HOW DO I FACE THE FUTURE?
Ecclesiastes 8.7

We are continuing a series on the Wisdom Literature of the Hebrew Scriptures (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and parts of the Psalms). Contrary to modern understandings, wisdom has a divine origin, not a human one. As we read wisdom literature, we can easily get the mistaken impression that wisdom involves the memorization and application of certain texts. The fact is, wisdom is not just common sense based upon experience, it is a result of a relationship with God.

13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.
14 For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12.13-14

In our study of Ecclesiastes, it is helpful to see the word translated “meaningless” (NIV) in a possible different light.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!"
Says the Teacher.
"Utterly meaningless!"
"Everything is meaningless." Ecclesiastes 1.2

"The merest of breaths,"
Says the Teacher.
"The merest of breaths!"
"Everything is a breath.” Job 7.7; Psalm 39.4-6, 11

The writer of Ecclesiastes believed that his book was an argument that came to a close in 12.13-14.

Therefore, we are able to fairly conclude, that each of the four sections, (1.2-2.26; 3.1-5.20; 6.1-8.15; 8.16-12.14), added something to the progress of that argument. The best way to then understand where the author is headed is to look at the conclusion of each section. If we can understand the conclusion, we might then be able to follow with greater certainty the steps leading up to it.

God has commended enjoyment as one of his most excellent gifts to the men and women who choose to fear him. God really intends that men and women come into a proper enjoyment of the good material gifts placed in the world by him, and that the gifts should be a source of constant satisfaction when the things and the users are properly related to the Giver himself, (Ecclesiastes 8.12, 15).

Human beings have an unquenchable thirst to know about the future. We will do anything to find out what’s going to happen next. It provokes all kinds of crazy behavior. People will pay good money for palm reading, fortune telling, tea leaves, fortune cookies, crystal balls, astrology. None of this stuff works. Predicting the future is big business. Even our best predictions are only educated guesses. Nobody knows what the future holds. Except God.

We’ve been in a series from Ecclesiastes on answering life’s toughest questions, and today we will look at “How Do I Face the Future?”

Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to come? Ecclesiastes 8.7

What does God have to say about the future? How do I face it? Only God knows what the future holds. There are a lot of “ifs” in life. What if? How do I face an uncertain future?

WHAT NOT TO DO IN FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

1. Don’t be arrogant about tomorrow!

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. Proverbs 27.1

13 Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. James 4.13-16
2. Don’t be anxious about tomorrow!

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:34

3. Don’t procrastinate until tomorrow!

3 If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth.
Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.
4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap. Ecclesiastes 11:3-4

HOW TO FACE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE.

Joshua 1 is God’s instructive words to Joshua, the new leader of Israel. The people were getting ready to go into the Promised Land. Joshua is in charge. He knows that the moment he leads them across the Jordan River he’s going to face enemy nations, all of them bigger than him, more trained, with an army. They will be in a continuous battle for the next many, many years. It was indeed an uncertain, scary future. In his grace, God encourages Joshua, and I believe us as well, with some keys when facing an uncertain future.

1. Go ahead and set up a Plan.

2 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses’ aide: 2 “Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them – to the Israelites. 3 I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.” Joshua 1:1-3

10 So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11 “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.’” Joshua 1:10-11

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps. Proverbs 16:9

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. Proverbs 16:3

2. Stay in the Word.

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:7-9

• Don’t let it depart from your mouth.
• Meditate on it day and night.
• Do it.

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. Proverbs 16:3

3. Step out in Faith.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9