

WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN?

(Ecclesiastes 12:8-14)

...Does life seem futile to you? Does it seem meaningless? Does anything we do really matter? Is there a key that unlocks the reason for our existence?

...Solomon's journey in search of such a key has now come to an end. He has found the key. It is only this key that will open our hearts to the joy and purpose that our souls have always longed for.

...Don't miss this. This key unlocks the mystery of life. To miss it is to live a dull, empty, and vain existence. But to find and use it will provide you with a full and satisfying life.

THREE INSIGHTS OF SOLOMON'S CONCLUSION PROVIDING US WITH THE KEY TO REALLY LIVING.

...try as you will, without this key you will never figure life out.

I. Your Life Apart From A Relationship With Jesus (God) Is Worthless. (v.8)

...for the disconnected life seems so meaningless...this is "life under the sun."

- A. Solomon reiterates his theme: "meaningless...meaningless...meaningless."
 - 1. He first gave this in 1:2, and now he concludes by restating it.
 - 2. He uses the word "meaningless" 3 times...meaning, it is the utter folly...even absurd.
- B. We were never made to exist without a relationship with God. To do so is to walk in the dark.
 - ...The first thing that Adam knew after God made him was that he had been created by God. They had a perfect relationship.
 - ...Everything else Adam learned about creation, his wife, his work, rules for living in the garden was born out through his relationship with God. That relationship made everything else make sense.
 - ...If Adam had been shown anything of the creation apart from God, he could not have understood it correctly.
- C. Apart from Christ, nothing in your life will make any sense. It all seems so meaningless.

II. Your Only Guide In Life Is God's Wonderful Word...The Bible. (vv.9-12)

...Beware of anything else, for it will wear you out and not give you the key to life.

- A. Solomon tells how and why he wrote this book. (vv.9-10)
 - 1. He did his work with diligence: "he pondered, searched out, set in order..."
 - 2. Few passages in the Bible tell us more about how the Bible was written.
 - 3. He did this in order to teach his people truth. (like every good pastor and teacher)
- B. Solomon further tells of the function and source of his words. (vv.11-12)
 - 1. The source of the words is God Himself. "given by the one Shepherd." (v.11)
 - ...God uses men to write the Scriptures, but He is the author. Inspiration.
 - 2. The function of the Scriptures..."the words of the wise," are twofold:
 - a. They are goads...which are a long stick with a metal point on the end used by shepherds to provide guidance. Stimulate us to godly living...
 - b. They are nails...which will anchor your life.
 - 3. The only way to know God is to immerse yourself in His Word. All other books are merely man's often confused musings. The Bible will navigate you through life.

III. Your Key To Life That Opens Life's Meaning Is Declared. (vv.13-14)

...Here is Solomon's grand conclusion. This is the chief end of man. This is it:

- A. We must "fear God," which means we must know Him.
 - 1. "F"...We must have faith in existence. (Hebrews 11:6)
 - 2. "E"...We must experience His grace. Come to know His grace, mercy, and forgiveness.
 - 3. "A"...We must be in awe of the majesty, the wisdom, and the wonder of God.
 - 4. "R"...We must be resolved to do what He says.
- B. We must "keep His commandments." This is the "wholeness of man." This is the secret to being a whole person. Everything hinges on the words, "fear God."
 - ...One day, Jesus will judge every person. He will bring to light even the hidden things. (v. 14)

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES: