

Ecclesiastes 9:11 – 10:20

Life in a wild and unpredictable world



The Text – Ecclesiastes 9:11 – 10:20

1. Read over the entire passage. How would you describe the experience of reading this passage? What connections can you make between the verses?
2. What are some of the themes and ideas mentioned in the passage? How are they connected?
3. Read 9:11-12. How are these two verses connected? What do you think they are saying about life under the Sun?
4. Here is a more literal translation of 9:11-12:

“Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all because people do not know their time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so people are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them.”

What difference does the word ‘because’ make in this translation? Do you think this passage is saying that our lives are governed completely by time and chance?

5. Read 9:13-18. Why is wisdom better than strength? What is the twist?
6. Ecclesiastes 10:1-4 describe folly. What is folly like? What do you think is meant by ‘right’ and ‘left’?
7. Read 10:5-20. What examples of folly are given in these verses? How do you think these verses relate back to 9:11-12?

The Scriptures - Ecclesiastes 9:11 – 10:20 as a portion of the Scriptures

1. Ecclesiastes 9:11-10:20 describe wisdom and folly in an unpredictable world. Do you think God intended the world to be wild and unpredictable? Read Genesis 1:28. What do you think it means to ‘subdue’ creation?
2. Luke 9:57 – 10:12 describe Jesus’ interactions with his disciples. How do Jesus words relate to Ecclesiastes 9:11 – 10:20? What is Jesus relationship with the wild and unpredictable?
3. Read Psalm 111. How do the words of this Psalm reflect Ecclesiastes 9:11-10:20?

Our lives – walking the way of Jesus in response to Ecclesiastes 9:11 – 10:20 as a portion of the Scriptures

1. When have you been thankful for the unpredictability of life? When has it caused you distress?
2. In what ways do we try to make our lives predictable and in control? Can you think of times when this has caused disappointment?
3. What are some examples of living wisely when our lives are wild and unpredictable? How does accepting an unpredictable life help us to live wisely?
4. How have you been challenged to respond to this section of God’s word?