

Riches in a Fallen World

Ecclesiastes 5:8 – 6:12

Halifax: 12 January 2014

Introduction:

In our sermon series in Ecclesiastes,

- Solomon has been talking about the vanity that is found in this world for the secularist...
 - the person who tries to live without God—as if God is irrelevant.

In the last two sermons, Solomon has shown us that such persons can even be found in the worshipping assembly.

- That's right, he showed us that there are those who come before God neither to listen to Him nor to speak meaningful words to Him...
 - They are there in body, going through the motions, but it is all empty.
 - All too often, even God's own dear people fall into this kind of nonsense in their worship—
 - There is very little actual connection with God.

It is surprising to many people to hear that the worship of people who go regularly to the sanctuary can be nothing but vanity...

- but perhaps it may be even more surprising for them to consider what Solomon presents to us in our text for this week...
 - Ecclesiastes 5:8 through the end of chapter 6...
 - namely, that the people who really know how to rejoice in riches are true believers!
- Oh yes, they have seen the shallowness of the prosperity gospel—we are not talking about that...
 - but many think that the scriptures advocate poverty as the ideal.
 - In all honesty, many believers feel this way too—deep down inside—
 - and so they hold the wealth that they have with a little discomfort and feel a bit critical of those who have more a lot of this world's goods...
 - They have a shadow cast over their ability to really enjoy what God has given them in this world.
 - Sometimes, this attitude actually makes them ungrateful—
 - They feel kind of unspiritual to thank God for material blessings...
 - and also to ask for them...so they don't thank Him or acknowledge Him when He gives them things...
 - Oh yes, I know there are many believers who have the opposite problem—they look at God as a cosmic vending machine...we will look at that problem too...
 - Ecclesiastes 5:8 – 6:12 addresses both of these errors...it shows us how to view riches in a proper way in this fallen world...so let's take a look...

Listen as I read to you beginning at Ecclesiastes 5:8...

Ecclesiastes 5:8–6:12: If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.

⁹ Moreover the profit of the land is for all; *even* the king is served from the field. ¹⁰ He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also *is* vanity. ¹¹ When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see *them* with their eyes? ¹² The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep. ¹³ There is a severe evil *which* I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt. ¹⁴ But those riches perish through misfortune; when he begets a son, *there is* nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came; and he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ And this also *is* a severe evil—just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has labored for the wind? ¹⁷ All his days he also eats in darkness, and *he has* much sorrow and sickness and anger.

¹⁸ Here is what I have seen: *It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for *it is* his heritage. ¹⁹ As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—*this is* the gift of God. ²⁰ For

he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart.

^{6:1} There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men: ² A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil affliction. ³ If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he— ⁴ for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. ⁵ Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything*, this has more rest than that man, ⁶ even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?

⁷ All the labor of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied. ⁸ For what more has the wise *man* than the fool? What does the poor man have, who knows *how* to walk before the living? ⁹ Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. ¹⁰ Whatever one is, he has been named already, for it is known that he *is* man; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.

¹¹ Since there are many things that increase vanity, how *is* man the better? ¹² For who knows what *is* good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?"

May the Lord bless to us the reading of His holy word.

In expounding this passage today, I want to do something a little different than I usually do...

- I want to begin with the middle of the passage—with verses 18-20—
- This is at the heart of all that the Lord is telling us that we ought to do with riches in this world...

In short...Solomon tells you to:

I. Rejoice in the good things that God has given you in this world! (v. 18-20)

- Look at what it says in verse 18 & 19:
 - **Ecc 5:18-19: Here is what I have seen: *It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.* ¹⁹ As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—*this is the gift of God.***

A. That's right! You are to rejoice greatly in what God has given you!

1. It is not wrong to rejoice in your new clothes, in an excellent meal on your table, in a new house, in a beautiful necklace that your husband gave you, or in a new bicycle that your father bought for you.
 - You don't need to feel guilty about rejoicing in these things if you have obtained them by honest means...
 - through lawful work or some other way that you have come by it honestly and fairly.
2. In fact, it is wrong if you don't rejoice in it! You are called to rejoice!
 - a. What?
 - Do you somehow think that God is not the one who gave you these things?
 - Of course He did!
 - Solomon says that our possessions are our heritage from God...
 - God is very much in the picture here—
 - He is mentioned again and again in these verses...
 - three times as the one who has given us our earthly inheritance.
 - b. And for you to feel guilty about having what He has given you—
 - or for you to disdain what He has given you to enjoy is very inappropriate indeed!
 - Yet, too often, that is what believers do...
 - We have been overly affected by the eastern mystics who disdain God's gifts and elevate poverty in the church...
 - They inherited this more from anti materialist Greek philosophy than from Jesus Christ!
 - Certainly, Jesus told us not to worry about what we have and do not have in this world...
 - but He also teaches us to rejoice in God's good gifts.
 - c. That is why it says that it is good and fitting for us to rejoice...
 - The word *fitting* also means *beautiful*!
 - It is a beautiful thing to give thanks to our heavenly Father—to acknowledge His goodness and His kindness in giving us our daily portion in this world!
 - We who know Jesus should be the most grateful of all...

- We know that we do not deserve the least of God's mercies because we know that we are sinners...
 - How grateful we should be for what He has given us!
3. In Deuteronomy, the Lord warns His people that ingratitude will be their downfall when He brings them into the Promised Land.
- Prosperity will be harmful to them if they cease to acknowledge Him as the one who gave it all to them...
- a. He warns them over and over that He is giving them a very great inheritance there—
- vineyards and olive groves that they did not plant, houses that they did not build...
 - And He tells them that when they obtain all these things, they will forget Him...
 - they will forget that He is the one who gives them the power to obtain wealth.
- b. And He says that it will be on account of this ingratitude that He will punish them.
- Listen to what He says in Deut 28:46-48:
 - **Deut 28:46-48: And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever. ⁴⁷ Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸ therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.**
 - It seems to me that this ingratitude is one of the main things that has often brought ruin to the church...
 - When God brings the gospel to a nation, there is often a pattern...
 - First, there is persecution, but then the gospel begins to fill the land and change the nation—and they begin to prosper...
 - But then instead of giving thanks, they forget God, just like Moses is saying Israel would do and just as they did do!
 - Then God begins to chasten them and bring them down.
 - So don't feel guilty about what you have if you have it honestly...
 - Give thanks to God for it!
 - It is the heritage that He has given you!
 - It is a manifestation of His love and goodness.
- But at the same time...
- B. Don't make too big a deal over your riches either—just enjoy them before God.
1. That is what verse 20 is getting at...
- It explains that when you just enjoy what you have, you won't be all focused on what you have or don't have in this present world...
 - You will just be full of joy and free of fretting and complaining.

- Look at what it says of the one who learns to do this...verse 20:
 - **Ecc 5:20: For he [that person] will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.**
 - *To not dwell unduly on the days of your life*
 - means that you won't be looking at this world as if it is all there is!
 - You will be able to focus on the glory of the LORD and on the gospel and on all the blessings that you have from Jesus Christ.
- 2. God will keep you busy with the joy of your heart...Jesus Christ...
 - a. That Jesus loves us so much that He came to die for our sins...
 - That the Father loves us so much that He sent Him to do this...
 - That the Holy Spirit loves you so much that He reveals all of this to you and turns you from vanity to see the riches that will never perish.
 - b. As Jesus said, you will not worry the way the Gentiles who do not know God do about what you will put on, what you will eat...
 - what might happen to your bank account—whether you will get a raise—whether your worldly goods are all secure...
 - all that stuff—it won't matter so much to you because your treasure will not be in this world...
 - Again, you will not dwell unduly on the days of your life...
 - because God will keep you busy with the joy of your heart!
 - c. Sure, you will be thankful for what God gives you in this world...
 - In fact, you will enjoy it more than the people who make it their whole life—
 - because you will have it all in the proper perspective.
 - The secularist who does not know God is unable to do this.
 - He has not dealt with what really matters.
 - All his treasure is in nothing else but this world—
 - even if he is totally altruistic—it is limited at last to this world and whatever he might be able to leave behind for others for the short time that they will be here after he is gone...
 - He can do nothing else but dwell unduly on the days of his life because he has nothing else to dwell on.

TRANS> Well now, let's flesh all this out a little!

- If you go back to where our text begins—Ecclesiastes 5:8,
 - You can see what happens if you make too much of worldly riches...

II. Solomon shows us a number of things about worldly riches that prevent you from enjoying them if you esteem them too highly...

- It is really quite the irony with riches...
 - that the higher the place you give them, the less you are able to enjoy them.

- It certainly does make sense though, doesn't it?—
 - If you ask too much of anything, you will end up being disappointed by it.
 - So let's look at some of the ways that too high an estimation of riches will keep us from enjoying them.
- A. First, if you give riches too high a place, it may cause you to be overly distressed when you see the oppression of the poor.
- In 5:8, Solomon says:
 - **Ecc 5:8: If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter;**
1. It is indeed a very wicked and terrible thing to see,
 - and the Bible speaks very strongly against it...
 - There is no doubt that we should be against oppression and oppose it where we can...
 - But for the kind secularist who really cares about other people,
 - It is an unbearable thing to see...
 - Because this world is all there is and you have these poor people that are being abused and made to work for the sake of selfish rich people...
 - And the caring secularist becomes bitter against people having cars and phones and cameras and houses and clothes...
 - because all he can see in them is the abused poor in some third world country enslaved to produce all of this stuff.
 - Basically, it turns the caring secularist into a bitter cranky secularist.
 - It is the same kind of thing you have with those today who latch on to environmental issues or animal rights issues or whatever.
 2. But the truth is, we should not be surprised by oppression—we should expect it from a world of secularists who reject God.
 - For most of them, people are nothing more than evolved matter, so why does it matter if those people are oppressed as long as it makes life better for them...
 - After all, this world is all they have, so what difference does it make?
 - You have to grab what you can, and if you are in a place of advantage, you might as well make the most of it.
 3. But we should also recognize that God has put in some restraint to check the oppression from going too far.
 - There is the conscience of course, but Solomon points out an external restraint.
 - **Ecc 5:8b: high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.**
 - God has given us civil rulers that do help to establish law and order.

- Even though there is a lot of injustice in the whole system, there are still checks and balances that restrain wickedness.
 - And to make sure that this is so, you have the reality that even the king himself is as dependent on the labouring man as anyone else...
 - In verse 9, Solomon says:
 - **Ecc 5:9: Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field.**
 - The king himself has to eat what is brought forth by the poor man's labour.
 - He knows that if he carries oppression too far, he will have no one to feed him.
 - To put it another way, if a king becomes too oppressive of the common man, he will only harm himself.
 - The Lord has made it this way, so we do not need to be overwhelmed when we see oppression.
- B. Secondly, if you give riches too high a place, you will find that you are never satisfied with them.
- This is stated in Ecclesiastes 5:10:
 - **Ecc 5:10: He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.**
1. Greed is insatiable!
 - Perhaps you know something of this in your own life if you have ever battled with lust...
 - The more you give to your lust, the more it wants!
 - Nature can be satisfied with just a little, but lust is never satisfied.
 - The more the greedy man takes in, the more he craves...
 2. So for the materialist for whom riches is all he has—how can he ever be satisfied?
 - John D. Rockefeller, a very wealthy man, was asked how much was enough and he replied famously, “Just a little bit more.”
 - James Hamilton, a preacher from the 19th century, said,
 - Could you change the solid earth into a single lump of gold, and drop it into the gaping mouth of avarice, it would only be a crumb of transient comfort, a cordial drop, enabling it to cry a little louder, “Give, give.”
 3. The love of money will swallow up your soul—
 - It will consume you so that family, other people, and the kingdom of God become very unimportant to you.
 - How many men pretend to be serving their families when in fact they are only serving their lust for riches!
 - Their families know that they are not loved, but the greedy man goes on pretending that it is all for them that he never pays them any attention.

- And the sad thing is that for all of his pursuit and for all of his acquisition of wealth—still he is never satisfied with it.
 - As Kidner says, “Men with eternity in their hearts need better than this!”
- C. A third reason that riches should not be given too high a place is because of all the demands they will place upon you.
1. Those who obtain great riches find that they always come with a lot of hungry mouths...
 - As Solomon puts it in verse 11,
 - **Ecc 5:11: When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?**
 - When they increase, so does the need for accountants and lawyers and managers and consultants and servants—
 - And all of them want you to feed them—
 - So Solomon is saying, the only benefit you have is that you get to see all this stuff that you are doling out to everybody who is serving you.
 - He knows this better than anyone, and he is trying to tell us that being rich is not all that it is cracked up to be!
 - It mainly means that you have a whole lot more bills to pay than you do now!
 2. And besides that, there are the worries that go with having a lot...if indeed riches are given too high a place in your life...
 - Look at verse 12:
 - **Ecc 5:12: The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.**
 - It can be very hard for a rich man to sleep—
 - he has so many things to worry about—
 - his investments, the bad decision one of his managers just made, the competitor that is moving into his territory, the repairs on his beach house that was in a hurricane...
 - But the labouring man—he has little to worry about even if his provision is meager...
 - He is able to sleep at night.
 - Shakespeare has a line in one of his play where a king says,
 - “How many thousands of my poorest subjects are at this hour asleep!”

TRANS> Considering all this is enough to make you thankful that you have no more than you do!

- Godliness with contentment is great gain...
 - Indeed there are still more reasons that wealth should not be made too much of.
- D. If you make too much of it, you set yourself up to become greatly disturbed if you should lose it (5:13-17).

1. In verse 13, Solomon refers to it as a **severe evil**—a serious problem—if you keep riches to your own hurt...
 - that is, if you cling to them too tightly— if you set your heart on them.
 - This is what Jesus tells you when He warns you not to lay up treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and where thieves break through and steal...
 2. Always hold what you have in this world very loosely—
 - a. Realise that it can be here today and gone tomorrow—
 - These are Solomon’s words in verse 13-14:
 - **Ecc 5:13-14: There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt. But those riches perish through misfortune; when he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand.**
 - Solomon does not tell us how he lost them—there are a thousand ways it might have happened—war, a bad decision, a loss in the market, thievery, natural disasters...
 - But the end result is that the man who had planned to provide richly for his son finds that he has nothing for him!
 - How much better if he had provided the treasures that can never perish and set his hope in these!
 - b. But even if there are no setbacks throughout a man’s entire life,
 - still, he only has his riches for the short time that he lives on the earth and then all is forfeited...he can’t take it with him!
 - It is certain that you will lose it all—every bit of it!
 - Verse 15 & 16 say:
 - **Ecc 5:15-16: As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came; and he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ And this also is a severe evil—just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has labored for the wind?**
 - Yes, enjoy what God gives you here,
 - but know that it has no use beyond this world—it is no better than wind at the last!
 - Don’t give to riches the place that belongs to the treasures of heaven!
3. Horded riches can also harm you in this present world.
 - Verse 17 describes the sorry state of the miserly soul who hoards wealth to his own hurt...
 - **Ecc 5:17: All his days he also eats in darkness, and he has much sorrow and sickness and anger.**
 - He eats in darkness because he has driven all who might have been around his table away—all to attain riches he cannot keep...
 - He has much sorrow—for who ever heard of a happy miser...
 - He has sickness—his worry over his hoard has given him ulcers...

- And he is full of anger—anger at his servants for their wastefulness or their bad decisions, anger at those he supposes have cheated him,
- anger at the whole world really for not fitting into his money making schemes as well as he would like.

TRANS> In all these ways Solomon makes it clear that riches are not the place to set your heart...

- Enjoy everything that God gives you—give thanks to Him for it—
- but it is sheer vanity to set your heart upon it...

III. There is great need for a reality check about riches in a fallen world.

A. It is a great evil of this present fallen world that that you may have them and then lose them all, even if you do not hoard them.

1. Chapter 6 begins with a description of this evil which Solomon says is a very common occurrence...
 - **Ecc 6:1-2: There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: ² A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.**
 - On the surface of it, this can happen to the godly and the ungodly alike...
 - It is what happened to Job and it is what happened to the wicked King Belshazzar of Babylon—
 - They had all that this world has to offer one day, and the next day they lost it...
 - That is the vanity of riches—they are like a breath or vapour that quickly disappears.

TRANS> This happens to the godly and the ungodly alike,

2. This happens to the godly and the ungodly alike, yet, there is also a huge contrast between them—
 - between what happened to Job and what happened to Belshazzar...
 - a. Because Job's treasure was laid up in heaven—
 - He did not have in this world *no lack of all that he desired*.
 - No, the first thing he said when God took everything away was,
 - *The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*
 - He had his treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt...
 - It was a great difficulty to him to lose his great earthly riches, his large family, and even his health all at the same time...
 - but all along he had hope because, as he said,
 - **Job 19:25-27: I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ whom I shall see for**

myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

- This world was by no means all that he had...

- b. But not so with Belshazzar—it was a much greater tragedy for him to lose his treasure in this world because it was all that he had!
 - He did not have a redeemer!
 - He was left entirely desolate.
 - And so will every person be who does not have Christ...
 - If you don't have Him, all you have is this world and you are going to lose it all!

- c. In verses 3-6, Solomon declares that it would be better to be a still-born child than to have everything this world offers and then lose it all!
 - This may seem like an extreme statement, but if you think about it, it is true!
 - The stillborn child does not lose anything because he never had anything to lose...
 - It is much more vexing to have a lot and to lose it all than to have never had anything at all!
 - Solomon drives home the point in a very convincing way...
 - by asking what this man would have if he were to live twice as long as the patriarchs lived before the flood—for 2000 years...
 - but saw no goodness...
 - Would his long life be a blessing to him?
 - Not at all—it would be a greater curse—the still born child is in a place to be envied compared to that man!

TRANS> The point is, since you know you are going to lose it, don't set your heart on it. To do so is to set yourself up for disappointment!

- B. So hold this world's treasures very loosely—do not regard them too highly!
1. What you have in this world's goods is for your mouth, not your soul...
 - Verse 7 states it for us...
 - **Ecc 6:7: All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied.**
 - What we have in this world is for our mouth in that it is for consuming—not for keeping.
 - It is not meant to satisfy our soul and it cannot satisfy it.
 - It is only meant to be used while we are here.
 - Don't ask too much of it or you will be sorry.
 2. Verse 8 shows that the worldly wise man has nothing more than the fool when it comes to this world's riches...
 - Either may obtain great riches; and either may lose them all.

- There is no advantage—both will end up losing everything in the end.
 - Both enter the world naked and both leave the world in the same way.
3. Therefore, Solomon says that it is better to rejoice in what you have than wishing for what you don't have—
- That is what it says in verse 9...
 - **Ecc 6:9: Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.**
 - If you put the world in proper perspective, you will simply enjoy what God gives you at the time instead of constantly yearning for more—
 - for what He has not given you—as so many do!
 - That yearning for what you don't have is *the wandering of desire*.
 - It goes all over the place, always craving, always looking for more,
 - but godliness with contentment is great gain!
 - It has promise even for this present life...
 - Because you can actually enjoy whatever God has given you—
 - whether it be a crust of bread in a dungeon or a feast at a king's table...
 - it doesn't matter—you can enjoy it before God without all the fretting and all the clamouring for more, more, more!
 - The wandering of desire is chasing after the wind—because you can never catch it...
 - Your desire is always running ahead of you for the next thing and you never get to enjoy what God has set before you now!

TRANS> All this advice is very simple and straightforward—so what is it that keeps us from following it?

- Why can't we just enjoy what God gives us?
- C. We cannot simply enjoy what God has given us because we do not accept the simple reality that He is God—and that we are **not** God!
- This is the age old problem we have had ever since the fall—
 - We want to run the show instead of leaving it to God!
 - We want to decide what we ought to have instead of leaving that with the Lord.
1. Solomon reminds us all of our identity—that we have already been named—
- So what are we?
 - We are **man**—actually, the word is *Adam*, which means: *red dirt*!
 - Look at verse 10:
 - **Ecc 6:10: Whatever one is, he has been named already, for it is known that he is man [Adam];**
 - It doesn't matter if you are a king or a peasant, you are still just **Adam**,

- God made us of clay, and that is what we are.
- And what does this mean?
2. It means that we are in no position to contend with God about the way He has distributed wealth in the world...
 - Look at the rest of verse 10...
 - **Ecc 6:10: he is man [Adam, dirt]; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.**
 - It is a great folly for any of us to strive with our Maker...
 - But we do that all the time when it comes to our possessions...
 - Even godly Job did this until he came to realize how foolish it was and put his hand over his mouth...
 - How often we complain about what God has given us instead of rejoicing in what He has given and giving thanks for it!
 - We act as though we are God's equals—but we are not...
 - He is much mightier than we are and we look like idiots when we strive with Him and debate with Him!
 - Israel did this repeatedly in the wilderness...
 - And again when Jesus came—
 - They quarrelled with God about His way of redeeming us.
 - They said the cross was not the way to do it and they were cut off from Him as His people!
 3. Solomon reminds you that you have no idea what is best for you to have in this world!
 - Look at verse 11-12—
 - **Ecc 6:11-12: Since there are many things that increase vanity, how is man the better? ¹² For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow?**
 - a. When he says that there are many things that increase vanity,
 - he is pointing out that there are things that, if we had them, would make us cling to worthless things more than we already do...
 - We think that we would be better off if we had them, but how would we be better if they increased our vanity?
 - b. The truth of verse 12 is that we simply do not know what is best for us.
 - Only God knows what we ought to have.
 - And therefore it is our place to leave it with Him to decide.
 - Who are we to strive with our Maker?
 - We are Adam, He is God!
 - We don't even know what will become of us after we leave this world—unless God tells us.

- So how is it that we presume to tell Him what we ought to have here and now?
- c. Yes, there are great evils in this world—like having everything and then losing it...but if that is what our Maker has decreed for us in this world, we must leave it with Him.
 - It is a fallen world on account of our sin, and He has been gracious to come to us to redeem us.
 - And if you are among those He has redeemed—if you are trusting in Christ—
 - then you of all people should leave your life in His hands because He has promised, in your case, as His redeemed child, to work in your life to make you more like Jesus.
 - He gives and He takes away with perfect wisdom...
 - And all you have to do is enjoy what He has given you in this life and look to Him to make you more like Jesus.
 - As we saw at the end of chapter 5,
 - It is your heritage, as long as you are in this world, to labour and to rejoice in the fruit of your labour as God's gift.
 - Don't make such a big deal about what you have or don't have—it is not that important...
 - Just enjoy it before the Lord and delight in the Lord Jesus Christ whom He has given to you forever.

Conclusion

- That is really what is at the bottom of it all...
 - Until you have received God's marvellous provision of Christ who alone can reconcile you to God,
 - you will never be able to acknowledge God as God.
 - You will always be striving with Him about what He should have done.
 - But once you receive His marvellous provision—then you will be forever satisfied.
 - You will be glad that He is God and convinced that He is the only one who is qualified to run the world.