

Topic	Take Risks Boldly But Wisely
Reference	Ecclesiastes 11:1 – 6
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We believe that working hard today and not focusing on the temporary joys but rather focusing on a long-lasting significant joy that happens later on is wisdom and focusing on temporary is foolish. It is foolish to focus on the temporary in light of the eternal but it is wisdom to focus on the eternal in the long-term and let that define how you act in the temporary. So we can say it is wisdom to let the eternal define your temporary. It is wisdom to let your destination define how you walk. Especially, in light of eternity, let your eternity define how you act today in the temporary. We have to keep in mind this as we go through the passage.

- Be Bold but Wise (11:1-2)
- Act now, don't overanalyze (11:3-4)
- Seize every opportunity to sow (11:5-6)

There is a lot of imagery today in the text. The first imagery that we see here is

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

If we put our bread upon the water it is going to sink. How are we going to get it back? This imagery used does not ask that we receive exactly that bread back but rather we receive something in return. So for whatever we give we will receive something in return. Some other imagery that was used by commentators is the fact that it could be thinking of Solomon's ships. So he is actually sending corn onto the boats and then sending it out to the nations and it is a risky boldly move just like putting bread onto the water thinking you will get something back because as you bring the ships over the lands for trade, anything could happen, you might not get those boats back, you might not get the grain back, the ship might sink, the grain might go foal. There are different risks, it is a risky move to put do that but Solomon use to do that and they use to have great spoils that come back and they get great in return, but not immediately, it took like two to three years. So they have some risk involved, but this is imagery we get here as well, but regardless of what imagery we use the ultimate message is this

Share and give boldly and take risk in giving and take your bread, whatever God has given you and put it onto the waters, have faith that when you do that, when you give freely and give risk fully and give boldly that you will receive something in return. So it is asking us to be bold, is asking us to take risks in our giving. The question is, you will find it after many days. There is some kind of certainty that is put there in this text. The question is does this certainty uphold in light of other passages in scripture and I think it does. If you look in for example Proverbs, it says

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will **repay him for his deed**. Proverbs 19:17

5 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and **your reward will be great**, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Luke 6:5

“When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For **you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.**” Luke 14:12-14

Again you will be repaid. It is not a condition; it is a definite. So it seems to be in the light of the Old Testament and the New Testament that if we give boldly we will be repaid. Now of course the timeframe is very important. I think here especially in this passage in Luke it says you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. So it doesn't mean that we will be paid immediately, it doesn't mean we will be repaid in this world with immediate kind, it could be spiritually, it could be in the future. The guarantee of God though is that whatever you do will be repaid. The guarantee lies in a future hope on the resurrection of the just that whatever trials and difficulties that we have is producing for us eternal weight of glory and in Hebrew it says, *even though those who were commended for their faith did not receive what was promised to them because God had something better in store for them.*

So yes they will receive back but it is at a future people. Many people misread this and think that if I give today I must receive back greatly right now and this is what we call the beginnings of a prosperity gospel or technically what we think is an over-realized eschatology. What that means is believing what is for tomorrow is deserved for us today. The guarantee is that we will be repaid but it says here when the guarantee comes in the resurrection of the just, it is a future time. It doesn't mean we can't get blessings today, it doesn't mean that we might not get some temporal blessings and repayments today, but another thing I want to point out here is what everyone of the scripture says, it talks about a heart condition in the giving. Every one of the text says this, how we are supposed to given.

- Whoever is generous to the poor.
- Whoever gives expecting nothing in return
- Whoever gets lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.

So you don't just invite people so that you can get repaid. So you are not supposed to give to hold up some future purchase money in heaven. That is not the reason why we are giving. The reason why we are giving is to be sacrificial, is to be loving and not to expect nothing, it is an emptying of self, it is not an expecting of something in return, it is a giving freely for we have received freely to honor him who though he was rich became poor so that through his poverty we

may become rich. It is a gospel principle. It is a sacrificial principle. It is that kind of giving that will be repaid at a future time.

10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. (Hebrews 6:10)

How can we be so sure that God will do that?

Ultimately Jesus says this of himself. He said whatever we do to the disciples in the sake for his name is as if we are doing it to him himself. In Matthew he says this

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ **37** Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? **38** And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? **39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ **40** And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

So whatever we do in charity, in giving, the right heart to people as if we are doing to Jesus and he says if we are doing it to Jesus he will guarantee something for us that we will inherit the kingdom.

Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

Back in the Old Testament language a portion was something that you give to as charity to people who were in need. So when you had a feast what happen is that you use to give portions to the people outside the feast to the families and everybody else.

Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10

Even in Esther when they overthrew Haman, they finally conquered Haman and they were having a party they were feasting and then they sent portions to the family. So portion was always a charity and that’s why we can see this context of this whole passage is in times of charity and giving to the needy and giving to the poor from the blessings and from whatever we have received from God. So it is sending out these kind of portions.

It is not giving to charity to some people, whatever you have, give fully and give more than that, let it hurt, it is supposed to be sacrificial giving. You are giving completely; you are giving fully. So that’s the imagery we are getting here, it says give in a risky way and give fully but there is

additional imagery here, because we are saying seven or eight portions also means this, don't put everything in one investment. Another way of saying it today will be don't put all your eggs in one basket. Diversify your portfolio.

When it comes to the kingdom business, don't just put all your eggs in one basket, don't just invest in one area of the kingdom, no diversify your portfolio, give wherever you can, give fully, no give more than that, don't just put your efforts just in one area, no put it into many areas of your life.

What is that mean for us today?

I believe this text has very much to do with finance and stewardship and money but I think it has actually to do with a complete life attitude as well. So it talks about your treasures, it talks about your talents and it talks about your time. May be you are a person here who comes on Sundays and you regularly give graciously to the church financially, don't just invest in one area diversify your portfolio. Maybe you are gifted, maybe you are a good leader, maybe you should come to a Bible study, equip yourself so you can lead other peoples in Bible studies, because what could happen is tomorrow there could be an economic breakdown and you might not be able to give financially that how you are giving now but if you have diversified your portfolio you can still continue to grow the kingdom but you are teaching other people from what you have learned in the bible studies.

So many of us just think that just think to come to church on Sunday and we serve in a ministry and we think okay we are doing our kingdom work. What is saying is we should not put our eggs in one basket, we should actually put our investments all over the place because that is wisdom, in business that is wisdom. What is saying here, as Christians when it comes to the kingdom business we should be venture capitalist. Whatever resource we have we should invest it so it may grow strongly. Now the reason it says here, is because you do not know what disaster will happen. It is strange because you don't know because what disaster will happen is usually the excuse that we give for not giving.

But somehow this scripture is saying, no that very fact should cause the opposite. Because it is saying while you have the opportunity, while you are blessed to give freely, give fully, no give more, give in different areas of your life because one day there may come a time where you will not be able to do so anymore. We give those excuses and it justifies our greed to justify the fact that we care more about ourselves then we care about the kingdom.

There are so many passages that talk about how we handle money, reveals the condition of our unregenerate hearts. It talks more about that in scripture then it talks that how lust and sexual immorality reveals unregenerate hearts. We are so quick to point out the adulterer and point out the homosexual but we are so cautious to talk about greed. We are afraid to do so.

The parable of the rich young ruler who came to God, he did everything right and said God how do I have eternal life. Jesus said, come and sell everything and follow me and he couldn't do it. He couldn't give up his riches and that was a sign that he was not truly interested in following Jesus. The bible says that when we understand the gospel we are willing to treat like a treasure, we find and we sell everything we have just to buy that land on which that treasure is. We are willing to sell everything that we have. There seems to be some kind of connection in our hearts with our finances. Where our treasures lie there are our hearts will also be. Scripture says that it is easier for camel to go through an eye of a needle than a rich man to go to heaven. The scripture over and over emphasizes it.

Imagine you have invested yourself fully, let's say you have sold your house and given all the proceeds to an orphan center. Let's say you have taken a job that earns you less money so that you can spend more time with your family, invest yourself there and be more part of church. Imagine you have given your finances and you have given and you are struck by disaster that whatever job you have you lose it. Let's go the extreme that whatever God promises that he would provide for you, does not happen and you are one of those people in Hebrews who didn't receive what was promised. Imagine the church doesn't help you and you starve to death and when you stand before God he is not going to say you are fool, he is going to say 'well done good and faithful servant'.

There is a promise that we have here that we will be repaid on the resurrection of the just. God will care for us. He will gather those people on one side and say, here come inherit the kingdom. So what we are truly afraid of is not the eternal, what we are truly afraid of is the temporary, the struggles that we might have today, what we are truly afraid of is not having luxury and comfort for ourselves today. You might say it is not just about me, it is about my children. You might say if it is just for me I could do it, but I need to pay education for my children, they have to go to school. Yes, I am saying they are needy they need your charity. Children cannot take care of themselves, a portion should go to them, but if you don't live in that kind of lifestyle why you are worried about what they will learn, what are you teaching them in light of eternity. What are you teaching them to honor and obey the word of God? Are you teaching them that yes we should do everything in life but when it comes to finances and money and giving, no, no, no we don't follow scripture we follow business ethics. Because there are two consequences that will happen by doing this. The first consequence is they will not take you serious anymore when you talk about God because they read one thing and you are doing another thing so they might not take you serious anymore, the second thing is they won't take God serious anymore because your lifestyle doesn't represent the scriptures and so many of us wonder why the 18-22 year olds are no longer in church, because they finally start reading and understanding the scripture for what it truly is and doesn't see represented in the household and the families. So somebody must be a hypocrite either our parents or God. It is a strong picture.

The parable of talent describes this. The master gave five talents to one person, he gave two talents to another person and one talent to the third person. He went away for a while and when

he came back. One servant said, I have invested your five talents and earned five more talents. The master is happy with him. The person that two invested two and the master is happy. The last one said, well I know you are a hard man, you reap where you did not sow. So I was afraid. I hid the talent and I dug a hole and I put it there. Here is what you give you. Jesus said, you wicked person, he didn't say bad investment or you lazy, he said you wicked and evil person. If you really thought that I was the kind of guy who would reap where I didn't sow what you should have done is you should have taken the challenge of at least put it into a bank so you can reap some interest. The parable tells us that whatever God has given us, our treasures, our talents, our time we should invest it for the kingdom.

We think that God is wicked, if we make a mistake he will punish us for it. If we don't have great returns in that investment, he will throw us away that is our fear or he will not honor his word and this is exactly what the parable of the talents is talking about. The guy who didn't invest in the kingdom is, Jesus said to go where the gnashing of teeth is. Because it revealed the condition of that person's heart that he thought God was wicked, he was not willing to invest into the kingdom.

These two verses are telling us, no whatever God has given us let's be bold with it, let's give more sacrificially, let's give it to different areas in our lives, let's just not depend on kingdom work in one area in life, no we are going to fully invest in our lives in different areas. This is the kind of attitude that will surely receive back in time. The imagery continues and it says here in the next two verses

3 If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. 4 He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

At first glance looking at this imagery, it shows here that, the extent that we can understand. There are some logical things that we can observe in nature that gives us ideas, like the clouds are full of rain and they empty themselves, it is something that we know and the trees fall to the south or north there it lie. Based on these observers we can make wise decisions but it also warns us and give caution, don't be overly cautious for he who observes the wind will not sow and he who regards the clouds will not reap. We could be the type of person who says, I am waiting for this perfect condition before I make my move and I think the NLT translates it perfectly. It says, if you wait for perfect conditions you will never get anything done. That's the message right here and I think that from simple reading we get there, because many of us are perfectionist. We want to have the right time and back then the imagery was focused is a farming imagery. So it is very important to sow at the right time and if you sow your seed and it does not rain you will not have crops grow. If you reap harvest and it rains fully then the harvest might rot. So seasons and understanding the season was very important but the farmer who sits down and looks at the wind and keeps on calculating and keeps on waiting and waiting for the

perfect condition will never sow. He will never get anything done. There will never be that perfect condition.

So what he is saying here is that we should act, we should do it now. There is going to be a time where it is too late. So that is what the imagery is telling us here rather clearly. Even though we know things, don't overanalyze things, act now. If we look a bit more carefully into the imagery here it says, **If the clouds are full of rain they empty themselves on earth.**

I think there is a deeper meaning here as well which falls into the kingdom gospel principle that we have been talking about earlier as well and see how that gospel principles are even embedded in nature. We see back then rain clouds were blessings, it was very important for you to have rain because otherwise you cannot have your crop and your farming industry will not work out. So whenever rain comes the water that is held by the cloud was blessing and it is natural in nature that whatever is full of blessing will empty itself. It is a natural emptying of self. That principle applies even in nature. It is the gospel principle. Jesus who was God did not count equality with God, something to be grasped, but no he emptied himself onto human form. He was obedient like a servant even onto death on a cross that is the gospel principle to empty yourself, it is embedded in nature. It is what Jesus did. The imagery continues, **if the tree falls to the south or the north, in the place that tree falls there it will lie.**

This is making reference to the fact that wherever the moral condition of a man is where he dies that is the moral condition that he is going to stick with. However you are when you fall is what is going to stick with you. There is going to be a time which is to mean too late for you to change. By the time you die, wherever your heart is, regenerated or un-regenerated, whether you have repented or not, it is over. We see that in the last chapter of revelation it says this.

11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.” Revelations 22:11

So it is giving you that kind of urgency and saying, hey empty yourself, act now. There is going to be a time where it is too late to change. You might wait for the perfect conditions before you do so but there is never going to be that perfect condition, do it now, act now, don't overanalyze. The scripture reveals the condition of our hearts, so if many of us here we have been revealed ourselves, maybe we have not been following Christ, maybe we have been pretending to ourselves, because clearly the frequency that scripture talks about money and finance is sowing something to me right now. There is opportunity right now for you. There is opportunity to repent and change now.

As you have the opportunities given to you in your live, use them, you do not know what disaster may come. Perfect condition definitely won't come, act now.

5 As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. 6 In the morning sow your seed,

and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

It seems that the teacher here is making imagery of birth. When he is talking about spirit, he is talking about the human spirit, not the holy spirit. With medical science today we have a lot more understanding that there are different stages of development, what the teacher is saying that we have no idea in what stage of this development the eternal spirit, eternal soul attaches to this fetus. So we do not know when he is drawing to creation. He is drawing to something that we are fearfully and wonderfully made but still we do not know things. We understand a lot of things here, but one thing we do know that God makes everything.

He is giving reference to the fact that we do not know and says because we do not know become industrious. Because you don't know what will happen, so you see every opportunity to sow. As we have a diversified portfolio of kingdom investment, we throughout the day should share the gospel with everyone we meet, we have absolutely no clue which one of our sowing is going to take fruit. So we invest ourselves throughout the whole day through our diversified portfolio for the kingdom. That is what he is saying, seize every opportunity to sow and you have no idea whether in the future you will still have opportunities. You have no idea which one will take fruit. Spurgeon says

If I could I would only preach to the elect, but since I have no idea who they are I shall preach to all.

Let's preach to all, let sow our seed widely. The parable of the sower and seed tells us what kind of soil am I. In that probable some of the seeds fell on the path where in it was packed up by birds and some seed fell on rocky ground and as the plant was growing it didn't take root and when the hot sun came in it fell away and it died and some was sown among thorns and when it grew up it was choked out by the thorns and some fell on the good soil and it grew plentiful. Jesus told that the sowing of seed is word of God and the sower was sharing the word of God and some of it was taken away by the evil ones, so people who heard it, it was taken out of their heart. So it is kind like of bird and the one with the rocky grounds with the soil in which it didn't take root, the word didn't take roots in their hearts. When suffering came, when hardships came to their lives the word went away. They couldn't deal with it and it show that they have not real gospel roots in their hearts. The third soil is the one with the deceitfulness of riches and the worldliness choked away. It revealed that the gospel did not soak into their hearts because the riches deceived them. The fourth one was the goods soil which had great harvest.

The question is not what kind of soil you are; my question is what kind of sower are you. Because we can see that the sower who sowed he had no idea what is going to take place but he sowed with liberality, he sowed generously, he sowed everywhere and we today do not know what is going to happen. The lesson that we need to learn from the sower is that, he is somebody

who sows everywhere, every kind of soil but we don't do that. We are too afraid and passage here has kind of three objections:

1. I do not know what disaster may happen.
2. I don't think it is the right time.
3. I have no idea what is going to happen. I am afraid of failure. I don't know what is going to take fruit and what is not. I am not willing to fail.

All these excuses are a sign that we are afraid that we will have hardship. Afraid of our in comforts, afraid that we might have suffering tomorrow if we do so, it is fear that is keeping us away from living in the light of the gospel. The most frequent command throughout the scripture is, 'do not fear'.

We know the end game, Jesus has overcome. There is victory. As you diversify your portfolio you will be sure to have riches beyond that. If you know that you can do that kind of investment even though there might be hardships along the way but in the final end you will reap everything, you would do it. Jesus said, do not be anxious for tomorrow. There is going to be trouble today, lets deal with today's trouble. Let's not think about tomorrow, but there is this beautiful scripture that comes along aside with this.

His mercies are new every morning.

Do not be afraid, do not fear. He will repay you at the resurrection of the just and because we know the victory in Jesus we are able to give boldly, to take risk in our giving. The scripture tells us not to be cautious but be courageous in our giving. We do not wait for the right timing, we have time to change now and we can cease every opportunity to sow.