

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:16

Injustice Vocation, Community

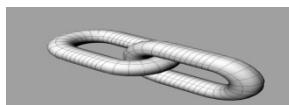
Sermon Notes for November 17, 2013, by Pastor Dennis R. Tuuri

¹⁶Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.

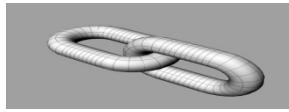
¹⁷I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.

¹⁸I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. ¹⁹For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. ²¹Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?

²²So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?



¹Again I saw all the **oppressions** that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had **no one to comfort them!** On the side of their **oppressors** there was power, and there was **no one to comfort them.**



²And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. ³But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.

⁴Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

⁵The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh. ⁶Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

⁷Again, I saw vanity under the sun: ⁸one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone?

¹²And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—

a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

¹³Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish **king** who no longer knew **how to take advice.** ¹⁴For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. ¹⁵I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. ¹⁶There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Discussion Questions From Ecc. 3:16-4:16

- 1. How central to your theology of work is serving others? And how can the truth that work is serving others add meaning, purpose and joy to your labors?**
- 2. What are the particular limitations that God has put into your life as part of your heritage from Him? Are you grateful to God for these elements of your heritage?**
- 3. What sins cause you to move into isolation?**
- 4. In what practical ways have you comforted others this past week or month?**
- 5. Are you willing to yield, utilizing the benefits of community by being open to advice and counsel of your community?**