

Remembering Empowers Your Joy

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[0 : 00] Isn't it good when your God is the ancient of days? His throne always stands and ever will. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn one more time to the book of Ecclesiastes, or as James liked to say, Ecclesiastics.

I kind of like that better, actually. I like that. So chapter 11 and chapter 12, this is our, well, it's not our final time. It's actually the last words of the preacher.

So next week we will take one more look at the very final paragraph in chapter 12, which is not the preacher. It's written by the editor, right? He talks about the preacher.

And we'll use that last time as a review. So we'll go over the last six chapters, kind of deal. What have we learned? What is it that we've taken out of this?

How do we read a book like Ecclesiastes? Because this is quite different than most of the books that we look at. We have to kind of add a little bit to it, right? So this morning we'll be in chapter 11 and chapter 12, the final words.

[1 : 18] And as well, not only will next week be our final review of Ecclesiastes, but the week after that, Lord willing, yes, the week after that, Lord willing, we will be in 1 John.

So beginning 1 John. So very fresh breath of air in our scriptural language. So if you're able, please stand. I'm going to read from Ecclesiastes 11 and 12.

11, 1 through 12, 8 to be specific. Cast or literally send your bread over the waters.

For you will find it after many days. Give a portion to seven or even to eight. For you do not know what disaster may happen on earth. If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth.

And if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. He who observes the wind will not sow.

[2 : 22] And he who regards the clouds will not reap. As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, So you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

So in the morning sow your seed. And at evening withhold not your hand. For you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

Light is sweet and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all. But let him remember that the days of darkness will be many.

All that comes is fleeting. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth. And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Remove vexation from your heart and put away pain from your body.

[3 : 40] For youth and the dawn of life are fleeting. Remember also the creator. Remember also your creator in the days of your youth.

Before the evil or miserable days come and the years draw near of which you will say, I have no pleasure in them.

Before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain. In the day when the keepers of the house tremble. And the strong men are bent.

And the grinders cease because they are few. And those who look through the windows are dimmed. And the doors on the street are shut. When the sound of the grinding is low.

And one rises up at the sound of a bird. And all the daughters of song are brought low. They are afraid also of what is high.

[4 : 40] And terrors are in the way. And the blossom tree blossoms. Excuse me. And the almond tree blossoms. And the grasshopper drags itself along.

And desire fails. Because man is going to his eternal home. And the mourners go about the streets. Before the silver cord is snapped.

Or the golden bowl is broken. Or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain. Or the wheel broken at the cistern. And the dust returns to the earth as it was.

And the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanity says the preacher. All is vanity.

Or as we've learned to take it unfulfilling. Under the sun. Let's pray. Father help us as we come to these final words of the preacher.

[5 : 38] Help us to gather what he's saying. To understand what he's saying. And then Father be able to translate it into. Believer's language.

Into New Testament promise and hope. Help us as we do by all things. Interpret scripture with scripture. And Father impress upon us.

What is urgent. Before it's too late. Help us to hear today. What we need to hear from you. We ask in Christ's name.

Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. So. I finally found out.

I finally found a diagnosis for my condition. Right. A. A. A. A. D. D. D. Age activated.

[6 : 43] Attention deficit disorder. No. That's it. Sorry. Sorry. So. So. So. Our passage describes the aging process.

It describes. Kind of before we go to the grave. Kind of thing. Kind of very sobering picture. Before we look at the heavy side. I thought we'd look at the light side of aging.

I found some comments on aging. Old age is like a plane flying through a storm. Once you're aboard. There's nothing you can do about it. If you want to know how old a woman is.

Ask her sister-in-law. Old age comes at a bad time. Inside every older person is a younger person. Wondering what happened.

Phyllis Diller said. I'm at the age where my back goes out more than I do. George Burns said. Nice to be here. At my age it's nice to be anywhere.

[7 : 44] And at my age. Flowers scare me. That's George. T.S. Eliot said. The years between 50 and 70. Are the hardest. You're always being asked to do things.

And yet you're not decrepit enough. To turn them down. At age 20. Ann Landers. Here you go. At age 20. We worry about what others think of us.

At age 40. We don't care what they think of us. At age 60. We discover. They weren't thinking of us at all. Pablo Picasso said.

We don't grow older. We grow riper. The golfer Lee Trevino said. The older I get. The better I used to be. George Carlin.

Remember George Carlin? Back in the old days. Yeah. I remember. Not much good to remember. But yeah. He had an interesting thought. He says. I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a lot more as they get older.

[8 : 46] And then it dawned on me. The cramming for the final exam. Grandchildren don't make you feel old. It's the knowledge that he's married to a grandmother.

That makes him old. When your friends begin to flatter you on how young you look. It's a sure sign you're getting old. According to Mark Twain. Am I getting older?

Or is the supermarket finally playing good music? Mark Twain said.

The older I get. The more clearly I remember things that never happened. The important thing to remember is that I'm probably going to forget. And then at my age.

Getting lucky means walking into a room. And remembering what I came there for. All right. Enough of that. I get a kick out of those things.

[9 : 49] And I resemble too many of those things. So. You ever forget stuff? Of course you do. Forget stuff. You forget an appointment. You feel bad.

Or you forget to set your alarm so you remember the appointment. You forget your homework. That's not good. You forget your homework. You get in trouble. You forget why you came into a room.

Right. You ever forget where you put your keys? I always put my keys on the hook by the door. And when I go to the hook and they're not there.

Panic. Because I have no clue where they are. If they're not on the. So we came home from camping a few weeks ago. And Delinda lost her keys.

Oh. She never loses her keys. It's always on the hook. Or it's in her purse. It's just. That's it. She lost her keys. And we're thinking. Okay. Camper.

[10:48] We're searching everywhere. Cars. And so we gave up. You know. So we're going to make. And I figured. You know. The law is. You know. Once you give up on something.

And you. Remedy it. Then you'll find them. All right. So you got to go make keys. Got your car key. And your house key. And your church key. And your. Camper key.

And what are you going to do without keys? Right. I know. Leave everything open. So she finally. We give up. She. She puts on this. Her.

Hoodie. Thing. And reaches in her pocket. Like. Oh. Here they are. It's. The consequences. Of forgetting things.

There's always consequences. You forget an appointment. You feel guilty. You forget your homework. You're in trouble. You. You. You. You. You. You. You forget. A lost opportunity. You. You. You. You've got time that you've lost.

[11:43] Because you're looking everywhere for the silly keys. So it's frustrating. So you forget little things. It's frustrating. It's not the end of the world. But if you forget the big things.

Then it's more than frustrating. Then it can be despair. Then it can be grief. It can be sorrow. My. My. Parents died before I told them I loved them.

Or. You know. Whatever. Something. you can't change. So what is crucial to remember? Our text brings up remember in important ways.

And remembering at a time when it's beneficial to you and not when it's too late. So it's urging us, this chapter, chapter 11, chapter 12, are urging us to remember the important stuff now these are things that we can't afford to put off until they're too late.

So I want you to think, first of all, about the importance of remembering. I started to think about this. What's remembering? Because chapter 12 is going to start with remember your creator.

[12:56] I'm thinking, what does that mean? Remember your creator. He talks about when to remember him. He doesn't talk about how. So what is remembering? And is remembering, and I remember what Mark had preached on some time ago about the memorial stones, right?

Remembering. Those are important things. God wants us to remember certain things. So go back in the Bible and think about what did God call the Israelites to remember? So you do a little word study, little Google on your Bible thing, and remember.

What? What? And there's a whole bunch of God-remembered-us stuff. But what does he call us to remember? Because God remembered Noah. God remembered, you know, Abraham.

God remembered Lot. God remembered Rachel, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. God remembers.

And then when he puts the rainbow out, right, he remembers, right? What did he call us to do?

So first, in the Ten Commands, which command is about remembrance? Does anybody know? The Sabbath. The Sabbath. Remember the Sabbath day. Why? Why is the Sabbath so important? It's holy.

[13:59] He actually has declared a day of rest for us. He declared it. And it's what he did. He says, remember, because I created the world six days, on the seventh day I rested, and I made that a holy day.

You follow what I do. I want you to be like me. I want you to do what's important. And then after the deliverance from Egypt, he told them, I want you to remember my deliverance from Egypt.

Why? Because who you are is important. Because I didn't just save you from the slavery of Egypt, so now you can do whatever you want.

I saved you for myself. I saved you to give you purpose in life. I saved you to give you a new identity. I saved you from one taskmaster to put you under a benevolent God, Master, Lord, who will give you blessings.

Right? So, so, so, and then, and then at the end, in Deuteronomy 80, he talks about, so you've gone through this wilderness for 40 years.

[15:10] I want you to remember that. I want you to remember the wilderness. I want you to remember all the trials. I want you to remember that I was humbling you and testing you to see what was in your heart.

I want you to remember that your shoes never wore out for 40 years. I want you to remember there was bread for you every day and there was meat for you every night. I want you to remember.

And more than that, I want you to remember that you don't live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. It's not the physical, but it's the speaking of God that's important.

So, why is remembering important? Because Sabbath is important because it calls us to be like God and to actually set, be intentional about setting aside time, not just to rest for me, but to rest with him.

Right? Because the New Testament Sabbath is every day. Every day is Sabbath, Hebrews 4, where we look to him and find our rest. You know, we remember, and so Jesus gave us a whole new thing to remember in the gospel, right?

[16:22] The upper room, he gave us what we commemorate every month, the bread and the wine. The bread represents his shoes. What? What does a bread represent?

His body, which was what? Given for you. I'm your substitute. So remember that every time you do this. And the wine represents his blood.

Remember the blood because the blood is what set you free. The blood is what paid the price.

Right? So that's important to remember. If we forget that, what happens?

We kind of live life on our own and we don't experience his... We just sang about, right, how he is the faithful and he is the one that we trust.

He's the Ancient of Days who's always there. And if we forget that we... There's consequences to forgetting. We lose.

[17:22] So, here he's going to compel us in Ecclesiastes 11, 12 to remember a couple of things. He wants us to remember something about our youth and he wants us to remember something about our death.

Okay? He wants us to remember the significance of aging. What is that all about? So when we come to the end of our life, what will matter most? It's kind of this ultimate priority issue.

When we come to the end, what do we want written on our gravestone? More than that, bigger than that, deeper than that, is when I come to the end, what will I regret? Will I regret?

I didn't have enough pleasure. Will I regret? Oh, I didn't accumulate enough stuff. What will I regret? I'm going to regret things about relationships. I'm going to regret things about how I walked with God, right?

So before it's too late, don't wait till then, is his point. So two ultimate priorities. He's going to talk about youth and he's going to talk about death. Chapter 11, he's going to talk about youth.

[18:27] In the days of your youth, do these things in the days of your youth. And then in chapter 12, it gets a little bit more, you know, picturesque. Before you die, you know, before your grinders go out and before you're dragging along like a grasshopper, right?

Before all that stuff starts happening to you, remember, you're a creator. All right, so let's do it this way. So I'm going to put this, I'm going to fill in what he tells us to do with some more life to it, a little more scripture to it, a little more New Testament to it, okay?

So whereas he's going to say, you know, carpe diem, he's going to say, seize the day, live your life before you die is basically what he's saying. I'm going to put it in a better way. So priority one is this, fulfilling joy in life.

That's what we want. We want joy that fulfills us. Fulfilling joy in life is fueled by desiring God utmost.

You say, well, I didn't see that at all in Ecclesiastes 11. You've got to pull it out of there. Fulfilling joy in life is fueled by desiring God utmost.

[19:46] In other words, if I desire God the utmost, if God is the source of my, of ultimate pleasure, which he claims to be, then I will find fulfilling joy.

The fulfilling joy I'm looking for, which I can't find under the sun, I find in desiring him, seeking him. That's where my carpe diem is.

Okay? Anybody know the catechism? Anybody grow up in the catechism or anything, know the first one? Maybe you know the first one. All right? The chief end of man is what?

To glorify God. Remember that? The chief end of, why we exist, is to glorify God. But they didn't stop there. These guys are wise. And what?

And enjoy him. Oh, that changes the whole thing. To glorify him by enjoying him. See, if you really enjoy God, you can't glorify him any better than that.

[20 : 58] Why are you so happy? I know God. I walk with God. I know Jesus. I walk with Jesus. Wow, that's fulfilling. Oh, it's fulfilling.

So, it's that kind of thing. Desiring God utmost will bring you the fulfillment of joy. So, in this passage, he's going to give you three goals. In verses one through six, he's going to talk about living boldly.

Verses seven and eight, he's going to talk about don't waste your life. Use every opportunity you have now. And then, then verses nine and 10 in chapter 11, he's going to basically say, pursue joy. Pursue joy.

Pursue joy. Go after joy. Okay? So, verses one through five, little strains. There's two different views on what this means. Most of the English translations say, cast your bread on the waters. And actually, it's weird because in Hebrew, that's not, the word doesn't mean cast, it means send. Send. Send. Send your bread over the water.

[22 : 03] Not throwing your bread on the water and watching it fall apart and sin. So, what does that mean? So, two views on what that kind of stuff means.

The casting and the giving and the reaping and the sowing. One view is that it's about giving. About generous giving. So, give your bread away.

Right? And if you give and you help others, God will reward you. It'll be rewarding to you. Right? So, giving it away. And that's a popular view of what this means. And it doesn't change the meaning of the whole thing.

If that's how you see that, that's fine. The other view is that this is about making investments. About risk and reward. Right? So, so, so if you're going to make investments in your life, if you're going to sow seed, right?

Don't just sow one seed. If you're a farmer, you sow rows of seeds. Right? And you sow fields of seeds. Because why? Well, what if the one seed doesn't take?

[23 : 06] But if I've got lots of seeds out there, I've got more, more chance. Right? It's a calculated risk. So, two ways of looking at it. All right? About investing, that kind of thing.

Apply it any way you want. It's really about living boldly. Don't put off things because of unknowns. So, notice verse, um, two.

He says, give a portion to seven or even to eight. Why? Because you don't know what disaster may happen on earth. So, so, so, you don't know. So, give.

Do it. Right? You don't know. If the clouds are full of rain, they're going to empty themselves. If the tree falls, it's going to fall. Right? Verse four.

But, he who is always watching the wind won't sow. So, farmers have to pay attention to the weather. Right? It's like, I don't want to, I got to be careful. I got to time it right.

[24 : 02] But if you're so anxious about what the weather is, I'll never sow. And I'll never reap. Because, oh, the clouds are coming. So, at some point, you got to put the seed in the ground.

Right? So, if you see the storm coming, okay, yeah, let's wait. Especially in Colorado. Do we know what it's going to do tomorrow? Because, the forecast says, chance of rain.

Yeah, that's Colorado. Very much. Afternoon, chance of rain. Now, if you live by the mountain, never mind. So, and so then he gets to his point, verse six, then, oh, verse five.

Again, something we don't know. Just like you don't know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman and child. Right? There's that. He's talking about something that's so mysterious. How does, how does the spirit, the life, right?

How does the life come into bones in the womb? Right? That's God. They still call it birth a miracle, isn't it? We've figured out how that happened.

[25 : 12] We tried to define away when life starts. Life starts when God says, I'm going to make a life. Right? So, just like we don't know the whole mystery of that, so we don't know, in verse five, so you don't know the work of God who makes everything.

In other words, you don't know when God's going to send the rain. You don't know when God's going to send the clouds. You don't know when he's going to give you, you can generally know, but you don't. You can't plan every day.

Right? So, verse six, so in the morning, sow your seed. Period. Put the seed in the ground. Go for it.

There's a hurricane, and then, you know, put the seed in the ground. And in the evening, don't withhold your hand. Pull, you know, do your reaping. Okay, so get to it. In other words, live boldly.

Don't be, don't be waiting always for the perfect opportunity or the perfect source of knowledge because there's so many things we don't know. Right? There's always unknowns that we can't control.

[26 : 20] So, sow anyway. Okay, that's his point there. So, now verse seven, he's going to talk about a different kind of not wasting your time, don't waste your years with a warning in verse seven and eight.

So, he's going to compare. Light is sweet, and it's pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. So, everybody loves, you know, isn't it great when the rain stops and the sun comes out? It's like, I love it.

We had a week of rain, and it's like, enough! James, stop praying. Right? So, I want to go outside, right? And not get all wet. So, we love to see the sun come out because it's, you know, especially when you compare it with the clouds.

Anybody ever lived in Portland? It's really depressing. Clouds, all the time. It's going to rain. No, it doesn't rain. It's kind of like sprinkles.

So, when it sprinkles here, I say, oh, it's Portland. Portland rain. Anyway, clouds lead to dreariness. If we never see the sun, never see the blue skies, we always just see gray.

[27 : 26] What is that? It's gloomy. Right? So, verse 7, so light is sweet, and it's pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. That's the prime of life, right?

So, verse 8, if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all. So, not just when you're young here, sounds like he's youth oriented, right?

If a person lives many years, all your years, enjoy them all. But remember, here's the warning, but remember, that the days of darkness will be many. So, he's looking ahead.

Enjoy while the light's out. Jesus even said, walk while you have the light. Right? So, enjoy the days of light, because the days of darkness are coming.

So, now he's going to start hinting at when you age. He's going to talk about the days of youth being the light, walking in the light, when you're vigorous, when you're, when you have energy, when you have more and more opportunities, and then the days of darkness come, and your opportunities will be more limited.

[28 : 31] So, live while you can. That seems to be his point. There will come a time when, when it's too late. So, don't put things off. So, look at verse 9 then, as well.

Now, he's going to talk about pursuing joy. In fact, he's going to pile up the urgings here. Verse 9, rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.

Walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, but know, again, warning, but know, for all these things, God will bring you into judgment. So, yeah, go after, walk in the ways of your heart, but what will my heart do sometimes?

Do I have a good heart? Can I trust my heart? Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful, and we're sick than anything. So, when we say people have a good heart, we know what we mean.

We mean, you know, they have a good heart, but nobody has a good heart. Pure and pure.

Because in our heart, Jesus said, that's where everything comes from, right? All the stuff comes out of the heart.

[29 : 33] And that's why we need God to constantly cleanse and change our hearts. Because our hearts are our intention and our thoughts. So, that's why he's putting a little, you know, at the end of verse 9, so go after your heart, follow your eyes, but remember, okay, but remember, be careful, because this, there's consequences.

So, pursue, live, seize the day. Then, verse, verse 10, remove vexation from your heart, put away pain from your body.

Yeah, I'd like to know, how do you put away pain from your body? How do you do that now? I think he's talking about focus.

I think he's talking about focus. I mean, you know, he's talking about focus. So, turn away your thoughts from vexing. There's lots of things that are vexing, lots of things that are frustrating. Don't focus on those. Turn away from that, right?

So, turn your thoughts off of that. And pain. Yeah, we can focus on our pain, because it, like, you know, grabs our attention a lot. try to put it away as much as you can. That's what he's saying.

[30 : 45] Try to have a positive outlook. All right, why? Because, in all these things, God will bring you into judgment. There's a God factor. So, it sounds like, as we read that, it sounds like a threat,

doesn't it?

live your life, have fun, but remember, God's going to bring you into judgment. So, he, this writer, we know, is a little bit jaded, right?

We know he's a little bit, uh, carpe diem, because you're going to die, right? Kind of guy. This isn't Solomon of the Proverbs. This is, if it's Solomon, it's Solomon in his dark days.

Right? So, what, how do we, as Christians, read that? How does scripture interpret that? Why, what is judgment about? Why does God want us to think about judgment?

Because he's going to go to the next chapter. Therefore, remember your creator, right? Remember your creator. While you're young. Recognize that your life is a gift, is what this means.

[31 : 57] Why is there a judgment? Because God has given you things. He's given you life, breath, abilities. He's given you the abilities to do what you do.

He's given you a mind. He's given you health for a time. Right? He's given you so many things.

We're accountable. There's the reason that God gives us life and years and abilities.

That's why he's going to say, remember your creator, the one who created you. There will be a day when your body, dust, goes back to dust, and your spirit that he gave you, the life that he gave you, he takes, right?

He calls the shots. He gets the last word, doesn't he? Because he's the creator. He gets to do that. If we look at it negatively as a legalistic thing, then okay. Yeah, it sounds negative. But that's not how scripture presents it.

Scripture doesn't. God gives us life and breath and gifts that we may enjoy him and thereby glorify him. We show people how great he is because he's the source of our joy.

[33 : 13] So let's look beyond Ecclesiastes to get a better understanding. Here's Paul in Acts 17. This is Paul talking to the philosophers on Areopagus in Greece.

If you've ever been to Greece, there's the Mars Hill, they call it, or the Areopagus, where all the philosophers used to discuss things.

So Paul went up there. These are guys, these are not Jewish guys. These are Greek philosophers. These are guys that believe in all kinds of different gods. Right? So how's Paul gonna preach Jesus to these guys?

Right? What's Paul gonna do? So watch what he does. Acts 17. Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, the Mars Hill area, I actually saw that place, said, Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

For as I passed along and observed the object of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, to the unknown God. See, they're covering their bases just in case we missed one.

[34 : 15] Right? To the unknown God. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you, the God that you don't know, the God who made the world and everything in it.

So he's talking about the God. Being Lord of heaven and earth does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything.

Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything, he's the creator, and he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods.

So America has an allotted period, right? We're a nation that has an allotted period. Just like Israel had an allotted period, just like Babylon and Assyria and Greece and Rome all had allotted periods. So he has fixed, determined allotted periods in the boundaries of their dwelling place. Why? That they should seek God. That they should seek.

[35 : 28] That's an interesting way to say it, isn't it? That they should seek God. Not obey him. Seek him. Desire him. He's done all this so that they might desire him in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him.

And then Paul says, and actually he's not far from each one of us. He's not a distant God. For in him we live and move and have our being.

He's right here, ever present, right? So Paul is saying the purpose of life is to seek God and to live in him and move in him and find all our satisfaction in him.

So he says, being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that a divine being is like gold or silver or stone or an image formed by the art and imagination of a man.

The times of ignorance God has overlooked. So the time of, the Old Testament, the time of ignorance. Not all the nations understood this.

[36 : 43] So now, now he commands all people everywhere, every nation, every person in the world, everywhere to repent. Why? Because he's fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed and of this he has given assurance to all by raising that man from the dead.

Who's that man? Jesus. But as soon as Paul started talking about resurrection on the Areopagus, he's like, okay, we're done. Don't worry. They didn't want to hear anymore. This resurrection, we didn't want to hear that.

But he got to some point and some of the men did then want to talk to him. We'd like to hear more about this. Interesting, that's how Paul approached the culture of that time.

That's what our culture is like, by the way. Our culture is filled with all kinds of different gods, all kinds of different ideas, all kinds of different religions. They don't know the creator. So Paul starts at A, right?

Let me tell you about the God you don't know about. He's the creator, right? And this is what he's called us to. Why do we exist?

[37 : 55] We exist to seek him, to desire him. So read scripture understanding that. See, that's what Paul thought. It wasn't God just wants to give you a set of rules and he wants you to live.

He wants you to be satisfied. And he wants you to come sooner than later to the realization that everything under the sun is ultimately unsatisfying.

It's good stuff and it brings temporary joy, but it's not fulfilling. Don't wait to the end of your life when you've gathered all this stuff and say, I'm still not fulfilled.

Yeah, you figure that out as you go. But we think, oh, if I just had a little more. I just had a little more, a little salary bump, that'll make me happy because then I can get that other boat and that'll make me happy until it breaks down and I hurt myself trying to ski.

Okay. So first and foremost, I think what he's saying in chapter 11 as we look through the lens of scripture is desire God utmost and that will fuel your joy.

[39 : 13] Then chapter 12, he comes to another point. Another priority. Really, this is the ultimate priority of all ultimate priorities is remember your creator in the days of your youth.

And then notice he's going to say before, before, before. Verse one, before the evil days come.

Verse two, before the sun and the light, everything goes dark. Verse six, before the silver cord is snapped, before everything breaks down and everything fails and you return to dust.

Remember your creator. That's the context. Okay. One priority. Remember your creator. Let me put it this way. Let me, let me put it with a, with a scripture twist on what this, not twist, but filling out.

Let's fill in what he says by remember your creator. I will put it this way. Walk with your creator.

Walking with your creator empowers satisfaction in all your years because God is the source of joy and satisfaction.

It's another way of saying what we said earlier. It's another way of saying, right, fulfilling joy in life is fueled by desiring God. Well, walk with God. I'll take it another step as we walk with God.

[40 : 29] And that's what I mean by remember your creator because not just, oh yeah, I forgot about him yet. No, keep remembering your creator. So walking with him, constantly aware of him, empowers satisfaction in all of life, not just your youth.

So, one priority, remember. Remember your creator. What's that mean? He tells us when to do it before this, before that.

He tells us, you know, when to do it, but he doesn't tell us how to do that. How do you remember your creator? So, we forget him, right? That's what we talked about things, you know, we forget. We lose things. We forget where we put things. You know, so the consequence of losing my key is not that big a deal, not the end of the world, just frustrating. But if I forget my creator, what's the, there's a bigger downside to that.

So what does it mean to remember, not just recall him, not just, oh, go to a funeral. Oh yeah, God, yeah, I remember now. There's this whole God thing. Remember, Romans 1 tells us that most of the world suppresses the truth, right?

[41 : 41] That God has made himself incredibly evident. in our world, right? But the world suppresses. They say, oh, I don't believe, I'm an agnostic, or I'm, I'm an atheist.

No, no, you're not. You've just taken the evidence and suppressed it. Because the evidence is everywhere. It's everywhere.

There's a constant, so, so I, I'm sitting, living in a van down by the river, right? So for three weeks, we're sitting by the river and I, and I just had time to relax and just look and I'm watching the river. I'm watching these three different kinds of birds. One swooping over the water, one kind of hanging up here and then, then there's a way up high, there's the hawks circling around.

It's like all this life going on and, and I got hummingbirds coming and going. I got, I got, I got, I got, not moose, we didn't see moose. We saw elk come right into the campsite.

[42 : 41] I'm just sitting right there, minding my own. Here comes mama moose and she's eating my tree. Not my tree, but she's, so I'm seeing all kinds of life.

I'm just constantly reminded what God has made. So, at night, you go out and see the stars. What does scripture say about the stars?

The heavens? They proclaim they proclaim the glory of God. If you look at the night sky, you can't hear anything if you're looking and listening but the glory of God.

What? Look up some Jason Lyle videos on astrophysics stuff. It's just astounding, astounding what God has done.

You can't say it's not intelligent design, et cetera, et cetera. We look at the mountains. What do we see? We love where we live. We've got this beauty of creation.

[43 : 47] After a rain, we see the rainbow. What does the rainbow tell us? I remember. I'm not going to kill you this time by that way. I'm keeping my promise.

I always remember. Constant reminders, right? So he says, in your youth, remember your creator in the days of your youth.

Is he implying that by the time you're old and feeble, it's too late? It's never too late. But he's talking about likeliness. If you've put off, if you've put God off and your creator off for a lifetime, what are the chances?

Right? Now, always a chance. Right? We hear about people that are dying and they confess Jesus and wonderful. Great. Thief on the cross.

Right? So, but are you counting on that? Don't count on that. Is what he's saying.

[44 : 49] Don't wait till the end. It may be too late. By the time, so look at verse 2 then. So he says, before the evil days come, what he means is the days of trouble come, the days of misery come, and the years draw near in which you will say, here comes that day when you say, I have no more pleasure in these days.

I have nothing more to like about this life. So what do you, so you get to that, you wait till that point, what are you going to do? When you're in despair, when you're in depression, many of you know, it's a deep pit.

Okay? I need some time to get out of that pit. I need God to take me out of that pit. So, and then he says, okay, before verse 2, now he's going to draw a picture before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened.

And everything goes dark. It's a picture. It's a metaphor. It's an image, right, of the storm clouds coming. The clouds come. The stars, everything's darkened and the clouds return after the rain. Wait a minute, the clouds are supposed to disperse after the rain. But no, the rain comes, the storm comes, and then it comes more clouds. So in other words, the light's gone. Everything now is Portland.

[46 : 07] I'm sorry, everything now is cloudy. Everything now is gray. Okay? So now he's going to bring some urgency to this in verses 3 through 6.

He's going to bring images. And as we read this, you might be going, what? What are the grinders? What are these windows getting dim? What's going on here?

These are images of the dying process. These are images of older age. I know, I don't like talking about it because I'm already experiencing them.

Right? Before the loss, he reasons. So here's the images. Verse 3. In the day when the keepers of the house tremble. So the keepers are the guards. They're the ones, the watchmen, right?

They're the keepers of the house. And if they're shaken, okay, not good. You ever watch, what's it called?

[47 : 05] Annie Griffith. Yeah, it's Annie Griffith. You know, and then they go to the bank, right? And the guard at the bank is old Gus. Right? And they rob the bank and Gus pulls out his gun and falls apart, right?

Kind of like that. By the time the guard is shaken, okay, where? And then what else? So you got the, and then the strong men are bent. Right?

Right? I'm walking more like my dad. You see me doing this all the time. I'm like, I'm bending. And then the grinders.

I like this one. I had no clue about this one. The grinders cease because they're few. What are the grinders? You grind with your teeth. And the grinders cease because they're few.

You're losing your teeth. And those who look through the windows are dim. What are the windows? They're your eyes. And they get dim.

[48 : 09] And the doors on the street are shut. What are the doors? My ears. So I'm losing my teeth. Losing my eyesight.

Losing my hearing. Right? It's all going down. When the sound of grinding is low and one rises up the sound, you're easily startled. Right? And all the daughters of song are brought low.

Does that mean they can't sing as high anymore? I don't know. They are afraid also of what is high. Afraid of heights. I'm not going up them stairs. I might fall down them stairs. And this isn't about a ladder, by the way.

So I should be afraid of heights, right? I haven't learned yet. And terrors are in the way. Everything's frightening because if your body is shutting down and if you are not able to do as much as you used to do, then certain things I wisely must be more afraid of.

Am I going to go hiking up a cliff? Right? Am I going to go doing things that I used to do when I'm 20 and now I'm 63 and I can fall off that ladder now?

[49 : 21] I've proven it. Twice. So, okay, then we get, I love this, and then the almond tree blossoms.

Anybody seen an almond tree blossom? What's it look like, Diane? I asked Diane. What's it? She was stalling.

You know what? Diane's like, come on. I don't know. Well, they're actually pink. They can be pink. And they're in the rose family. They're five petals. So, we're getting into technical. So, they're white. Aren't they basically genoids? Not necessarily. Okay.

James! We know too much. But the general picture from Israel is, the almond trees are white.

[50 : 18] Pure white. What's that? The hair turns white. The hair turns white. And then I love this one. The grasshopper. Ah, grasshopper.

Grasshopper of what? Drags. Drags. Drags itself along. Wait a minute. What? I thought grasshoppers don't hop. So, they've lost their hop.

Have you lost your hop? And desire fails. Technically, the word is the caperberry fails. Yeah, I call it viagra now, but...

Caperberry was an aphrodisiac. Just for energy. It's just an energy thing. So, they translate for us 20th, 21st century people.

Desire fails. We don't know what a caperberry is. You look it up, you'll find out. Somebody said Solomon must have a bunch of those. So, see, get the picture?

[51 : 26] It wasn't me. So, you start to shake, you start to bend over, you lose some teeth, your eyesight dims, your hearing's going, you have fears, white hair, your hop's gone, right?

Desires are fading. Why? Why? You know, verse 5, because man is going through his eternal home.

Man's going to his next stage. He may only mean his eternal home is the grave if he doesn't believe in the afterlife. We know that there is afterlife.

It's just a matter of where you go in eternity. Where's your eternal home? Right? man. So, then he gets into some other pictures.

Verse 6, before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken. So, what's that? Well, those are precious things. Those are fragile things. And if they're lost, once your life is lost, once your silver cord and your golden bowl is broken, right?

[52 : 37] or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain and the wheel is broken at the cistern. So, you go to the well, right? How do I get the water out of the well?

Well, I put a pitcher down there and then I dip it in and then I bring it back up. But if the pitcher that I put down there is broken, I'm not getting any water. And then if the wheel at the cistern where I'm pulling the veil up is broken, I'm not getting it so I'm double dead, right?

Double dry, double... important to hydrate, that's a lot. No. Sorry. I prayed that way. So, ultimately, the end, verse 7, the dust returns to the earth as it was.

Dust to dust, right? God said in Genesis 3. Genesis 2, God created man out of the dust, right? He took the dust and He formed the man and then He breathed raw, He breathed spirit, breathed into man and became a living being, right?

And then after Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 3, He said what? The day you eat of it, you will die. Well, it's going to be a process, actually. It's going to be this process of death, but at the end of the process, you dust, Adam, dust, return to dust.

[54 : 03] I'm taking my spirit back. Yeah, that's the picture. Before it's all done, right?

So then He adds His flavor on this, verse 8, of course, the preacher has a very negative view of life, a very pessimistic, very skeptical, right?

Vanity, vanity, everything's vanity, it's not worth it, it's all fleeting, it's all fragile, it's all unfulfilling, all unsatisfying under the sun.

So you know, do what you can. But we know there's more. We know there's much, much more.

This life is not. If there's no resurrection, then Paul agrees with this guy by saying, yes, there's no resurrection, no life after death, you can eat, drink, be married, tomorrow you die, that's it, so get what you can.

But there is resurrection, Paul goes on to say, Christ has raised from the dead, he's proven it, he's broken that chain, and all who believe in him, he will raise from the dead.

[55 : 14] And all souls, every soul is eternal. Every soul is eternal, you know, it doesn't just stop. Every soul is eternal.

we will spend eternity somewhere. Do we know the one that makes the choice for that? So, why is it so urgent to remember my creation?

What's the big deal? Psalm 90, I think, fills in the gaps here for us. Psalm 90, interestingly, is traditionally written by Moses. Not David's psalm, this is actually a Moses.

Moses says, Lord, you have been our dwelling place, you're it, you've been our dwelling place in all generations, not the land, not the wilderness, you have been our dwelling places in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you ever had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God, you're it. You return man to dust, and say, return, all children of man.

[56 : 22] For a thousand years in your sight, or but yesterday when it's passed, or as a watch in the light, in the night, you sweep those years away as with a flood.

They're like a dream, like the evening as it fades and withers. Well, like grass that is renewed in the morning, and in the morning it flourishes and is renewed, and in the evening it fades and withers.

So, life is so temporary and frail. For we are brought to an end, watch this, this is interesting. We are brought to an end by your anger, by your wrath.

We are dismayed. You have set our iniquities before you. Our secret sins you brought to light in your presence. For all our days pass away under your wrath, and we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

years of our life are 70 or even by reason of strength 80. Now, Moses was different, apparently. Right?

[57 : 29] 80, he was only halfway down. Yeah. But he's speaking as a prophet, right? Generally, people get 70, maybe 80 years. Or, yeah, their span is but toil and trouble.

Genesis 3, thorns and this. They are soon gone and we fly away. But here's the question. Who considers the power of your anger and your wrath according to the fear of you?

Who considers that? Who really spends time thinking about my creator? Who wants to? If I desire to live a life according to Bill, according to what my eyes lust for, what my heart longs for in the quick fix of the world?

Who wants to think about fear of God? That's a damper. Amen. Or is it that I've been aiming to love?

Is it that I am satisfied too easily with the world's joys? And they do it last. I got it.

[58 : 51] At least they're joyful for a moment or so. At least they take my mind off the bad stuff of the world. At least they give me a little bit of breathing space.

Of course I know then I get low again. I probably lower the next time because it's less satisfied each time. Maybe there's, as God promises, there's a joy, there's a fulfillment that he offers.

In fact, Jesus talks about he who eats my bread will never hunger. He who drinks from me will never thirst.

So he's talking about fulfillment. Real satisfaction. I came that you might have life. what kind of life? A drudgery kind of, you know, whore.

I came that you might have a life and have life abundantly, like you've never experienced. Would you trust me for that? Or are you going to aim low?

[59 : 57] Why is there anger from God? He's our creator. What makes him angry? What gives him wrath? What does that mean? And don't read into God's feelings, our feelings.

Our anger doesn't accomplish the purposes of God. God's anger does. So it's different. Ours is sudden and self-pushed.

His is righteous. Oh. So to Christians, does God ever get angry at a Christian? Do you find that in the New Testament?

No. Is God ever disappointed with a Christian? Impossible because he knows, he knows, he knows, he knows, he knows what you're going to do. Peter, are you going to fall?

Are you going to be disappointed when Peter falls? No. Oh, he's going to fall. That's not disappointing. Don't let the devil tell you that. Don't let the devil tell you God is mad at you. God is not mad at you. What is God's feeling in the New Testament when we sin?

[61 : 04] Grieve. Grieve. He's grieved. He's hurt. He's wounded. Because we've rejected his love.

Because we've rejected his promise. He's hurt. He's not mad. When Peter fell, and he fell big time, didn't he?

For all his boasting. What'd Jesus do to Peter? Right? He said, Peter, hey, Peter, hey, rock, hey, Rocky.

I'm not feeling like a rock today, Jesus. I let you down. Hey, rock, do you love me? Three times he asked Peter, you love me?

Go feed my sheep. Go shepherd my sheep. In other words, he didn't say, okay, you're right down now. You were the rock, now you're just the corrupt devil. He said, no, dude, you're still my guy.

[62 : 11] Right? All right. Please don't buy that. Because if you buy that God is angry with you as a Christian and you, when you have fallen short of him, if you buy that, if you feel guilt and shame, that's not coming from the Holy Spirit, that's coming from the evil one.

Because what that's going to do to you is, here's God, I'm going to do this, right? That's not the one. God wants you near. So the Holy Spirit's going to convince you.

That's a whole different thing. That's not guilt and shame. It's this soft. But sometimes it takes a hammer, right? A ladder. Because I'm, you know, I'm not hearing the soft knock.

But it's always, conviction's going to draw me to him, not send me away from him. Holy Spirit wants to draw him to him. That's a whole different, not shame me, not guilt me.

That guilt and shame is coming from me, coming from you. I'm like, if I don't know the Lord, that's still evil. Where are we?

[63 : 27] What happened? so, in Psalm 90, Moses has two prayers, but there's three, but two I want to focus on.

So, because our life is aside, because we're going to pay for our sins, because there is a reason for death, as God said, because we sin, the wages of sin is death. We earn that, and we prove it when we die.

that doesn't mean we're not saved. So, he says, if I'm going to live this life rightly, here's how Moses says in Psalm 90, so, Lord, teach us, teach us to number our days, because we only got a few.

Teach us to number our days. Teach us to use every opportunity that you give us, so that we may have a heart of wisdom. Return, O Lord, come back to us, O Lord, how long?

Have pity on your servants. And then he says this, and I love this. By the way, John Piper uses this as a daily prayer. He's like me, or I'm like him.

[64 : 26] He gets depressed, he needs a little lift. Listen to this, this last line of Psalm 90. Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love.

Fill us, satisfy us, quench our all our desire. Give us the ultimate fulfillment and satisfaction in your love.

Not wrath, not anger, not law, your love. And then what will happen? Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

love. The cheap end of man is to glorify God by enjoying him forever. Desire him, seek him, be satisfied in him.

Walking with your creator empowers satisfaction all your years, not just when you're dead. Lord, help us right as we get old. I still want some satisfaction.

[65 : 44] I still want some power to find joy in spite of troubles, dark days, clouds. So, do you remember your creator?

Oh yeah, I just got reminded today. No, no, no. You keep them in mind. Pay attention to the constant reminders that he gives us. What a joy. We get busy, I know, but go out at night, look at clouds.

I didn't call it that. Those two. Yeah. Those two. The stars. Go out where the city lights are not, where you can see just, oh my gosh.

You'll appreciate how many there are. You know, if you have a chance to go to the coast, go see the ocean. I love you. I don't like the beach, but I love you.

But, ow, right? Ow. You ever dived in the end? You ever done scuba? Oh, that's a whole lot of that. That's really cool. I mean, God's created you.

[66 : 54] Remember him. He gives us constant reminders of the day. Walk with him. Walk with him. Oh, Lord, I love that tree you got over there. It's all kind of prickety. I love you to make prickly.

They're not identical, right? And then we go to our plant and we make things all identical in our yard. Why do we do that? God doesn't. So I start planting like God's big tree over there. No, that's too much in line. Over here, try to do what he does, right?

It's a little more. man. Everything's lined up, you know, it's man. Why do we remember him?

Because as we walk with him, he empowers our satisfaction. All our fears. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this reminder from Ecclesiastes.

[67 : 59] Thank you, Lord, that even in this servant, the preacher, who does believe in you, certainly, but seems to be discouraged in his old age in trying to counsel the young to not make the mistakes that he has made.

help us hear that. And even more, help us to hear what Paul said and what Moses said, what the Psalms said, because they fill in the missing parts.

They give us the reason why we want to remember you, because you satisfy us. The reason we want to seek you is you give us joy.

And by that, Lord, we glorify you. We are true light, true salt in this lost world. That's what we want to do.

In Christ's name we pray, amen. Amen.