

Eternal PERSPECTIVE *Ecclesiastes*

BIBLE TEXT | ECCLESIASTES 8:14-17

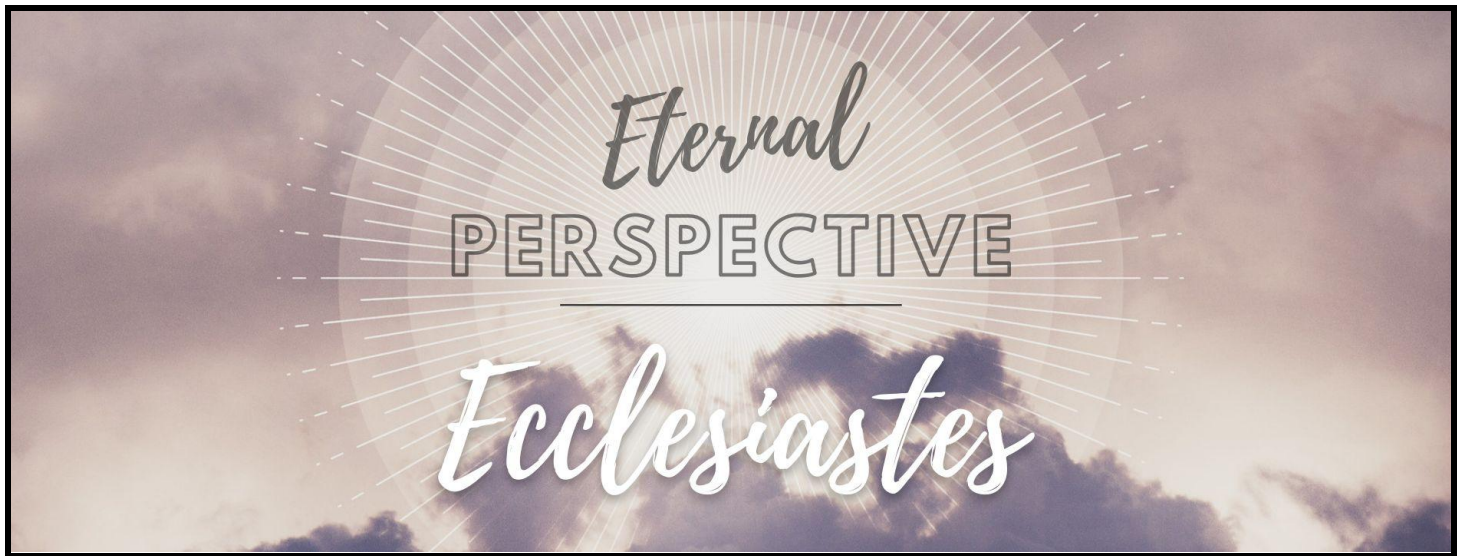
14 There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. **15** So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night— **17** then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

DEVOTIONAL FOR ECCLESIASTES 8:14-17

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As I read these scriptures, I reflect on my past, as does Solomon. In verse 14 he reflects on why life is not fair, why bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. In my mid-twenties, my mother was diagnosed with cystic kidney disease, and over the next ten years I watched her suffer through several surgeries, removing pieces of her kidneys a little at a time, with great suffering and pain. I am talking about a pain so bad she would pass out because of it. And I couldn't understand why the God she loved would let her suffer to that extent. I was angry at God. It wasn't until her death, when I was holding her hand asking God to take her home, that I made peace with God, when I saw for myself the peace of God. And that death on this earth is not final for those who believe in Jesus Christ. He gave her peace, and me peace, that I could not understand. Now thirty-five years later, my heart still goes out and I miss my mother. But I know she is better off than I am, still suffering from sin and living in this world. And one day, we will be united in heaven.



As you read verse 15 it is easy to think that Solomon was commending unbridled, rampant indulgence in sin. But that is not what he was saying at all. Read Ecclesiastes 2:2. It could be said that the parable that Jesus told of the rich man whose land was very productive and he had such abundance, that instead of sharing his abundance, his first thought was to build bigger barns to hoard his wealth and drink and be merry. And what did God say to him, YOU FOOL! This very night your soul is required of you.

I believe we all want wisdom and understanding. But we see in verses 16-17 and in Ecclesiastes 7:23-24, that even the wisest man ever on the earth still struggled to fully understand a sovereign God. I cannot and will not try to put my GOD in a box just to be able to say that I understand him. Isaiah 55:8 says, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD."

Even though I don't fully understand the sovereignty of my Holy God. I believe He has always had good plans for me, and He has always loved me and has shown me much mercy and grace. May I always show others the same mercy and grace.

Questions:

1. Do you try to put God in a box so you can say "I understand Him?"
2. Do you really believe that God has good plans for you?
3. Have you confessed publicly that Jesus is your Lord and Savior? If not, reach out to pastor@stonepointchurch.com.