

Weekly Worship Guide 2024 – Week 2

Prayer Focus: Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck (Missionaries to Northern Italy)

Memory Verse: If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5

Shepherding Notes	Family Worship	Bible in a Year
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Sunday		
Service Review	Service Review	Service Review
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Monday		
Ecclesiastes 6	Genesis 6	Jeremiah 12 Jeremiah 13
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Tuesday		
Ecclesiastes 7	Genesis 7	Jeremiah 14 Jeremiah 15
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Wednesday		
Ecclesiastes 8	Genesis 8	Jeremiah 16 Jeremiah 17
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Thursday		
Ecclesiastes 9	Genesis 9	Genesis 10 Jeremiah 18
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Friday		
Ecclesiastes 10	Genesis 11	Jeremiah 19 Jeremiah 20
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Saturday		
Job 2	Proverbs 2	Jeremiah 21 Jeremiah 22

January 7, 2024 Sunday Service Review

- Which song that we sang during the service did you find to be the most important for your own edification?
- Was there anything that you learned for the first time? If so, what was it? Did it surprise you?
- The Bible is like a mirror that reveals who we really are. What did the text teach you about yourself? What does that say about your need for grace?
- How did the text connect to the gospel?
- Which application point or challenge was most personally relevant to you, and how do plan to implement change/growth in that area in your life?

January 8 Shepherding Notes - Ecclesiastes 6

A couple of years ago I experienced something incredibly disturbing. I, like many people at the time, contracted Covid-19. It hit my wife and I really hard at the same time. During that time, many of our church members displayed the love of Christ toward us by bringing us meals. I can't remember much from those days, but I do remember that someone brought us a meal from 5 Guys. To put it mildly, I love 5 Guy's burgers. Imagine my shock and horror when I realized that Covid had disrupted my taste buds to such an extent that the burger in my hands tasted absolutely disgusting. It wasn't that I couldn't taste it at all. Rather, the taste buds that did work were apparently all the wrong ones and it made what should have been a delicious meal into something completely repulsive.

Ecclesiastes 6 opens with the 'Preacher' highlighting the terrible reality that people who reach their goals don't actually receive satisfaction. Remember, the book of Ecclesiastes is describing life 'under the sun.' Living for the here and now is never satisfying. Just a couple of years ago, the catchphrase 'YOLO' became a cultural phenomenon. (YOLO stands for You Only Live Once.) The idea was simple: get as much as you can because this is the only chance you are going to get for fun and pleasure. But, anyone who has attained the mountain top of their pursuits will tell you, their satisfaction is at best temporary and brief. One of the best examples I have seen is in the life of Michael Jordan. He is, without dispute, the greatest basketball player of all time. He is a billionaire. He is world famous for everything from the silhouette of his foul-line dunk to his sneaker line. Yet, after only being out of the league for three years, Jordan asked the following questions to a reporter named Wright Thompson. "How can I enjoy the next 20 years without so much of this consuming me?" When contemplating what was next for his life he asked, "How can I find peace away from the game of basketball?"

Here is the key to understanding Ecclesiastes 6. If you hunger and thirst for earthly things of any kind, you will never be satisfied. That is why a disproportionately high number of lottery winners attempt suicide. Whatever you are chasing will not make you happy. What looks delicious will turn to sand in your mouth. But, Jesus teaches us a better way. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." (Matthew 5:6)

What are you looking for to satisfy you? Think about your answer. Does your life actually align with your assessment? Is it possible that you have inadvertently built an idol in your heart and then become blind to the fact that it is there? As a pastor, I have experienced this kind of dissatisfaction when I have sinfully allowed ministry itself to become an idol in my life. When I have looked to the very good gift of ministry to satisfy me, it results in sadness and misery. Idols are often built out of God's good gifts. The 'Preacher' of Ecclesiastes is waving a warning flag that there is no satisfaction to be found there. If you want to be satisfied, then go to the source of satisfaction, Jesus Christ Himself.

January 8 - Family Worship

Read Genesis 6

Discussion Questions:

- What was the earth like before the flood? (see vs. 5)
- What is the first thing that we learn about Noah in verse 8? (God had favor on Noah) What does that mean? (God loved and showed kindness or grace to Noah.)
- If God told you to do something major, like building an ark, would you do it? If you think you would, then why do you so often disobey God's simpler commands, like "Obey your parents?" What does our disobedience tell us about our own hearts?
- God said that He would "establish His covenant" with Noah. What is a covenant? (A sacred, unbreakable promise.) Is there a covenant that we can have with God that will protect us? (The New Covenant is a promise that God will save all who believe in Jesus.)

Song: [Sovereign Over Us](#)

Prayer Focus: The Health and Safety of Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck (Missionaries to Italy)

Family Activity: 'Did you know?'

Each member of the family asks, "Did you know..." And then they give, what they perceive to be the most obscure or unknown fact about the Bible. They must be true facts. You can check them against the Scripture to ensure accuracy.

Bible in a Year

- Read Jeremiah 12
- Read Jeremiah 13

January 9 Shepherding Notes - Ecclesiastes 7

There is a quote that has been attributed to Mark Twain which says, "When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years." The last two verses of chapter 6 and the first fourteen verses of chapter 7 are all about wisdom and folly. The comical quote above gives a sense of the foolishness of youth. Chapter 7 begins with 13 proverbs that young people do not generally understand, but if they live long enough, they will probably learn. Let's consider just a few examples.

Verse 3 speaks about how sorrow is better than laughter because, in some way that fools do not understand, a sad face tends to make the heart glad. You have probably experienced this phenomenon on many occasions. The happiest moments of your life probably bring about tears. I can think of a number times that my children have asked my wife if she was sad because she was crying immense tears of joy. Laughter is typically cheap and leaves minimal impact on your life. The most impactful moments are moments of sorrow, or moments that make you shed a tear or two.

Verse five informs us that it is much better to have someone rebuke you for your foolishness than to "hear the song of fools." Our society has more choice than anyone in history regarding what we listen to, and I can say with strong confidence that most people choose the music of fools over wise rebuke.

All of the proverbs in this list are forms of practical wisdom that is only learned by listening to those who know, or by having it beaten into you through a life of hard knocks. But, chief among them is the last, which says, "Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?" If you have been paying close attention so far in Ecclesiastes, this should sound familiar to you. Chapter 1:15 says, "What is crooked cannot be made straight..." and that man "is not able to dispute with one stronger than he." (Ecc. 6:10) Fools believe that they actually have the ability and authority to rule their own lives, and in some sense, rule the world around them. That is not only false, it is foolish.

Verse 14 says that man is not able to find out what will be after him. Mark Twain probably isn't the author of the words that started these notes both because his father died when he was 11, and because he died well before the quote was ever published by anyone. But it does sound like something he would say, which is probably why people have posthumously given him credit for it. Ironically, he never knew these famous words that came after him even though they usually bear his name.

There are two final thoughts that we should take away from this chapter. Verse 19 undermines the foolish thinking listed above it that you might as well live with a little bit of wisdom but balance it out with a little bit of foolishness in your life. Wisdom alone truly gives you strength for life. Folly destroys.

Lastly, verse 20 makes it clear that all men are sinners. This verse stands as a reminder of the universality of depravity. And, this verse stood true until one day a baby was born who grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. That man lived a life surrounded by sinners, but never sinned. This chapter reminds us not only of our desperate need of wisdom from the Lord, but also of our desperate need of forgiveness from Him. And, by His grace, He gives it freely to sinners like you and me.

January 9 - Family Worship

Read Genesis 7

Discussion Questions:

- How many of each type of animal were to be brought onto the ark? (tricky question – 14 [two pairs] of every ‘clean’ animal. Two [or one pair] of all the rest of the animals.)
- The flood devastated the earth and killed almost 100% of the people. What attribute of God is displayed in by the destruction and death caused by the flood? (God’s wrath)
- What is God’s wrath? (His Holy anger towards sin.)
- Who is under the wrath of God? (Anyone whose sins have not been forgiven.)
- How can we avoid God’s wrath? (Being safe in Jesus Christ. Just like Noah went into the ark and was safe from the flood, we can go to Jesus and be safe from the judgment of God for our sins.)

Song: [How Vast the Love](#)

Prayer Focus: The Financial Security of Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck (Missionaries to Italy)

Family Activity: ‘Did you know?’

Each member of the family asks, “Did you know...” And then they give, what they perceive to be the most obscure or unknown fact about the Bible. They must be true facts. You can check them against the Scripture to ensure accuracy.

Bible in a Year

- Read Jeremiah 14
- Read Jeremiah 15

January 10 Shepherding Notes - Ecclesiastes 8

Wisdom has Limitations

Chapter 8 opens with a parable about a king and his servants. The servants are called to follow whatever orders the king gives because He has been given authority from the Lord to lead the people. Verse four goes so far as to say that the people shouldn't even question the king's decisions. But, the parable quickly turns to the reality that there is no such thing as a king on earth who is all knowing and who can make wise decisions all the time. People just don't have enough information to know what to do. We can't know the future (vs. 7). And we can't even predict our own deaths (vs. 8). Even the wisest of earthly kings is incredibly flawed. This is very pointed because, according to the Lord, Solomon was the most earthly wise of all kings. Even so, the conclusion of this parable is that, due to the limits of human wisdom, "man had power over man to his hurt." (vs. 9)

It is a good thing that we do have a good King who does know all things and who can rule with perfect, heavenly wisdom. It is only with a perfect King, like Jesus, that we can actually apply the concept of never having to question the commands of a king. When dealing with earthly rulers, we must always filter their commands through the question of whether or not they have aligned their rules with God's commands. The Lord alone holds authority that is to be unquestioned, because He rules out of perfect wisdom at all times.

Wickedness has Repercussions

There is a common question of injustice that arises in various places in the Old Testament. Not injustice on man's part, but on God's part. We see this, for example, in Psalm 73 and the book of Habakkuk. There is a question that troubles and perplexes believers regarding the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering or death of the righteous. Asaph's complaint can be summarized by what he says in these two verses, "Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence." (Psalm 73:12-13)

Ecclesiastes 8 makes it clear that the wicked will not escape judgment. Although they might live a very long time, and they might experience many pleasures in life, they are eventually going to stand trial before the Lord. Verse 11 simply explains that the heavenly warrant for their arrest is "not executed quickly." And, as much as this perplexes Christians on many occasions, it is actually a very good thing. God is patient and longsuffering with sinners. Imagine, what if the Lord struck you dead the first time you sinned? If that were the case, there would be no future generations because nobody would live long enough to reproduce.

Ecclesiastes is once again instructing us that the pursuit of wickedness might seem like a good idea to those who live with 'under the sun' thinking. But, every one of those wicked people will one day realize that every last sin will be punished with the wrath of God. The good news for those of us who are in Christ is that God's wrath is not poured out on us, because it was all spent on our Savior. Ecclesiastes 8:13 says that "it will not be well with the wicked." But, because Christ bore the wrath for us, we can truly say that "whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul."

January 10 - Family Worship

Read Genesis 8

Discussion Questions:

- How did God clear away the water? (With wind – vs. 1)
- What was Noah hoping to discover by sending birds out of the window of the ark? (Whether or not there was any dry land near them.)
- Does God ever forget anything? (No) Then what does it mean that “God remembered Noah” in verse 1? (God set His special focus and attention on the covenant promise that He made to protect Noah.)
- When Noah and his family sacrificed to the Lord, what did God promise? (That He would never “curse the ground,” or “strike down every living creature” again.)
- What reason does God give for never flooding the earth again? (Because “the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.”)
- What does that mean? (It means that God knew the world would immediately fill up with wicked sinners, but He is going to show immense restraint and patience instead of wiping them all out.)

Song: [Wonderful, Merciful Savior](#)

Prayer Focus: The ministry effectiveness of Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck (Missionaries to Italy)

Family Activity: ‘Quiz Mom and/or Dad’ (requires that your kids can read)

Have your kids take their Bibles and select a verse from one of the following five books of the Bible: Genesis, 1 Samuel, Psalms, John, or Ephesians. (No peeking mom and dad!) Have each of your children read three consecutive verses from anywhere in the book they selected. Parent(s) You must make an educated guess as to what book, chapter, and verse they read. If you got the book right, you get 1 point. If you get the book and chapter right, you get 3 points. If you get the book, chapter, and the verse you selected was in the range of verses that your child read, you get five points. If you miss all of them, your child(ren) gets 4 points. First to 12 points wins.

Bible in a Year

- Read Jeremiah 16
- Read Jeremiah 17

January 11 Shepherding Notes - Ecclesiastes 9

One of the chief principles that the book of Ecclesiastes is trying to get through to you is that you are not God. There is a mountain of evidence that you are not God, but your heart still likes to think that you are an independent, autonomous person that is unaccountable to anyone but yourself and that is only required to live in accordance with your own standards. The chief evidence that you are not God is the fact that you will die one day.

I know some people who take really good care of their bodies. They exercise regularly. They eat the kind of foods that I can only imagine feeding a pet rabbit. They avoid sweets like the plague. They run often. (I need to learn from them and be more disciplined like they are.) But, the fact of the matter is, no matter how much they take care of their bodies, they will still die. On the extreme opposite side of the spectrum, I remember distinctly having a conversation with someone about their addictions to alcohol and cigarettes a few years ago, and pleading with him to stop. His response was, "I am going to die someday anyway, so what is the point of changing this now?" And technically, he was right.

'Under the sun' thinking tells you that this life is all there is, so you should "eat, drink, and be merry." This examination of worldly philosophy is pressed even further in verses 11-12 which reveal that regardless of where you fall on the scale of wisdom, wealth, intelligence, or strength, you are just as prone to experience seemingly random troubles, like fish that accidentally swim into a net. If this life is all that there is, then it seems right to simply make whatever choices we want. But, this life is not all that there is. And everything that you do right now counts for eternity. Believing that this life is all that there is results in the nihilistic thinking that nothing matters. But everything you do matters. Let me close out today's notes with three reasons why.

First, the closing words of this chapter (vs. 13-18) are placed here to undercut all of the 'under the sun' thinking that was presented so far in this chapter. Even from a temporary, earthly perspective, wisdom protects, sin destroys. Selfish and foolish actions will ruin your life, and also damage the life of those around you. The blast radius is typically far larger than you would expect. But, just like the poor wise man who saved the city in the short parable at the end of this chapter, your wise decisions can radically impact the people around you for good, even if they don't recognize it. What you do matters here and now because it impacts those around you.

Secondly, it is interesting that the 'Preacher' of Ecclesiastes chooses to use the word 'sinner' in verse 18. This is the first time in this chapter that he puts our decisions into a spiritual dimension. Prior to this point, everything is all about experiences and emotions. Now he classifies all of these selfish, foolish decisions as sinful. That is really important because it indicates that the people who do them are sinning against God. One of the reasons why everything we do matters is because we are going to be judged by every action. For example, Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 that we are going to have to give an account for every word we have spoken. The fact is, all of us are guilty to some extent of thinking of ourselves as God and pretending as though everything that exists is there to serve us. In doing so, we sin and act foolishly. Therefore, we are all guilty.

The third reason that everything you do matters is simply this: If you are a Christian, you have been forgiven of all of your sin. The consequences that you have earned will never be doled out on you because they were given to Jesus Christ. Now your life is to be given in service of worship to Him. Every action matters. Every word matters. Every thought matters. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)

January 11 - Family Worship

Read Genesis 9

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." (Have lots of babies.)
- Who did God give this command to earlier in the Bible? (Adam and Eve.)
- In this chapter, what did God promise to never do again? (Never flood the whole earth – vs. 11.)
- What is the sign that God gave that shows that He will never destroy the earth again with a flood? (The Rainbow)
- The word 'bow' means warrior bow or battle bow. Which way is it pointing? (Away from earth.)
- What does that signify? (That God has turned His judgment away from the people who deserve it.) The gospel is all about the fact that Jesus came to turn God's wrath away from people who deserve it, like you and me.

Song: [Are You Washed in the Blood?](#) No link available

Prayer Focus: The Schreck family (Jesse, Jerryvee, Cici, Beatrice, and new baby on the way. (Missionaries to Italy)

Family Activity: Vocab Quiz

Starting from the youngest to the oldest, see who can accurately define the following words:

- **Longsuffering:** Being slow to anger and self-restrained. God displays longsuffering towards us by not destroying us when we sin.
 - **Grace:** Unmerited favor. Receiving Kindness and forgiveness when you don't deserve it.
 - **Covenant:** An agreement or contract between two parties. A promise. God always keeps His covenant promises.
 - **Bonus challenge: Antediluvian:** 'Ante' means before and 'diluvian' means it pertains to the great flood. Antediluvian is a way to describe the time or people who lived before the flood. For example: "The antediluvian people had hearts that only desired evil continuously."
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Bible in a Year

- Read Genesis 10
- Read Jeremiah 18

January 12 Shepherding Notes - Ecclesiastes 10

If you are familiar with your Bible, this chapter may feel a little bit out of place to you. This looks and feels much more like it fits into the book of Proverbs, doesn't it? Well, it certainly is a list of proverbs. But, these proverbs in particular are designed to summarize wise thinking directly related to the 'under the sun' thinking that has been presented in the previous 9 chapters. It would be good for you to meditate upon these proverbs and soak them in. For the notes today, we will just dive into a few of them with a little bit of explanation.

One foolish decision can completely ruin your life. You could get 99.99% of your choices right, but then make one wrong turn and your life is forever changed for the worse. Consider the Hollywood actor who commits a scandal, or the mayor who gets a DUI, or the pastor who has an affair. Verse one says, "Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor." You are one outrageous sin away from totally destroying your reputation, just like that little fly could destroy an entire expensive bottle of perfume.

Not every ruler has their position because they are worthy of it. The point of the extended proverb in verses 5-7 is that there are some people sitting on thrones that deserve to live in poverty. And there are some people in the lowest class of society that should, by any reasonable standard, be running the nation. Verses 16-17 revisit the idea of a ruler by saying, "Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child." In those days, it was not uncommon for a king to come to power when they were very young. However, in holding with the imagery and metaphor of this chapter, I think it is probably also speaking about having a ruler that acts like a child. That is a dangerous thing for the nation.

One of the underlying concepts that has been simmering just under the surface of this book for several chapters is the idea of laziness. Much has been said about doing whatever you want to do. So often, what people want to do is... nothing. Many people simply want to be idle. Verse 18 is continuing an explanation of rulers that act like children. "Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks." There is something beautiful (although sometimes frustrating) about the blatant honesty of little children. Sometimes I will ask my kids, "Why didn't you do what you were supposed to do?" And their response will be some form of, "Because I didn't want to." Childish leaders don't carry out their calling because they don't feel like doing it. Stan Lee may have been the first to say, "With great power comes great responsibility." But that concept has been present right here in the Scripture for millennia. True leaders are called to serve heartily with commitment.

The last proverb from this chapter that we will examine today is the easiest one to misunderstand. In verse 19 it says, "Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything." This statement is a continuation of the previous verses that speaks of childish leaders. It is not stating that these things are true; rather it is saying that childish kings live like this is true. They are all about mirth and cheap happiness from feasting (vs. 16) and they think that money will be the answer to any of their sadness or lack. Brothers and sisters, as much as we can learn the practical lessons of applying these leadership principles to our own lives, much more this chapter

should cause us to see the contrast between wicked, earthly rulers and the Leader that we follow. We have a better example. We have a King who gave up His heavenly riches to come and live with us. He gave up comfort to save us. He is the quintessential opposite of the wicked leaders found here. He is worthy of your worship today.

January 12 - Family Worship

Read Genesis 11

Discussion Questions:

- What did the people of Babel do wrong? (They wanted to make a name for themselves, which is another way of saying that they wanted to show God that they didn't need Him.)
- How would you describe the heart attitude of the people of Babel? (Proud, arrogant, determined to disobey.)
- Was God impressed by the tower that they built? (No.) How can we know? (He 'came down' to look at it. The language is revealing that all the combined forces of man cannot match the power of God.)
- How did God divide the people? (He divided their languages.)
- When do we see a reversal of this event? When does God give a gift to overcome the language barrier created in Genesis 11? (Acts 2, when the church was born the Lord gave the apostles the ability to speak in other languages. This was to show that, although the kingdoms of this world are divided, the people of God are one united kingdom under God.)

Song: [May the Peace](#)

Prayer Focus: That Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck will have joy in their missionary efforts in Italy.

Family Activity: Memory Verse Challenge

Starting from the youngest to the oldest, see who can accurately quote our weekly memory verse:
James 1:5

Bible in a Year

- Read Jeremiah 19
- Read Jeremiah 20

Shepherding Notes Track

- Read Job 2

Family Worship

Read Proverbs 2

- According to verse 6, where does wisdom come from?
- Which verse in this chapter can you apply today?

Prayer Focuses:

Pray for Christlikeness in Jesse and Jerryvee Schreck.

Tomorrow's Church Service – (Sample – Lord, please allow the church to worship well tomorrow. Let our flock rest well tonight so that we will have the energy to fellowship and hear the Word of God well.)

Family Activity: Quiz over this week's reading: (Points are for fun. Use them if they are helpful, discard them if not. (answers on the reverse side of this page.)

20 Points – Fill in the blank: "the Lord regretted that He made _____..."

20 Points – What are the names of the three sons of Noah?

40 Points – How old was Noah when the flood came?

30 Points – What kind of wood was Noah told to use to make the ark?

10 Points – How many of each 'clean' animal was to be brought onto the ark?

20 Points – What are the two kinds of birds that Noah sent out of the ark?

30 Points – What did God command Noah to do after getting off of the ark?

10 Points – What was the sign of the covenant that God made with Noah?

20 Points – How did God disperse the people across the face of the earth?

50 Points – Why was Babel called Babel?

Bible in a Year

- Read Jeremiah 21
- Read Jeremiah 22

Answers Key:

20 Points – Fill in the blank: “the Lord regretted that He made _____.”
man.

20 Points – What are the names of the three sons of Noah?
Ham, Shem, and Japheth

40 Points – How old was Noah when the flood came?
600 years old

30 Points – What kind of wood was Noah told to use to make the ark?
Gopher wood

10 Points – How many of each ‘clean’ animal was to be brought onto the ark?
14 (7 pairs)

20 Points – What are the two kinds of birds that Noah sent out of the ark?
Dove and Raven

30 Points – What did God command Noah to do after getting off of the ark?
“Be fruitful and multiply”

10 Points – What was the sign of the covenant that God made with Noah?
The rainbow

20 Points – How did God disperse the people across the face of the earth?
By confusing their language

50 Points – Why was Babel called Babel?
“...because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth.” (Gen. 11:9) Babel means confusion or to confound
