Living your (best) Life

Message 11

10.4.26

Ecclesiastes 11 (CSB)

INVEST IN LIFE

11 Send your bread on the surface of the water,

for after many days you may find it.

2 Give a portion to seven or even to eight,

for you don't know what disaster may happen on earth.

3 If the clouds are full, they will pour out rain on the earth;

whether a tree falls to the south or the north,

the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.

4 One who watches the wind will not sow,

and the one who looks at the clouds will not reap.

5 Just as you don't know the path of the wind,

or how bones develop in the womb of a pregnant woman,

so also you don't know the work of God who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed,

and at evening do not let your hand rest,

because you don't know which will succeed,

whether one or the other,

or if both of them will be equally good.

7 Light is sweet,

and it is pleasing for the eyes to see the sun.

8 Indeed, if someone lives many years,

let him rejoice in them all,

and let him remember the days of darkness, since they will be many.

All that comes is futile.

9 Rejoice, young person, while you are young,

and let your heart be glad in the days of your youth.

And walk in the ways of your heart

and in the desire of your eyes;

but know that for all of these things God will bring you to judgment.

10 Remove sorrow from your heart,

and put away pain from your flesh,

because youth and the prime of life are fleeting.

Live like it all matters

A. Cast your Bread upon the Waters

1. This doesn't make sense.

2. Who enjoys wet, soggy bread?

3. What is Solomon saying in this wisdom?

B. Solomon challenges us to live with faith and expectancy.

1. Cast=trust, adventure, activity

2. Bread=our lives, our total commitment.

3. After many days=rewards which require patience.

C. Life is uncertain.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 (CSB)

> **5** Just as you don't know the path of the wind,
>
> or how bones develop in the womb of a pregnant woman,
>
> so also you don't know the work of God who makes everything.

1. The workings are hidden, something only God understands.

2. Trust your life, cast your bread upon the waters of faith, and see what God does!

3. No matter how in control we think we are, it does not take long for something or someone to make us realize that we are not in control.

D. We can determine that we will send our bread.

1. Our lives are made up of our habits and daily decisions.

2. Have you ever had meals that you will never forget for the rest of your life?

a. Maybe you were celebrating a big event, or you got dressed up for a fancy restaurant, or you were in an exotic place.

b. How many meals do we really remember?

c. A dozen or two?

1. I can think of the donut I had at the top of Pike's Peak, a pizza in front of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and goat on the Nile River in Uganda.

2. In my childhood, I remember meals with parents, grandparents, and mentors who are no longer with us.

3. But the number of memorable meals is really few.

3. But, for all the memories, none of those meals sustained me. None of those meals made me healthier, sicker, or anything of the sort.

4. Instead, the 2, 3, or 4 meals we have eaten every day for our entire lives are what have sustained us, helped us be healthy or sick, and provided for this journey.

E. We think of the big things in life as "living," but in reality, it is what we do every single day.

1. It's not the loaves of bread we cast on the water; it's the bite-sized chunks we cast day after day.

2. We don't know what act, what decision, what thing may end up being vitally important, produce the most benefit, or cause us the most pain.

3. We have to live with an open hand.

a. Sowing and reaping, and sowing again.

b. If we stop sowing, taking chances, and living life, we lose.

F. Those who wait for perfect circumstances miss out on really living.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (CSB)

4 One who watches the wind will not sow,

and the one who looks at the clouds will not reap.

1. The world we live in is fallen.

2. The people in this world are fallen.

3. If we wait for perfect people, perfect circumstances, and perfect weather, we will miss out on the life that God has given us.

G. Because we don't know everything, everything matters

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (CSB)

6 In the morning sow your seed,

and at evening do not let your hand rest,

because you don't know which will succeed,

whether one or the other,

or if both of them will be equally good.

1. Solomon encourages us to take chances, trust the seasons, and trust God.

2. We do the right work in the right season, whether it makes sense or not, whether it seems favorable or not.

3. Only God knows the final outcome, and we trust God and His process.

The uncertainty of it all adds to the beauty of the gift.

Live life like it is a gift

Ecclesiastes 11:7–8 (CSB)

> 7 Light is sweet,
>
> and it is pleasing for the eyes to see the sun.
>
> 8 Indeed, if someone lives many years,
>
> let him rejoice in them all,
>
> and let him remember the days of darkness, since they will be many.
>
> All that comes is futile.

A. Notice this contrast: light is sweet; remember the days of darkness.

1. Not all our days are sunshine, and not all our days are darkness.

2. Being thankful for both is something I don't do very well.

B. Some people struggle when things are not going well.

1. Some struggle when times are good.

2. Because life is uncertain and unpredictable, we must rejoice in all our days.

3. But we don't know how to rejoice in all our days.

C. During Wednesday night Bible study, one member made a great observation.

1. We are to worship in every season.

2. God instituted the seasons; thus, we are to worship Him in every single one.

3. Grief, trials, joys, and celebration are all occasions to worship God.

D. Have you thanked God for the season you are in?

1. Let him rejoice in them all!

2. Let him remember the days of darkness!

3. Remember the days when there was no light, no hope, no joy.

4. When pain was your companion, and darkness clung to you like a set of wet clothes.

5. Rejoice in all our days, and when you can't see through the darkness, maybe that's the time to be at our loudest.

Live life like it matters, like life is a gift, and lastly…

Live like someone is watching

Ecclesiastes 11:9–10 (CSB)

> **9** Rejoice, young person, while you are young,
>
> and let your heart be glad in the days of your youth.
>
> And walk in the ways of your heart
>
> and in the desire of your eyes;
>
> but know that for all of these things God will bring you to judgment.
>
> **10** Remove sorrow from your heart,
>
> and put away pain from your flesh,
>
> because youth and the prime of life are fleeting.

A. Solomon's wisdom here is a bit confusing.

1. Walk in the ways of your heart, and the desire of your eyes: But you will be judged by what you do.

2. That sounds odd:

    a. Make your own decisions.

    b. Do what feels good.

    c. You do you, boo.

3. When we say that, we are saying you are free to do whatever you want, and I'm not going to judge you.

B. But another person judging you is not the ultimate worry.

1. It's the judgment of the almighty God.

2. There is no such thing as a judgment-free life.

3. Not only is someone always judging you, and sometimes rightfully so, but God will judge you.

4. And for God, the ultimate measuring stick is not whether you have sinned, for that is already a yes, but whether you believe and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

5. It isn't enough to simply say, "I believe that Jesus existed," to be saved; we must profess that Jesus is Lord overall and He is the only way to heaven.

C. There are generations of people who claim to be Christian, yet they are allergic to any type of judgment.

1. This is not limited to only the younger generations.

2. In fact, I would say that those who were formed in the 1960s and 1970s are just as sensitive to judgment and criticism about their lives as the kids are.

3. We are not guaranteed a judgment-free life; we are guaranteed a righteous standard for judgment.

D. For those of us who profess Christ, when a fellow believer criticizes, corrects, or judges you, sometimes that is an act of mercy.

1. Because by calling you out now, they are sparing you from being judged by God.

Proverbs 27:5–6 (CSB)

5 Better an open reprimand

than concealed love.

6 The wounds of a friend are trustworthy,

but the kisses of an enemy are excessive.

Proverbs 15:31–32 (CSB)

31 One who listens to life-giving rebukes

will be at home among the wise.

32 Anyone who ignores discipline despises himself,

but whoever listens to correction acquires good sense.

Galatians 6:1 (CSB)

Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted.

2. Not all criticism is valid, but not all criticism is wrong either.

3. Solomon says do what you want, but remember there are consequences.

E. Have you evaluated your life through the lens of eternity?

1. There is coming a day when all things are judged.

2. Whether you get away with it on Earth or not is not the final say.

3. Judgment is coming.

4. And it begins with God's household.

1 Peter 4:17 (CSB)

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

Live Life, and do it wisely.

A. Are we living lives that are wise and God-fearing?

1. The goal isn't to be a good person.

2. The goal is to honor God.

3. Are we honoring God with our:

1. Family

2. With our time

3. With our attention and affection

4. With our words

5. With our inner dialogue

6. With our spending

7. With our leisure

8. With our work

4. If Jesus were to do a review of you today, what would the result be?

B. Where are we investing the best of our time and energy?

1. Are we casting our bread upon the waters in faith that God will provide the harvest?

2. **When was the last time you made a faith-move, something that only makes sense in light of what God has promised?**

3. Have you made any significant investments of time or energy into your walk with Jesus lately?

4. When was the last time worship and service to God cost you something?

5. Could it be that our spiritual lives are not fruitful because we neglected to sow good seed into it?

C. What areas of life are you not enjoying?

1. What if that area became the place you prayed over more?

2. If work is hard, pray that you find joy there.

3. If family is stressful, pray not only for the situation to change but for your heart to be changed first. (This seems to be the way God does it, our hearts are changed BEFORE the circumstances.

4. Worshipping God in every season will lead to enjoying God in every season.