



1867



1899



1905



1950



1974



2009

"The Evolution of Our Church Buildings"

First Baptist church

Established 1826

TOWNSEND-SMITH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

A CARING CLASS

JANUARY STUDY THEME: Wrestling With Life's Mysteries

January 31, 2010 Lesson: "Wrestling With Work"

Scripture Passage: Ecclesiastes 2:18-26; 5:18-20

There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and to enjoy his work. I have seen that even this is from God's hand. For who can eat and who can enjoy {real} life apart from Him? [Eccl. 2:24-25]

Solomon wants us to understand that having a good attitude about work is important. Not all people have to work for a living, some are born into a wealthy family, some have inherited wealth, some have won the lottery, and others have worked hard throughout their life and God has allowed them to accumulate a sizeable fortune from a legal, and legitimate means of earning material wealth.

King Solomon reminds us that in the beginning of his life he hated his work. Of course he did not have to indulge in actual labor with his own hands, because God had decreed that since he [Solomon] had asked for wisdom as a gift, He [God] was going to give him an additional gift of being the world's richest person in terms of material wealth. And what was the reason he gave for hating his work? It was because he had the wrong attitude about work. It was because he was laboring under a false impression that he was going to have to die and leave it all to someone who would come after him with no way to know whether he would spend his inheritance wisely or foolishly. Some people, as the head of a family have chosen to put the "family fortune" in a trust either because it was rather sizeable and they thought that perhaps their family need assistance in handling their affairs, or, they might have thought their heirs incapable of handling the affairs of their estate and they wanted to give them the protection of a trust over what they had accumulated as the "family fortune."

As he was drawn closer to God, his attitude changed and he was impressed to say, "There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and to enjoy his work." Christian should recognize that every good gift, no matter how large or small, comes from God's hand. We must remember that every thing that happens in the world, and that includes Gods' grace gifts to us, has been sifted through God's permissive will.

God wants His creatures to take joy in their work because He took joy in His work of creating the heavens and the earth. Even while Jesus endured the cross, the most painful experience imaginable, He did it for the "joy" that lay before Him [Heb. 12:2].

King Solomon then said that as he became more mature, he finally realized that, with the proper attitude about his wealth, that there is nothing wrong with enjoying eating and drinking [non-alcoholic beverages] and experiencing good in all the labor that one does in his life during the few days of his life that God has given him. Not many people have less income than the average person who lives in Haiti. The nation as a whole is the poorest nation in the Eastern Hemisphere. The average daily income of a person who lives in Haiti is less than \$1.00 a day. And yet, we must remember that **"God gives riches and wealth to every man."** [vv. 19]. This is a general statement that refers not so much to an amount of money as to the fact that everyone receives something from God with which to work. God allows us to enjoy what we have, whether much or little. Then He allows mankind to **"take his reward in work."** The true reward we can look forward to one day is Jesus saying, **"Well done thou good and faithful servant."** And finally, another way God helps us to enjoy our labor is in how He keeps us busy. A person does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him **"occupied with the joy of his heart."**

#### MY WORK—MY LEGACY [Eccl. 2:18-23]

*18 I hated all my work at which I labored under the sun because I must leave it to the man who comes after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will take over all my work that I labored at skillfully under the sun. This too is futile. 20 So I began to give myself over to despair concerning all my work I had labored at under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose work was done with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, but he must give his portion to a man who has not worked for it. This too is futile and a great wrong. 22 For what does a man get with all his work and all his efforts that he labors with under the sun? 23 For all his days are filled with grief, and his occupation is sorrowful; even at night, his mind does not rest. This too is futile.*

#### MY WORK—MY JOY [Eccl. 2:24-26]

*24 There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and to enjoy his work, I have seen that even this is from God's hand. 25 For who can eat and who can enjoy life apart from Him? 26 For to the man who is pleasing in His sight, He gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and accumulating in order to give to the one who is pleasing in God's sight. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.*

#### MY WORK—GOD'S GIFT [Eccl. 5:18-20]

*18 Here is what I have seen to be good: it is appropriate to eat, drink, and experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few days of his life God has given him, because that is his reward. 19 God has also given riches and wealth to every man, and He has allowed him to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God, 20 for he does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with the joy of his heart.*

