



Weekly Booster

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Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

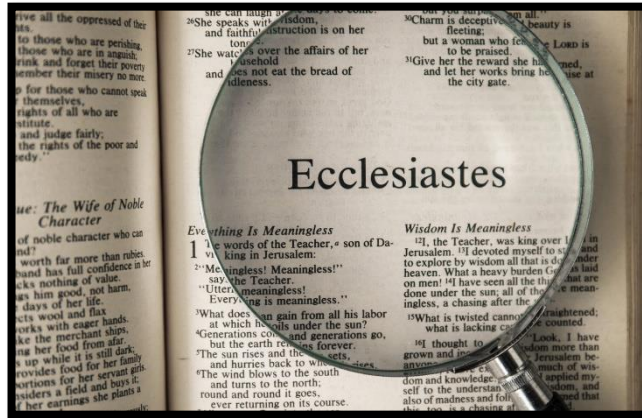
Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Jodi Anderzhon



Ecclesiastes: Wisdom on Our Human Experience

The book of Ecclesiastes takes a hard look at the human experience and offers wise advice on how to live meaningfully, purposefully, and joyfully. The author reflects on the experience of life and sees a busy human anthill in mad pursuit of many things, trying now this, now that, laboring away as if by dint of effort humans could master the world, lay bare its deepest secrets, change its fundamental structures, burst through the bounds of human limitations to control their destiny and achieve a state of secure and lasting happiness. In short, he sees people laboring at life with an overblown conception of human powers and consequently pursuing unrealistic hopes and aspirations.

Through his reflections, the author concludes that human life is “meaningless”, its efforts all futile. And yet, what begins with “Meaningless! Meaningless!” (Ecclesiastes 1:2) ends with “Remember your Creator” (12:1) and “Fear God and keep his commandments” (12:13) by the end of the book. The author offers up much wisdom along the way.

Continued page 2.

Question and Answer –

Q: When did God create Adam?

A: A little before Eve!

Reminders

May 20th

Men's Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.

May 28th

Sunday morning speech by
Wyatt Baldwin
Remembrance Recognition

May 31st

Study with Pastor David - Noon
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.
Choir – done until Fall

June 1st

T.O.P.S. – 5:30 p.m.

June 11th

10:30 a.m. – Single Board
Transition Question/Answer
Session

**Worship Assistants are needed
for June

** Fellowship Volunteers needed
sign-up in Fellowship Hall

Ecclesiastes Continued from page 1.**Wisdom About the Human Endeavor**

1 – Humans cannot by all their striving achieve anything of ultimate or enduring significance. Nothing appears to be going anywhere (1:5–11), and people cannot by all their efforts break out of this caged treadmill (1:2–4; 2:1–11). They cannot fundamentally change anything (1:12–15; 6:10; 7:13) and hence, they often toil foolishly (4:4,7–8; 5:10–17; 6:7–9). All their striving “under the sun” (1:3) after unreal goals leads only to disillusionment.

2 – Wisdom is better than folly (2:13–14; 7:1–6,11–12,19; 8:1,5; 9:17–18; 10:1–3,12–15; 12:11). It is God’s gift to those who please him (2:26). But it is unwarranted to expect too much even from such wisdom—to expect that human wisdom is capable of solving all problems (1:16–18) or of securing for itself enduring rewards or advantages (2:12–17; 4:13–16; 9:13–16).

3 – Experience confronts humans with many apparent disharmonies and anomalies that wisdom cannot unravel. Of these, the greatest of all is this: Human life comes to the same end as that of the animals—death (2:15; 3:16–17; 7:15; 8:14; 9:1–3; 10:5–7).

4 – Although God made humankind upright, people have gone in search of many for getting ahead by taking advantage of others (see 7:29). So even humans are a disappointment (7:24–29).

5 – People cannot know or control what will come after them, or even what lies in the more immediate future. Therefore, all their efforts remain balanced on the razor’s edge of uncertainty (2:18; 6:12; 7:14; 9:2).

6 – God keeps humans in their place (3:16–22).

7 – God has ordered all things (3:1–15; 5:19; 6:1–6; 9:1) and a human being cannot change God’s appointments or fully understand them or anticipate them (3:1; 7; 11:1–6). But the world is not fundamentally chaotic or irrational. It is ordered by God, and it is for humans to accept matters as they are by God’s appointments, including their own limitations. Everything has its “time” and is good in its time (chapter 3).

Continued page 5.



Question and Answer

*Q: What did Adam and Eve do after they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden?
A: They raised Cain!*

Volunteers Needed



**LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS**

First United Methodist Church
**Please wear your
name tag on
Sunday mornings**



Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High
Sunday School finished
until September 2023
Questers (Adults) 10:30**

****Chancel Choir –**
Wednesdays, 6:45 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

The front door to the church
will be unlocked during
office hours and closed only
for errands and lunch.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
CLOSED
Thursday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Friday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in
advance if you need in the
church to make sure
someone is in the office. If
you reach the answering
machine please leave
your name, number, and
a brief message and your
call will be returned. Calls
after 2:00 p.m. may be
returned the next
business day.



Who gave King Ahasuerus
pleasing advice after Queen
Vashti's refusal?

- a) Haman
- b) Biztha
- c) Memucan
- d) Harbona

Who had 70 sons?

- a) Adam
- b) Lamech
- c) Gideon
- d) David

**Check page 4 for answers
from the previous week.**

Through whom is the veil
that remained unlifted when
they read the old covenant
take away?

- a) Moses
- b) Christ
- c) Paul
- d) The apostles

Birthdays and Anniversaries



28th – Mike Peterson
29th – Laura Bowen
2nd – Dan Weiss
3rd – Jeff Hiser, Elinor Sharp, Paul & Connie
Andersen, Dave & Jacque Lashier

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need
one added, please call the office, or send an
email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our Youtube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit!

People: Grant us your peace.

L: Come Holy Spirit!

P: Give us your power.

L: Come, Holy Spirit!

P: Grace us with your presence.

“What Does This Mean?”

Old Testament Reading:

New Testament Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Songs

O Spirit of the Living God #539

God of Wonders #3034

Open the Eyes of My Heart #3008

I Come with Joy #617

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship - 73

Online Worship – 14

Our Mission:

“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”

Our Vision:

“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”

**Answers for May 21st are b) sin offering d) being of the same mind c) 40
Quiz s hints – Q1) Esther Q2) Judges Q3) 2 Corinthians**

Practical Counsel for Wise Living

- 1 – **Accept the human state as it is**, shaped by God’s appointments, and enjoy the life you have been given as fully as you can.
- 2 – **Don’t trouble yourself with unrealistic goals**—know the measure and limitations of human capabilities.
- 3 – **Be prudent in all your ways**—follow wisdom’s leading.
- 4 – **“Fear God and keep his commandments”** (12:13), beginning already in your youth before the fleeting days of life’s enjoyments are gone and “the days of trouble” (12:1) come when the infirmities of advanced age vex you and hinder you from tasting, seeing and feeling the good things of life.

Ecclesiastes provides instruction on how to live meaningfully, purposefully, and joyfully under the reign of God. This is done primarily by placing God at the center of one’s life, work, and activities. And, by contentedly accepting one’s divinely appointed lot in life, reverently trusting in and obeying the Creator-King. (Note particularly 2:24–26; 3:11–14,22; 5:18–20; 8:15; 9:7–10; 11:7—12:1; 12:9–14.)

The Author of Ecclesiastes

The narrator presents the Teacher as Solomon (1:1,12), but many scholars now think that the Teacher was not actually Solomon but one whom we are to imagine as like Solomon with his wisdom and power. We know from 12:9 – 10 that the Teacher was a wisdom teacher who carefully gathered and arranged his material as he taught the people. We do not know the identity of the narrator who presents the Teacher’s sayings, and so overall the author of Ecclesiastes is unknown. To understand Ecclesiastes, however, it is important to note that the narrator, whose voice is heard in 1:1; 7:27 and in the epilogue (12:9 – 14), presents the Teacher’s journey and teachings in the context of his introduction, conclusion, and note in 7:27.

When Ecclesiastes Was Written

A variety of dates have been proposed for Ecclesiastes. Some argue that its type of Hebrew and the presence of Persian loanwords confirm that it was not written in Solomon’s time, but this could just mean that a much earlier book was updated at a later time. Ecclesiastes’ skepticism could show awareness of Greek philosophical influence, but evidence for such skepticism is also found much earlier. If the Persian loanwords and Greek influence do indicate the date of writing, then Ecclesiastes was most likely written in the postexilic period, probably in the fourth century BC. At that time it would have appeared to many, in what was left of Israel, as if God’s purposes with them had run aground, thereby giving rise to the sort of questions the teacher struggles with. However, we cannot be sure of the date when Ecclesiastes was written.

Literary Genre and Structure

The argument found in Ecclesiastes does not flow smoothly. It meanders, with jumps, and starts through the general messiness of human experience, to which it is a response. There is also an intermingling of poetry and prose. The announced theme of “meaninglessness” (futility) provides a literary frame around the whole (1:2; 12:8). And the movement from the unrelieved disillusionment of (chapters 1–2) to the more serene tone and sober instructions for life (chapters 11–12) marks a development in matured wisdom’s coming to terms with the human situation.

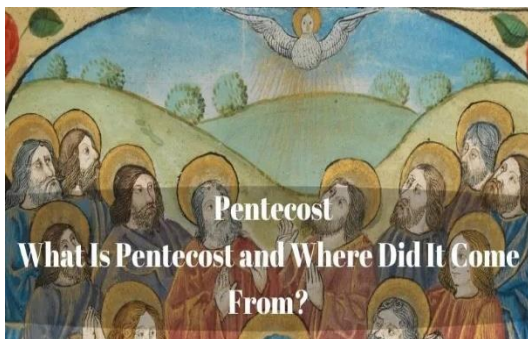
A striking feature of the book is its frequent use of keywords and phrases: e.g., “meaningless”, “work/labor/toil”, “good / better”, “gift / give”, “under the sun”, and “chasing after the wind”. The enjoyment of life, as God gives it, is also a key concept in the book (see 2:24–26; 3:12–13,22; 5:18–20; 7:14; 8:15; 9:7–9; and 11:8–9).

Summary

The author of Ecclesiastes ultimately affirms life and joy but only as the result of a struggle with the brokenness of life in a fallen world. With wisdom matured by many years, the author takes the measure of human beings, examining their limits and their lot. He attempts to see what human wisdom can do (1:13,16–18; 7:24; 8:16) and shares he has discovered that human wisdom, even when it has its beginning in “the fear of the Lord”, has limits to its powers when it attempts to go it alone—limits that circumscribe its perspectives and relativize its counsel. Most significantly, it cannot find out the larger purposes of God or the ultimate meaning of human existence. With respect to these, it can only pose questions.

Content drawn from the *NIV Study Bible, Fully Revised Edition*, and the *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*.

Adapted from the NIV Study Bible, Fully Revised Edition, and the NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible. HarperCollins Christian Publishing. NIV Weekly Blog, All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, May 22, 2023.



Jesus’ followers were gathered together for Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit “filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2). “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4).

If you go back and read the Old Testament, you will discover that Pentecost was one of the Jewish feast days. Only they didn’t call it Pentecost. That’s the Greek name. The Jews called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks. It is mentioned in five places in the first five books — in Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16.

Pentecost in the Bible

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound, the multitude came together, and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians-- we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." (Acts 2:1-13)

What is the Origin of Pentecost?

Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during May and June; the final harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of May or sometimes in early June.

There were several festivals, celebrations, and observances that took place before Pentecost. There was Passover, there was Unleavened Bread, and there was the Feast of First Fruits. The Feast of First Fruits was the celebration of the beginning of the barley harvest. Here's the way you figured out the date of Pentecost. According to the Old Testament, you would go to the day of the celebration of the First fruits, and beginning with that day, you would count off 50 days. The fiftieth day would be the Day of Pentecost. So First fruits is the beginning of the barley harvest and Pentecost is the celebration of the beginning of the wheat harvest. Since it was always 50 days after First fruits, and since 50 days equal seven weeks, it always came a "week of weeks" later. Therefore, they either called it the Feast of Harvest or the Feast of Weeks.

Why Is Pentecost Important to Christianity?

Modern Christians observe Pentecost as a holiday, not to celebrate a wheat harvest, but remember when the Holy Spirit invaded the Church in Acts 2.

1. On Pentecost Sunday, the Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and added 3,000 new believers. The account in Act 2 reports that, after Jesus ascended into heaven, Jesus' followers were gathered together for the Feast of Harvest (aka Pentecost), and the Holy Spirit "filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:4).

This strange occurrence drew a large crowd, and Peter stood up to speak to them about repentance and the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:14). By the end of the day that the Holy Spirit came, the Church grew by 3,000 people (Acts 2:41). This is why Christians still celebrate Pentecost.

John Gill expresses the significance in his commentary:

"Through this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, the apostles became more knowing, and had a greater understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel, and were more qualified to preach it to people of all nations and languages."

2. The Holy Spirit was prophesied in the Old Testament and promised by Jesus. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit in John 14:26, who would be the Helper for his people.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

This New Testament event is also significant because it fulfills an Old Testament prophecy in Joel 2:28-29:

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men, and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

The Significance of Pentecost Today

In a video for Christianity.com, Phillip Nation explains why Pentecost is significant for Christians today. Read the transcript of that interview below and find the video at https://youtu.be/_eMvam4zMA

The significance of Pentecost to the church is something that we need to walk through carefully, and we shouldn't ignore, because Pentecost was a Jewish celebration. And so in our modern-day of the New Testament church, we don't celebrate Pentecost in the way that the Old Testament Hebrews did.

But Pentecost was the moment in history after Christ had ascended. And he had promised during the gospel narratives, during his earthly ministry, that he would leave, but that he would send the comforter, he would send the holy spirit. And it was at that moment in Pentecost when the spirit came, and he empowered the early believers, specifically the apostles that were left, and Peter, who is almost a comedic personality in the gospel narratives.

He is the one who constantly puts his foot in his mouth, having to be corrected by Jesus, but is in the inner circle. And because of grace and mercy, he is chosen to be the one who stands up in front of this throng, probably thousands, maybe tens of thousands of people to proclaim the gospel, there in the midst of a Hebrew celebration that was intended to remind the Hebrews of how God had always protected them.

And here Peter stands up and says, "And let me tell you about the Messiah, who is the eternal protection for all of humanity. Let me tell you who he is." And so Pentecost becomes this marker in history to really what many people would say, "And that's the moment that church is born."

That is when thousands come into the faith. And it goes from this little sect of believers who followed a Jewish rabbi from Nazareth who died and rose again, and suddenly the church breaks forth into the culture. Suddenly it is that unstoppable force that no one can really deny any longer. Pentecost has taken on a new significance for us. It, at one point, is just a historical memory. Now it is the living reality of the moment that the spirit of God seemingly burst forth.

3 Historical Insights into Pentecost

There are three things you need to know about Pentecost that will help you understand Acts 2.

1. **Pentecost was a pilgrim festival.** That meant that according to Jewish Law, all the adult Jewish men would come from wherever they were living to Jerusalem and personally be in attendance during this celebration.
2. **Pentecost was a holiday.** No servile work was to be done. Schools were out. The shops were closed. It was a day to celebrate.
3. **There were certain celebrations and sacrifices and offerings which were prescribed in the Law for the day of Pentecost.** On Pentecost, the High Priest was to take two loaves of freshly baked wheat bread and offer them before the Lord. The wheat bread was made from newly harvested wheat.

In short, Pentecost in the time of the Apostles was a grand harvest celebration. The streets of Jerusalem were clogged with thousands of pilgrims who had come from every point of the compass to celebrate the goodness of God and the bringing in of the wheat harvest.

Excerpted from "The P.U.I.H." from Keep Believing Ministries, Dr. Ray Pritchard, April 17, 2023 (used by permission).



Within the United Methodist tradition, connections and conferences have had a significant impact from the beginning. As a scattered and dispersed movement within the Church of England, John Wesley gathered his preachers together for encouragement, training, communication, and organizing. These first conferences were not legislative bodies and did not include laity. The same practice continued in colonial America. After the Revolutionary War, many Methodist preachers returned to England resulting in a shortage of clergy. In 1784, the first “General” Conference was held in the United States. At this conference, a Book of Discipline was adopted, clergy were ordained, and bishops were appointed.

Methodists continue the tradition of conferencing together in ways that link local bodies in mission and resources. It is a unique blend of episcopal (or bishop) leadership and democratic processes.

The **Charge Conference** is the local body that meets at least once per year at each pastoral charge. This conference reviews and evaluates the mission of the local church, sets salaries for the pastor, elects members to the church council and other administrative bodies, delegates to the Annual Conference, and recommends candidates for ordained ministry.

The **Annual Conference** is a regional, organizational unit of The United Methodist Church that is presided over by a bishop. During its annual business meeting, the members are clergy and at least one layperson from each pastoral charge. The conference reviews ministry, adopts policy and resolutions, elects delegates to the General Conference, and ordains clergy. Throughout the year the bishop and their representatives continue the ministry of the Annual Conference through support and strengthening of the spiritual life throughout its region.

The **General Conference**, then, is the global gathering of The United Methodist Church that meets every four years. The next General Conference is scheduled for April 23 - May 3, 2024. This is the legislative body for the denomination and consists of an equal number of clergy and laity.

The Iowa Annual Conference will be held June 2-4 in Des Moines, with many also attending virtually. The theme of this conference is "Remembering Who We Are." Bishop Kennetha (our newly appointed bishop in Iowa) says, "This is the church Wesley envisioned when he said, *'Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike.'* Wesley said we may not be of the same opinion, but can't we be of the same heart? Can't we have hearts centered on love? We are a people immersed in grace, washed in grace, upheld by grace, embraced by the grace of God, and called to be extenders of that grace to the world."

Please be in prayer for this gathering that a spirit of grace and wisdom abounds. If you have any questions you may contact Pastor David, or your lay delegate, Craig Harris. You can also visit <https://www.iaumc.org/ac2023> for more information.

Grace and peace,

Pastor David B. Clark



Food Pantry Needs for June

pasta (any type), condiments & spices, Mandarin oranges, hamburger, tuna, and chicken helpers, potato flakes, gravy packets, cake, brownie, muffin, and cookie mixes, Sloppy Joe mix (canned), cereal, shampoo & conditioner, paper towels & Kleenex

This Sunday, May 28th will be the last Sunday the choir will be singing until September. We are looking for special music for the summer. If you are interested in providing special music or know of someone that might be interested, please contact Mace Hensen or call the office and the message will be forwarded to him.

