



Ecclesiastes 8:10-15

"The Problem of Evil and the Promise of Justice"

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Transcript

30:44

Just so that you guys know as as we prepare to start a book study, we're studying our way through the book of Ecclesiastes. When we do that, we kind of map out which passages we're going to preach on each week.

30:56

We kind of have an idea of where we're heading and can kind of plan ahead that way. So we do that before the book ever starts. So six months ago we knew the passage that we were going to be talking about this week.

31:07

Additionally, things like Child Dedication happened that, you know they get planned a month or two or whatever it is out and so this just kind of, got orchestrated the passage that we're going to be preaching this week at the same time that child dedication happened.

31:23

But there's this really interesting kind of convergence of a couple of different topics that we're going to be looking at this week because as we finish Child Dedication now, we're getting ready to jump into Ecclesiastes Chapter 8.

31:36

I'm going to invite you guys to make your way there, but the passage that we're going to be looking at this morning, in the 1st 6 words, we immediately dive into this reality about the mortality of man.

31:49

It's kind of this interesting, like beginning of life, end of life balance thing that God has kind of brought here this morning because we've got all these kids that were up here on the stage. And then as soon as we jump into our passage, it talks about the end of life.

32:02

And so this is kind of an interesting thing that God's brought us to this morning. But I think he's got good things for us to hear from his word. So as we look at this, this passage that starts with talking about seeing someone buried, it's going to continue on into a topic that I think is a really interesting topic, a really important topic for us as Christians to kind of be able to to answer and to think through this question.

32:28

So he goes on to discuss a frustration with something that he sees in life, sees in the world, and it's commonly referred to among people today as the problem of evil, right, The problem of evil. So the problem of evil has been described as an appeal to the phenomenon of evil as evidence against the existence of God.

32:50

It's this thing that people will point to and say, you know, if an all powerful God exists and he can control things and he's good, then why did bad things still happen in the world? Why do natural disasters happen?

33:03

Why do bad things happen to good people? And so we're going to touch really, really briefly on that topic this morning because it kind of shows up in our passage a little bit, but it's a much bigger conversation than we're able to deal with.

33:15

So I wanted to help you guys out a little bit. I stuck a QR code on the screen there. So if you're interested in reading just a little bit more, this is still kind of a brief summary of something.

33:27

This is a topic that people have written thousands and and thousands and thousands of pages on. Anybody that ever took, you know, philosophy 200 in college probably talked about this idea for a while.

33:38

But if you guys want to snap a picture of that or scan the QR code, it's an article that I think may be helpful for you. That kind of carries off of what we're going to be talking about this morning.

33:49

So, but as we get started, I want to encourage you make your way to Ecclesiastes 8 and your copy of God's Word. If you don't have one, there should be one underneath of your chair, or maybe the chair in front of you, or you guys can follow along on the screens.

34:02

But we're going to start by reading our passage from Ecclesiastes 8, verses 10 through 15 this morning. It says starting in verse 10. Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place, and we're praised in the city where they had done such things.

34:18

But this also is vanity, because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily. The heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Though a Sinner does evil 100 times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well for those who fear God because they fear before Him.

34:36

But it will not be well with the wicked. Neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God. For there is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, that bad things happen to good people, right?

34:52

But there are also wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous, that good things happen to bad people. He says that this also is vanity. But I commend joy, For man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and drink and be joyful.

35:07

For this will go with him and his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun. These are the words of the Lord. Would you guys pray with me? God, we thank you for your word.

35:18

God, we thank you that we can gather together that we can celebrate the goodness of who you are and how you've worked in our lives. That God, that we can celebrate the incredible gift of children that you've blessed so many in our church with.

35:29

And God that you've blessed us as a church with. God, we're thankful for the ministry that we have in, in sharing who you are and the good news to these young people that we've been blessed to have as a part of our church.

35:41

And God, we pray that as we dive into this really interesting passage of scripture, talking about this really interesting dynamic of how people see bad things happen to good people and good things happen to to bad people.

35:54

God, I pray that you would help us to, to wrestle with this a little bit this morning. God help us to think through how do these things exist in the world and, and how do we reconcile that with an all powerful and all benevolent God.

36:05

So we pray that you would speak and that we would listen this morning. And God, we give this time to you and we pray that it would bring you glory, in everything that we say and do here this morning, it's in Jesus name we pray, Amen.

36:16

Right. Well, as we dive into this passage, we see a couple of different things that are kind of interesting that I want to pick out a little bit. So the first thing that he points to in verses 10 and 11, it sounds a little weird for me to even title this section this way, but we see the appeal of evil mentioned in verses 10 and 11.

36:33

And it says in 10 that he saw the wicked buried, that, you know, people would go in and go out of the holy city, but that they were praised for the things that they had done that as this evil person died, that people still spoke positively about them.

36:45

And then we bump right into, as we just start our passage this week, we bump into this basic condition that reminds us that all humans eventually die, right? All humans eventually die. Father time is undefeated eventually, as we've all heard it said before.

37:04

So, you know, there's, there's times in life where death just confronts us on a different level. It may be news of, of someone dying far before their time. It may be a, a funeral of a loved one where you go to a time of mourning, a time of grieving the loss of a loved one or someone that you may have known or worked with.

37:23

But in those moments, there's times where we can have this level of like crystal clarity as we think about the brevity of our life. Anybody ever said the words before, you know, it feels like life is moving faster and faster every year that goes by.

37:39

It seems like, you know, things are speeding up as we grow into adulthood. As kids, it seems like days take forever to go by, weeks take forever. You know, my birthday is 3 weeks away and it's going to take forever for that birthday to finally come.

37:53

But as we get older, that birthday seems to come faster and faster. And no, no, no, I'm not actually, oh wait, I am actually that old, right? Anybody ever had that thought before? I can't actually be as old as I am.

38:04

Well, it seems like it's speeding up, right? The interesting thing is that as we bump into this reality of the fact that life is short and that death comes for everyone, what we see in

this first verse that the preacher kind of expresses some frustration about the reality that that life comes to an end quickly for this wicked person.

38:25

But the things seem to go well for him. He's frustrated and he talks about it. He says that as he saw the wicked buried, that people spoke positively, that they were praised in the city where they had done their evil things.

38:39

He's frustrated. I think he's expressing something that many of us have felt or we've heard other people expressed before. You know, if, if somebody is a bad person, then why do good things happen to them?

38:51

Why is it that, if God is good and God is going to punish the bad people and, and bless the good people. If God is just, then he ought to judge the wicked people, right? Preacher looks around though, and what he's describing is exactly the opposite.

39:09

He says in verse 10 that the wicked people were praised in the city. To make matters worse, the apparent imbalance between the rewards of the righteous people on the rewards of the unrighteous people, he says it actually makes people more likely to do evil.

39:24

And he noticed what he says in verse 11. He says because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, then the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil here. What we get is this ugly glimpse into the reality that lives inside of all of us.

39:39

Anybody that has ever been driving down the road, anybody ever gone a little bit over the speed limit before? Yeah. We sometimes we do that. Right. I'm not going to ask for confessions.

39:51

We don't want to have to be writing tickets on the way out of here today. But. But you know, we we sometimes sneak over the speed limit, right? Anybody ever had a police officer pull in behind them? All of a sudden, you happen to slow down, right?

40:02

You slow down just a little bit because, you know, there's an immediate possibility of punishment that exists there. Versus when we just drive around, we go, no, I'm safe, I'm going to hurry up and get to where I need to be.

40:14

You know, the reality is that if evil deeds were punished immediately, there would be a lot less incentive to try to do them and feel like we're getting away with them. And, you know, people would be deterred from doing wickedness.

40:25

Meanwhile, what he's talking about here is the fact that God delays punishment, that God is patient with us, that God continues to show grace and mercy to people. It seems like it's, it's actually causing people to to send more.

40:39

He's frustrated by this as a child. We learn really quickly if we touch something that's hot, I don't want to touch that anymore. If you grab something that's sharp, well, I don't, I don't want to grab that anymore.

40:50

But you know, I notice it with my kids. They, they look around and if mom or dad are there, they know where those boundaries are. And, you know, I'll see them look around and mom's not here. And then they go touch the thing that they're not supposed to do.

41:02

They go take the the cookie that they're not supposed to have, whatever it is. So when justice is painfully slow, it seems to to kind of tend that people feel like they can get away with their sin a little bit more.

41:15

But as far as this present life is concerned that the wicked seem to not get what they deserve. They seem to be benefiting from doing evil things sometimes. And so the preacher here in our passage is actually kind of bemoaning and and complaining about the fact that there's this injustice of it all as he describes it, as he sees things.

41:35

And so this idea kind of continues. We're going to jumble up our passage just a little bit. I want to jump down to verse 14 where he talks about the that the injustice of it all as he sees wicked people getting what seemed to be positive things.

41:50

Verse 14, he says that there is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, but that there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous.

42:02

I say that this also is vanity. This is where we bump into that problem of evil that that people wrestle with, that people struggle with this idea of how is it that that a good God can allow good things to happen to bad people, meanwhile bad things happen to good people?

42:19

Why is it that natural disasters happen and come? Why do all these problems seem to pop up? If there's a good God who's in control of all things, if God's righteous, we would expect him to reward the righteous, to reward the good people and to punish the bad people.

42:34

But often times it seems in life that that's the exact opposite of what we see play out in life. You know, cruel dictators seem to drive out free government and peace loving people. And the fact that evil empires have risen time and time again throughout human history, it seems to indicate that there's some positive benefit to being an evil, cruel dictator.

42:57

People who work and go to their job and essentially rob investors of their hard earned money to profit for the company are dishonest in their jobs. They get bonuses at the end of the year.

43:09

Meanwhile, honest people, it seems like they often lose their job, they lose their home, they have bad things happen to them sometimes. Any young people in this room? Or if you guys ever think back, anybody ever known a friend when you were in school who cheated and got an A on a test?

43:24

Meanwhile, you were the honest person who worked hard and studied, and you got to see instead it seems like, you know, things aren't fair, that bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.

43:35

It doesn't make sense. But what we're seeing here in this reality is not an inability of God to be able to deal with these issues. It's not that God is unaware of the fact that these things happen, that this is some sort of injustice on God's part.

43:49

Instead, when people operate unrighteously, what they're doing is they're taking advantage of God's mercy. The Bible tells us that God is a merciful God, that God is a patient God. The fact that God doesn't sit in heaven and just go Nope and send a lightning bolt to zap people when they do bad things.

44:07

It's the fact that he's patient with us that causes him to hold back from doing what he obviously could do in punishing sin immediately. Exodus 34, verse 6, it tells us that as it's talking about Moses and his interaction with the Lord, it says that the Lord is a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

44:30

You know, the Bible is clear. Judgment is coming one day judgment. Ultimately God's keeping score. God's going to deal with all things and set all things right at one point, maybe sooner than we think.

44:41

We we don't know when that day is coming, but the reality is that God is giving us more time because God is patient, that he's merciful, that He's gracious, that he's slow to anger, and it means that he's giving us more time.

44:55

Bible tells us in Romans chapter 2 that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance. You know, the reality is that the world has been broken ever since the very beginning, ever since... you go all the way back to the beginning of the book in Genesis chapter 1 and 2.

45:11

The world was perfect, that God created a perfect world, that there was perfect relationship between Adam and Eve and God and things were great. And it only took them three chapters to blow it all up, right?

45:23

In Genesis chapter 3, we see Adam and Eve commit the first sin and sin comes into the world. And so now we're living in a world where the world is kind of essentially it's broken, right? The problems that we see exist in the world, A lot of those things are a result of the fact that we live in a sin, cursed, broken, evil world.

45:44

There's bad things that happen to good people. A lot of the time it's because God is being merciful and patient to the person who may be sinning against another person. The the person who is doing something wrong, well, God's being patient with that person and that allows evil to exist in our world.

46:01

Now, sometimes that may bring us frustration. Sometimes we may get irritated by that and say God, no, no, no, don't be patient with them anymore. Bring justice on that person. It's easy for us to point at someone else and to say no, no, no, bring justice on them, don't have mercy on them.

46:16

That's kind of the story of the book of Jonah, right? Jonah is frustrated as God tells him to go and to preach and to bring the good news to an evil city that he had determined wasn't worthy of having mercy or forgiveness towards.

46:30

As Jonah's commanded to go to Nineveh and call them to repentance and says no, no, no, those people don't deserve to be forgiven. And he runs away. He runs and gets on a boat and tries to get as far away from that evil city as he possibly could.

46:44

And you know what God does? God has mercy on him and says, no, you're being disobedient to what I told you to do. I'm going to get your attention. He's thrown overboard in this giant storm, is eaten by a big fish and is given three days to kind of rethink his decisions and is spit out on the land.

47:00

And God tells him as he spit out on the land again, he tells him again, go to Nineveh and do what I told... God has mercy on him. And so Jonah goes to the city of Nineveh and declares... gives like the worst sermon in the history of all sermons.

47:15

He goes, shows up and says, Hey, you guys should repent or God's going to punish you all. And they do. And, and he goes and he sees all these people repent and, and sorrowful and come back to the Lord and they're obedient to him.

47:28

And, and you know how Jonah responds? He's, he's excited, right? He should be excited if the pastor comes in this entire city return. He doesn't. He's frustrated at the fact that God again showed mercy to this evil, wicked city.

47:41

While there's there's this interesting irony that's kind of underlying the whole book because Jonah is frustrated that God's showing mercy to these people, while God is actually showing mercy as well to to Jonah.

47:55

Yeah, it's easy for us to point at other people and go, no, no, God punish them for these terrible things that happened, the terrible things that they did. They should be punished right now. But it's cool if you show me forgiveness, if you show me mercy, my thing wasn't that bad.

48:09

So yeah, overlook my sins, have mercy on me. But make sure that you level the people over here that deserve it, right? Judgement is coming one day. But the Bible tells us that God is being patient and giving us opportunity, that His patience, that His mercy should lead us towards repentance, as Romans 2 tells us.

48:32

Do you not presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But many people abuse the patience of God. They think that it's an excuse for them to just go do whatever it is that they want to do.

48:48

That judgment is never going to come, that the day of reckoning is never going to come. And if they do believe that there's a final judgment, they assume it's a long, long ways away and they can do whatever they want to now and then, you know, just settle the score sometime before the end of their life.

49:04

Nothing bad is going to happen to me. I can do what I want with total immunity. It's kind of the, the attitude that a lot of people live with. And you know, as I was thinking about that idea this week, I... Google has all kinds of interesting, wonderful things on there, right?

49:18

I got a little curious and wandered down the Google-hole for a little bit and found a video that I wanted to share with you guys. It's just a short little thing, but it kind of illustrates

this idea of how people act when they don't think there's any consequence that can be had. So let's check out this video that we've got.

49:36

Now: In this video posted to YouTube, you can see the reflection of a little girl pounding on her chest as she looks at the male gorillas. Now, one of the gorillas, known as Kajito here at the zoo, charges to the glass and breaks through the first of three layers of protective glass. You can hear that reaction there. Now, the zoo says this isn't the first time they've seen this before. It's common for the glass to break because of environmental or engineering causes as well.

50:04

Alright, obviously I didn't show you a video where something really bad happened. But yeah, the glass protected that girl, but she thought she was safe. She thought she could do whatever she wanted to. And so she's standing there projecting these signs of dominance toward a gorilla. And you know what?

50:20

The gorilla didn't like it. And the gorilla decided no, no, no, no, no. You think you're the big one in the pack here, but I'm the big one in the pack. And so he comes running. And if it wasn't for that glass, that story is going to end drastically differently with a little girl being picked up and just back and forth.

50:37

It's not going to go well, right? You know, the absence of immediate punishment caused that girl to feel safe in doing what she probably wouldn't have been doing if she was out in a in a grassy plain somewhere with no glass to protect her.

50:51

If she had been out just in the middle of nowhere with a gorilla 30 feet from her, she probably would have acted a little bit differently, right? Yeah, I'm not going to. I'm going to slowly back away and hope it doesn't see me.

51:03

It's probably more of the reaction that people would have. But this girl instigated what would have been a really, really angry gorilla if it had gotten through that glass. God's patience as as, as we see it here in this passage.

51:17

I think this kind of illustrates for us something that that we see in this conversation, that the absence of immediate punishment doesn't necessarily mean that it's a good choice for us to to snub our noses at God and say, see, God hasn't punished me yet, so God's never going to punish me.

51:32

So judgement is never going to come. So I'm just going to go do whatever I want to because just because it hasn't happened yet doesn't mean that it'll never happen. It just means that it hasn't happened yet.

51:43

I could probably, if I played my cards just right, could go out here, get on the edge of the 91 freeway and run across successfully. Maybe. If I do that, does that mean that it's a good idea for me to just start going back and forth?

51:56

And the fact that I made it across the first time doesn't mean that that's a safe thing for me to do. It just means that something bad didn't happen the first time that I did it. Anybody that's ever played Frogger knows what I'm talking about, right, you guys?

52:09

God's patience that he is extending to US time and time and time again. It's not evidence of the fact that there will never be judgement. It simply means that it hasn't come yet.

And that's kind of what we see talked about in verses 12 and 13, the reality that justice will one day come.

52:26

One of the best ways for us to regain God's perspective on good and evil is to do what the preacher did here in these verses. It's to go into to stand at someone's grave. Because in his struggle over witnessing all this injustice that exists in the world, the preacher also kind of needed to reflect on the end of the story.

52:44

What happens after we die? See, the preacher knew that that God was going to make all things right one day. He he talks about it with absolute certainty in verses 12 and 13. As we look at those verses again, it says even though a Sinner does evil 100 times and prolongs his life, I know that it will be well with those who fear God because they fear before Him, but it will not be well with the wicked.

53:07

Neither will he prolong his days successfully like a shadow because he does not fear before God. So he talks about these two different groups of people. He talks about the the wicked and he talks about those who fear God.

53:18

So for the wicked, he talks in verse 12, he says that the wicked will want to prolong their days. That's because they don't know what happens after this life is over. They don't have the assurance of heaven.

53:30

They don't have the assurance of anything that happens beyond this life. And so they cling desperately to life and they try as hard as they possibly can to make this life last as long as they possibly can.

53:43

But verse 13 tells us that it doesn't matter how hard they try to prolong their days, that they won't get a single day more than God has set out for them to have. We've talked about this time and time and time again throughout the book of Ecclesiastes that God's in control, right?

53:58

That God is sovereign over all things. And so if God has decided that you're going to die at the age of 17 or you're going to die at the age of 47 or you're going to die at the age of 107, it doesn't matter because whether you eat a salad or a Big Mac... you should eat the salad, right?

54:16

But we, we know what the better choice is for us. But, but it doesn't matter how hard we try to be that, that like type a personality person that I can control everything and I can make sure that everything happens just the way that I want it to people that, that, that are the healthiest picture of health that you could possibly think of and, and build in a laboratory.

54:36

Things happen to them too, right? Bad things happen, no matter how healthy you are or how terrible you eat. Bad things happen. Whether you are the the wisest, safest person who stays locked up in a clean room all the time or whether you're out, you know, I don't know, licking doorknobs at Target like you still, you still are going to get sick.

54:56

Things still happen. And, and there's not a day that goes by that God's going to accidentally give you more time than than you were otherwise planning on having by making some decision to do this or not do that or, or control this or not control that.

55:12

You know, it tells us that the, the wicked will not receive even one more day than God gives them. He says, kind of ominously, he also says it will not go well with the wicked. I think he's pointing here to the same truth that we see reflected in Hebrews Chapter 9.

55:28

Hebrews 9 tells us that just as it is appointed to for man to die once, after that comes the judgement. Yeah, everyone is going to stand before God one day and we're going to give account for how we lived our lives.

55:41

And so God, the way that conversation is simply going to go is God's going to lay the standard on the table and see how we measure up to it. So God looks at us and and one day we're standing before him and he says, all right, here's the standard.

55:52

You have to be absolutely perfect because I'm perfect. And then we can stand there on our own merits. And he's going to start to judge the actions that we, the way that we live, the way that we talk to people, the selfish motives that we decided to do things or not do things with.

56:06

And he's going to look at us and go, Nope, Nope, Nope, Nope. And we're going to deserve judgment. We're going to deserve punishment from God that the wrath of God is going to be destined for us. If we stand before God one day hoping to measure up to his standard of perfection in on our own power.

56:25

That's one way that we can play that. The other option of how we can play that is as it talks about here, that those who fear God, those who follow the way that God has called us to live, well, you know, we live that out sometimes also, no person in this room, no person in the world is good enough to measure up to God's standard of perfection on their own.

56:45

So the good news is that, you know, God kind of knew that was going to be the way that things worked, that no one is ever going to be able to measure up to his standard of perfection on their own.

56:54

So God made a way for his Son Jesus to come and to live perfectly and to live out everything that God expected of us. He was the prototype. He was the perfect model of what a human should look like in his relationship with God.

57:09

But when Jesus went and died on a cross, he paid a punishment that he didn't deserve so that someone like me could be forgiven, that I could receive grace even though I'm a wicked person, that you could receive grace even though you're a wicked person, that you deserve judgement, that you deserve punishment.

57:26

God said no, no, no. If you'll accept the sacrifice of Jesus and receive that good news, well then it drastically changes that conversation. That happens one day when we all stand before God.

57:39

Please don't disregard what we're talking about here today as as mere opinion. I know we don't have time to wander down all these rabbit trails that I just kind of gave a summary for just a second there.

57:48

But this is this is absolutely the truth that he's pointing to in Ecclesiastes chapter 8, that that bad things may happen to good people in this life, that good things may happen to to bad people in this life, but that one day judgment is coming.

58:02

And just because it hasn't happened yet doesn't mean that it's not going to happen. So he says, he warns for those who are wicked, he says it will not go well for the wicked as judgment day comes. He also in these verses compares, he says, for those who fear God.

58:18

And in verse 12, he says, I know that it will go well with them who fear God because they fear before him. The proper fear of God is an important theme that we've seen over and over again throughout Ecclesiastes, but especially at the end.

58:30

He's talked about in back in Ecclesiastes 3 told us to to fear God because he's sovereign over the times and the events of life. We should be able to to look to him and to fear him and to trust him to be in control.

58:43

It also said in Ecclesiastes 5, it warned us to fear God when we get, when we go into his house for worship, If we come into church and, and you know, I've got something to say and God has something to say, you know, there's one of us that should probably shut up in that conversation and it's not God, all right, I should probably come and learn and listen and humble myself before him because he's the God of the universe.

59:07

And I probably should just be quiet and listen and learn a thing or two, right. Later on, at the end of the book, in Ecclesiastes chapter 12, it's going to tell us to fear God by keeping his commandments.

59:18

Hear what it's talking about. It tells us to fear God, that if we fear God that things are going to go well for us in the days to come. You know, there's these two kinds of people that we're kind of talking about here.

59:28

There's those who fear God and there's those who who simply don't. Bible's clear that for one of those groups, things are going to go well and for one of those groups things are going to go poorly. It's kind of it's interesting to me as we talk about this whole conversation.

59:44

Yeah, it may not always seem that way in life. It may not always seem like one day that the things are going to go well for good people and, and things are going to go poorly for wicked people. But the fact is, regardless of what we see, regardless of the fact that it seems like these, the opposite is true.

59:59

So often, just because we haven't seen God's judgement yet, it doesn't mean that it's never going to come. That's why I think it's interesting that as we've had all the the events of this morning line up the way that they did, that we had all these beautiful children up here at the front that were lined up as we talked about this passage and we talked about child dedication.

01:00:19

These young families that stood up here this morning, you know, part of the commitment that they were making was that they were going to lead their house in a way that that our house fears the Lord, that our house wants to live in a way that we believe that God is truly who the Bible says he is.

01:00:35

That we believe that God is the one that should be leading our home. That God should be the one that is determining what we do or don't do. It's this beautiful thing because our passage this week talks about it.

01:00:46

It says for the people who fear the Lord, things are going to ultimately go well. For those who don't, things are ultimately going to go poorly. It's an encouragement for us as families church, you guys can be involved in this too.

01:01:01

Make sure that you live a life that fears the Lord. Make sure that your home is a home that fears the Lord. So it leaves us as as those who fear the Lord as we hopefully all are here this morning. It leaves us to ask this question.

01:01:14

So, what now right that the last verse, verse 15 kind of answers this question for us. So what now The same fear of God that leads us to eternal life actually helps us find enjoyment and peace in in the normal things of life every day here and now as well as it talks about in verse 15. Verse 15 It says I commend joy for man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and to drink and to be joyful for this will go well, will go with him and his toil through the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

01:01:45

In spite of all the vanity that we see, in spite of all the things that just don't make sense to us, that we look around and we get frustrated with the injustice and the that the things that just don't add up.

01:01:55

It is possible for us to find genuine joy for us to find genuine contentment in the ordinary things of daily life if we live the way that he's inviting us to live. It's actually one of the main points of this book of Ecclesiastes.

01:02:09

It's one of the things that that drew us to this book as we were deciding what are we going to preach on and talk about and started this series. You know, if we, if we grab onto and sink our teeth into this God centered worldview, then the burdens of injustice that we see in the world that we, we, we don't have to carry those burdens when we realize that God is in control, that God is sovereign over all things, that God's not somehow missing the boat and blowing it.

01:02:36

God, how do you not see this injustice that exists in the world? Well, if we don't carry the burden of feeling like we have to keep score for God and and update him on the things that he needs to do or not do, how he needs to handle this situation or handle that situation.

01:02:51

Well, then it sets us free from all of this burden. And we get to simply live in the way that verse 15 is telling us about. If God is in control, if he's going to resolve all of the problems in this world in his perfect timing, if he's going to judge sin in his perfect timing, then that allows me to just relax and enjoy the ride.

01:03:10

I get to find rest. I get to find joy in his Providence. As we've been talking about for several of these different passages that we've looked at over the last month or two, we've been reminded of the fact that God is sovereign, that God is ultimately in control of all things.

01:03:26

And if God's the one that has to deal with all the problems and God's going to give me good things that I can enjoy, well then that sets me free to enjoy the things that he's given to me. You know, when we build up, you know, my family has to be this way and I have to control everything.

01:03:40

And my family is the goal of my life is to make sure that all these things play out just right in my family. Well, then when something goes sideways in your family, it totally rocks your world. Anybody ever planned and prepared and thought they had everything all sorted out and controlled and taken care of, and then you go to a doctor's visit and find out, oh, things aren't going to be the way that I thought they were going to be?

01:04:05

Anybody ever had a normal day where they went to work and thought it was just another day at work? And they go through that terrible, horrible day and realize, Oh, my life is going to be drastically different than I thought it was going to be when I went into work this morning.

01:04:19

You know, the reality is that those things come and, and God brings those things into our lives and God takes things out of our lives. But the reality is that God is in control over all those things.

01:04:30

And when I think I'm in control, then I start to freak out and worry and panic and try to, you know, if I just had eaten that, that salad instead of that Big Mac, then, you know, maybe I wouldn't have cancer right now.

01:04:43

Maybe you would. God's not surprised by those things. Make healthy choices, right? But trust that God's in control too. Trust that God is in control over all things. When we realize that God is in control over all things, that frees us up to be obedient to do the things that He's called us to do.

01:05:02

If we live the way that He tells us to live, things generally go better for us, right? We should live the way that he's commanded us to live, but we're not in control. And when we realized that God is the one that's in control, it frees us up to live the way that he tells us to.

01:05:17

In verse 15, he says, I commend joy for nothing. Man has nothing better under the sun but to eat and to drink and to be joyful. God has given us good gifts. And that's one of the things that we see.

01:05:30

We see this kind of this same statement over and over again in Ecclesiastes because God has given us good things that we can enjoy. He's given us good food, enjoy it. He's given us this, this gift of work.

01:05:43

A lot of us find enjoyment in our work that, that we can step back at the end of the day and say, look what I did, I accomplished this. That's an enjoyable thing. We should enjoy that. We should find happiness in that the the things like family and things like relationships, all these good things that we've talked about throughout this book, all those things are things that we should, we should benefit from, that we should enjoy that we should celebrate that We shouldn't live with this burden and Gray cloud kind of floating around over us like Eeyore all the time.

01:06:15

But we get to set back and just go, you know, God's in control of all things. And if I realize that he's in control, then I just get to live happily and trust he's in control. I don't have to be. So I'm just going to say thank you every time a good thing comes and just enjoy life as He's given it to me to live days like today.

01:06:34

We should enjoy those things. If you're standing up here, parents, you're up here worrying about, Oh goodness, what's going to happen to my kids? I hope they don't grow up to get themselves in trouble one day.

01:06:42

I hope I don't have one of the the the people that you know, they, they go and do this or they go and do that or, you know, this little thing happens in like don't worry about those things. Enjoy today.

01:06:53

Be thankful for the moments that God has given you today and deal with tomorrow. Tomorrow. Bible tells us that tomorrow has enough worries for itself. We don't have to worry about tomorrow, but God gives us grace for today in the moment, right?

01:07:07

Talking about this whole conversation, I want to share with you guys one brief quote from a man named Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I feel like, you know, for those of you guys that don't recognize that name, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he is immensely qualified to talk about what we're talking about here this week.

01:07:22

Bonhoeffer was a German pastor who was born in 1906. He was living in Germany under the time when the Nazi regime came into power. And so he was a an early and an outspoken critic of the Nazis. But he, in speaking out against the Nazis, kind of made himself to be an enemy of the state.

01:07:40

And so he was arrested by the Nazis in 1943. He was moved to the dreaded Gestapo prison in Berlin in 1944. And then he was actually hanged in 1945 for his crimes against speaking out against the Nazis at the young age of 39 years old in 1945.

01:08:01

Bonhoeffer was not unfamiliar with the idea that we see showing up in our passage this week that wicked people may seemingly prosper while good people seemingly are punished. I think that's kind of the definition of his life, right?

01:08:14

Listen to what he said about enduring through the difficulties of life and dealing with the problems of life. He said our life is not only a great deal of trouble and hard work, it is also refreshment and joy in God's goodness.

01:08:27

We labor, but God nourishes and sustains us. There is a reason to celebrate. God is calling us to rejoice and to celebrate. In the midst of our working day. God invites us to find a rest in His sovereignty and His goodness and the fact that He's in control so we don't have to be.

01:08:45

God's the one who's keeping score. We just get to simply walk in obedience and trust that when we live life the way that he's called us to, that he's going to deal with the details. And we get to celebrate the fact that dad's in control and we don't have to be.

01:09:01

If you came here this morning with burdens that you're carrying as we're sitting here talking about living life with this freedom of trusting that God's in control in whatever circumstance in life comes up, and you're just, you're still sitting here with that burden on your heart.

01:09:15

Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service is over. And I encourage you to come bring that burden down here, pray with our prayer team and leave it in God's hands. You don't have to leave here with that burden on your shoulders today.

01:09:26

So I'd invite you to do that. And would you guys pray with me as we finish up? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for your work in our lives and for your work in the world. Got even as we as we see this reality of evil that exists out in the world, as we see

things that sometimes don't make sense to us in our own mind, God, we know that this is a much, much bigger conversation.

01:09:48

God, we know that there is so much that you understand about the way that things work and the way that you're bringing things to pass in the world that don't make sense to us, may not ever make sense to us.

01:10:00

But God, we know that you're really big and that we're really small. And so we trust you with that. God, we pray that you would help us to God just to accept the fact and to rest and to find joy in the fact that you are sovereign and in control over all things.

01:10:16

And God, even as we witness these seeming injustices that exist that happen around us every day, God, we know that ultimately one day you are keeping score and you will set all things right. But in the meantime, we thank you for the way that you love us, the way that you move and lead in our lives that we might be able to find joy as we talk about the truth of you being in control this morning.

01:10:42

God, we pray that you would lead us in every decision that we make and everything that we do every day of our lives. God, we pray that you would lead and that we would follow. And we thank you for all that you do for us.

01:10:51

And we thank you for Jesus. It's in His name we pray. Amen.