

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.

A Paradigm for understanding Ecclesiastes

הָבֵל HEVEL “Vanity, Meaningless, Futile” (Vapor) (Abel) - The Puzzle/Conundrum/Enigma

“Life Under the Sun” - The pattern of the life we build outside God.

“There is nothing better” (Seize the Day) - The way back to God’s presence and power. Enjoy life instead of commiserating over its brokenness.

What does it mean to Fear God?

A (Brief) Theology of:

“FEAR GOD”

EDEN

ABRAHAM

EXODUS

ISRAEL

WISDOM

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Step 1: Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 with your group. Talk about things that stuck out to you, noticed for the first time or even things you felt some resistance towards.

Step 2: Look at v.1-2 What does Qohelet mean when he wants his audience to “Guard their steps and listen rather than offer “the sacrifice of fools” (Can you think of instances in the Old Testament when people did not “guard their steps?”)

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Step 3: Look at v. 3-6 How is our speech, what we say and do, connected to our relationship with God?

“Fear of God describes an attitude of holy reverence toward God and a creaturely openness to being instructed by him.” - Craig Bartholomew

JESUS

Matthew 10:27-42

²⁶ “Therefore, don’t be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won’t be uncovered and nothing hidden that won’t be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ Don’t fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s consent. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. ³¹ So don’t be afraid therefore; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple complex to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee took his stand and was praying like this: ‘God, I thank You that I’m not like other people —greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.’ ¹³ “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, ‘God, turn Your wrath from me —a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this one went down to his house justified rather than the other; because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 23:39-43

Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at ^w Him: “Aren’t You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God, ^x since you are undergoing the same punishment? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong.” ^y ⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!” ⁴³ And He said to him, “I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise.”

1. Fear of the LORD is an attitude of holy reverence to God, yielding to his presence, and responding in a life of humility and absolute surrender.

2. When we correctly “Fear God,” we embrace our status of creatureliness under our creator and rightly posture ourselves to enjoy the life he provides us and the life of the world to come.

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