

Problems Under The Sun

(Ecclesiastes 4)

Always something to do...

- Fix: Entropy; Murphy's law...
- Clean: house; dishes; children...
- Maintain: car, house, children, health...

Always something to enjoy (3:13-15)

- 1 Tim.6:17
- Eccl.3:16-4:16, six items appear to contradict this theme

I. I Saw Wickedness In Justice
Department, 3:16-17

16: God instituted human courts

- 1 Sm.7:15-17, Samuel
- Mt.26:59-68, corrupt

17: God holds human courts accountable...

- Ps.119:136, Rivers of water run down from my eyes, Because men do not keep Your law.
- Ac.8:2, devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

I. I Saw Wickedness In Justice Dept., 3:16-17

II. I Saw Death Reigning Supreme,
3:18-21

18-19: death is universal. Gn.5

20: dust – Gn.3: universal fact

- Death: the great leveler.

21-22: purpose of it all

- God shows us our frailty to get our attention: are we ready to meet Him in judgment?

I. I Saw Wickedness In Justice Dept., 3:16-17

II. I Saw Death Reigning Supreme, 3:18-21

**III. I Saw The Oppressed Without
A Comforter, 4:1-3**

Oppression / extortion

- Cause trouble and hardship to others
- Violence ... Job 35:9
 - Ruler of nation, master of slave, cruel father, husband...in position of authority
 - Ps.10:7; 12:5; 42:9; 55:6
 - Eccl.5:8 (7:7)
 - Tears reveal . . .
 - ¹Injustice of it all
 - ²Helplessness
 - ³Absence of comforter (Jn.11:19)

2: worse than death (better to die)

- Moses, Nu.11
- Job 3 (Mt.26:24)
- Elijah, 1 K.19:4
- Jeremiah 20:18
- Jonah 4

3: dog-eat-dog world.
A life so disheartening
that it prefers death / non-
existence.

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III. I Saw Oppressed Without Comforter, 4:1-3

IV. I Saw Envious People, 4:4-6

4: keeping up with Joneses

- A distraction to godliness
- TV, car, vacation... [9:6]
- Keeping up: 'ENVY'
 - Cain: Gn.4
 - Saul: 1 Sm.18
 - Jews: Mt.27:18

5: welfare mentality: folds hands, eats own flesh

- Sarcasm / metaphor [self-torment]
 - Raises no crops; must consume stores
 - self-destruction.
- Pr.6:9-11; 24:30-34
 - May avoid envy, but excuses laziness.
2 Th.3:10
 - Even sinners despise laziness.

6: 'bird in the hand...'

- Pr.15:16-17; Pr.16:8; 1 Tim.6:6
- A call for balanced living.
- Contentment makes a poor person rich.
Ec.5:18-20.

6: rat race

- Toil, striving after wind...
- When does the workaholic get to stop and smell the roses?

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**V. I Saw People Without
Companions, 4:7-12**

7-8a: no companion

- Paul, Ro.16.

8b...: no family, no satisfaction

9: two better than one

- May lose independence, but gain rewards
- Pr.17:17; 27:17
 - Single focus leads some to neglect self, soul, and salvation.
 - Better: marriage, congregation, friends...
 - Lk.10:1

10-12a: why?

¹Help, 10. Gal.6:1.

²Heat, 11. 1 K.1.

- Lk.24:32, And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”
- Ac.28:15, And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

10-12a: why?

¹Help, 10. Gal.6:1.

²Heat, 11. 1 K.1.

³Hope, 12. Lk.10.

12b: threefold cord...

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VI. I Saw Popularity Pass Away,
4:13-16

13: answer precedes problem (14-16)

- Two characters:
 - Wise youth
 - Foolish old king

Will not listen to advice or warning; out of touch

14: 'he' – old king; from prison to throne

15: people favored youth over aged king

16: history repeats: youth reaches pinnacle, loses popularity... People want change.

Lessons

- People are fickle. Mt.21 . . . 27
- Popularity is fickle and fleeting.

**A meaningful life is not a
popularity contest.**

