



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

4 - The Few Days of Their Lives

Announcements:

2/14 @7:30 -

Prayer

2/15 @6:30 -

Grace Group

2/18 @8:30 -

Sunday School

2/18 @6:00 -

Family Night

PSALM 10

ICE BREAKER: Finish this sentence: "Life is _____"

READ: Ecclesiastes 2:1-8

So far in Ecclesiastes we have seen the main thought (that all is vanity) appearing quite a few times (1:2, 1:14, 1:17, 2:1, 2:11). But in the text we read today, we saw our first instance of another thought that will occur as a sort of "sub-theme" in this book: the brevity of life. That life is a mist or a vapor, something temporary and fleeting is, in many ways, a central aspect of *why* life under the sun is so vain. So today we are going to spend some time wrestling with the thought that we do not have much time on this earth, that in fact we are only given "a few days of [our] lives" (Ecclesiastes 2:3)

The first thing that we should note is that we are to see that the time we are given is not just short, but *extremely* short. This is seen in not one but two ways. The first is to see the unit of measure that we are given. According to Solomon here we should measure our lives in *days*. We might like to think of our lives in terms of the decades we will spend on earth (though still not a lot...), maybe the years, but not so fast, says Solomon. You have *days*. The shortness of the measurement matches the brevity of life. Much like you wouldn't measure a house in acres, rather square feet, a life is to be measured in days. But the problem is actually worse... we have only a *few* days here "under the sun". We do not have a lot of days... we shouldn't measure the vast number of days. We are reminded that we have just a few. Life is short indeed!

DISCUSS: Why is it important for us to be reminded of the brevity of life?

As we contemplate the brevity of life, there are two major takeaways that we can see from this. The first is that we should see that life is short in an *earthly* sense. We could look to other parrots of Ecclesiastes to see this point, but we will get to those as we work our way through this book. Instead we can look to the New Testament to see why this is important.

READ: James 4:13-17

While there is (as I feel like I say all the time!) a whole going on here, let's pull just two thoughts out here. The first is that the shortness of life forces us to trust in God. That is what the whole "if the Lord will..." part is about. And the second is that the shortness of our lives makes us remember our place. That is what the whole "boasting in arrogance" thought is all about. In other words the brevity of life on this earth causes us to see God as God and ourselves as his servants who rely on him. And while this might be a hard way to get there, it is a wonderful thought to land on!

DISCUSS: In what ways does the brevity of life motivate us to serve God? How can we keep this thought in the forefront of our minds?

But the second takeaway that I would like to look at is to see the brevity of this life in an *eternal* sense. Again The New Testament is helpful. Here the words of Paul

READ: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Here we have a bit of a comparison. It's not too complex, but it is for us a source of great hope: Life is short, heaven is forever. In this sense, the brevity of life is not something to mourn, rather it is something to celebrate! Our outer self is wasting away (this itself more of the "vanity" of life under the sun!), but that is OK, because we have a great hope in heaven. While we look around and see, like Solomon, that this world is fleeting, temporary and vain, we set our eyes not on the transient, but the eternal. There we find our hope in the completed work of Jesus!

DISCUSS: Why is this eternal mindset so important? Why are we so quick to often forget it?