

Ecclesiastes 4
Winter 2023

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 (p555)

¹Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them.

²And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive.

³But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 2:26, 3:22

For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God.

So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

By thoroughly disgusting us with the world, and by making us realize its absolute vanity, God means to draw us to himself. Only in this way can Yahweh, the true and absolute Being, become to us what he really is. Through much tribulation must our hold on earthly things be loosened and ourselves enter into the kingdom of God. (Ernst Hengstenberg, 1860)

4

Deut. 6:4-6 (p151)

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

The Shema continues through verse 9.

5

Ecclesiastes 4:4, 4:6, 4:16

⁴ Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

⁶ Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

¹⁶ There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

6

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6

⁴ Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

⁵ The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

⁶ Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

7

Prov. 6:10-11 (p531)

**¹⁰ A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,**

**¹¹ and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.**

8

Isaiah 9:20 (p574)

²⁰ They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry,

and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied;

each devours the flesh of his own arm,

9

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

5 The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh.

6 Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

10

Phillipians 4:11-13 (p982)

11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.

13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

11

Ecc. 4:7-12

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun:

8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

12

Ecc. 4:7-12

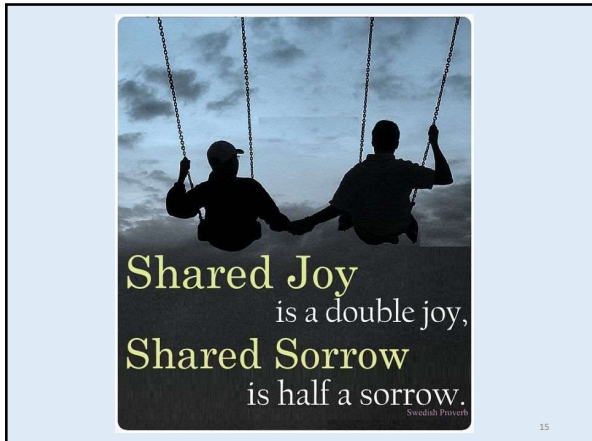
¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow.
But woe to him who is alone when he falls
and has not another to lift him up!

¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm,
but how can one keep warm alone?

¹² And though a man might prevail against
one who is alone, two will withstand him—a
threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13





Ecc. 4:13-16

13 Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice.

14 For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor.

15 I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place.

16 There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

16

- **Combine our abilities and work together.**
- **Be a companion.**
- **Be a voice in your school or workplace.**
- **Show your character.**
- **Exercise wisdom – it's better than folly.**
- **Recall the seasons and know where you are. (time to speak, time to be silent, etc.)**

17
