

SOLOMON'S OPTIMISM

The Book of Ecclesiastes is so pessimistic that when you hear something optimistic from Solomon you pay special attention.

In today's lesson, Solomon mentioned something that he has observed in life under the sun that he describes as "good, fitting, and rewarding."

(Eccl.5:18) "Here is what I have seen (raah / kal pf) to be good (tob) and fitting (yapheh); to eat , and to drink, and to enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils (amal / kal impf) under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given (Nathan / kal pf) him; **for this is his reward (cheleq).**"

SOLOMON IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT SOMETHING IN LIFE UNDER THE SUN!

This lesson will study six aspects of Solomon's Optimism about the rewards of one's work in life.

1. We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following three points on Solomon's Optimism.

- Godly life (Eccl.5:18) Life which God has given
- Godly gift (Eccl.5:19) Riches and wealth which God has given
- Godly heart (Eccl.5:20) Gladness of heart which God has given

Solomon is optimistic about the rewards in life that he can enjoy from his labors during the few years that God has given him.

2. The Hebrew word for reward is (cheleq). [It is normally translated profit, award, or reward].

- In Eccl.2:10, 5:18-19 and 9:9, it is translated **reward** (NAS)
- In Eccl.3:22, it is translated **lot** (NAS)
- In Eccl.2:21, it is translated **legacy** (NAS).

Solomon saw the benefit of having more than just enough or more than barely getting by in life as a reward and a gift blessing from God (Eccl.5:18-19).

He saw that when the believer reflects upon having more than barely enough and acknowledges that it has come from the **grace of God** – it caused his heart to be filled with gladness (shimechah) (Eccl.5:20).

3. The labor part of work is grievous because of the curse of Adam's Original Sin (AOS) (Gen.3:17-19).

We will examine Gen.3:17-19 by the following three homiletical points.

- Curse (Gen.3:17) Work Toil (all the days of life)
- Conflict (Gen.3:18-19a) Weeds Thorns and thistles
- Coffin (Gen.3:19b) Woe Tomb (naked) Job 1:21; Eccl.5:15; 1 Tim.6:7-8

Jesus used the parable of Weeds (tares) to explain the angelic conflict between Son of Man and the Evil one (Matt.13:36-43) as well as the parable of the Sower (Matt.13:18-23) [thorny ground].

4. Work (employment) is one of five Divine Institutions designed by God to direct divine blessings to the human race.

- DI #1 Freedom (Gen.1:26-27)
- DI #2 Employment (Gen.2:15-17)
- DI #3 Marriage (Gen.2:18-25)
- DI #4 Family (Gen.3:15-16; 4:1)
- DI #5 Nation (Gen.10-11)

Each of these divine institutions operates with divine laws of establishment. They operate for both the believer and unbeliever alike.

Jesus used some of the divine laws of establishment of employment in the parable of Laborers in Matt.20:1-16: hour and wage contracts between owner and worker, agreement on production requirement, and payment agreement.

(Matt.20:15) “Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?”

The work week and hours were set at 12 hours a day and six days a week (Matt.20:9) [72 hours per week].

(Luke 13:14-15) “There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day. But the Lord answered him and said, ‘You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead him away to water him?’”

(John 11:9) “Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.’”

- Warning to the lazy worker is given in Prov.24:30-31 – “For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.” (2 Thess.3:10; 7-11)

5. Enjoying the fruits of the reward of one’s labor is one of the divine blessings of employment.

(Eccl.5:19) “Furthermore, as for every man who **God has given (Nathan / kal pf)** riches and wealth, **God has also empowered (shalat / hipil pf)** him to eat (akal / kal infin) from them and to receive (nasa / kal infin) his reward and to rejoice (samach / kal infin) in his labor; **this is the gift of God.**”

(Eccl.5:20) “For he will not often (rabah / hipil infin) consider (zakar / kal imp/ remember) the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied (anah / hipil ptc) with the gladness of his heart (grace orientation).”

Solomon’s optimism regarding the rewards of his work is mentioned seven times in this book (Eccl.2:24-26; 3:12-13, 22; 5:18-19; 6:1-2; 8:15; 9:7).

6. It is possible to receive double the rewards from your vocational work by being spiritual at work for the Lord.

My grandfather, Guy Homan, used to tell me that a person was rich when his money worked for him while he slept. **I believe this about treasures in heaven** – “But lay up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt.6:20-21; Luke 12:33-34)

You can lay up treasures in heaven by spiritual words or deeds in your vocation even without having any money to give (Matt.19:21; Heb.11:26) – “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will **receive the reward** of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.” (Col.3:23-24)