**Support Notes from Donnie for Death is Meaningless without Jesus**

**Bible Passage**

**Ecclesiastes 9:1-10**

So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. **2**All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good,
    so with the sinful;
as it is with those who take oaths,
    so with those who are afraid to take them.

**3**This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: **The same destiny overtakes all**. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and **afterward they join the dead.**

 **4**Anyone who is among the living has hope[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+9&version=NIV#fen-NIV-17480b)]—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

**5**For the living know that they will die,
    but the dead know nothing;
they have no further reward,
    and even their name is forgotten.
**6**Their love, their hate
    and their jealousy have long since vanished;
never again will they have a part
    in anything that happens under the sun.

**7**Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. **8**Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. **9**Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days.

For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. **10**Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

**Bible Truths**

Ecclesiastes has written meaninglessness or futility over everything, and now death is the climax of life’s absurdity.

***Note:***

Remember that the OT believer's understanding of death and life after death was significantly less informed than ours is. Death was seen as a gloomy, dark experience.

Once again, we should be grateful as New Testament believers of the knowledge and insight we possess compared to believers 1000’s of years before us.

There are many biblical truths in this passage, but I would emphasize the following.

**1. Death overtakes all, the good as well as the bad.** Chapter 9:3

One thing is abundantly clear: death is a predator that tracks us all down!

There are really fit people whose hearts give out and they die young, and there are chain

smokers who  live into their nineties.

 Ex. My dad and I met one at Cattleman’s restaurant in Fort Worth, Tx. Our waitress was 96 years

 old and checked in with us before she took a smoke break.

We cannot use our circumstances to determine if God

loves us or hates us, accepts us or rejects us.

We were made to live (Gen 1–2), but we all end up dying (Gen 3).

That is Solomon’s point here in Ecclesiastes. It does not matter how wise you are, how much

money you make, how much comfort you have, how successful you are, how religious you are,  or how

cleanly you live your life. Death is inevitable and the great equalizer!

The ***reason we die*** is because God designed the human condition that included a requirement of death be the penalty for humankind’s rebellion against Him. Therefore, we inherited the corruption of Adam and Eve’s choice to rebel against God (chapter Ecclesiastes 3). See Romans 5:12-19 as well.

**Discussion Questions**

When did you have to face the reality of death for the first time?

Fish for stories of those who were young. Their perspectives could be interesting.

Ask them to share how it impacted them?

* What did they think?
* Their theology of sorts
* No one is really helping me think through this
* What did they feel?
* Sad
* Fearful
* Confused
* Aloof

What are some ways people try to flee from and escape death? Why do you think we are so

prone to do that?

**2. You only get one shot of life on earth and once you die, you no longer have an opportunity to alter change of what you have done.** 9:4-6, Luke 15 – rich man and Lazarus story

Thus, once one is dead, he has no more interaction with life on earth. Solomon is not suggesting that there is no life at all after death, only that the dead have nothing more to do on earth.

**Discussion Question** – What regrets do you have? Are there still ways to redeem the time?

**3. Because death is imminent, one should enjoy the good things of earthly life God has provided.**

Solomon tells us that in the face of death’s harsh reality, we should enjoy life. He commands us to seize the day—carpe diem.

Contemplate death and take it to heart so you can enjoy life. That is his point. Go to a funeral rather

than a party so that you can contemplate your frailty and finitude as a means to live  wisely and enjoy

life.

**Discussion Question** - How can contemplating death cause you to enjoy life more?

Do not live every day as if it were your last, but do live as if you have a set number of days. Live as if youdo not get an endless supply. Living your life with this in mind is wise because it will help you not be careless with your spouse, miss out on time with your children, be indifferent at your job, or other such

distractions.

**CREATIVE IDEA** – play all or part of the song, *Live Like You Were Dying* by Tim McGraw

**Solomon gives a representative list of six things we should enjoy in life.**

**First**, he says to eat your bread with pleasure (v. 7). Enjoy your meals, eat good food, and see meals as a chance for fellowship. Food is a wonderful gift from God meant to bring us nourishment but also  pleasure, taste, variety, and an opportunity for relationships.

*Potential Question* – How much did you enjoy yourself this past week?!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Second**, he says to drink your wine with a glad heart for God has already approved of what you

do(v. 7)

For Solomon’s part here in Ecclesiastes, wine was simply the drink of choice in ancient Israel, and so he  says that part of enjoying life is enjoying a tasty beverage. That could apply to all kinds of drink options we have today.

*Teacher’s Choice* – if you want to discuss social drinking, that’s up to you. You know your ABF.

**Third**, he tells them to wear white all the time (v. 8), which means to wear festive clothing. The  instruction to wear white is culturally conditioned. White was the garment of choice because of the hot temperatures in the Middle East.

The idea is to wear celebratory clothes that fit your cultural context.

*Potential Question* – are you a Ross’ Dress for Less, Stein Mart or Hollister shopper?

**Fourth**, he says to put oil on your head (v. 8). Again, the Middle East is arid, and skin can get dry. Oil was a means of protecting the skin in the Middle Eastern heat. Protect your skin from the heat so you can enjoy life.

**Fifth**, he says to enjoy your wife (v. 9). Love your wife, be her best friend, and enjoy her physically,

emotionally, and spiritually.

**CREATIVE IDEA** – Play the song or read some of the words by Bruno Mars, *When I Was Your Man*.

**Sixth**, enjoy your work and activities (v. 10). Find a job, find a hobby, and find activities to do with your  family. Do life with all you have because death is near. Solomon paints the picture of fully enjoying life.

**So let’s be clear: it is not a sin to enjoy life.** Many in America were raised on a brand of Christianity that communicated life is a drag and

holiness is boring. Many were taught that holiness in Christianity means having no fun—holiness is found only in abstaining from fun.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Were you raised in a faith tradition that taught or implied that walking with God means not

doing anything that fun or viscerally stimulating?

Why do you think the church has often defaulted to that position?

How can you fully enjoy life in a godly way?

**4. We never have to fear death and can look forward to rewards and know that love awaits us. (unlike verse 9:1 states)**

What Ecclesiastes aches for, the New Testament presents to us.

The question that needs to be raised is, *How does Jesus redeem us from the curse of death?*

He did so by taking the curse of sin and death on Himself at Golgotha (Gal 3:13).

As Mark Driscoll said, “The only way to get rid of death is to get rid of sin”.

 Jesus took care of both sin and death at the cross and through His resurrection.

The good news is that Jesus came to redeem us so that we can begin to live according to God’s  good design. He did not just die and rise again to forgive our sins; He also died and rose to

conform His followers to His image (Rom 8:29), which means a new empowerment by the Spirit to live according to God’s design

*Hope of a Christian?* It is Back to Eden we go!

**Additional Teaching Methods Ideas**

Do the **experientia**l provided by Terri Snead.

In your introduction, share some ***true/false statements*** as a way of reviewing previous teachings since we they have had at least a 4 Sunday break from the study.

Break your class into small groups and have them discuss the following questions or statements.

* Are you afraid of dying?
* Share a time in your life when you lived like you were dying.
* Since there is no turning back, what are some regrets you have?
* Do you feel guilty taking vacation time, enjoying life? Expound.
* What are your parameters for “enjoying life”?

**SWEATER BASH NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2ND!**

**Schedule updates…**

* We will be completing the Ecclesiastes study on the 9th and 16th.
* NO ABF on Sunday the 23rd.
* Yes to ABF on Sunday, the 30th.