

Ecclesiastes: Ancient Wisdom Learned in 2020

Ep. 3 – Envy vs. Empathy

Ecclesiastes 4:1-6

Vs. 1 Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter. **Vs. 2** And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. **Vs. 3** But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun. **Vs. 4** And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, chasing after the wind. **Vs. 5** Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves. **Vs. 6** Better one handful with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Proverbs 28:5

Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.

Leviticus 19:15

"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."

Vs. 1 Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter.

- **"I looked and saw: the tears of the oppressed"**
 - Are we willing to look and see?
 - **Empathy:** "tears of the oppressed with no comforter"
 - **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

A Spring of Envy: Vs. 4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another.

A Handful of Tranquility: Vs. 5-6 Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves. Better one handful with tranquillity than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

- Fools do less than they need or strive for more than they require.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Vs. 1 says Solomon “looked and saw”. When you look and see, what oppression in the world bothers you the most?
2. Proverbs 28:5 says “evil people do not understand justice”. What do you think that means?
3. What does it mean to have empathy for the oppressed?
4. How do we turn empathy into action?
5. Solomon says, “Better one handful with peace than two fistfuls with strife.” Do you live that way?