece of filament plastic that is before his direct viewing, but he lived a good-good life and a meaningful one too. He got to play baseball, although very-very cautiously. He gets to see the parks, the zoos and even though it takes 28 specific steps for both the kid to memorize and the parent to make sure that he can go from the sterile environment of his room into this little NASA astronaut suit, he gets to spectate and be in awe of life every day. It is unfortunate that at 12 years old he passed away due to complications of a potential treatment.

As he knew that he was going to die very soon, instead of being full of resentment, he then had this awe and wonder in his eyes in saying, there was so much to see in this world. I can't wait to see what God has in mind in the next life. In his little way he found that actually life can be experienced fully even with great control and this is the life that we have living with the gospel. This world is not meant for us, we can't live to the fullest extent because of our sin but through Christ that protects us we can then experience life to the full and be not afraid because we are looking forward to the future with him face to face.

Where does this new life start?

This new life starts at the foot of the cross.

There are four constants in life which we experience that both harms us and also encourages us.

- There is evil.
- There is love.
- There is forgiveness.
- There is life.

These four things converge in the history on the cross of Jesus Christ where evil was seen for what it was, goodness displayed in his son, Jesus. Love and forgiveness given on that cross, life anew we can receive. So start your life in awe of him and start being in awe of him at the foot of the cross.

Remember Your Creator – Before You Fade Away

There is a long poem in chapter 12 verse 2 until verse 5 and it talks in metaphors the everyday experience an Israelite would have in ancient day life and as do we in modern day life. So this long text here from verse 2 to 5 is broken in three parts

2 before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain;

If we do notice all these things will bring to an absence of light. In Ecclesiastes light represents life under the sun. So where there is light there is life, where there is darkness there is death. So when the sun and the light and the moon stars to grow dark, that means death is coming. It represents calamity and that is constant that we will have in life whether you are young or old.

3 when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; 4 when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades;

This is the death of the city. When the security guards are no more, when the soldiers are weakening, the grinders are those who sharpen the tools that are used for everyday use in everyday life. So when these people that help maintain the running of a city also disappears and when suddenly everything goes still. We see that in Chernobyl, Russia when the atomic bomb hit it they had to evacuate and after 50 years the city is barren, it looks like not being take care of. So remember your creator before your city fades away.

when people rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; 5 when people are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags itself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then people go to their eternal home and mourners go about the streets.

Age fades and this is the experience of all human life. Every one of us leaving will die one day. How does that give us any encouragement at all? Because it is part of life. We tend to try our very best to look as best as we can, but we know that will not last. The beautiful faces on media in the past are no longer beautiful and it is same of the handsome guys. The media and this world tries and tells us that if we can't live like an immortal, we can try and look like one. So that's why every morning we do our very best, we comb our hair, we brush our teeth because it is hygiene but then we put makeup, like putting a mask on ourselves, making ourselves look good for the morning, but by the end of the day after through the hustle and bustle we look more like our passport photos then what we actually want in real life.

This looks very hopeless, because we can try and fake it but by the end of the day this is the stark reality, literally naked reality.

We can't find hope in lying, we can't find hope in facing the truth where then can we find this hope?

We find this hope in what ought to be, what ought our image should look like God from the beginning of time had hope that God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. There is the ideal and when we lost that vision of what the image of God looks like he sent forth his son and that's why he is called Emmanuel, God with us. So when you want to see what a human being really looks like, a man or person that has lived his living life to the fullest we look to Christ because although he had ended at 33 days, after three days he rose and then now he lives in eternity.

Remember Your Creator – Before You Face Him

A few items were left separately from the text of his natural writing and is actually quite interesting.

6 Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well,

There is a lot of interpretation is in this but what we can say for certain is that silver and gold is being referred and so we assume that what we think would last forever and is in the form of things which we would normally use, both on momentous occasions and very important occasions. Golden bowls were used for ceremonies and celebrations; silver cords were worn especially among young people because they look lovely in them. They are gifts, they are rewards, they are displays of wealth and they are displays of what they thought will last forever but these too will fade away. Give anything on this earth enough time it will corrode and fade away. So are the things that we hold value on this earth. So that means nothing last and we want these things to last because we put so much meaning and value into this but if these don't last what then can last through time. Christ said this very timely

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-20

We see these things that last forever in the person that is Jesus Christ, why, because when he died no bacteria or virus could degrade his body, on the third day it rose. So he rose and he rose

to eternity. Do not store your treasures, that you may look young and continue as if you live forever, because you won't. Store now the image of God in your life and that will last forever and live it without doubt.

John Piper said, *Treasuring life above Christ is a tragedy.*

Final Cry

8 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!”

It means that life is short. John Piper says it very well. He says life is precarious, therefore life is precious, don't presume that you will have it tomorrow and don't waste it today. Make the decisions that you need to make today and make your decision to be with Christ each and every day.

Tim McGraw, a country folk singer, sings a song about an allegory of a man.

He said I was in my early 40's,
With a lot of life before me,
And a moment came that stopped me on a dime.
I spent most of the next days, lookin' at the x-rays,
Talkin' 'bout the options and talkin' 'bout sweet time.
Asked him when it sank in, that this might really be the real end.
How's it hit ya, when you get that kind of news.

He said I was finally the husband,
That most the time I wasn't.
And I became a friend a friend would like to have.
And all the sudden goin' fishing,
Wasn't such an imposition.
And I went three times that year I lost my dad.
Well I finally read the good book,
And I took a good long hard look at what I'd do
If I could do it all again.
And then.

And he said someday I hope you get the chance,
To live like you were dyin'.

Like tomorrow was a gift and you've got eternity

To think about what you do with it,
What could you do with it, what can
I do with it, what would I do with it.

What would you do if your life if you knew to live like you were dying?

Meaningless, meaningless, life is short. Live like you are dying. What would be the first decision that therefore you make every day. Decide therefore to cling onto things that will last beyond this life that we live, this eternal life that we can find through his son, Jesus.