

"Whole Duty"

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- You wouldn't think you could sum everything in the Christian life up in just a few words
- But "The Preacher" in Ecclesiastes, Solomon, does this very thing in the passage we address today
- He describes for us "the whole duty of man"
- This should be of interest to anyone who has a desire to follow God
- We'll take a closer look now on our "Whole Duty" edition

- We find Solomon in his old age in this book
- Often declaring everything "under the sun" vain and empty
- By "under the sun" he means things not done for God, or with God in mind
- Worldly things, selfish things

- If things done for ourselves are empty, what then can be done?
- What is it that is meaningful?
- These two verses tell us...

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

- This is the conclusion of the whole matter
- Short of this, it would seem, life is totally empty
- Ecclesiastes 1:2 would confirm this...

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

- Then asking the question in Ecclesiastes 1:3...

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

- If we take all that is done "under the sun" to mean things not done for God
- We see the meaninglessness Solomon laments throughout this book

- These verses address something higher
- Something beyond ourselves
- A duty that is "worthwhile" instead of "worthless"
- It may still represent labor, but it is valuable labor (in an eternal sense)

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

2 I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?

3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:

6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

- There is very little Solomon has not experienced
 - No pleasure was withheld from him
 - No possessions
 - No experiences
 - No accomplishments
 - No accolades
 - But they were empty - they left him empty
 - Today's theme verses are his final conclusion
 - Not empty - filling to overflowing
-
- We are to fear God
 - This is not a new requirement

Proverbs 1:7a

7a The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...

Psalm 112:1b

1b Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

- Fear is an Old Testament designation for true piety
 - It is fear conjoined with love and hope
 - It is reverence
 - It is to know who God is - to have understanding
-
- The fear of the Lord is found by searching the scriptures
 - Having a comprehensively scriptural concept of God

Proverbs 2:3-5

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

- Don't have a fear of God?
- No doubt it is because we do not understand, scripturally, who He is
- Failing to fear Him is failing to have proper respect (reverence) for Him
- It is failing to know who He is, consequently failing to know who we are
- And if we have a proper view of Him
- And a proper view of ourselves
- How could we fail to devote ourselves to Him, to love Him, to commit to Him?

- That is the next part of the "whole duty"
- To keep His commandments
- This is something Jesus emphasized greatly

John 14:15

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:21

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

John 14:23-24

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

- Commandment-keeping is a reflection of our love
- We keep because we love
- Not in order to be loved
- Not to gain favor
- We have been favored - and we know it - therefore we love

- We are left with some big thoughts
- All is vanity apart from God
- But with God...
- With a proper understanding of Him
- A scriptural understanding
- We are able to see life's vanity
- And to live worthwhile lives
- Those characterized by faith in Him

- Characterized by obedience to Him
- Joy-filled, worthwhile, valuable, of eternal importance
- He will make this so
- He is the only One who ever could

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2020