

Recovering AWE

desert breeze
community church



Saturday & Sunday, April 9/10, 2016 Ray Davis

Ecclesiastes 3:1-22 "HOPE"

You can live 40 days w/o food, just a few days w/o water, 4-6 min w/o O₂, but not a single second w/o hope. Human beings are unavoidably hope based creatures. How you live in the present is inevitably shaped by what you believe about your future. You can't avoid that! Hope in the bible is not "wishful thinking" but it is "confident joyful expectation".

What do you do with your life when you see no progress (v9) or no justice (v16)? What do you do when life doesn't make sense and people seemingly get away with murder? What do you do when life seems like a random out of control crapshoot?

FALSE PHILOSOPHIES OF SUFFERING:

- ✓ **Monistic View** – Deny it. Eastern philosophy that says suffering is an illusion and you must exercise mind over matter to deny it.
- ✓ **Stoic View** – Endure it. Suffering is real but it's a crapshoot because we are nothing more than a collection of molecules.
- ✓ **Dualistic View** – Forgive God for it. There are two opposite and equal forces working against each other good (God) and evil (Satan). Sometimes evil gets the upper hand on good.
- ✓ **Existentialism View** – Defy it. Suffering is senseless but I will be full of purpose. Be courageous and moral in the face of suffering.
- ✓ **Hedonistic View** – Avoid it. You avoid it by being selfish and avoiding commitments. If something is unfulfilling than get out.
- ✓ **Romanticist View** – Confess it. Good people have good lives. Bad people have bad lives. If you're suffering it's because you're sinning.
- ✓ **Political View** – Blame it. Somebody is the cause of this suffering. That somebody can be a race, gender, party, group, etc.
- ✓ **Masochistic View** – Welcome it. They don't feel alive or worthwhile unless they are suffering. Because I suffer, I'm deep, complicated and better than you.

BIBLICAL VIEW OF SUFFERING:

- God is the All-powerful and all-knowing Judge of History whose timing is perfect. Vv15, 17; Matt8:29; Rom12:19; 2Pet3:9

- God is the infinitely wise and perfectly loving Weaver of History who is working all things for our good and His glory. vv11, 14-15; Isa. 46:8-11; Ps. 103:19, 115:3; Rom8:28; Gen50:20

LIVING A HOPE-FILLED LIFE EVEN IN SUFFERING:

- Don't focus on the temporal but on God's eternal plan. V11; 2Cor4:16-18
- Don't let your lack of understanding keep you from enjoying life. V12; Pro3:5-6; 1Cor13:12; 2Cor5:7
- Don't forget that an attitude of gratitude for God's many gifts invariably kindles happiness. V13; 1Thess5:16-18
- Don't fear what may happen in life, fear God. vv14-15; Ps112:6-8
- Don't fret over injustices, judgment is coming. Vv16-17; Ps73:3, 17
- Don't fail the test; God's glory is best displayed in lives that are most satisfied in Him in all circumstances. Vv18, 22; 2Cor4:7-9

God so loved us and hates suffering that he was willing to come down and suffer for us so that He could end evil without ending us in the final judgment. (Heb4:15-16)

Growing Notes

- 1) How important is hope (Pro10:28, 13:12; Heb11:1)? Have you ever felt hopeless? Explain. How would you counsel a person who is feeling hopeless about life (Ps42:11)?
- 2) Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-22. What stands out to you from this text? What is the Preacher struggling with (vv9, 16)?
- 3) Review the false philosophies of suffering. Which one(s) are you prone to lean? Review the Biblical view of suffering along with verses. How does the Biblical view differ from the false views?
- 4) Review the six statements for living a hope-filled life along with verses. Which one(s) are most helpful to you? What is God speaking to you from this study? What difference does the Cross of Christ make in our struggle with suffering? Pray.