

Series: Ecclesiastes
Sermon: The Vanity of Wealth
Scripture: Ecclesiastes 5:8-20
Teacher: Jeff Norris
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Ecclesiastes 5:8-20 (ESV)

⁸ If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. ⁹ But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.

¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. ¹¹ When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? ¹² Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

¹³ There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, ¹⁴ and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? ¹⁷ Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

¹⁸ Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. ¹⁹ Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰ For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

I. Don't be shocked. (v. 8-9)

II. Don't love money. (v. 10-17)

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (ESV)

Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Matthew 19:23-24 (ESV)

Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

- With more wealth comes more burdens. (v. 11-12)
- With more wealth comes more disorientation. (v. 13-16)

Job 1:21 (ESV)

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

- With more wealth comes more opportunity for darkness. (v. 17)
 - a. The darkness of greed.
 - b. The darkness of bitterness. (v. 17)
 - c. The darkness of envy. (v. 17)
 - “There is no joy in your life that cannot be destroyed by envy.”
 - “There is no heaven that envy cannot make into a hell.”
- Gavin Ortland, *Humility*, p. 60
 - “There is nothing so blinding as envy or grievance. This was the nerve the serpent touched in Eden, to make even paradise appear an insult.”
Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, p. 291

III. Be glad in God and His gifts. (v. 18-20)

- "When the God of joy is with us, even money can prove to be a blessing. On the other hand, if God is absent, then nothing can satisfy us, least of all money."

- Philip Ryken, *Why Everything Matters*, p. 97

- "I have found more in Christ than I ever expected to want."

- Charles Bridges, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, p. 66

Image shown: *The Moneylender and His Wife* by Renaissance painter Quentin Massys