

Ecclesiastes

FEAR GOD AND ENJOY HIS GIFTS

To understand and internalize the message of Ecclesiastes and learn how we fear God and enjoy the life that he gives us.

In the Garden

Gen 2:18-19 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

Gen 3:8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

In the Garden

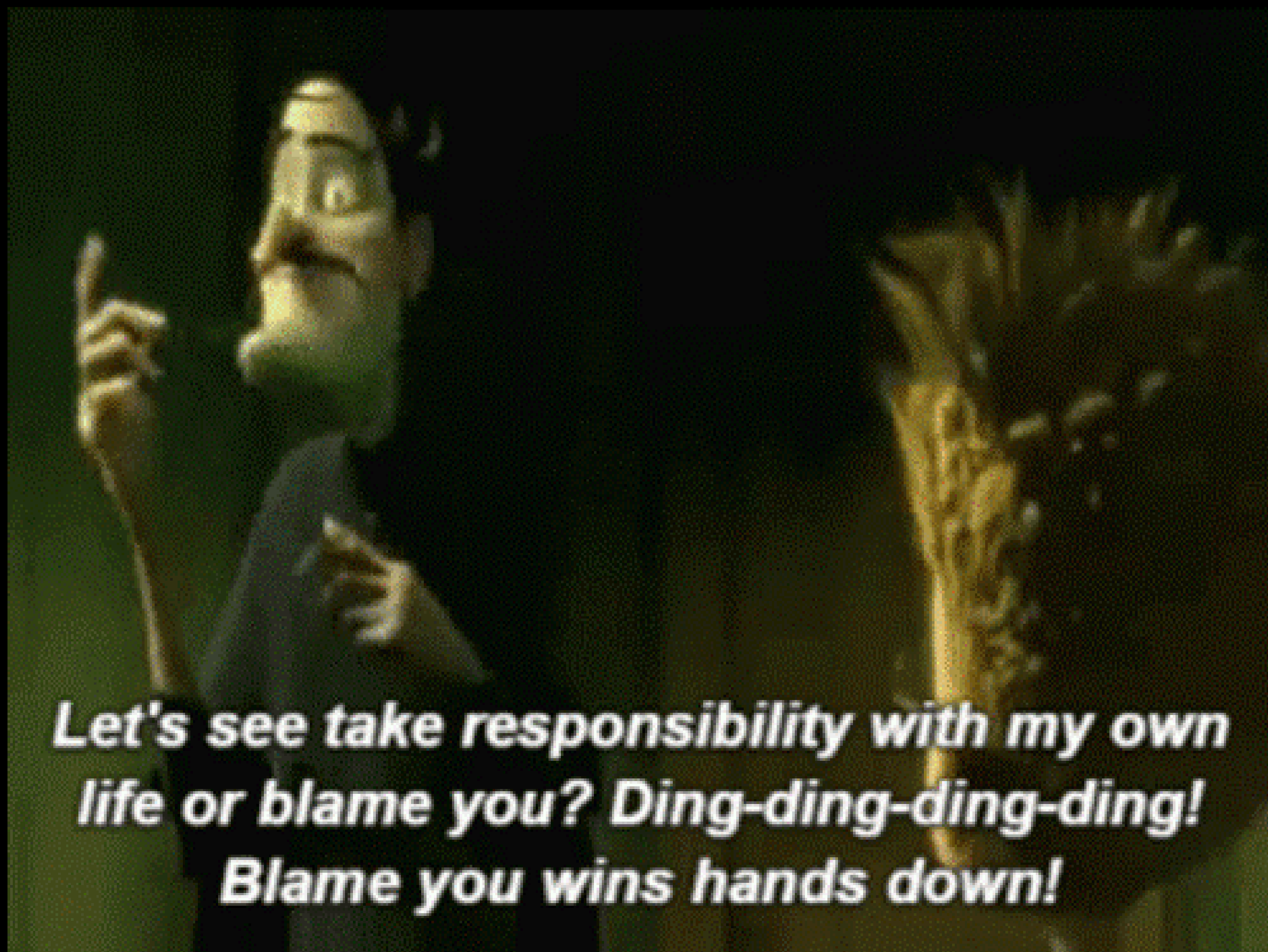
- *It is not good for man to be alone – God made a helper (etzer or helper – same word used for how God helps His people)*
- *God worked with man and walked with him. They had a close, personal relationship.*
- *God's design is that man should be in close connection with other people and with God, and this would include both work and relaxation or leisure (and enjoyment of God's creation)*

Under the Sun

Gen 3:12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

Gen 3:13 The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

- ***After the Fall, these relationships were broken.***
- ***Rather than having each other's back, they initiate the Blame Game***
Adam blamed Eve.
Eve blames the serpent



***Let's see take responsibility with my own
life or blame you? Ding-ding-ding-ding!
Blame you wins hands down!***

Qohelet: 4 Relationship-Related Observations

- *Oppression*
- *Rivalry and jealousy motivate work*
- *Isolation*
- *Government/Leadership*

What is oppression?

Oppression is when one party (person or group) takes unjust or cruel advantage of power they have over another to benefit themselves (and make them feel bad).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Have we suffered from oppression in one form or another?

Let's be generous and assume that we are not oppressing others knowingly. Might we be doing so unknowingly? What might that look like?

Under the Sun: Oppression

- *Oppression is horrible! Power is on the side of the oppressor, and there is no comfort for the oppressed.*
- *It is better to be already dead,*
- *and better still never to have lived*

Kingdom View: Oppression

- We should not oppress others
 - Proverbs 14:31 Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him.
 - Proverbs 22:16-17 A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty. Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction.

Kingdom View: Oppression

- If Oppressed, don't take it upon yourself to right those wrongs
 - Luke 6:27-28 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
- - Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- Bring it to God, He will help
 - 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your care upon him; for he cares for you.
 - Hebrews 13:6 for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Kingdom View: Oppression

- If Oppressed for your faith, be joyful!

Mt 5:43-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

1 Peter 4:13-14 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Kingdom View: Help those you encounter who are oppressed

Jn 8:2-10 Woman caught in adultery

Jn 4:8-26 Samaritan woman

Mt 12:9-14 Healed man with withered hand

Under the Sun: Work Motivation

- *Ecc 4:4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Discuss the meaning of Ecc 4:5-6

5The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

6Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

Under the Sun: Work Motivation

- ***All labor and achievement is motivated by Rivalry and Jealousy***

No work brings poverty

Two hands full bring toil and chasing after the wind

One handful is better than either two or none

Kingdom View: Work Motivation From 2 weeks ago

- **Build God's Kingdom**
- **There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil.**
- **If we do that, our work will be motivated by building God's Kingdom, not by rivalry or jealousy!**

Under the Sun: Isolation

- *Isolation: Toiling for yourself is Hevel!*
- *With 2*
 - Work goes better*
 - You can keep one another from falling*
 - Keep one another warm on a cold night*
 - Help defend one another*
- *If 2 are better than 1, then 3 is better still*

Kingdom View: Isolation

- God is a trinity in relationship. As image bearers He created us to be in relationship as well. Gen 2:18: It is not good for man to be alone.
- We belong in fellowship.

Mt 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Heb 10:24-25. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Under the Sun: Leadership

- *The current leaders are old and foolish*
- *Better that leader is replaced by someone new and young and not brought up in the current leader's style*
- *But Succession disappoints – their replacement may seem good for a while, but they will soon need to be replaced as well*

Kingdom View: Leadership

Rom 13:1-7 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Summary

- **Oppression is a huge burden. Give it to God and seek his help to bear it.**
- **Work to Build God's Kingdom, not out of envy.**
- **Man is made for fellowship, not Isolation. Find it with fellow believers.**
- **God puts leaders in place. Honor them according to the responsibility God has given them.**

There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and enjoy the gifts that God gives us.

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Kingdom View: Isolation

- Rom 12:1-5 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Kingdom View: Oppression

- If Oppressed for your faith, be joyful!
 - I Peter 4:12-14: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

Kingdom View: What work do we do?

What does Kingdom work look like?

Heb 11:33 And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Kingdom View: What work do we do?

Kingdom work is the highest value work

John 9:4 While it is day, we must work the works of him who sent me; night is coming, when no one can work.