

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18 Discussion Questions

Outline of Pastor Mike's Sermon

Intro

- Discussing Community Groups
 - Belong
 - *When we gather together regularly to share meals and stories, to laugh, worship, pray, and study the Bible, we experience a sense of belonging and commitment to one another. As we do this, we get to know and love each other more deeply, while growing in our knowledge of, and love for, God. This unifies us in Christ and exemplifies His love to the world around us.*
 - The need for diverse community
 - *It takes no grace to relate to someone who looks, thinks and acts just like me- Philip Yancey, Vanishing Grace*
 - Become
 - *At its root, the Christian life is about following and becoming more like Jesus, together. We call this discipleship. When we commit to living in community, our giftings are activated in such a way that allows us to build up each other with encouragement, accountability, and support. This matures us as the people of God and prepares us for the good works He's called us to do.*
 - The need for a confessional community
 - Mobilize
 - *We pray for and pursue gospel-centered mission. In the same way that God lovingly pursues each one of us, we intentionally seek to share God's love with those who do not yet know Him, inviting them into a relationship with Jesus and His Church. Whether it's serving our neighbor next door, or traveling overseas to share the gospel, we don't stay put...we mobilize.*
 - The beauty of a missional community
 - Multiply
 - *As our groups grow in size, we strategically divide and multiply to bring gospel-centered community to new places. This provides more opportunities for people to experience life-giving relationships that support faithful pursuit of God and the advancement of His kingdom.*
 - A picture of a healthy community

- Prayer Points
 - That the Spirit would empower our group leaders as shepherds
 - That the Lord would build communities of belong that display both the distinct grace and mutual dependence of its members
 - That mission would not just be the activity of the church, but expression of our individual communities
 - That the Lord would multiply us- as he gives us the grace to participate in his work of salvation that the Lord would raise up and multiply more leaders to create community groups of belonging, becoming, mobilization and multiplication.

- Table of Contents
 - Unpredictable Results (v.11-12)
 - Case in Point (v.13-18)

Unpredictable Results (v.11-12)

- Preacher lists five assumptions around the way the world works that have not proven universal
 - Race to the swift
 - Battle to the strong
 - Bread to the wise
 - Riches to the intelligent
 - Favor to those who have knowledge
- The unpredictability to time and the chaos of chance destroy these assumptions
 - A particular emphasis on nets, traps and snares
 - Snare typically refers to foolish entering into a trap
 - Amos 3.1-5
 - Proverbs 7.21-23

Case in Point (v.13-18)

- An anecdote about the siege of a small city
 - The poor man exhibits the wisdom to save (unexpected)
 - Though the poor man saves the city, he is despised and his wisdom is rejected (unexpected)
- The Preacher would rather have this wisdom than might, but realizes that sin and foolishness can even undue this wisdom.

Implications

- The call of the believer is not to achieve by merit, but to follow Christ into servanthood and submission
 - Matthew 20:20-28

Discussion Questions

Feel free to choose what questions will be most helpful to your group to grow in their understanding of the Scripture and faithfully apply it to their lives.

Read Ecclesiastes 9:11-18

1. One of the obvious things about life is that often things don't work out like we believe they should. How do you personally deal with this fact of life?
2. To what does the Preacher attribute the disordered and unfair nature of life? (See vv. 11-12, 18.)
3. What stands out to you about the Preacher's story in vv. 13-18? How does it bring home his point?
4. If this is how the world operates, then how should we respond?
 - a. How did Jesus navigate living well in a broken and disordered world? What did he teach us to do? (For example see Matt 20:20-28.)
 - b. How does focusing on serving others as opposed to asserting our rights (what we believe we deserve) change the way we approach challenging situations, relationships, etc.?
 - c. What happens when we go into a challenging or broken situation focused on getting what we believe we deserve, as opposed to focused on addressing the needs around us? Have you ever been in a situation like this and seen someone do this? What happened?
5. Where are you currently struggling with entitlement? How is the Lord challenging you to replace that with humility and a servant's heart?

6. How are you currently serving others and how do you see God using that to address the brokenness in the world? What fruit do you see God producing in your own life through it?

7. Is there a new or different way that you believe the Lord is calling you to serve that you are struggling to actually do? If so, what is holding you back?