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Ecclesiastes 9:7-10

"Gifts from Above"

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Transcript

24:51

We're going to be in Ecclesiastes 9. Looking at just a few verses this week, but just an awesome little section of the book. So by this point in the book of Ecclesiastes, you guys are experts, right?

25:04

It seems like, you know, the preacher has brought up some topics time and time again that we've kind of seen and are starting to recognize things, You know, unlike narrative, you know, when we went through the Gospel of Luke, that's, that's narrative.

25:16

It's telling us a story of kind of sequential events, right? So we go through something like narrative literature and it's very linear. We go from this to this to this. But wisdom literature, like Ecclesiastes, it can be cyclical.

25:32

We can see the same themes show up over and over again. And yeah, we're starting to see by this point, we've been studying the book for several months now, and we're starting to see some themes start to pop up.

25:42

I'm sure if I asked you guys what are some of the things that we've heard over and over again, you guys would probably say a few things, right? A vanity of vanities. All is vanity. Everything is smoke.

25:53

It talks about the troubles of life. It talks about the brevity of life, how short life is. It talks about the emptiness of stuff, you know, as we chase after these different things that we think will make us happy.

26:06

We we look at all these different things and they're described as smoke. They're described as vanity. But you know, another theme that we've seen throughout the book is a theme that we're going to see and, and kind of talk about a little bit.

26:18

It's kind of the sole focus of this week's passage. So you know this idea of the preacher encouraging us to enjoy life and all the good gifts that come from God. We've seen this a couple of different times.

26:30

This theme come up. In chapter 2 he talked about eating and drinking, how those are good gifts from God. And in chapter 3 he talked about joyfully doing good as long as we live. In Chapter 5, he explained how good and fitting it is for us to find our enjoyment in our work.

26:48

And in Chapter 8, he went on, he even went further than these other places and commended joy as a lifestyle, as a way that we should kind of be describing our life. And so, you know, I've heard different places as I've been studying the book of Ecclesiastes, I've heard different preachers suggest that the preacher is being kind of almost sarcastic when he talks about the positive things in this book.

27:12

When he says to enjoy life, some people go, Oh, well, you know, he talks about all these bad things and he says, well, enjoy! Like, I think it's some sort of a negative, some sort of a bad thing. But I don't think that's a correct understanding as he is just being incredibly honest with us about all of the things that we see in life.

27:29

Right? If anybody has lived a week of this life, you'll know really quickly that, you know, there's there's days and moments where things are really great and there's days and moments where things are really bad.

27:40

And I think, you know, the preacher here in Ecclesiastes has been very honest and very accurate regarding his reflections on life. You know, the reality is that life can be hard, but that doesn't mean that everything is bad.

27:53

That doesn't mean that everything is terrible or that we should be depressed or, you know, there's, there's lots of good things in life as well. And the preacher points to God as the source of those good things that we're going to look at and talk about a little bit in this week's passage.

28:07

So I hope you have made your way to Ecclesiastes 9. If you've got your copy of God's Word, we're going to read. We got a short passage this week. That means I won't talk as long, right? That we're going to, we're going to you guys laugh.

28:18

Why did you guys laugh? It wasn't a joke. I... all right, nobody thinks I can do this in less than thirty, 40-50 minutes. So I'd invite you guys to follow along with me. Ecclesiastes 9, verses 7 through 10.

28:33

It tells us in these verses, Go eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do. Let your garments be always white. Let not oil be lacking on your head.

28:46

Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that He has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil in which you toil under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol to which you are going.

29:04

These are the words of the Lord. Would you guys pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you that we can gather together, that we can study, that we can humble ourselves before you and humble ourselves before your word.

29:16

God, I pray that as we gather tonight, God, that you would help us to speak less and God that you would speak during this time. God that this wouldn't be anything that pops into my mind of my own ability or my own thoughts.

29:29

But God, we pray that you would use this time for your purposes, for your glory and to speak your truth to us collectively tonight as we gather together around it. So God, we give this time to you and we pray that you would speak and we pray that we would listen.

29:42

It's in Jesus name we pray, Amen. Well, we see a few different gifts that are are kind of scattered throughout these verses that I thought it'd be good for us to pause and notice these different things.

29:53

So the first gift that we see in our passage is the gift of pleasure, the gift of pleasure. So you know, what kinds of pleasure has God-given to his people to enjoy. As we look at these verses, we see a few different things that he mentions here in these verses.

30:08

The 1st pleasure that he mentions is the basic pleasures of eating and drinking. Right in verse 7 we read this first verse. It says, go eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart for God has already approved what you do.

30:23

Now, the word go that is used here, It's not something that we just passively sit back. It's not a way of him saying, you know, just while you're doing these things, make sure you're thankful. You know, he's telling us, go and, and eat your bread with joy.

30:36

Go and do this. It's a, it's not a descriptive statement. It's an imperative statement. He's commanding us go and do this. This is something that God wants for us to do. He's commanding go and be joyful.

30:48

It's not so much about the, the eating and the drinking. What he's saying is, you know, there's good things that God has given to us. There's good gifts that God has given us. And so he's commanding them to go and to, to have heartfelt joy and the things that we can celebrate and the things that we can enjoy in life, you know, as we share table

fellowship with one another, as we enjoy good food, you know, there's always bread, right?

31:11

The restaurant always brings the breadsticks to the table. Enjoy a breadstick every once in a while. It's OK, it's a good thing. As we break bread, as we sip fine wine, as we taste all the other good food and good drink, all the good things that God has provided to us, we are commanded to receive these gifts with God centered joy.

31:32

It's kind of an interesting thing. The first thing that we see is the basic pleasures of eating and drinking are commended. This passage kind of continues on in verse 8 with some unfamiliar instructions.

31:42

I think it's important for us to slow down here just a little bit. But in verse 8 he tells us, let your garments always be white. Let not oil be lacking on your head. So if we were to go back, rewind in time, go back in history a few thousand years, white garments in this culture were kind of the dress up clothes of the ancient Near East.

32:02

Yeah, they would wear white garments. Many festive occasions called for people to wear white garments and would be adorned in these special outfits that they would wear. And so the preacher is telling us to, to put on your nice clothes, put on your party clothes.

32:16

And he also says to wear a sweet perfume to anoint yourself with oil and oil would be some sort of a, you know, you got to, you got to make sure that your skin doesn't dry out, right? Nobody wants to be ashy and dry when the desert sands come blowing through.

32:32

And yeah, that's, that's no fun for anybody. Put on your lotion. Make sure you anoint yourself that, you know, you don't want to be stinky showing up to the party, right? If you are going to show up, you're going to put your nice clothes on.

32:45

He's encouraging us make sure that you anoint your head with oil as well. To anoint someone's head with oil, as we see in in the book of Psalms, was to pour out something that was richly scented, like cologne.

32:59

This is an important part of getting ready for a celebration. You got to put your Sunday best on, put your good clothes on. But he's also telling them that smelling good is an important thing. Our teenagers are going to be in here tomorrow morning as they worship with us.

33:12

Got to make sure we communicate that it's good to dress nice. It's also important to smell good guys. I know you guys already have that all figured out, but Mike, we're going to make sure we'll get them. To put this in a contemporary context, I think what the preacher is trying to communicate to us here is he's telling us, you know, put on your tuxedo, put on your evening gowns, get ready to celebrate, to dance the night away.

33:34

He's telling us to prepare for a party, that there's good things that God has given to us and we should celebrate those things. The preacher also speaks of the pleasure that as he gives instructions to husbands in verse 9, I think wives, we can, you guys can receive something from this as well.

33:50

I think it goes to both genders. But verse 9, it says enjoy life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

34:04

The preachers commending the the daily pleasures of marriage. He's commending the good things that that we get to enjoy in marriage and family life. You know, the love that we see commanded husbands, wives, the love that we see commanded is not the only instruction that God gives to husbands and wives.

34:24

The only response that we should have. It's not just, you know, love them because you have to. He also is telling us here to enjoy life with the one who you love. Enjoy life with the one who you love.

34:35

It gives this very specific command. This isn't just, you know, grin, grit your teeth and bear it. And ugh I love you, Right? You should actually enjoy spending time with your spouse. It's a good thing to want to spend time and to enjoy life with your spouse.

34:51

Every husband is being called on in this verse to enjoy your wife. And now some of you guys may look next to you. I know you're not going to say it out loud to me right now, but you're thinking, Yeah, how am I supposed to enjoy time with her?

35:04

Why is, you know, sometimes if we're, if we're honest, life gets difficult, doesn't it? Sometimes things get a little bit hard. Sometimes life gets a little bit crazy. And, you know, wives, you're looking at me going, "Not always. I don't always enjoy life with him. I don't always enjoy life with her," right? I saw a few elbows happen there just a second ago. I know I've been married for a while now too. I get it.

35:27

Sometimes life gets heavy and sometimes life gets hard, right? Well, I think what he's telling us is, is something that's important for us to understand that marriage is not just something that we clench our teeth and bear down and survive.

35:41

Marriage is something that is a good gift that is given to us by God and He's calling on us to enjoy it, telling us to spend time together not just as you have to do these things, but as things that we get to do as someone that we get to enjoy spending life with.

35:56

We get to spend time together, not just as husband and wife, but as friends and all the busy demands of life. I know there's a lot of conversations that happen that they're simply, you know, we have to talk through the finances.

36:08

We have to make sure that the calendar is set. We have to make sure that the kids get here or there, that the decisions get made about this or that, you know, all the, the hard things. But it's important to not just deal with the hard stuff, not just pass each other like ships in the night as she's going one way and you're going the other.

36:27

It's good to enjoy and value that time together. Love the time that you get to spend together. Enjoy the time that you spend together real practically. This isn't in the passage specifically, but I think this is something that we can add on and acknowledge as something that's important for us.

36:44

Ryan, you give me a thumbs up. If this passes the marriage study on Wednesday night, Any of you guys that are, you know, elbowing each other right now, you should be here on Wednesday nights. But yeah, I know that life gets busy and things get crazy.

36:56

That's that way for all of us. But it's important for us to make time to value that relationship and to make sure that we invest in that relationship just like we would anything else that we find important or significant in life.

37:08

So find times to enjoy your spouse. Find times to enjoy that person that you love. Not just as well. I guess we have to check this box off. We just have to have this conversation. But yeah, it's important.

37:22

Even after you're married, surprise your spouse with a date night, go take them out and go do something. Go enjoy time together. Go have dinner, have an intentional conversation where you know you take that device out of your pocket, put it away somewhere.

37:37

So, I can't even begin to describe it. It's kind of become a pet peeve for me. And so all as we sit at a restaurant or we're kind of, you know, Kari and I are sitting talking and, and hanging out and maybe even have our kids there, I am amazed, I am always amazed at how many people are sitting at dinner and not interacting with each other.

37:57

And all of them, yeah, I've seen families with all of the people around the table looking down, playing on their device, you know, streaming something or watching something or doing anything they can to ignore the people that they're there with.

38:10

Date night is not the time for you to get caught up on your emails. Date night is the time for you to get caught up on your relationship with your spouse. Put your device away. It may be as simple as, you know, husbands sometimes we probably need to turn the ball game off and spend some time talking with our spouse in the evenings.

38:26

We probably need to find some time to, you know, play a game or just sit and talk rather than filling up every moment with a distraction. Because distractions are so easy. It's so easy for us to fill up life with all of the stuff that we can fill up our life with on a regular basis.

38:43

It's important for us to find times to enjoy our spouse as he talks about here in verse 9. Finally, the the last pleasure that the preacher mentions in our passages, the the pleasure of work. In verse 9, he starts the verse by saying enjoy life, but you know, in the other things that he says, he says enjoy life in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

39:05

If we kind of take the the clauses and stick them together there, we've talked about the joy of work. We've talked about that at at different times throughout this series and Ecclesiastes. And while the the reality is that a lot of people hate work, a lot of people get frustrated by the fact that they have to go and toil day in and day out, day after day.

39:23

Work is a God-given gift that he's given to us. And it brings pleasure when we can step back at the end of a project and look at something that we accomplished, look at something that we worked hard at, and we can celebrate a job well done.

39:37

I was talking a little bit with a church member. I'm not going to tell you who it is because I know you guys are all going to want to call him and ask him for help if I tell you who it is. But I was talking with a church member this week and he was telling me that he had been working at his house and he had just finished up a remodel project where he had been figuring out how to do tile and then had re-tiled their shower in their bathroom at home.

39:59

So he proudly sent me pictures of his job well done. He was celebrating what he had done. I even wanted to drop in the pictures for you. You know that we got we've got old shower and we've got new shower.

40:11

If you guys go into the nursery and stake it out real hard, I'm sure you guys can figure out who it was that was sending me these. So if you really need tile work done, find that baby and, and follow him back to the big people that come in and claim him.

40:25

But yeah, the reality is that there's work that God gives us to do. There's things that we have to go and, and work and take care of on a daily basis. But a lot of the time those work projects can bring joy in our lives.

40:39

Then we get to the end of it and we can step back and, and proudly send pictures to our friends and say, look I accomplished this, I finished this, I did this thing. And so there's a joy, there's a pleasure in a sense of accomplishment that can come from our work.

40:55

He goes on in verse 10 to reinforce what he's talking about and about this idea of work. And verse 10, he says whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no work or thought of thought or knowledge or wisdom and shield to which you are going.

41:13

The point is not here as he says, whatever your hand finds to do. The point is not that we should just run around and do whatever we feel like doing and just work randomly on this and that and run around and bounce all over the place.

41:25

We should just do whatever we please instead, What he's trying to communicate to us. As you know, we've talked like probably 30 times, it feels like throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, we've talked about the fact that God is ultimately in control, that God puts us in circumstances, that God brings situations into and out of our lives as he chooses, as he sees fit.

41:45

So what he's communicating here is whatever it is that that God brings into your life, wherever it is that God has put you, work hard, as hard as you possibly can accomplish what it is that God has given you to do and do it with all your might.

42:00

Whatever it is that He puts in our path that we're able to do, do it and do it well. He's telling us, don't sit around wishing. I wish I had that person's skill. I wish I had that person's ability.

42:12

I wish I was a missionary over here or a Craftsman over here. I wish I could do that. I wish I could do that. He's telling us, don't sit around wishing what you could do. Do what you can and do it well and enjoy it.

42:25

Colossians Chapter 3 talks about the same idea. It tells us whatever you do, work heartily. As for the Lord and not for men. We talk about all these different pleasures. We see several different things that we can enjoy, these good gifts that God has given to us.

42:40

I think we would be remiss, though, if we didn't talk about just a couple of the dangers that are kind of implied here. It's important for us to offer a word of caution as we look at this list of all these different pleasures.

42:53

We can get so distracted by earthly pleasures. It's important for us to make sure that we don't lose the the focus on where those pleasures came from. If we get so passionate about chasing after this and working and enjoying your relationships and enjoying food and drink, all these different things.

43:12

It's important for us to make sure we we don't chase after them at the expense of acknowledging where they come from. How tempting it is for us as created things to to chase after those good gifts, to chase after creation and forget who it is that created all of those things.

43:30

You know, some people live for food, the glutton, you know, their thought is constantly about food. It's constantly about, you know, how can I get this? How can I get to my next meal? I just want it. I want it, I want it. It's a mindset that can take over a person's mind that has nothing to do with health, with weight, with anything else. It has to do with the way that we think about food.

43:53

We're not created to chase after and worship food. We're created to celebrate food as a good gift that God has given to us as his creation. Some people live for food. Some people are addicted to strong drink.

44:07

It's a danger that we could easily find here in this passage. Some people live for a relationship that relationship is the only thing that you know to to quote the old classic movie, "you complete me" type thing. That's not it. May make for a great movie line. It makes for really bad theology and a really bad way to live your life. If you're looking to a relationship to complete you, it means that your focus has gotten out of line somewhere. People live for food, people live for strong drink, people live for a relationship.

44:38

Some people live for their work. All of these things can become out of line and can become very dangerous for us. If we take good gifts that God has given to us and we make them that the most important thing in our life.

44:50

If we make them the paramount we simply will. They'll crumble under the weight of expectation that we place on them when the danger comes, when they take the place of God. You know, Tim Keller has a quote here I wanted to share with you guys.

45:05

He said sin is not just the doing of bad things, but the making of good things into ultimate things. Seemed kind of profound as we talked about all these good gifts that God has given to us. Sin is not just the doing of bad things, but the making of good things into ultimate things.

45:23

So we see this idea of the gift of pleasure in our passage. The next thing I think it's important for us to stop and to acknowledge is the gift of gratitude. You know, an acknowledgement of all of the good gifts that God gives us, all of these things that he brings into our life to give us pleasure and enjoyment.

45:38

Our response should be one of gratitude. In general, this is the approach that the Bible teaches across the board. With all the good things that God gives to us, that all the good things that God brings into our life, well, the response, the only appropriate response for us is thankfulness and gratitude towards him.

45:57

What it tells us to do is to receive pleasure with gratitude and to return our thanks to God. One of the best ways for us to keep all of these pleasures that we were talking about just a second ago in check is to make sure that that is we keep them in their

proper perspective is to praise the giver of all of these gifts, to thank God for all of these things that He's given to us.

46:18

First Timothy chapter 4, it says for everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with Thanksgiving. You know, Philip Reiken, as I was reading his commentary this week, he gives us a good test that I think we should use for all of these pleasures.

46:33

I think this is really important for us. Make sure you pay attention, maybe even want to snap a picture of that. It's a really valuable quote I want to read for you guys. And he said, we can ask ourselves when I pray, is this something this this pleasure?

46:46

Is this something that I would feel good about including in my Thanksgiving, or would I be embarrassed to mention it? Am I thanking God for this pleasure, or have I been enjoying it without ever giving Him a second thought?

46:58

When we're enjoying legitimate pleasures in a God honoring way, it seems natural to include them in our prayers. Seems like a good check and balance for us as we look at these different things in life.

47:09

If we are going to chase after something and make the argument, you know, God gave us this good gift. So I want to, I want to go and I want to indulge in this and I want to, you know, take this in and, and live all this thing out to the best that I can.

47:23

Whatever it is, if it's a relationship, if it's food or drink or, you know, anything else that we can go and chase after and try to find pleasure in in life. You know, I think we have to pass the prayer test with it, right.

47:36

If we feel very comfortable at saying God, thank you for giving this to me. Thank you for this wonderful gift. And, and I want to praise you as the creator of this. And if we can pray that with with no question, with no hesitation, with no doubt in our mind.

47:51

Well then that's probably the appropriate response that we should thank him for it. Now, if we struggle with that and we go, you know, it's really hard for me to thank God for the fact that I'm abusing this thing that, I'm chasing after this thing, this thing that's really unhealthy and doesn't really line up with the way that God created it for me to enjoy.

48:13

If we can't praise God for giving that to us probably means that in your conscience, in your, in your heart of hearts, there's probably something going on there that maybe you shouldn't be indulging in whatever that pleasure is, your perspective on it.

48:27

Or even maybe it's a sinful thing that's outside of the guardrails that God has given to us. It's not just God has given us all things. Do whatever you want. Good luck that there are instructions in Scripture, right?

48:39

There are things that God has told us do this, don't do that. Hey, this is dangerous. Hey, you, you shouldn't live this way. He's not just saying, you know, run off and and do anything that makes you happy because sin can make us happy sometimes, right in a temporary moment.

48:52

Sin can be something that's really appealing for people. But if you know that you're doing something sinful, you're probably not going to pray until God, thank you for God, this mistress over here. God, thank you for this abusive relationship over here.

49:06

God, thank you for giving me this. Well, no, we know that's probably going to fall out of line, right? So if it can pass the prayer test that we can say, God, thank you for giving me this beautiful relationship.

49:19

God, thank you for giving me this beautiful food, this wonderful tasting food that I can enjoy. If God is the source of all these good things that we enjoy in life, well, then we can celebrate those things things and we can thank him for those things.

49:33

That's the reason why we pray before we eat most of the time, many of us, Right. And we're giving thanks to God who put the bread on the table, who filled that cup with a delicious drink, whatever it is, whether that's Dr. Pepper or or anything.

49:46

Yeah. I don't know what your drink is. Doctor Pepper's mine. If you want to surprise me with something, bring me a big, cold, icy drink. We're going to be friends, right? We should be marriage in the same way.

49:57

It's something that's good, that we can enjoy, that we can celebrate. It's intended, though, to point us to God, not just to be that the sole thing that we focus on and and find joy in our work can be the same thing.

50:10

It can be a kind of blessing for many people. We enjoy the blessing of work and we should be able to constantly tell God thank you for whatever it is. If God has given us these good gifts and we're enjoying them in his proper context, if we're enjoying things as the the gifts that God has given to us, well then thank you God for these wonderful gifts.

50:32

Is the response that should constantly be coming out of our mouths as we accept these things. We have the the gift of pleasure. We also have the gift of gratitude. Finally, we see at the very end of this passage the gift of perspective verse 10.

50:45

I think it gives us the gift of perspective. It says in that last verse in our passage, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom and she'll to which you are going.

51:00

The word Sheol is not a word that's synonymous with hell, but simply refers to the place of the dead, good, bad, indifferent. It's just kind of a statement of something that we've heard, you know, maybe a dozen other times in the book of Ecclesiastes.

51:13

We're all going to die one day, right? What he's saying, Martin Luther actually said it. Well, he describes Sheol as the hidden resting place outside of the present life where the soul departs to its place.

51:26

When the preacher is saying that there's no work, that there's no wisdom there, it sounds like he's denying the fact that there's an afterlife. But simply what he's trying, he's not trying to to even talk about the reality of the afterlife.

51:36

Remember, all of this book is written with this perspective of being under the sun, you know, in this existence. That's all he has. That's all he's talking about. That's all he's thinking about.

51:46

So what he's trying to do, he's not talking about the afterlife because he really doesn't know. He doesn't address that. He simply is saying that we're all going to die one day. And when we do, that's going to be the end of all of our earthly pleasure, of all of our earthly work, of all of our earthly relationships.

52:03

All of those things are going to change when we go to the other side of death. These ideas may sound contradictory. They may sound confusing for us to think about these two things as we're going to talk about in just a second.

52:16

But the reality of death can render life meaningless or it can render life incredibly meaningful, depending on how we look at it, depending on how we hold on to these things. If a preacher brings up the reality that death is coming because he encourages us to enjoy life and the things that we have to enjoy life, to enjoy these good gifts as things that are appropriate and can be celebrated when they're held in their proper context.

52:46

We should enjoy all of the good gifts that God has given to us. So, let's be clear. It's important for us to be very clear on this. It is not a sin to enjoy life. Did you hear me? I think there's a lot of people, there's a lot of places I've grown up in places where you know, this idea that, you know, it's a bad thing if, if people are laughing, if people are having fun, they're probably not doing what God wants them to because God wants people to be grumpy and sad, right?

53:15

Anybody grow up or, or been around a church where, you know, it seemed like everybody, they were told you have to be grumpy and sad and, and a little bit melancholy in order to come to church here.

53:26

Anybody ever been around that before? I have. I've been around people that you know, it seems like if, if something seems fun, that means God doesn't want you to do that, right? It's not a sin to enjoy life.

53:40

Many in America were raised on this brand of Christianity that that holiness means that you have to be boring. One preacher I was reading said many were taught holiness is only found in abstaining from fun.

53:56

Some people were taught that if it feels good, if it makes you happy, if you enjoy it, then it's a sin. So get rid of it and stop doing it. But I think Ecclesiastes here is telling us the exact opposite of that.

54:06

God wants you to enjoy life. He wants you to to to enjoy all of the good gifts that he's given to you. He wants it to feel good. He wants you to be happy and all of these things. Danny Aiken, I thought, this is just so beautiful and profound and made me giggle a little bit.

54:23

So it made the list, right? Danny Aiken talking about this, said to God is the author of fun and he gave these gifts to be enjoyed as he intended. After all, the very beginning, he created paradise where there was a garden with tons of acreage with all the food that you could ever eat.

54:39

Then he put a husband and a wife in that paradise with no clothes on. That sounds like a pretty good deal to me. Take it up with Danny Aiken if you're offended. Not me. I'm just the reader of a quote.

54:53

I hope for us today as we think about the the fact that God has given good gifts to his children, that God has given all of these things that got, you know, God is the creator of fun. God is the creator of joy.

55:07

God is the one that that made many of these things so enjoyable. God's the one that made food taste good. God's the one that made relationships fulfilling and meaningful in life. God's the one that made work really enjoyable.

55:21

When we when we enjoy what we do and we work hard, God's the one that gave us that sense of fulfillment when we step back at the end of a job and get to celebrate a job well done. I think it's important for us as we look at a passage like this, it seems very simple, but it's really profound if we truly grab onto and, and grasp what it's trying to communicate to us.

55:43

My hope for us today is that we'll realize that that following God is not just God doesn't just want us to live in the, you know, the no fun zone. He doesn't want us to just live in this space where we have to follow the rules and live in this rigid life.

55:59

And God created these things, these good gifts for us to enjoy them. Now, does God put up guard rails for us? Does God tell us that there's some dangerous areas that you probably shouldn't wander off into?

56:11

Of course he does. God's not saying just go do whatever you want. Good luck. Everything is, you know, fair game. There's things that people do that they find temporary fleeting happiness in, but they're very dangerous paths in life.

56:24

And the Bible talks a lot about those. I think many of us are probably aware of different places where, you know, we can get outside of the guardrails. We can get outside of the bounds of of what God has for us and what God has encouraged us to go and to take and to eat and to do and to celebrate and to enjoy.

56:42

We want to stay between the guardrails, but does God just want us to sit around and be bored and live this grumpy, depressing life? No, absolutely not. Absolutely not. God created pleasure. God created all of these wonderful gifts for us to enjoy and, and these gifts that were given to us are given to us so that they might stir our affections towards the Creator who gave them to us.

57:08

When you take that bite of that wonderful meal, whatever your favorite meal is, when you take that bite, take that bite and say thank you God for making this wonderful gift that you've given to me. When, when God gives you that wonderful night with your significant other that you can just go and, and celebrate and spend time talking and the, the wonderful times that we can spend together, say God, thank you for this beautiful gift of relationships that that he created.

57:35

When God gives you that opportunity to work hard and to find that fulfillment and work, thank him for that. All of these good gifts that God has brought into our lives are things that we can celebrate are things that should point us back to him are things that should help us to to think of him in those moments.

57:55

You know, Oh man, this is delicious. Thank you Jesus. Oh, oh man, this is so much fun. Thank you Jesus, for all these things, those good gifts that have been given to us, have been given to us by a creator with a very specific purpose.

58:10

They should point us back and stir our affections towards Him as we finish. That's the take away for tonight. That's the question for us tonight as we look at life. I want to ask you to consider, have you come to grips with the fact that God has made life in a joyful way that you should be able to celebrate?

58:35

Do you look back to Him and say thank you in those moments where you get to enjoy one of the good gifts that He's given to you? Does the food that you get to enjoy point you back to Him? Does the the the the arts, the music, the different things that we get to enjoy?

58:51

Does that point you back to him? Do the relationships that the friendships, the spouse, the spending time with your family, does that point you back to him and cause you to say thank you God for all the good gifts that you've given to me?

59:04

When we enjoy the good things that God has given us, when we work, we can enjoy it. When we celebrate and and party, we can enjoy it. When we eat, we can enjoy it. All these things God has created for our, for our pleasure, for them to be good things that we can celebrate and they can point us back to him.

59:27

So I hope that as we finish tonight that that you'll, you'll tell him thank you for all the things in your life. There's all kinds of good things that he brings in. The fact that we can be here tonight.

59:38

I can look around and see some people that I haven't seen in a while. It's good to see you here tonight. It's good to see, it's good to to worship together. It's good to be with one another. All of these things are things that should cause us to say thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus, thank you, Jesus.

59:53

You know what, there's one final thing that we're going to do tonight that that really should cause us to say thank you, Jesus, right? Because in just a minute we're going to take communion and we're going to have just a few moments to to remember the sacrifice that Jesus made when he went to to die to die on a cross.

01:00:11

As we remember the sacrifice that Jesus made and giving his life so that we might be ransomed, so that we could be set free, so that we could be forgiven. And so in just a minute, we're going to read a little bit of scripture as Jesus kind of initiated this practice of communion.

01:00:27

We're going to pray and we're going to invite you guys to to either come to the front tables or go back to the back and take the communion elements. And as you collect those, go back to your seat, I'd encourage you to to take a few moments and pray, thank God, celebrate the good gifts that he's brought into your life.

01:00:45

Thank him for the sacrifice that he made on the cross and make sure that there's nothing in your heart that that you have rest, you know, have have not surrendered to him any sin that you've not confessed to him.

01:00:58

But come, take, eat, celebrate. So we remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Let me read for us First Corinthians 11 verses 23 through 25. It says in those verses, For what I received from the Lord, I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread.

01:01:22

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

01:01:35

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. We're going to pray and then I'm going to invite you to come take and eat. Let's pray. God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you that you bring good gifts to God that you are the good father that gives good gifts to your children.

01:01:53

God that we can enjoy all these good gifts that come from your hand. And God, we thank you that we can God that we can remember the greatest gift that was ever given, God that Jesus the Savior would come and would give his life as a ransom for many.

01:02:07

God, we thank you that we can, God, that we can gather together as a forgiven sons and daughters of the King because of the sacrifice of Jesus. And God, as we take and we and, and we eat, God, as we remember the sacrifice of Jesus and taking communion tonight, God, we pray that you would fill our hearts with newfound affections.

01:02:30

God, we pray that you would fill our minds with thoughts of you. God, that we would celebrate, that we would leave here in joy, knowing all the good gifts that you've given to us. God, that we have a good Father who loves us and who has blessed us with far more than we deserve.

01:02:46

God, we thank you for for all the love that you have for us. God, we thank you for all the good gifts that you've given to us and we pray that they would point us back to you rather than just capturing our attention as we focus on on the thing instead of on the one who created the thing.

01:03:00

God, we love you and we worship you and it's in Jesus name we pray, Amen.