

## **Saturday, September 3, 2022**

From Darren:

Eccl 4:1-6:12 — “People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much.”

Ps 47:1-9 — Clap and shout with joy!

Pro 22:16 — Honor God in your business dealings

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:7 — Take care in choosing your companions...will they bring you closer to God or move you away?

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### **Eccl 4:1-6:12**

**4** 1 Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless.

2 So I concluded that the dead are better off than the living.

3 But most fortunate of all are those who are not yet born. For they have not seen all the evil that is done under the sun.

4 Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

5 “Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin.”

6 And yet, “Better to have one handful with quietness than two handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind.”

7 I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun.

8 This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, “Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?” It is all so meaningless and depressing.

9 Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed.

10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.

11 Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone?

12 A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

13 It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice.

14 Such a youth could rise from poverty and succeed. He might even become king, though he has been in prison.

15 But then everyone rushes to the side of yet another youth who replaces him.

16 Endless crowds stand around him, but then another generation grows up and rejects him, too. So it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

**5** 1 As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is evil to make mindless offerings to God.

2 Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few.

3 Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool.

4 When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him.

5 It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it.

6 Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved.

7 Talk is cheap, like daydreams and other useless activities. Fear God instead.

8 Don't be surprised if you see a poor person being oppressed by the powerful and if justice is being miscarried throughout the land. For every official is under orders from higher up, and matters of justice get lost in red tape and bureaucracy.

9 Even the king milks the land for his own profit!

10 Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness!

11 The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

12 People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep.

13 There is another serious problem I have seen under the sun. Hoarding riches harms the saver.

14 Money is put into risky investments that turn sour, and everything is lost. In the end, there is nothing left to pass on to one's children.

15 We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us.

16 And this, too, is a very serious problem. People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing—like working for the wind.

17 Throughout their lives, they live under a cloud—frustrated, discouraged, and angry.

18 Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life.

19 And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God.

20 God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

**6** 1 There is another serious tragedy I have seen under the sun, and it weighs heavily on humanity.

2 God gives some people great wealth and honor and everything they could ever want, but then he doesn't give them the chance to enjoy these things. They die, and someone else, even a stranger, ends up enjoying their wealth! This is meaningless—a sickening tragedy.

3 A man might have a hundred children and live to be very old. But if he finds no satisfaction in life and doesn't even get a decent burial, it would have been better for him to be born dead.

4 His birth would have been meaningless, and he would have ended in darkness. He wouldn't even have had a name,

5 and he would never have seen the sun or known of its existence. Yet he would have had more peace than in growing up to be an unhappy man.

6 He might live a thousand years twice over but still not find contentment. And since he must die like everyone else—well, what's the use?

7 All people spend their lives scratching for food, but they never seem to have enough.

8 So are wise people really better off than fools? Do poor people gain anything by being wise and knowing how to act in front of others?

9 Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

10 Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there's no use arguing with God about your destiny.

11 The more words you speak, the less they mean. So what good are they?

12 In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we are gone?

### **Psalms 47:1-19**

**47** 1 Come, everyone! Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise!

2 For the LORD Most High is awesome. He is the great King of all the earth.

3 He subdues the nations before us, putting our enemies beneath our feet.

4 He chose the Promised Land as our inheritance, the proud possession of Jacob's descendants, whom he loves. Interlude

5 God has ascended with a mighty shout. The LORD has ascended with trumpets blaring.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!

7 For God is the King over all the earth. Praise him with a psalm.

8 God reigns above the nations, sitting on his holy throne.

9 The rulers of the world have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham. For all the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere.

### **Proverbs 22:16**

**22** 16 A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty.

### **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:7**

**6** 14 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?

15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?

16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

17 Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.

18 And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty. "

**7** 1 Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

2 Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone, nor led anyone astray, nor taken advantage of anyone.

3 I'm not saying this to condemn you. I said before that you are in our hearts, and we live or die together with you.

4 I have the highest confidence in you, and I take great pride in you. You have greatly encouraged me and made me happy despite all our troubles.

5 When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. We faced conflict from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear on the inside.

6 But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.

7 His presence was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from you. When he told us how much you long to see me, and how sorry you are for what happened, and how loyal you are to me, I was filled with joy!