

Living With Hope
Ecclesiastes 2:18-26; I Tim.6:17-19; Heb.12:1-2

0.0 Introduction

- 0.1 Bible constantly talks of hope and joy – and Ecc seems last place to see that
- 0.2 Today's passage is first positive mention of God's presence in Ecc (v.24; cf. 1:13) and offer of finding joy in life right now (e.g. 3:12-14,22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10)
- 0.3 *Carpe Diem* – 'seize the day', incl. opportunities for joy, pleasure and hope

1.0 Finding Enjoyment (v.24a)

- 1.1 Do you *want* to enjoy life? Ability is God-given (2:26c; also 2:1; 3:13; 5:18)
- 1.2 What things give you joy?
- 1.3 Even animals can find joy & satisfaction (Ps.145:15-16)
- 1.4 God wants to satisfy your heart's yearnings (I Tim.6:17) – though note
Ecc is "arguing for limited enjoyment, not ultimate satisfaction" (T. Longman)

2.0 Find Satisfaction (v.24b)

- 2.1 What have your hands found to occupy for your six days of "labor" (Ex.20:9)?
- 2.2 Work/labor gives three things: engagement, friends/associates, personal structure
- 2.3 Limits & frustrations imposed in Eden (Gen.3:19) – yet labor still essential

3.0 Find Enjoyment and Satisfaction Now, Wherever You Are

- 3.1 Difficulties come and go, and some 'joy waits till the morning' (Ps.30:5):
 - as held true for the priorities that guided Jesus (Heb.12:1-2)
 - even wisdom cannot last forever (vv.18-19 – if Solomon, then Rehoboam next!)
- 3.2 Focus now on what is good in your life (Rom.8:28) and live with hope

Next week (May 16) – Even More Hope - Ecc.3:1-13

Ecclesiastes 2:18-26 (NASB)

The Futility of Labor

¹⁸ So I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is futility. ²⁰ Therefore I completely despaired over all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun. ²¹ When there is a person who has labored with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then gives his legacy to one who has not labored for it; this too is futility and a great evil. ²² For what does a person get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³ Because all his days his activity is painful and irritating; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is futility.

²⁴ There is nothing better for a person *than* to eat and drink, and show himself *some* good in his trouble. This too I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. ²⁵ For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him? ²⁶ For to a person who is good in His sight, He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is futility and striving after wind.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NASB)

¹⁷ Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to set their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB)

Jesus, the Example

¹² Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.