

ECCLESIASTES
Ecclesiastes 6:1-12
“New Glasses”
April 14, 2024

Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: ² a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. ³ If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life’s good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴ For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. ⁵ Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. ⁶ Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

⁷ All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. ⁸ For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? ⁹ Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

¹⁰ Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. ¹¹ **The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man? ¹² For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun? ¹**

This is God’s Word.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Ec 6:1–12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

There are many of us in the room today who have need of corrective lenses to see well. Whether contact lenses or eyeglasses, the lenses allow us to see clearly, or more clearly, than which was unseen or blurry prior.

However, many who wear corrective lenses likely go a bit long before getting an updated prescription. Yet, if you go too long wearing the wrong prescription some things begin to happen that are not positive, and actually could be avoided.

One doctor shared five common signs that you may be wearing the wrong glasses prescription.

1. Blurry vision
2. Headaches
3. Squinting
4. Sensitivity to Light
5. Vertigo²

I'm sure there are more signs, but some of you right now are thinking, "Hmmm, I may need to get an updated prescription for my glasses."

When you see things without clarity for an extended period of time, you begin to think that everyone else sees things just as you do and more vital to note, you begin thinking that how you see things is all there is to see. You may forget what clarity is. We can convince ourselves that our viewpoint is correct and full when we truly are not seeing things as they are.

That happens today. That happened thousands of years ago to the writer of Ecclesiastes.

Over and over, he states that what he sees "under the sun" is frustrating, temporal, wasteful, and without meaning.

² Thompson, Travis. "5 Signs That You're Wearing the Wrong Glasses Prescription." *Hardin Valley Eyecare & Optical*, 29 Sept. 2022, hardinvalleyeye.com/5-signs-that-youre-wearing-the-wrong-glasses-prescription/.

And, he's not wrong.

But he *is* wrong.

He is not wrong in what he sees. He is wrong in that he is perpetually using old glasses to see things and has forsaken a better viewpoint.

To simply put on the glasses provided by this world leaves us wanting. The writer discovers this and at times gives a glimpse toward a good news answer, but then puts his old glasses back on once more and falls into the same old story of despair.

The emperor may have new clothes, but the Preacher is wearing old glasses and the message to the people is one void of hope...at least at this point.

The Preacher declares that with all that he is seeing “under the sun” the results are...

1. **No Satisfaction**
2. **No Rest**
3. **No Future**

NO SATISFACTION

The Rolling Stones made it into a pop hit, but the message “I can't get no satisfaction” resonates with many (and bothers English teachers throughout the country due to the double negative.)

The Preacher declares this loudly, even after dipping into moments of joy and faith and purpose in previous chapters. Can you relate? Ever have those moments of clarity where worship is good, joy is present, thankfulness for all God does is evident and then...BOOM...you slip back to moments of restlessness and dissatisfaction? It happens all too often. Let this be a good reminder that when we seek to live life in neutral, just cruising along, even well-intentioned Christians often find themselves drifting away from godliness and joy.

The gravitational pull of our sinful nature is strong.

Thus, as we read this portion of scripture, we see the frustration and vanity bubbling up to a point where Solomon is seemingly experiencing a memory lapse and rather than moving forward in faith, he is back to declaring all to be vanity.

Just seven days ago it seems the entire nation was enamored with what was occurring under the sun. “My eyes hurt” was a trending Google search last Monday. That is troubling. Yet, thousands of years ago we have this book penned by God’s man and it too focused at things under the sun. Solomon was not focused on an eclipse making the earth dark for a few moments during the daytime, but on what he saw and experiencing in life “under the sun.” In this case, Solomon declares that what he sees is troubling, unsatisfying, and spiritually dark. Evil even.

Ecclesiastes 6:1

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: ³

Evil is a strong word. It is as far from godliness as one can get. Solomon defines life as vanity and a “grievous evil.” This is the testimony of a man not satisfied. He then goes really dark in his comparative analysis using one of the most painful situations in life to describe his feelings.

NO REST

This perhaps is the point that seems most surprising here. What does rest have to do with such darkness and vanity? A theology of godly rest is heightened in this passage. Solomon’s comparison of a stillborn child is shocking, but in the Hebrew, there is a connection in this illustration and rest. Rest (nahat) is that which the wealthy, seemingly blessed man is missing but the stillborn child has. It’s dark.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ec 6:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The writer is saying that this child never experienced the hardships of life and the evil under the sun.⁴ Thus, the child is at rest and with all the hardship and challenges viewed in life, it seems the child is better off.

I don't like his use of the stillborn as an illustration, but I can now see the theological implications that draw him to desire rest.

From the seventh day of creation being the one when God rested, to the naming of Noah, son of Lamech, we see a theme of rest in the book of Genesis. Noah's name literally means rest. Thus, the hope for Lamech with his son was that from the ground that God had cursed since the casting out of Eden, that God would bring relief from work and toil.⁵ Solomon continues to look back to Genesis in this book. It is his longing for another time. The dissatisfied often wish they were living in a different era, if not different circumstances.

There is an underlying Sabbath message throughout this as well. As people rush throughout life seeking to gain more, the sin of working harder than the next guy leaves resting in the Lord ignored. Thus, as the earth spins under the sun, the work done under the sun becomes, from Solomon's perspective, an effort in futility. To live like this, leads to believing there is...

NO FUTURE

Ecclesiastes 6:12

For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun? ⁶

⁴ Bartholomew, Craig G. *Ecclesiastes: Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 236.

⁵ Bartholomew, 236.

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ec 6:12). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Did any of you have those lenses that allowed you to stare at the sun during the eclipse? To not have these protective lenses would lead to great problems...and maybe a trending search of “My eyes hurt” on Google.

Having the right lenses in your glasses is vital. Yet so many people seem to be viewing life with the wrong lenses. They see things from a perspective that seems normal, right, and how it should be, but...there’s something wrong. Just because others seemingly sees things in life (relationally, politically, religiously, culturally) the same way does not make the view correct. Perhaps it is a spiritual astigmatism?

We do not simply live based on the facts of our life experiences. We live based on our *interpretation* of the facts. No one is more influential in your life than you, for you talk to you more than anyone else.⁷ As Solomon views life, he explains to himself what it means.

“Who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?” Solomon asks. Rhetorically? Perhaps. Yet, longing for an answer. Maybe that’s your question, too. “Who can tell?” “Who really knows?”

- There is satisfaction in the stuff of life, but in the One who is life.
- There is rest not in simply a pause from work, but in the one who is our Sabbath.
- There is a future in the one who can tell what will be after one’s time “under the sun.”

Jesus is the answer. He is the right perspective and prescription for viewing the truth about life. In Luke 4 Jesus declared the Father had sent him to proclaim who he is – the good news, and he recovers sight to the blind. Without the Son, we are destined to simply write our own narratives based on what we see “under the sun.”

RESPOND AND RECEIVE.

⁷ Tripp, Paul David. *New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), April 7.