

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: September 3, 2017

Sermon Title: FINALLY! - Summing it all up

Sermon Series: Ecclesiastes

Text: Eccl. 12:9-14

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: September 3, 2017

Title: FINALLY! - Summing it all up

Text: Eccl. 12:9-14

Theme: God sings a singular song and we must harmonize with this song or all will be lost.

Introduction:

We have covered a lot of ground over the last several weeks as we worked through Ecclesiastes. Our desire was to hear God's Song in the Preacher's story. There is little doubt that you could relate to the story since his experiences are our experiences. But did you hear God's Song in his story? And can you hear God's Song in your story?

Regardless of what else might be going on in our lives, if we miss this we have missed everything. There is nothing beyond JESUS and there is nothing beside JESUS. JESUS plus nothing equals everything and everything minus JESUS equals nothing.

This is that text. You can look for answers in and through the shadow, but you will come up empty and dry, dead and miserable. Life is hard enough without God; it becomes incorrigible without Him.

THE BIG PICTURE:

"Two epilogues bring the book to a close, each beginning with "besides, in addition to." The first epilogue focuses on the professional activity of Qohelet and the nature of his teaching. The second epilogue characterizes the intellectual process as endless and exhausting, offers some advice on what is really important, and warns that a judgment day is certain."¹

"This passage is properly regarded as the Epilogue of the whole book; a kind of apology for the obscurity of many of its sayings. The passage serves therefore to make the book more intelligible and more acceptable."²

WHY THE BIBLICAL TEXT?

Because the Holy Spirit speaks through the text, we must be bound by the text. It forms for us our borders. The Psalms tell us it feeds our souls. We honor the text by studying and listening to this text.

⁷ "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward" (Ps. 19:7-11).

“Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13).

¹⁴“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:14-17).

The preacher has offered us an intimate glimpse of his life. He has baptized us into all of the grit of his existence. We know who he is and still he is loved. We know that he acknowledges his own brokenness and inability and rests solely in God. For us, our answers to life’s most perplexing experiences are known only in the person and work of JESUS CHRIST.

Our book concludes with a last word expressing the preachers care for his audience. Two things evidence this care. First, the care he took in the process itself. Secondly, we see this care by the words he spoke. Let us explore both these ideas in our text.

Outline:

I. His Care for the People as evidenced by His work (vv. 9-11)]

A. He taught the people wisdom (v. 9)

1. He pondered

“He weighed and studied.’ The verbs וְיָזַן וְיָחִקֵר (vÿ’izzen vekhiqquer, “he weighed and he explored”) form a hendiadys (a figurative expression in which two separate terms used in combination to convey a single idea): “he studiously weighed” or “carefully evaluated.” The verb וְיָזַן (conjunction + Piel perfect 3rd person masculine singular from II יָזַן (“azan) “to weigh; to balance”) is related to the noun מִזָּן (mo’zen) “balances; scales” used for weighing money or commercial items (e.g., Jer 32:10; Ezek 5:1). This is the only use of the verb in the OT. In this context, it means “to weigh” = “to test; to prove” (BDB 24 s.v. מִזָּן) or “to balance” (HALOT 27 II יָזַן). Cohen suggests, “**He made an examination of the large number of proverbial sayings which had been composed, testing their truth and worth, to select those which he considered deserving of circulation**” (A. Cohen, *The Five Megilloth* [SoBB], 189).”³

2. He searched out

3. He arranged

“The verb תָּקַן (taqan, “to make straight”) connotes “to put straight” or “to arrange in order” (HALOT 1784 s.v. תָּקַן; BDB 1075 s.v. תָּקַן). This may refer to Qoheleth’s activity in compiling a collection of wisdom sayings in an orderly manner, or writing the wisdom sayings in a straightforward, direct manner.”⁴

B. He sought to drive it home (vv. 10-11)

1. Delightful words (v. 10a)

“In the construct phrase דְּבַר־יִיְהוָה (divre-khefets, “words of delight”) the noun הִפְזָן (“delight”) functions as an attributive genitive (“delightful words”) or a genitive of estimation or worth (“words viewed as delightful by Qoheleth” or “words that he took delight in”). For another example of a genitive of estimation of worth, see זִבְחֵי יְהוָה (zivkhe ’elohim) “sacrifices of God” = “sacrifices viewed as acceptable to God” (Ps 51:19). In other words, Qoheleth wrote his proverbs so effectively that he was able to take moral and aesthetic delight in his words.”⁵

2. Truthful words (v. 10b)

“The consonantal form וְכָתוּב has been revocalized in three ways: (1) The Masoretes read וְכָתוּב (vÿkhatuv, conjunction + Qal passive participle ms from כָּתַב, katav, “to write”): “Qoheleth sought to find pleasant words, *what was written* uprightly, namely, words of truth.” This is supported by the LXX’s καὶ γεγραμμένον (kai gegrammenon, conjunction + masculine accusative singular perfect passive participle from γράφω, grafw, “to write). (2) The BHS editors suggest the vocalization וְכָתוּב (vÿkhatov, conjunction + Qal infinitive absolute). The infinitive וְכָתוּב (“and to write”) in the B-line would parallel the infinitive of purpose לְמַצּוֹ (limtso’, “to find”) in the A-line: “Qoheleth sought to find pleasant words, *and to write* accurately words of truth.” (3) Several medieval Hebrew mss preserve an alternate textual tradition of וְכָתַב (vÿkhatav, conjunction + Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular). This is reflected in the Greek versions (Aquila and Symmachus), Syriac Peshitta and Vulgate. The major English versions are divided among these three textual options: (1) וְכָתוּב (Qal passive participle): “*and that which was written* was upright, even words of truth” (KJV); “*and that which was written uprightly, even words of truth*” (ASV); “*and, written by the upright, words of truth*” (YLT); “*but what he wrote was the honest truth*” (NEB); “*and what he wrote was upright and true*” (NIV). (2) וְכָתוּב (Qal infinitive absolute): “*and to write* words of truth correctly” (NASB); “*and to write correctly the reliable words of truth*” (MLB); “*and to write down true sayings with precision*” (NAB). (3) וְכָתַב (Qal perfect 3rd person masculine singular): “*and uprightly he wrote* words of truth” (RSV); “*and he wrote* words of truth plainly” (NRSV); “*even as he put down plainly what was true*” (Moffatt); “*and he wrote* words most right, and full of truth” (Douay); and “*and he recorded genuinely truthful sayings*” (NJPS). The editors of the Jerusalem Hebrew Bible project favor וְכָתוּב “*and to write*” (option 2): see D. Barthélemy, ed., *Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project*, 3:596–97.”⁶

“The construct phrase אֱמֶת דְּבָרַי (divre ’emet, “words of truth”) is a genitive of content (“words containing truth”) or an attributive genitive (“truthful words”). Depending upon the vocalization of וְכָתוּב, the phrase functions in one of two ways: (1) as direct object of וְכָתוּב יוֹשֵׁר (vÿkhatov yosher) “*and he accurately wrote truthful words*”; or (2) in apposition to וְכָתוּב יוֹשֵׁר (vÿkhatov yosher) “*and what is written uprightly, namely, truthful words.*”⁷

3. Inspired words (v. 11)

A goad is a long, pointed stick used for prodding and guiding oxen while plowing. The words of God are like the yellow tags marking the ICE AGE TRAIL. The yellow tag tells you what the right way is and assure you that you are on the right path.

“It is difficult to affix any meaning to the last clause, except that the sages, of whom the verse speaks, have been given for the instruction of the people by Israel’s great Shepherd (Psalm 80:1).”⁸

“This is the opinion of the majority of commentators and translators. If it is correct, the meaning of the sentence is that the ultimate source of the teaching of wise men is God himself, who is called a shepherd elsewhere in the Old Testament.”⁹

“The noun is used often in the O. T. both in its literal sense, and of kings and rulers as the shepherds of their people (Jeremiah 2:8; Jeremiah 3:15; Jeremiah 49:19; Jeremiah 50:44; Ezekiel 34 passim), and of God as the great Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 23:1; Psalm 80:1, and by implication, Ezekiel 34:23). It was not, perhaps, without some reference to this thought, though scarcely to this passage, that our Lord claimed for Himself as the one true Guide and Teacher of mankind the title of the “Good Shepherd,” and condemned all that had come before Him, assuming that character, as thieves and robbers (John 10:8; John 10:11), and that St Peter speaks of Him as the “chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4) over all who exercise a pastoral office in the Church of Christ.”¹⁰

II. His Care for the People as evidenced by His words (vv. 13, 14)]

A. Cautioning words (vv. 12, 14)

1. Endless and excessive (v. 12)

“The exhortation may be understood in two ways: (1) to avoid any so-called wisdom sayings beyond those mentioned in vv. 10-11: “The words of the wise...are given from one shepherd. And of anything beyond these, my son, be warned!” (see RSV, NRSV, NAB, Douay, NIV). This is paraphrased well by Moffatt: “My son, avoid anything beyond the scriptures of wisdom” (Moffatt). (2) The exhortation refers to the concerns of v. 12b, namely, diligent study is wearisome, i.e., “Furthermore, my son, be warned: there is no end to the making of books, and much study is wearisome to the body” (see NEB, ASV, NASB, MLB).”¹¹

“Study. – The word occurs here only in the Old Testament; but is not a Talmudic word.”¹²

2. Infinite and inclusive (v. 14)

The judgment coming to all is death and death is inclusive and unavoidable.

“The epilogist insists that nothing will fall between the cracks. God will uncover the hidden villainies and the secret deeds of charity. This comforting word for good people and frightening word for sinners is, again, totally alien to Qohelet’s thinking.”¹³

“As with Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, and Lamentations, the Masoretes thought this last verse of the book, and perhaps especially the last word, evil, too harsh as the conclusion to the whole book, and ordered v. 13 to be repeated after v. 14 when the book was read in public.”¹⁴

I agree, but I would not dismiss the verse as inconsequential. You and I must feel the weight of future judgment, despair of any hope of rescue from the scathing judgment of God, and run into the loving arms of God’s sole provision for deliverance in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

B. Concluding words (v. 13)

“The summary is alien to anything Qohelet has said thus far. The combination of fear toward God and observance of the divine commands would fit better elsewhere.”¹⁵

“Finally, he offers his own idea of the sum of the matter when all is said and done (vv. 13, 14). Considering everything, he condenses it into one line, and that is the orthodox Jewish conviction that God must be feared and his commandments kept. That is the standard by which all human beings will be measured: Have they kept the law?”¹⁶

1. Fear God
2. Keep His Commandments

What does this look like; Ecclesiastes!

- THE BIG IDEA

The Bible sings a single SONG and the melody of that SONG is . . .

JESUS
FEAR
GOD AND
KEEP
HIS COMMANDMENTS
(12:13, 14)

- FEAR / KEEP

The statement is really one. To fear God is to keep His commandments. The vertical **causes** the horizontal **consequence**. When we fear God, we keep His commandments. This dynamic cannot be changed or avoided.

Think of our Lord's response when asked what is the greatest commandment?
Matt. 22:36-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37

³⁴ "But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. ³⁵ One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, ³⁶ 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' ³⁷ And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments **depend** the whole Law and the Prophets'" (Matt. 26:34-40).

²⁸ "One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'What commandment is the foremost of all?' ²⁹ Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; ³⁰ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' ³¹ The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' **There is no other commandment greater than these'** ³² The scribe said to Him, 'Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; ³³ AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.' ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions" (Mark 12:28-34).

²⁵ "And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶ And He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' ²⁷ And he answered, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' ²⁸ And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE'" (Luke 10:25-28).

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. He takes two passages and combines them into one response.

Jesus says in Matthew 22:40 that the entire Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments. The word depend is "to hang." It is used of Jesus hanging on the cross (Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal. 3:13) and of a snake hanging from the arm of the apostle Paul (Acts 28:4). In the absence of these two commandments, the entire Law has nothing to support it.

In Mark's Gospel, the Scribe knew Jesus answered correctly (Mark 12:32). Verses 28 and 32 use the same word "well, right." Mark says, "Jesus saw that the Scribe had answered intelligently, discreetly, with insight." For those who had ears to hear, they understood the spirit behind the letter.

In Luke's account, Jesus asks a Lawyer how he understands the Law and he gives Deuteronomy 6:5 as his answer. Jesus says, "You have answered correctly." (v. 28). The word "correctly," is our English word **orthos**. We use the word with orthotics, orthodoxy, orthopedic. It means

“plain, right, straight.” The Lawyer took all of the Law and said, “Here is what cuts straight across the entire landscape of the LAW, love God.

When the author of Ecclesiastes says, “Fear God and Keep His Commandments,” this is what those who had ears to hear would have heard. They would not have drilled down into the minutia. To burrow down into the minutia of the Law is to be buried under its weight.

If one loves God, he will then love his neighbor and in so doing the entire Law would be kept.

Is this right?

Think of John’s response in 1 John 3:19-24.

- ¹⁹“We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him ²⁰in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²²and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because **we keep His commandments [plural]** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. ²³**This is His commandment [singular]**, that **we believe** in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **love one another**, just as He commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us” (1 John 3:19-24).

Prior to JESUS the Song says, “Believe God. After JESUS the Song says, “Believe JESUS.” Do you? Will you?

“And with that the Christian is in agreement. When we learn from the Preacher how great our human need is, Christ then comes to bring redemption, and that calls for still another word: obedient gratitude.”¹⁷

Obedience is a practical matter. It is singular. Fear God and keep His commandments. Do this one thing and the trail will be clearly marked.

The song God sings is singular. Your experiences, your life are the harmony to God’s melody. Apart from His melody, your life comes up as shadow without substance.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Benefit from the words of the Shepherd (vv. 10, 11)
2. Beware of those who go beyond the words of the Shepherd (v. 12)

To those who have yet received the words of the One Shepherd. You must accept Jesus as your only means of rescue from sin and death. Apart from Him, there is nothing but darkness and death awaiting you.

To those who have received the words of the One Shepherd. Continue believing that Jesus is your only means of life and light. He is the only one who can make sense of life’s circumstances and can answer all of your questions.

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- ¹ James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 189.
² Barnes' Notes on the Bible on Eccl. 12:10.
³ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
⁴ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
⁵ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
⁶ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
⁸ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Eccl. 12:11.
⁹ R.N. Whybray, *Ecclesiastes*, 172.
¹⁰ Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges on Eccl. 12:11.
¹¹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ecclesiastes+12:7>
¹² Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers on Eccl. 12:12.
¹³ James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 192.
¹⁴ R.N. Whybray, *Ecclesiastes*, 174.
¹⁵ James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 192.
¹⁶ J.A. Loader, *Ecclesiastes*, 135.
¹⁷ J.A. Loader, *Ecclesiastes*, 136.