

Prayer: Fill our worship with grace, Lord Jesus Christ, that every thought, word, and deed may be acceptable to you, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

### ***LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH GOD'S GLASSES“ – “I” to “WE!”***

Ecclesiastes starts out “The words of the teacher.” Solomon is the Son of King David...the 3rd King of Israel, and he writes these words in Jerusalem...the pulpit for the Jewish people...with the temple He’s built to honor God in the background.

Ecclesiastes is written by a leader of the gathering that chose wisdom from God when he was given the chance to choose anything he wanted. But it’s also written by a man who conducted his own experimental research with his life...by that I mean, he sought fulfillment in everything that he thought would gratify him...Here’s what he said:

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 - Good News Translation; 10 Anything I wanted, I got. I did not deny myself any pleasure. I was proud of everything I had worked for, and all this was my reward. 11 Then I thought about all that I had done and how hard I had worked doing it, and I realized that it didn't mean a thing. It was like chasing the wind—of no use at all.

Summed up in my Southern verbiage... “Satan has you and you chase worldly carrots on a stick...only to find out...“Sin always takes you farther than you want to go...Sin always keeps you longer than you want to stay...and sin always costs you more than you want to pay.”

During our mission here on earth, we will always be tempted by Satan’s carrot on a stick to find self-fulfillment...self-satisfaction and comfort...He’ll say, “Chase this ...this is what you want...and so we do, and only discover too late...it’s the wind...and we’ve lost a lot...and gained nothing.

And God calls...“Come to me all who are weary and burdened with this life.” Satan the thief has only come to kill, steal and destroy your life and I have come to give you abundant life...That abundant life means “the end of me” and the resurrection of Christ who lives in me. The meaningless now has meaning...my life now has a purpose...and it’s not about self-fulfillment...now it’s about Christ fulfillment.

What we see in life depends on what kind of glasses we use. If we look through human glasses, we see “I.” If we look through God’s glasses, we see “WE.”

We don’t have to be taught how to be selfish. A baby’s first instincts are to cry for whatever he wants. A baby perceives that the whole world centers around them. When the baby grows, they think that all the toys, food, attention, etc. belong to them. In life, we don’t grow out of selfishness.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve looked through glasses that saw what “I want” rather than what “God wants.” That’s the definition of sin. The middle letter of sin is “I”. The middle letter of pride is “I.”

The Beatles were one of the most popular singing groups of all time. When they made their first trip to the Ed Sullivan Show in New York. It was a TV frenzy!

After enjoying much popularity, they started growing more self-centered. Each Beatle was more concerned about himself. George Harrison wrote the last song they would ever record. The keywords are very simple – repeated many times, “I, Me, Mine. I, Me, Mine. I, Me, Mine.”

Looking through human glasses, you see “I.” Looking through God’s glasses, you see “WE.” We are part of a team, a community, a big family. There is no “I” in TEAM. There is “US” in JESUS. Jesus transforms selfishness into selflessness. He invites us to be a part of His team.

God's glasses read, "Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 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." (Ecclesiastes 4:9,10,12)

Do you know why a medium-power laser can burn through steel in a matter of seconds, while the most powerful spotlight can only warm the steel? Both have the same electrical power requirements. The difference is unity.

A laser can simply be described as a medium of excited molecules with mirrors at each end. Some of the excited molecules naturally decay into a less excited state. In the decay process, they release a photon, a particle of light. The photon moves along and "tickles" another molecule, inviting another photon to join in on the journey. Then the two photons "tickle" two more molecules and invite two more photons to join the parade. Soon there is a huge army of photons marching in step with each other. It is this unity that gives the laser its power.

A spotlight may have just as many photons, but each is going its own independent way, occasionally interfering with other photons. As a result, much of its power is wasted and cannot be focused. However, the laser, because of its unity, is like an army marching in tight formation and is able to focus all its power on its objective. It's the difference between "I" and "WE." America desperately needs to see "WE!"

A woman was at Panama City Beach, Florida and saw an 8-year-old girl go underwater. She swam out to try to help her, but she was pulled out by the water deeper than she could swim. 25 people on the beach joined hands and banded together in a human chain and brought both of them back to shore. What Sherry couldn't do by herself, a team of 25 could do!

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength...and the second is like it...love your neighbor as you love yourself...all the law and prophets hang on these 2 commands." Love God...Love People...Serve both.

Solomon also made a discovery about this life and its purpose...

IT'S LONELY TO NOT SHARE YOUR LIFE WITH ANYONE...AND FOR ANYONE - "There was a man all alone, he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth... 'For whom am I toiling he asked...this is meaningless...it's a miserable business.'" (v. 8) Who do you work for; who do you work with...and why?

Anyone here that doesn't think these are tragically sad words...There was a man all alone? I hear Three Dog Night singing in the back of my head, "One is the loneliest number there's ever been." If there is no one to work for...no one to work with...no one to share your life with and to share your life for...and you spend it only on yourself...what meaning is there...it's a miserable business.

I read a plaque that said:

ACHIEVEMENT comes to someone when he is able to do great thing for himself.

SUCCESS comes when he empowers followers to do great things with him.

SIGNIFICANCE comes when he develops leaders to do great things for him.

A LEGACY is created when a person puts his organization into the position to do great things without him.

Your lasting value will be measured by succession.

Mike Faust said this: “Disciples has been diminished because modern evangelism strategies have taught people how to share their faith instead of sharing their lives.”

The New Testament Church was never a place you went to get what you want...It was always the family of God you shared your life with...a resurrected life through the Holy Spirit...The family’s focus was always about those who were broken and in need...especially those who needed salvation. The fellowship, called “Koinonia” existed not because of “similar likes and preferences.” It existed because each family member thought of others before themselves. The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved because each member took the “Great Commission” of Christ seriously...and personally...They brought their friends and family to the Apostles so that they could share the Good News and teach them what it meant to follow Christ...They shared the Good News...They taught their friends, family and neighbors. They partnered with God and with each other...no miserable life here...They had joy in the will of God, there was gladness as the family grew...and they were sincere in their sin and brokenness. This was strength in numbers...no clergy and laity here....Just a family with Godly leaders and brothers and sisters following their Heavenly Father.

Churches get healthy when people move from the sidelines into the game. When each member gets involved and serves as the Holy Spirit enables them...and sometimes just because it needs to be done...It’s an attitude of willingness...because God has called you to serve and you say yes.

We may not have it all together, but together we could have it all!!

God’s glasses see His team of “WE.” Are you on that team?