

Series: “Chasing the Wind”, Lesson #5

THE MISFORTUNE of FORTUNE

We will begin by examining a four point homiletical outline of our lesson text.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Eccl. 2:18-20 | Hated fruit of labor | leave your fruit of labors to others | vanity (Eccl. 2:19). |
| • Eccl. 2:21 | Heirs of your labors | leaving your legacy to others | vanity (Eccl. 2:21). |
| • Eccl. 2:22-23 | Hard labor | leaving good sense | vanity (Eccl. 2:23). |
| • Eccl. 2:24-26 | Hand of God in labor | leave fruit of labor to godly | vanity (Eccl. 2:26). |

The Hebrew word for labor is (amel/ adjective). It is mentioned either directly or indirectly in very verse.

Our lesson title, **Misfortune of Fortune**, comes from Eccl.2: 21: “When there is a man who has labored with wisdom, knowledge and skill, then he gives his legacy, to one who has not labored with them. This too is vanity and a great evil.”

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the subject of The Misfortune of Fortune.

1. Solomon bemoaned leaving the fruit of his labors to future generations.

“Thus I hated (sane / kal pf) all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave (nuach / hiphil impf) it to the man who will come after me.” (Eccl.2: 18)

Solomon’s dilemma was “how do you know whether they will be wise or foolish with it?”

They will have control over all the fruit of his labor by which he had acted wisely (Eccl.2: 19).

Does his heirs have the same appreciation for God’s prosperity as he does? After much consideration, he concluded that it was vanity (Eccl.2: 19).

This conclusion resulted in Solomon becoming depressed: “Therefore I completely (sabab / kal pf) despaired (yaash / piel inf) of all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored (amal / kal pf) under the sun.” (Eccl.2: 20)

2. Solomon’s answer to depression regarding about the misfortune of fortune is stated in Eccl.2: 24.

“There is nothing better for a man to eat and drink and tell (raah / hiphil impf) himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen (raah / kal pf), that it is from the hand of God.”

Solomon worries should be directed to God’s word regarding fortunes left to heirs – “An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.” (Prov.20:21).

- “A good man leaves an inheritance for his children’s children, but a sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous.” (Prov.13:22)
- “Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver.” (Job 27:16-17)
- “Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.” (Prov.19:14)

3. Solomon was keenly aware of the dangers of leaving a fortune and legacy to those who have not labored with him in achieving them (Eccl.2: 21).

Solomon understood the importance of the processing of wisdom and knowledge and skill in achieving success in one's career.

Solomon understood that without God and divine wisdom it was not only vanity but also a great evil (2:21).

“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.” (Prov.23:4-5)

4. Solomon gave his interpretation of living under the Adamic curse of work (Gen.3: 17-19) [toil, thorns, tiresome, and taken].

It is the **taken part** and leaving behind to others one's legacy and heritage that bothers Solomon.

He gives his cliff-note version of it in Eccl.2:22-23. “What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity.”

Unfortunately, Solomon called it vanity or meaningless if done without God. “How much better to get wisdom than silver!” (Prov.16:16)

5. Solomon addressed the Misfortune of Fortune as Chasing after the Wind but this time he addressed it differently (Eccl.2: 24-26).

In Eccl.2: 18-23, Solomon established the principle of the Misfortune of Fortune and referred to it as vanity three times (vs.19, 21 & 23).

However, in Eccl.2: 24-26, Solomon established the principle of the **Good Fortune of God fortune**.

“There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. **For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?** For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that He may give to one who is good in God's sight.”

Solomon concluded that the Misfortune of Fortune is attempting to deal with it without God.

“This too is VANITY and CHASING AFTER THE WIND.”