

Speaker: Pastor Buster Brown

Today's Message: The Brevity of Life (Opportunity Knocks)

Today's Text: Ecclesiastes 12: 1-8

“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’; ² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, ³ in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, ⁴ and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low— ⁵ they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets— ⁶ before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, ⁷ and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸ Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.”

Solomon closes his book with an appeal to think biblically as he “comes home” to a biblical world and life view. He has been living with an “under the sun only” approach to life.

Under the Sun (only)

Epicureanism:

the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain in a socially acceptable fashion.

"god" is undefinable...

the reality of God is not strong and joyfully binding and there is no path to walk upon.

Solomon had previously pursued the dead-end streets of wisdom, pleasure, labor and wealth, and has concluded that all is mist or like trying to catch the wind in your hand. (Vanity of vanities.)

I. The Brevity of Life (v.1-2)

“...yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.” James 4:14

Life is short. Eternity is long. Live like it.

"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." **1 Corinthians 4:1-2**

II. **Physical Powers Will Fade** (v. 3-8)

Unless there is a 'big story' that answers life's ultimate questions and captures our minds, it is inevitable that regret and sorrow will accompany the passing of the years.

Because of the 'big story' of the gospel, we do not fear death.

"¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

Hebrews 2: 14-15

"^{52b} For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

'Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?'" **1 Corinthians 15:52b-55**

III. **The Certainty of Judgement** (v.13-14)

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously - no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption." **C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory**

*"He's a real nowhere man
Sitting in his nowhere land
Making all his nowhere plans for nobody."* **The Beatles, "Nowhere Man"**

IV. **Opportunity Knocks** (v.1)

FROM LAST SUNDAY:

1. Record and/or verbalize three reasons for thanksgiving, daily through Christmas.
2. Write a letter of Thanksgiving/Encouragement (250 words, or less) every week during Advent.