

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

- I. Futility:
- II. God's Immutable Plan for Life (3:1-22)
- III. The Futility of the Circumstances of Life (4:1-5:20)
 - A. Evil Oppression (4:1-3)

- 1 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression (**'aSHUQIYM = 4x; encompasses deceit, fraud, violence and extortion**) which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them (**Piel Ptc NACHAM**); and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them.
- 2 So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.
- 3 But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

Summary:

- 1. There are evil people in the world who _____ without redress of their activities.
 - 2. But those evil people will one day be _____. Matt 18:1-9
 - 3. As there was no one to comfort the oppressed, there will be no one to comfort the _____.
 - 4. For the _____, it is better to be dead or never have existed than to face the evils of the world today.
 - 5. Jesus said to _____ that it would have been better for him to not have been born. Matt 26:24-25
 - 6. Jesus is saying that the "Oppressor" is evidently driven by something, like power, that will never _____.
- B. The Emptiness of Hard Work (4:4-12)
 - 1. Competition In Hard Work. 4:4-6
- 4 And I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry (**QIN'AH = 44x; envy**) between a man and his neighbor. This too is **vanity** and striving after wind.
 - 5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.
 - 6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

Summary:

1. For the humanist, hard work is often simply a _____ for superiority and power over others.
2. Anything that is driven by envy is _____ to the Christian life.
3. But for the _____, there is no hard work, being driven by nothing.
4. Thus, there should be a healthy desire to accomplish various tasks that should be a result of _____.
5. Even Pilate knew that the sin of envy was behind the Jews delivering their _____ to be crucified. Matt 27:18 & Mark 15:10

2. Selfish Greed. 4:7-8

- 7 Then I looked again at **vanity** under the sun.
- 8 There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" This too is **vanity** and it is a grievous task.

Summary:

1. This person finds the accumulation of wealth to be the most _____ part of life.
2. There is not even a good _____ reason for this activity.
3. The love of _____ is the root of all kinds of evil. 1 Tim 6:10

3. Cooperation With Others. 4:9-12

- 9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.
- 10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. **(need life alert)**
- 11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?
- 12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

Summary:

1. Solomon points out that _____ sense would tell you that working as a team can accomplish more than working alone.
2. _____ can support each other, enhance the weak spots, encourage one another and better defend against enemies.
3. The stronger the team, the better the individual can _____.

C. The Emptiness of Political Success (4:13-16)

- 13 A poor, yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.

- 14 For he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.
- 15 I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.
- 16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is **vanity** and striving after wind.

Summary:

1. Solomon realizes those in powerful positions must _____ to learn and thus grow.
2. The one who may hold the world's most powerful position must realize that the power is _____.
3. This person can be easily _____ from the least likely of places.
4. Power alone will not satisfy the _____ of man and most often brings only frustration.
5. Power under the influence of the Sin Nature wants to _____ other volitional creatures.
6. Which is a human goal that can only gain _____ happiness.