

RHYTHM OF LIFE

"The God Factor"

Pastor Rick Shelton

Sunday, November 15, 2009

- Unless we have the 'God-factor' right in our life, nothing else matters.
- Pastor is here to help you know God better and find out what He wants you to do with your life.
- We can honor God first thing in the morning, but live the rest of the day without consulting God with decisions we need to make (i.e. purchases, relationships, business partner, etc.).
- God has to be 'everything' and in everything! Nothing will have any meaning in life unless God is in the middle of it.
- The Book of Ecclesiastes should be read several times a year.
- Ecclesiastes is about Solomon, a man who had everything yet was unfulfilled. He then went on a search to find meaning/fulfillment of life, apart from God being the center of everything.
- Ecclesiastes is somewhat a 'John the Baptist' book; John wasn't the answer, but pointed people to the answer.
- Ecclesiastes isn't a meal to feed us, but a bath to cleanse us!
- Solomon says: **Ecclesiastes 1:1** (Msg) ²⁻¹¹ Smoke, nothing but smoke. [That's what the Quester says.] There's nothing to anything—it's all smoke. What's there to show for a lifetime of work, a lifetime of working your fingers to the bone? One generation goes its way, the next one arrives, but nothing changes—it's business as usual for old planet earth.
- **Ecclesiastes 1:16-18 (Msg)** I said to myself, "I know more and I'm wiser than anyone before me in Jerusalem. I've stockpiled wisdom and knowledge." What I've finally concluded is that so-called wisdom and knowledge are mindless and witless—nothing but spitting into the wind. ¹⁸ Much learning earns you much trouble. The more you know, the more you hurt.
- **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 (Msg)** ¹⁻³ I said to myself, "Let's go for it—experiment with pleasure, have a good time!" But there was nothing to it, nothing but smoke. What do I think of the fun-filled life? Insane! Inane! My verdict on the pursuit of happiness? Who needs it? With the help of a bottle of wine and all the wisdom I could muster, I tried my level best to penetrate the absurdity of life. I wanted to get a handle on anything useful we mortals might do during the years we spend on this earth. ⁴⁻⁸ Oh, I did great things: built houses, planted vineyards, designed gardens and parks and planted a variety of fruit trees in them, made pools of water to irrigate the groves of trees. I bought slaves, male and female, who had children, giving me even more slaves; then I acquired large herds and flocks, larger than any before me in Jerusalem. I piled up silver and gold, loot from kings and kingdoms. I gathered a chorus of singers to entertain me with song, and—most exquisite of all pleasures—voluptuous maidens for my bed. ⁹⁻¹⁰ Oh, how I prospered! I left all my predecessors in Jerusalem far behind, left them behind in the dust. What's more, I kept a clear head through it all. Everything I wanted I took—I never said no to myself. I gave in to every impulse, held back nothing. I sucked the marrow of pleasure out of every task—my reward to myself for a hard day's work! ¹¹ Then I took a good look at everything I'd done, looked at all the sweat and hard work. But when I looked, I saw nothing but smoke. Smoke and spitting into the wind. There was nothing to any of it. Nothing.
- **Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 (Msg)** And I hated everything I'd accomplished and accumulated on this earth. I can't take it with me—no, I have to leave it to whoever comes after me. Whether they're worthy or worthless—and who's to tell?—they'll take over the earthly results of my intense thinking and hard work. Smoke.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:9-11 (NKJV)** What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? ¹⁰ I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

- Solomon had spurts of Godly wisdom, like this scripture, saying and understanding that God is 'all in all'. You will never find fulfillment until you seek God to find out what God wants you to 'do and be' in all areas of your life.
- In marriage, disagreements lead to hurt feelings and hurtful words on both sides, leading you on a path of destruction . . . without God in the center and ruling our 'fickle flesh' to bring you back together. Seek God's will in your marriage!
- About tithing, God wants writing privileges. Operate in God's economy, consulting His leading in your decisions.
- God and eternity is my focus!
- Back to marriage: (prophetic) There are those who are here today just about to head down a path you think is the answer, that is so wrong, and it will be disastrous. Don't communicate to be heard, but communicate to understand.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:12-15 (NKJV)** I know that nothing *is* better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, ¹³ and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it *is* the gift of God. ¹⁴ I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does *it*, that men should fear before Him. ¹⁵ That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past.
- In these scriptures, Solomon is not saying we resign ourselves to 'fate' (what will be will be, and nothing we can do will change it), but he is coming to an understanding that God has given us a roadmap/owner's manual for our life, with destiny and purpose. We are born with a road map; we are created for a purpose.
- Your 'choice' as a human being is to follow God's plan for your life or follow your own way!
- We can't take God as Savior without taking Him as Lord, where we *kinda'* serve God, and mostly do what we want.
- God has to be our final authority.
- Pastor said to an atheist (on a plane), "How is that working out for you?" (being an atheist!) It wasn't!
- **John 12:23-25 (NKJV)** But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
- What do these scriptures mean? Our entire life is like a seed and remains alone, not bearing much fruit until it's planted in the ground and it dies! Then something miraculous happens. It becomes alive, producing fruit, leaves, etc., that it could NOT have produced if it had not **died!** Jesus said this is what the kingdom of God is like! When you 'protect' your life, you 'lose' it!
- As long as you insist on saying, "God doesn't demand that I give up the right to dictate my own life," your life will end up in destruction.
- The way to true happiness in your life is not trying to maintain control or protect your life, but by giving it away/ laying it down. That is called trust.
- Do you trust God with all of your life? Do you believe God is really good? Does He really have a plan for your life?
- Rick's testimony: He didn't come out of the womb a preacher! As a young child he was insecure, felt inferior, and stuttered. He said he would do anything in the church, but he would not be a preacher! God got hold of him when he was a 21 years old Twinkie salesman. Pastor fell across his bed, and cried out to God. He saw a blank piece of paper, and asked God, "What is that?" God said, "This is my will for your life. Sign it!" Pastor said, "Lord, if this is a contract, fill it in and then I'll sign it." God said, "No! You sign it and then I will fill it in." Pastor understood that moment what 'lordship' is all about. It's not agreeing to something if you think it's the right thing; it's signing your life over to God. Pastor signed the paper and told the Lord his life belonged to Him. And God said, "Now, go preach the gospel!" He did not want to do what he is doing today because he thought he would be unhappy the rest of his life. He did not realize that when he stepped into God's will he would enter into happiness he couldn't have dreamed.
- Lose your 'life' in Christ; you end up getting it back!
- Peter gave Jesus his boat when He asked for it. When Jesus gave Peter back his boat, the difference was Jesus was in the boat. When Pastor signed the paper, he gave his 'boat' to Jesus; and when he got his boat back, Jesus was in the boat. Hallelulahl Give Him honor and praise today! Let Him become all in all in everything!