

**Ecclesiastes 6: 1-6; “The Soul not Satisfied with Goodness”, A Bible Study  
presented to those gathered at the Rendall home  
on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010, in the Evening.**

In the last chapter Solomon has been talking about evils that he had seen, and the good that he had seen. He has talked about the severe evil that he had seen when riches were kept by their owner to his hurt. This is what you and I would call hoarding. (Verses 13-15) He also saw the evil of a person’s living for their work and yet not being able to take the fruit of their labor with them when they die. (Verses 16 and 17). He saw the good of a man’s being given power by God to “eat” of his riches and wealth and enjoy the good of all his labor in this life. He said that this was a “heritage” from God; it is the gift of God. When God blesses a man in this way, he says that that man will not dwell unduly on the days of his life because God will keep him busy with the joy of his heart. This is truly a great good to any man; when God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart. Let us learn to be content with what God gives to us each day; to be satisfied with the simple pleasures of life which God gives. Let us and not try to be great in the eyes of men, but rather faithful in our job and family, so that God’s blessing may rest upon us, no matter how much money we make, or how much we are able to have in savings accounts. Let us remember that God is the real strength of our heart and our portion forever. (Psalm 73: 26) Now this evening Solomon expands upon what he has already declared in regard to the vanity of having riches and wealth and yet God not giving him the power to eat of it. He says that it is a vanity for many reasons here, but we will sum up it by naming two. First of all, it is a vanity because the blessings of this life which God has given, have been squandered. And secondly, it is a vanity because that person’s soul has been lost, and their life has been wasted. Let’s look a little more closely at these things for a few minutes.

**1<sup>st</sup> – It is a vain thing because the blessings of this life, which God has given, have been squandered.**

In verse 1 Solomon says that this is an evil which common among men; to be covetous and rich and not satisfied. This is the outcome of a life lived to one’s self and not to God. Notice that it says in verse 2 that it was God who gave this man his riches and wealth and honor, and yet there is no mention of this man’s giving thanks to God for these blessings. There has been nothing done to God’s glory, or to please Him by this man. He lacks nothing of all that he desires, and yet, because God is not praised, and God is not honored by the way that these blessings have been used; then God does not give that man the power to “eat” of them. That is; he cannot find his satisfaction and fulfillment in having these things. He cannot partake of them with satisfaction and joy. This is an evil affliction. It is a sinful disease of the soul when a man has so many material blessings, and he even has the recognition of men that he has done well for himself, and still he is not happy or satisfied. Turn over to James chapter 4 and you will see some of the reasons for this, in the life of both unbelievers and professed Christians. Verse 1 says, “Where do wars and fights come from among

you?” “Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?” “You lust and do not have.” “You murder and covet and cannot obtain.” “You fight and war.” “You do not have because you do not ask.” “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” The reasons mentioned here for any person’s being one who wars and fights to get what they want out of life, are these. They have desires for pleasure and satisfaction in their life that they cannot seem to obtain. Instead of praying about their needs to be addressed in a godly way, they think that they have to fight and compete with others for those blessings which only God can give them in the first place. They do not understand that it was God who has given them every talent that they have, and every blessing of prosperity in relation to the use of that talent that they have obtained. They do not see the significance of prayer in relation to the true prosperity of their soul, or that of their family. Then when they finally do see that prayer is important in the life of a Christian, they do not pray with a view to glorifying God through answered prayer; instead they spend the blessings of God’s being good to them upon their own pleasures. There is a restlessness in their heart; there is a suspicion in their mind; that their competitors will gain the advantage over them and capture their markets. Because of their covetousness they will become suspicious that even people in their own family and among their own relatives and friends are trying to take advantage of them in relation to their wealth. Because of this suspicion, they will not spend the time with them that they should to find their satisfaction and meaning in life in relation to those whom God has given to them, to lead and to nurture them up to know and to walk with the Lord. They instead pull away from them and will pursue worldly and selfish goals, and will spend very little time with them. Even in their own business, they will think it prudent to begin to associate with and do business with foreigners rather than those of their own country; thinking that shrewdness in business is to be preferred rather than kindness and generosity in relation to wages paid and benefits given. They will send their business and their capital to foreign countries where the labor will be cheaper. We are seeing quite a bit of this taking place in our own country these days. And so; because God is not being honored and glorified with what He has so freely and generously given to this person being described, He allows the foreigner to consume the wealth of the one who has worked so hard to build it and hold on to it.

Let’s look at a few verses which will confirm this. Turn with me to Hosea Chapter 7, and verse 1. Here the prophet is addressing especially the 10 Northern Tribes of the nation of Israel. “When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria.” “For they have committed fraud; a thief comes in; a band of robbers takes spoil outside.” “They do not consider in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now their deeds have surrounded them; they are before My face.” “They make a king glad with their wickedness, and princes with their lies.” He goes on to speak of their sins of adultery in verses 4-7. Then in verse 8 he says, “Ephraim has mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake unturned.” “Aliens have devoured his strength, but he

does not know it.” “And the pride of Israel testifies to his face, but they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek Him for all this.” You can see here from these verses that it is God Himself who is allowing their strength to be devoured by aliens. Their strength of integrity has been drained by sin, and now their financial strength is devoured by these aliens. The problem with many people, even many professed Christian people is that they do not think that God will deal with them over their unrepented-of sin.

But turn with me over to Jeremiah Chapter 5 and verse 10. “Go up on her walls and destroy, but do not make a complete end.” “Take away her branches, for they are not the Lord’s.” “For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously with Me, says the Lord.” “They have lied about the Lord, and said, ‘It is not He.’” “Neither will evil come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine.” “And the prophets become wind, for the word is not in them.” “Therefore thus says the Lord God of Hosts: Because you speak this word, behold I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.” “Behold, I will bring a nation against you from afar, O house of Israel, says the Lord.” “It is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language you do not know, nor can you understand what they say.” “Their quiver is like an open tomb; they are all mighty men.” “And they shall eat up your harvest and your bread, which your sons and daughters should eat.” “They shall eat up your flocks and your herds; they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; they shall destroy your fortified cities, in which you trust, with the sword.” “Nevertheless in those days, says the Lord, I will not make a complete end of you.” “And it will be when you ‘Why does the Lord our God do all these things to us?’” “Then you shall answer them, ‘Just as you have forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve aliens in a land that is not yours.’” Now this is what happened to Ephraim in the Old Testament days of Jeremiah. And what is happening to us in our day is that foreigners are consuming our strength as well. God has given to the United States of America riches and wealth and honor, so that she lacks nothing of all that her people desire; but we do not have God’s blessing to truly be blessed by all these material things because we have, in a very great sense as a nation, forsaken God. Therefore the foreigner is consuming our wealth, and we are being brought to dishonor in the sight of God. O may we be turned back from our vanity and our folly.

**2ndly – It is a vain thing to have riches but not to know good from them, because that person’s soul will be lost and their life has been wasted.**

(Verses 3-6)

“If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he – for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.” “Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness.” “Do not all go to one place?” Now here we see the root of all the evil that Solomon is talking about. The sin of

living in covetousness and greed leads men to a very sad state where they will drown in perdition. Even if that man fathers a hundred children and outlives the oldest man who has ever lived; a thousand years twice; but has not seen goodness; this is great vanity. (1 Timothy 6: 6-10) I think that the key to what Solomon is trying to say is found in the words, “his soul is not satisfied with goodness.” A man may have many material blessings, and he may also have come to know the honor of men in regard to the great things that he has done for himself; and still, he may not know at all, that wonderful sense of the goodness which comes from God alone. And what does he have in the end? In the end he has lost his soul, the most precious part of his life and being. His life has been wasted. When Solomon says that all men go to one place, he is not meaning to say that there is no heaven and hell. He is speaking of death and the grave, to which all men must someday come. Solomon’s point is being made in relation to the vanity of not knowing God’s blessing him with goodness in this life. If a man has been given riches and wealth and honor by God and yet cannot know God’s blessing these things to the satisfaction of his soul, then it is vanity.

But we must go farther. This life, and all that we do and experience in it, are that which sets the stage for the next. Even if God gives long life and riches and honor to a man; it is not enough if his soul is not satisfied with good. And God is the author of all good. Every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights. The only way that the soul will be satisfied with goodness is if it is satisfied with it in an endless sense. Otherwise, no matter how long the sense of earthly goodness lasts, it will someday come to an end in death. And better to have been a miscarriage than to have experienced all these material blessings and in the end, have them come to a complete end. Turn with me to Psalm 49 and you will see this. Verse 5 says, “Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?” “Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—that he should continue to live eternally and not see the Pit.” “For he sees wise men die; likewise the fool and senseless person perish, and leave their wealth to others.” “Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.” “Nevertheless man, though in honor, does not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.” “This is the way of those who are foolish, and of their posterity who approve their sayings.” “Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall be consumed the grave, far from their dwelling.” “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.” God redeems our soul at great cost to Himself, in the giving of His Son Jesus Christ to go to the cross and purchase our salvation; both body and soul. The Psalmist goes on to say, “Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after him.” “Though while he lives he blesses himself (for men will praise you when you do well for yourself), He shall go to the generation of his

fathers; they shall never see light.” “A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, is like the beasts that perish.” How great is the gift of salvation which shows men this truth and will open their eyes to see their need of Christ. May each of us see the vanity of riches without God’s blessing of goodness with it.