

Week 11 ~ Notes for Jan 16th
The Value of Wisdom as we try to Make Sense of Life

Ice breaker

Eccl 7:8 - "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning"
Something completed is better than something begun (CEV)
Endings are better than beginnings (Msg)

Fast response: Give an example of something whose ending is better than its beginning.

Read

Proverbs 8:10-12

"Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. I, wisdom, live with prudence, and I attain knowledge and discretion."

ICB: "I am wisdom, and I have the ability to think. I also have knowledge and good sense."

Puzzle on the five words

Ppt slide 1: There are five words tangled up on the screen. How are they related?

Ppt slide 2: Flow diagram shows their relationship

What is the value of wisdom? What is the advantage of being WISE?

Eccl 9:18 "Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one bungler destroys much good."

JPS: "Wisdom is as good as a patrimony ... For to be in the shelter of wisdom is to be also in the shelter of money; and the advantage of intelligence is that wisdom preserves the life of the one who possesses it"

1 Cor 12:7-9: Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,...

Qohelet writes of wisdom and *Money, Patience, Anger, Gossip and Nostalgia*

Wisdom and Money

Eccl 7:11-12a

"Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money..."

Wisdom is good with an inheritance (KJV)

Wisdom is better when it's paired with money (MSG)

Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing (NIV)

Wise use of possessions is good (ISV)

What do make of this statement?

Wisdom and Patience

7:8 Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; the patient in spirit are better than the proud in spirit. (NRSV)

Something completed is better than something just begun; patience is better than too much pride (CEB)

The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride (NIV)

The end of something is better than its beginning, so the patient are better than the proud (CJB)
Finishing is better than starting. Patience is better than pride (NLT)

What do make of this statement?

Wisdom and Anger, Wisdom and Gossip

We pass over these two because of time restraint

Wisdom and Nostalgia

Eccl 7:10 Don't long for "the good old days." This is not wise (NLT)

Do not say, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this (NRSV)

Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this (NKJV)

Never ask, "Oh, why were things so much better in the old days?" It's not an intelligent question (GN)

Here's how I think the Preacher in Ecclesiastes would respond to people who say things like [fing's ain't wot they used t' be]:

"If you think you're living in a world where things are getting worse all the time, then cheer up: at least you'll be dead before things get *really* bad."

Gibson p.101

Qohelet's answer to Gibson:

Eccl 3:11: "He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their* minds; yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end."
[* "their" refers back to the toiling workers]

YOUR STORIES

Think of **ONE** thing that you look back on with nostalgia and why.
Why do you think Qohelet thinks this is unwise or unintelligent?

Ref to Christianity Today Jan 15 2021

"Our Nostalgia Is Spiritually Dangerous"

Why we shouldn't worship the golden calf of the 'pre-COVID' days.

Jeremy Sabella

Sabella writes about looking back to pre-covid days and reminds his readers of the Children of Israel in the desert longer for the fleshpots of Egypt. The euphoria of crossing the Red Sea giving way to eating manna every day. The absence of Moses, their leader, giving way to the worshipping of a golden calf. He writes: "But nostalgia so consumed them that they overlooked 400 years of bondage *and* broke the first and second commandments in order to conjure an idealized, distorted past. They lost their moral bearings so completely that God considered wiping them out before Moses intervened."

He continues:

"C.S.Lewis points out that most vices, such as fear, ambition, or lust, tempt us to obsess about the future. Nostalgia, by contrast, is oriented toward the past. Since it nudges us in the opposite direction of most other vices, we tend to see it as innocuous by comparison. But spiritually speaking, *that* we lose contact

with the present matters more than how. The longer a vice keeps us from facing the challenges and appreciating the blessings of our present, the more spiritually corrosive it becomes. And precisely because it *feels* pleasant and harmless, nostalgia can be devastatingly effective at throwing us out of sync with the work of the Spirit for prolonged stretches of time.

What is your response to Sabella?

Good Old Days of Adventism

Ppt slide 14 shows scenes from the past

What do we as SDA / ex SDA Christians think about the “good old days”?

What do we look back longing to in Adventism?

Is this spiritually healthy?

How can we wrinklies come to terms with living in the Christian Church (SDA or other) of the 2020s?

“Maybe the past was better than the present. But when you start asking “Why was it better?” what you are doing is denying the reality of God’s presence in the present. If you think things are worse, do you think God is no longer in control? Do you think he hasn’t brought you to the point where you are now and that he no longer loves you or has plans or purposes for you? To ask the question in verse 10 is unwise because it forgets about God. Often when we ask this its because we are blind to the good things of the present and ignorant of the evil of the past”.

“... Nostalgia is a form of escapism by taking a vacation in the past instead of grappling with the present or looking forward to the future of faith.”

Gibson p.102

Do you agree?

“When you experience nostalgia, your heart is longing for a more beautiful person ... or place than you have ever known You think you’re longing for the past, but the past was never as good as your mind is telling you it was. And, says C.S.Lewis, God is giving you in that moment one of the most profound glimpses of the intensity of perfection and beauty that you have actually yet to see. What is in fact pulling on your heartstrings is the future: it’s heaven; it’s your sense of home and belonging that has just cracked the surface of your live, for just a moment, and then is gone.”

Gibson p.103

“Wise people who understand how God has made us to long for him and for heaven don’t look backward when they get nostalgic. They allow the feeling to point forward. They look up to heaven and to home.”

Gibson p. 103

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