

CHASING THE WIND – “GOING AFTER GOD”

We have seen that God had given Solomon “wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore” (1st Kings 4:7) as well as wealth and fame. Yet, with all he had been blessed with, he said that he “hated” life and even wished he’d never been born. How could this have happened? To put it mildly, he stopped looking to the Creator for answers and started looking instead to creation for his direction. This way of perceiving things is referred to many times in his thesis as life “under the sun.” Rather than going to God for satisfaction he started “chasing after the wind” - coming up empty every time.

Eventually, once he was mentally and physically exhausted, he realized the futility of all this and came to a correct conclusion. Turn to **Ecclesiastes 11:7-10**...

⁷ Light is sweet and it pleases the eyes to see the sun. ⁸ However many years a man may live, let him enjoy them all. But let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything to come is meaningless. ⁹ Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment. ¹⁰ So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigor are meaningless.

So, live it up if you choose, but understand that there will be consequences for your choices. And if you waste your youth and energy on selfish pursuits you’ll be wasting more than just your time. You’ll be wasting your life. Not only that, you’ll eventually have to answer to God for it. The Apostle Paul tells us in **2nd Corinthians 5:10** that “We will all appear before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account of the things we have done in the body, whether good or bad.” Notice Paul includes himself and the church in Corinth in that statement. It’s not just the people who ignore or openly reject God who will give an account. We all will. That’s why Solomon urges us in **Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**....

¹ Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them”- ² before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark, and the clouds return after the rain; ³ when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim; ⁴ when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades; when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint; ⁵ when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets; when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred. Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets. ⁶ Remember Him - before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, ⁷ and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. ⁸ “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!”

THE MESSAGE renders that last section like this: ³⁻⁵ In old age, your body no longer serves you so well. Muscles slacken, grip weakens, joints stiffen. The shades are pulled down on the world. You can’t come and go at will. Things grind to a halt. The hum of the household fades away. You are wakened now by bird-song. Hikes to the mountains are a thing of the past.

Even a stroll down the road has its terrors. Your hair turns apple-blossom white, adorning a fragile and impotent matchstick body. Yes, you're well on your way to eternal rest, while your friends make plans for your funeral. ⁶⁻⁷ Life, lovely while it lasts, is soon over. Life as we know it, precious and beautiful, ends. The body is put back in the same ground it came from. The spirit returns to God, who first breathed it. ⁸ It's all smoke, nothing but smoke.

His conclusion wasn't that we should only remember God in our youth. His very example says we need to **remember Him when we grow older, too**. The idea is "*remember your creator*" while you can; while you still have strength and ability to serve Him and others. I don't know if Solomon considered the fact that his Creator had remembered him first. In 2nd Samuel 7:12-13 God promised David that a direct descendent of his would sit on the throne of Israel (*Solomon*) and that in the fullness of time, another from the house of David would also take his rightful place on that throne - not just for a lifetime, but for-ever. The Messiah, the Christ, the One we know as "*Jesus*" - would become king of all kings.

Having said this, before He would sit down on that throne, Jesus would lay down His life, being nailed to a cross, sacrificing life and limb for Solomon's sins - and yours and mine, too. **Even if we don't remember Him, God remembers us**. Paul says just 11 verses after telling us we will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ that "*(Jesus) became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God.*" (2nd Corinthians 5:21) In other words, Jesus switches places with us. In another place it says, He bore the penalty for our sins. "*He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.*" For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (1st Peter 2:24-25) Hear that? Solomon isn't the only one to have misspent his youth. He's not the only guy who abused his blessings and wasted time going round in circles. I remember a time when I got a ticket for **doing donuts** in the school parking lot. That has nothing to do with eating pastry, but everything to do with spinning your wheels. The officer called it "*reckless operation*" of my **1961 Rambler**. Since I was under 18, I had to appear before the Juvenile officer. Worse yet, my dad had to accompany me. He was not a happy camper. But when we got to the court, Dad called the guy behind the desk by name. It was obvious that they knew one another. I wasn't sure that was a good thing.

In fact, my dad sat quietly while I was read the riot act and didn't say a word when the verdict was handed down for me to surrender my driver's license for 6 weeks. Then Dad dismissed me to go to the car while he talked a bit more with the officer. When he came back to the car, I expected a long lecture - or at least a "*serves you right...*" Instead, he showed me my license and said "*I convinced him to let me hold it for you. He also agreed that I can let you have it to drive back and forth to school and to work.*" When I asked why the officer did that, he responded, "*Let's just say he owes me.*" Though I never found out what my father had done for this guy, I got credit for what he did. I deserved punishment. What I received was mercy and even grace - and though I've spun out on slippery roads since then, I never did donuts in the school parking lot again. And echoing David's words in Psalm 25, I pray "**Remember not the sins of my youth...**"

This may serve on some level as picture of what happens on a spiritual plane. Our heavenly Father did something a long time ago and extends the line of credit to us. He sent His son to die for our sins. That sacrifice paid for our transgressions - and no matter how many times we've been spinning out of control, whether on a joy ride or some foolish choice, the Father sent Jesus to plead our case.

One more thing: for quite some time I thought my juvie record had been erased. I was wrong. Though kept confidential, with the right credentials, they are still available to be viewed and perhaps even used as evidence against me. Yet, though I made some other major blunders in judgment afterward, the incident never was brought up again – not even by my dad.

The truth is that everything we have ever done – right and wrong is on file in God's hall of justice. The truth is also that for those who accept Jesus as their savior, we needn't be overly anxious about it. The Hebrew writer tells us that our heavenly Father says of His children, **"I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."** (Hebrews 8:12)

So, instead of chasing after the wind, try *going after God*. I promise you will not come up empty!