

Ecclesiastes 8:10-17
November 20, 2022

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

1. Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
2. Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
3. Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
4. Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Icebreaker: What's your favorite Thanksgiving food?

What's the Thanksgiving food that you just can't get on board with?

- None: I've never struggled to befriend any food.
- Cranberry sauce: it's just so wiggly
- Deviled eggs: Not a fan of the name
- Turkey: I prefer other birds
- Pumpkin pie: Pumpkins are for carving, not baking.
- Other: _____

Ecclesiastes is a very hopeful book about living life under the sun. David Gibson summarizes the book: "Life in God's world is gift and not gain." What do you think he means by this?

Read Ecclesiastes 8:10-17

Be Hopeful Because All Will Be Well

"Then I saw the wicked buried..." (v10)

Discussion: Why does Solomon draw our attention to a graveyard filled with wicked people? What's his point here?

Discussion: In v10, he says that "this also is vanity." What is meant by that word "vanity?"

- It's bad
- It's something we need to avoid
- It's like the bananas I bought last week. Here today and gone tomorrow.
- It's fleeting
- Other: _____

Question: The Preacher talks about how the sinful man does evil "a hundred times and prolongs his life." Why do you think he draws attention to the number of times that the wicked person does evil?

“yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him”
(8:12)

Discussion: Imagine a co-worker or neighbor asks you, “why should I fear God?” What might be some ways that you respond to her?

Question: What did Bryce mean by saying that “because we know that all will be well, we can stop running a cost-benefit analysis every time we have the choice to be faithful”?

- I never know what Bryce is talking about
- We fear God and trust Him, therefore we obey regardless of the cost or benefit
- We are free to obey knowing that we belong to Jesus and the future belongs to Him.
- We can develop a habit of trust and faithfulness (unlike the sinner in v12 who is always choosing the opposite).

Discussion: Think about Queen Esther from our previous sermon series. How did she demonstrate this kind of wisdom in her life?

Be Hopeful Because All is Not As It Seems

“There is a vanity that takes place on earth...”
(8:14)

Question: Solomon tells us about another vanity. What is it this time?

Question: How does the fact that this too is vanity make you want to respond

- **Resignation** — Things are always going to be broken under the sun, so we might as well stop trying to fix it
- **Denial** — Things aren't thaaaat bad...
- **Hopeful** — It's not always gonna be this way.
- **Confident** — Though the wicked often prevail, even their days are numbered

Question: What does the Preacher commend in v15? Why? Does that seem a little misplaced?

Discussion: Take 45 seconds as a group to quietly think about your life: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Now think about what the Preacher just told us to do. He said to be joyful and to do what? Why does he tell us to do this

“What if the pleasure of food is a daily joy that we ungratefully overlook? What if our work was never intended to make us successful but simply to make us faithful and generous? What if it is death that show us that this is how we are meant to live.” (David Gibson, *Living Life Backwards*)

Question: The Bible teaches that there are two options for us: choose joy or choose control. Why are these two set against one another?

Follow-up: Read v17 again. How is acknowledging our limits actually freeing for those who fear the Lord?

Applying this on Monday Morning

One thing I'll do differently because of this sermon:
