

God's Good Gift



Eccl. 5:8-6:9

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I have four kids, so I read a lot of children's books to them. Two of my favorite children's books are by Max Lucado. One is called You Are Mine and one is called You Are Special. They are fantastic. Even if you don't have kids, go and get the books because they will bless your heart. You Are Mine is about these little people. They are not only people they are little creations of a guy named Eli and they are wemmicks. They are little wooden people in this imaginary land. There is this one little wemmick named Punchinello. Punchinello has two friends, Nip and Tuck, and they discover boxes and balls. They begin to collect them, and of course one of them gets two boxes and the next one gets three boxes, and then the one of them gets a ball and then the other gets another ball, and they begin to compare how many balls and how many boxes they have. Punchinello begins to wonder how he is to get happy, and he decides it's by collecting boxes and balls. In fact, the whole town gets infatuated with collecting

boxes and balls. Everybody is walking around with these giant stacks of boxes and balls. They can't see. They bump into each other. They are worried about their boxes and balls. What if somebody steals them? How do I get more? Their whole lives are spent chasing these boxes and balls. You can just tell little Punchinello is seeking happiness but he can't find it. He's miserable. He's distraught. He is carrying these giant boxes and balls, and all of a sudden he bumps into a door and all of his boxes and balls fall down. He opens the door, he walks into a workshop, and he meets someone named Eli. Eli is the master carpenter who has actually made all of the wemmicks, he has made Little Punchinello, and Punchinello didn't know this. He didn't know that he was made. He didn't know that he was made by Eli *for* Eli. He thought life was about boxes and balls and desiring more things and more stuff, and what he didn't realize is life is really about a relationship with Eli. What Eli got to say was that true happiness is not in what you have but it's who you know; it's by being made by me, having your identity in me.

You know, I think in the Christmas season we are most tempted to be like little wemmicks. We are most tempted to walk around, stacking boxes and balls and giving away boxes and balls, because we think somehow if I just have more, get more, buy more, and acquire more somehow I will be happy; I will find true happiness. But it doesn't work because we keep coming back to the next Christmas and the next Christmas, and somehow, we can't find that thing called joy. What we are going to see from Ecclesiastes is that Solomon is going to tell us that God actually has a gift for us that is better than any gift you have on your wish list from Amazon. Whatever you texted grandma about, whatever your kids have asked from you, God has a better gift. His gift that He wants to give to you this morning is to actually find enjoyment in life, true enjoyment. For you to do that, you have to be like little Punchinello — you have to bump into a door and drop everything that you are seeking joy in and you have to walk in. You have to understand that you are made by a Maker. You are made by Him and through Him and for Him, and until you find your joy in Him, you will seek it in other things and you will not be satisfied. The reason you won't is because God won't let you be satisfied. He actually wants you to have longings that you cannot satisfy because He wants those longings to

lead you to the place where they can be satisfied only in a relationship with Him.

We are going to see in Ecclesiastes chapters five and six that there's sort of a chiasmic structure. We are going to see the bad, the good, and then the bad. What we are going to read is that middle part because I think that's where Solomon would want us to really get our take home from — this idea that God has a gift that He wants to give to you and it is the gift of enjoying life. How many of you can honestly think and say you don't have that? You don't have joy in life. You are seeking it, you are trying it, you are wanting it, but you don't have true joy in life. Solomon is going to say God wants to give it to you but it's only found in relationship with Him. We are going to read verses 18–20 and then we are going to walk back through this text.

Scripture

"Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart."

So, the gift God wants to give you today is to find enjoyment in life. He wants you to be able to rejoice in the Lord, as Paul will say; He wants you to find joy. But in order that, we are going to have to learn what not to do in order to find out how to find true joy in the Lord. So Solomon is going to talk about some bad, then he's going to talk about the good, and he will talk about the bad again. Look with me back up in the text in verses 8–9 and we are going to have a little talk about politics. What we are going to see is that rulers are often bad but we all need rulers. When it comes to politics and a lot of leaders in politics, in the government, there's often corruption, there are often mishaps, there are often people not leading for your wellbeing, but leading for themselves...but we need government,

that's what he's going to say, "If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields." When you go into a city, or a province, or a state, or a country, you have leaders and the leaders have leaders over them. There is a lot of structure. When you see this oppression and violation of rights, it's because often when people get in leadership, they get power, and power often corrupts leaders and you can see that. We see that even in our social media feeds. We can kind of look into a country like China where you have communism who has a zero COVID policy and it's leading to real damage on individual's lives. You have a government that has power that is often not acting in the best interest of their citizens. But the opposite of government would be anarchy. What Solomon is going to say is that government is actually better than anarchy, tyranny is actually better than anarchy, because people need leaders even though leaders are often bad, because fields have to be cultivated and people have to be cared for.

Think about this even in the biblical structure. We are with King Solomon who is one of the kings of Israel. He's one of those leaders. But if you read the story of Judges, what you have is a people who are doing what's right in their own eyes, and guess what? It doesn't go well for them. What that tells us is that we don't do good leading ourselves; we actually need leaders. People don't do good leading themselves. We need leaders and that brings in 1st and 2nd Kings. So Judges says we need a king and then you have 1st and 2nd Kings, which produce a whole lot of bad kings. So they get kings but all the kings are bad.

So how do we reconcile that with what we need? We can't lead ourselves, we need leaders, but all the leaders are bad. So what do we do with that? Well, it brings us to Isaiah 9:6 where it says, "For unto us a child is born...and the government will be upon His shoulders." See, we need a leader, all leaders are bad, all kings are bad, oh except for one. There is one King who is good — His name is Jesus. He has come and He is coming. He is the good, perfect leader over His Kingdom right now, over

His church, and He is going to reign over the new Kingdom as our perfect King. See, Solomon is trying to say when you see corruption in government, realize that it's a necessary evil because people need leaders; all leaders are bad but it points to the leader that we need, and that leader is King Jesus. Only He can lead us in perfect and good ways. It reminds me of what Winston Churchill said. He said democracy is the worst form of government. Now, we are like, hold on...I thought democracy is the best form of government. He says democracy is the worst form of government except for every other government that's been tried. Even democracy, even our Republican order is broken! We have leaders who are broken, and when you see that don't be amazed. No, we live in a fallen world, we all need leaders, leaders are often corrupt, and it points to the perfect leader who is our King, Jesus.

Solomon is going to move from politics into economics. We are going to deal with economic for the rest of the way through, and just to kind of put a thesis over our talk of economics I want to think about what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. We read through that in our last sermon series. Matthew 6:24 says you cannot serve both God and money. Let's just keep those words of Jesus in your mind because it's going to fit well with what Solomon is going to teach us. In some translations, money is mammon. It's not just printed bills, it's what money gives us — power, influence, value, and significant worth — we can get those things out of money. It isn't just money, it becomes a god; it becomes mammon. So we are going to see that you can't serve both God and mammon, this desire, this love, and worship of money. Solomon says in verse 10, "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also vanity." Don't love money; it's kind of the first main key thing. If you want to have God's gift of enjoyment, you can't love money. Why? Well, because money won't satisfy. Now, you are looking at me like how do I know. Well, this is a guy who had more money than anybody in the history of the world, so I'm just going to take his word. I am not going to get more money than Solomon, he had the most money of anybody that's ever lived on the planet, and he says money won't satisfy. See, the problem with loving money is it starts with loving money, but when you get money, it turns into loving more money. It doesn't satisfies you; you have to have

more. It's like if you're Captain Jack Sparrow and your goal is treasure, you aren't happy when you get treasure; you are happy when you get more treasure. And then when you get more treasure, you are happy only when you get more treasure. So you are miserable because the thing you seek can't satisfy. It's like a bucket with holes in the bottom of it. The more you have, the more you want. It never truly satisfies you. So Solomon is trying to say don't love money. Don't love income. Don't love more in your bank account because there's never enough. You will first love money but then you only want more money, and more money will never satisfy you. So take it from Solomon, money can't satisfy you.

The second thing we see is more money equals more problems. Verse 11 says, "When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?" As goods increase, it actually increases the one who eats them. That's the idea that it increases your worry, it increases your stress, and it increases your waistline. Derek Kidner, a scholar, will point out that it's amazing that today that we have become a very affluent society. Most of us don't have to do backbreaking labor every single day just to eat. We have affluence. We have jobs that give us a lot of ease. Because we live in a culture with so much affluence and so much ease, we have to actually build gyms where we go and try to work off the effects of having too much money. We eat too much and our waistlines grow, so we have to pay memberships to work off some of the problems with the money that we have. Solomon is saying when your money increases you increase too. Your waistline increases, your taxes increase, your worry increases, and it's also the idea of people around you increase. When you have money, people are coming to get some of your money. If you have a lot of money, Giving Tuesday was probably a miserable day for you. Nobody called me on Giving Tuesday, but if you are a business owner, if you have some money, you probably got some emails, phone calls, and solicitation. Everybody wants you. Why? Because you have money, so you were stressed out on Giving Tuesday because a lot of people called. A lot of people depend on you, and so when your goods increase the idea is the only good is that your eyes just watch it go away. You have more, more people come around, and you watch it slip through your fingers.

Also, more money equals less sleep. Solomon says in verse 12, "Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep." So the more you have, the more you increase, the more wealth you get, the less you will sleep. Why is that true? Because you have to worry about all the stuff and all the demands and all the things that your wealth has brought to you. What he's trying to say is the bottom floor of Downton Abbey sleeps better than the top floor. The servants want the life upstairs, but the life upstairs is filled with worry, anxiety, misery, and sleepless nights. It's downstairs, those servants who are laboring that are enjoying the little small things they have. They are actually sleeping at night when those upstairs who have it all have to worry about all they have. He's saying you won't be satisfied. The more you have, the more problems you will have with it, and the more you get the less you will sleep.

So, what's the take home? What does Solomon want you to know? Well, number one is don't love money. Don't love income. Don't have as your goal that you are miserable and you want to be happy, therefore, you are going to pursue more money. He says if that's your goal, if that's your target, it won't satisfy you. The more you get will actually make you more miserable. So, don't love money, but the second thing is don't trust in money. Don't trust in riches. In verse 13, we will first see that riches hurt to keep. It says, "There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt." So when you keep riches, when you hoard riches, when you stack riches, they don't help you they actually hurt you. We actually know this because we tell stories like The Grinch. The point of the Grinch is not he's the good guy so go hoard your money on a hill. The point of Scrooge is not to be like Uncle Scrooge, right? It's don't be like Uncle Scrooge. Don't sit on your gold and not give and be generous to others. In The Ring of Power, the more you hold onto it, the more you keep it, the more it rots away at you. So the more you store, keep, collect, and hold onto, Solomon says, it actually hurts you. And he would know. Why? Because he has more than any of us ever had, and he is a wounded and hurt man with all that he has.

So, if keeping money hurts, here's the next thing — riches hurt to lose. Riches hurt to keep but riches also hurt to lose. Notice what Solomon says in verse 14, "...and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand." So the first guy hordes riches and it hurts him. The second guy loses riches and it also hurts him. I mean, we have seen the FTX fall, the cryptocurrency, over one billion dollars of consumer investment. People are investing big in cryptocurrency, and all of a sudden, in a moment it disappears. It vanishes. That was a bad investment, a bad venture, and then that person who was banking on this certain thing to make them rich, now they are broke and have nothing in hand to give to their kids. So what is the point? Don't trust in riches because it hurts to keep them and it hurts to lose them.

Also, riches can't travel with you. This is one of his big disappointments of life under the sun. He says riches can't travel with you. I don't know about you but I love to travel. I love having a trip on the calendar where I am going to get on a plane, fly somewhere, and do something. Part of it is I love bags. I don't know why, but I love I love bags. I don't love checked bags but I love carry-ons. I have convinced my whole family that we are never traveling with checked bags. I don't care if we are going somewhere three weeks we are only carrying a carry-on because I don't want to check a bag. When it gets there, I want to just have a backpack and a carry on. You can wear things three times. It's fine. It's just what I need. It's just what I'm going to use. But I can't imagine getting on a plane and having zero luggage. Can you imagine going on a trip and carrying nothing with you? That would be stressful. Solomon is going to say the place you are going, which is eternity, you can't check a bag, and you can't bring a carry-on. You aren't going to be able to carry anything on the journey you are going on. Notice what he says in verses 15–17, "As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger." So you get this idea that riches, it hurts to keep them, it hurts to lose them, and you can't take them with you. He is trying to say riches won't satisfy you here and you can't take

them there, so don't love them and don't trust in them. As Denzel Washington says, you will never see a U-Haul behind a hearse. It just doesn't happen. You don't get to take your stuff with you. Think about how much we spend working for the stuff that we buy, the stuff that we have, and the stuff that we want; yet the moment we die, none of it goes with us. The point is don't trust in it. Don't use it as mammon. Don't worship it. Don't make it your identity.

Solomon is trying to get us to the place to be able to accept the good gift of God, and the good gift of God is to actually enjoy the stuff we have in our lives, and in order to do that, you can't love money and you can't trust in riches. Again, he is richest guy in the world and he's the one telling you this, not me. He's got whatever he needs and he's telling you it's not going to work. And that leads us to this kind of key part where it all gets good in the text. We have seen this gift that God has for you, and we have some bad — don't love money, don't trust in money, this is a life that's not going to lead to happiness — but now we have this good spot of here is what you should do, here is what God has for you. This is what we are going to lean into and think about how do we get this. How do we get to this place where we enjoy the good God has given us? Look with me in verse 18, "Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting..." All of a sudden, Solomon is seeing something that's good and fitting, and I think we have one of those burst of light moments. We have talked about this in Ecclesiastes. It's under the sun, life apart from God, let's try to figure it out away from the Lord, but then in it you have these bursts of light where Solomon is saying hold on, let's just remove the clouds for a minute and let's remember God. Let's let the rays shine forth and let's see how are you to live this life connected to God and how could that make a difference in everything. So, this is one of those burst of light moment. Now he's seeing something that is both good and fitting. What is good and fitting? It's "to eat and drink and..." I want you to look at that word, "and." That is an important word. It's to eat and drink and what? "...find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot." Solomon is saying...*I am looking at the world and I see people loving money, trusting in money and stacking money and I myself are doing the same, and I can't sleep. I can't eat. Everybody's*

weary. Everybody wants me. And then he says but you know if we should shine God's light, there is something good and fitting. I have seen it happen and what's good and fitting is when people are able to eat and drink and find enjoyment in their labor. I mean, think about eat, drink, and work, just these simple things in life — not like these grand things, just the simple everyday, mundane things. He says find enjoyment in them. It's both good and fitting that we would receive that. They are actually these gifts from God and this is our lot from God.

What Solomon wants us to do is to enjoy the things in our life and we are going to see that this is actually God's good gift. If you are able to enjoy the things in your life, it's actually a gift of God. Notice what he says in verse 19, "Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions..." We kind of get the idea that wealth and possessions are bad. Like if you have wealth and possession, somehow you are bad. That's not what Solomon says. Wealth and possessions are not bad. Your relationship to wealth and possessions are either bad or good, and he wants you to have a good relationship with wealth and possessions. Things you have or the things that you don't have that you ultimately want he wants you to have a good relationship with that. Notice he says, "Everyone also to whom God has given [so it's a gift] and [that's another important and] power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God." It's the gift of God. What is the gift of God? To find enjoyment, to have the power and ability to enjoy the things that you have, that's a gift from the Lord. Just think about that. In your life, are you able to enjoy the things you have, or do you always want more? When you get something, like on Christmas morning, we open a present, we look at it, and we like throw it away. "Okay, what's next?" If you have kids, Christmas morning is just a madhouse. Isn't that our lives at times? It's just like one gift, don't even enjoy. Don't even think about it. Just toss it and then look for something else because that didn't quite do it. I need something else. I need something more. We can't enjoy the things we have because we are always wanting the things we don't have. We always want the other thing, the next thing, because we believe if somehow we get that next thing, we will be satisfied, we will be happy. The gift of God

is to actually enjoy those things like eat and drink and work and the simple things that you have already. To be able to enjoy them is a gift of God.

So, how do we how do we unwrap this gift? I mean, if God has it for us, if He is telling all of us He has a gift for us this morning and it is the ability to enjoy your life, how do we unwrap that? How do we get that? I don't know about you, but that's what I want. I want like to be able to enjoy my life. All of us want joy in our lives. How do we get there? We have some subtle hints in the text. Notice that these things are given from God, so if we are going to enjoy the small things in life, we have to believe that they are actually from God. We have to believe that they are gifts from a giver. We can't just go for them for just gifts in themselves; we have to see they are gifts from a giver. Our family, the things that we have, the goodness in our lives is all a gift from a good Father. The gifts have to lead us back to Him if we are going to find enjoyment in them. We have to believe that our gifts are actually from our giver who is God, and it has to lead us to God. Like Punchinello with the little boxes and balls, at some point it has to lead you to bump into the door and realize *this* is not what life is, God is life, and these are just accessories. If I don't have God, I will always be unhappy with accessories because accessories were never made to make me whole, only God can. If I know God, love God, and see God, then all these accessories I can enjoy in relationship with God. We have to see the giver of the gifts if we are going to be satisfied and have joy in the things of our life.

Also, Solomon talks twice about accepting your lot. What does it mean to accept your lot? You have to believe God is sovereign over your life and He's organizing and orchestrating your steps. Where you are right now is by God's design. Do you know what we often do? We don't love our lot; we want someone else's lot. We are an entertainment culture where most of our lives are spent imagining and living places where we are really not. We binge watch other things just to go somewhere and have something else because we don't like our boring mundane life. If we could have their life or her life or his life, then we would be happy. Part of enjoying life is to realize your life has been given to you by God and you should enjoy the lot you have. Don't want something you don't have. Don't want someone

else's life, enjoy your life because it's a gift from God and He has a plan for you, for your steps, where you are in the circles that you go through. Don't wish for something else, enjoy where you are. I love what David says in Psalm 16. He says, "The Lord is chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot." In other words, God, what I want most is you. You are my chosen portion. God, you are the one who has given my steps where they go. And then, he says, "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." If you follow David's life, not everything that happened to him was beautiful. He runs into a cave trying to escape because Saul is trying to kill him. His whole life is not beautiful, but he saw his life as beautiful because it's God's lot for him to walk through. Even his suffering he saw as a beautiful hand of God in his life. So right now, wherever you are, whatever you are going through, don't try to escape and get somewhere else and say if I just get here, then I will be happy. Rejoice in where you are right now because God is with you in the midst of it and God is the one who holds your lot. Rejoice in what you have and rejoice in where you are; this is the good gift of God.

Solomon ends it in verse 20, "For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart." One thing he's saying is that if you will remember God and you will be connected to God, saturated with God, and infatuated with God, then you aren't going to focus on all the suffering and bad in the world and everything wrong that happens to you. Instead, you will have joy in your heart. You will see your lot is actually good and the things you have are actually good because you are seeing God in the midst of them.

Now we go into another round of bad. We are going to see the alternative story, and that is a good life without joy. Look with me in chapter 6:1–2, "There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil." So here is another guy who has sort of the same things. He has wealth, possessions, money, and honor. He has the good life. He lacks nothing of all that he desires, but there's not an "and," there is a "yet." It

says, "...yet, God does not give him the power to enjoy them." So this is the counter story. The one guy has some good things in life and he can enjoy them because he's connected to God, yet here is a guy who's got a really even a better life, the best life, but he can't enjoy it. He can't enjoy the things that he has. Now, why would God not allow someone to enjoy the things they have? Why would He not give you the power to enjoy all the things that you have? Because He doesn't want you to settle for boxes and balls. He doesn't want you to settle for lesser things. He wants your longings and desires to lead you to Him because it's only in Him that you will be satisfied.

Solomon makes the case even stronger — here's the ultra-good life, not just a good life, the ultra-good life. Notice in verses 3–6, "If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?" So here's the ultra-good life, one hundred kids, two thousand years of life. Now, to the Jewish mind, kids and long life is a good life. But here is a guy who has one hundred kids and lives two thousand years, but he can't enjoy the things in his life. Solomon said a still-born baby is better off than him because a still-born baby doesn't know the pain of having everything but not able to enjoy it. I want to just compare these two so there's a contrast. There's one guy who has stuff and wealth, and the ability to enjoy them and the other guy has wealth, stuff, honor, and the good life but he can't enjoy them. One God gives the power to enjoy the other He doesn't. So what are you supposed to do with that? Why would God give to one and not give to the other? Well, the one who is able to enjoy them is the one who sees his life from God and his lot is from God. I think it's giving us the picture that he's the one who is in relationship with God. He's Punchinello, he has hit the door, dropped the boxes, walked in and met Eli. He's met his maker and now he sees all of life through the giver. All of the gifts are seen through the giver. He is able to enjoy every gift because he traces it back to the

giver; therefore, he has joy in the smallest things like eating and drinking. In the most mundane things like going to work on Monday, he has joy and happiness. But then this other guy who has the whole world is miserable, because what happens is when gifts are disconnected from God they become gods and those gods can't satisfy. That's why the end of the Elvis movie, you have Elvis in this penthouse suite overlooking where he is the star in Vegas, the most famous person in the universe, and he is miserable and broken because he has everything and he has nothing at the same time. He is at the top but he's really at the bottom. If you had the whole world but you missed God, you will have nothing. Solomon is trying to get you to see that. If you want to have true joy, you have to have the joy that only God can give, that God can empower, and it happens through a relationship with Him. When you see Him, understand Him, and know that your life is from Him, through Him, and to Him, then you can enjoy all the things He's given in your life. Everywhere you go, you can have joy because you're not getting your ultimate joy and stuff; you are getting your ultimate joy in Him, and then you can enjoy stuff because you are satisfied in Him. That's what Solomon's trying to get us to see.

Solomon is going to give us a few more instructions verses 7–9. Here's kind of the main point — enjoy what you have rather than wanting what you don't. Here's what he says, “All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.” Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite...in other words, it's better to see what you have than to want what you don't have. Think about wandering appetite. Does that sound like anyone? Does that sound like you? I mean, that certainly sounds like me most days. I have wandering appetites, and advertisers know that because when I look at something on my phone, it follows me around. Has that happened to you? When you look at something on Safari, then it goes to your email, then it goes to your social media. It follows you around everywhere. Why? Because advertisers know we have wandering appetites and the more we see, the more we want. The more we collect, the more we stack, and our

wandering appetites lead us to more and more stuff. What Solomon is trying to get us to see is we need to stop the wandering appetite and instead let your eyes see what you have. Be satisfied with what you have instead of always desiring what you don't, because when we actually look and see what we have and that it's a gift of God from God, we actually have joy because we are not worried about what we don't have. We are not worried about stacking boxes and balls; we are worried about spending time with our maker who is God, because He's not just our maker, He's also our redeemer. That's what Christmas is about. The one who made us is also the one who died for us so that He could cleanse us of all of our love of money, love of stuff and trust in stuff. He could cleanse us of our idols and our worshiping of gods so that we could be cleansed and made new. We could have a relationship with God through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. And now that we are brought into relationship with God, we can see Him and He actually becomes enough.

How do you know if you have come to know God and He is enough? Well, Solomon would say you have the ability to enjoy life. If you know God, if you are connected to God, if you have a relationship with God, here is what God gives you as a gift — the ability to enjoy life. You don't always need the next thing. You don't always have to make the next plans. You don't always have to be at the next place. You don't always have to look for something more because you have the One you are looking for. You have walked into the wood shop, you have seen your Maker, you have seen your Re-maker and you are satisfied in Him. When you are satisfied in God and what God gives you and the lot He has for you, you will have joy in your life. In the mundane things like eating, drinking, working, and just those average things, you will have joy, the joy that the world can't seem to get because they don't have the ability. God is not going to give you the ability to enjoy boxes and balls because they won't satisfy. God's not going to give you the ability to enjoy all the things that you are seeking and pursuing. He's not doing that because He's mean; He's doing that because He's good. He's doing that because He loves you more than you know. He's not wanting you to stop at stuff; He's wanting you to stop at Him. If you stop at Him and you come to Him and you trust in Him and you get a

relationship with Him, all of a sudden you will be satisfied and then and only then can you find joy in your life.

Do you have this gift? Solomon says the gift of God is to be able to enjoy life. How does that happen? It's through a relationship with God. Do you have the gift of enjoying life or are you miserable, still seeking, and never satisfied? Well, if that's you, you are like a little wemmick walking around with a bunch of boxes and a bunch of balls. But guess what? They are not going to satisfy. You know what you need to do — you need to bump into the door and drop those things you are seeking for true happiness and joy and you need to walk into the wood shop. You need to go to God and, through repentance and faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, find your identity and worth in Him. Because connected to Him, you will have joy, and His joy will cause you to have joy in every area of your life.