

Welcome, everybody, to this Sabbath, being day 49 of the count and tomorrow being Pentecost, "count 50."

Spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding, and true wisdom can only come from God. That is something that we understand. We "see" because of God allowing us to "see" it. God's spirit is what communicates spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding, and empowers the ability for someone to live wisdom, to live love, to live God's way of thinking.

The title of today's sermon is *Spiritual Understanding*.

Solomon was exploring the meaning of life, and if we look back at Solomon, the question was, "What was life all about?" And that's what his question was, "What is the meaning of life? What's the purpose of life?" Because of a calling from God, we know the purpose of physical life. Now, this in itself is great knowledge and great understanding to have, because we have direction and purpose in life, all because of this ability to "see" spiritually, this ability to know the truth, which God has granted us because of this calling.

Solomon wanted to know the real meaning of life. Well, we have it. We understand the true purpose of life. The meaning of life is to enter Elohim. We have the potential to learn, both physically and spiritually, principles based on what Solomon experienced. The purpose of life as a human is to take on Godly character by yielding to God's holy spirit; therefore, it requires a choice. Now, God pours out His spirit into a person when they are called, baptized, gone through that process, had hands laid on them by a true minister of God, and then God provides His holy spirit, His being, Logos, Word, this revelatory thought that will go into the mind of a person to give them the power to think differently, which is what life is about, to change, to yield to this power of God so that we choose to think differently. Now, it can only happen if a person has God's spirit. So it is only by the power of God's spirit that enables us to "see" spiritually. So this spiritual knowledge, this understanding, and the ability to *live* God's way to another has to be by yielding to God's thinking, God's Word living and dwelling in us.

So our purpose (the purpose of life, why we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God), is to take on God's thinking, God's character, and it is by yielding, by submitting to, by choice. That's what we desire to have in us, God's spirit living and dwelling in us, so that we can "see" spiritually, we can "see" spiritual knowledge and have this understanding, which is the ability then to comprehend something, then, on a spiritual level.

Because of God's mercy and our choices, once we are in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, we can in time enter into spirit life, into Elohim. So, we're going to start by looking at Ecclesiastes 1:1. This is Solomon, and he has been through much in life and he was really looking at the purpose of life and was given the ability to *see* a particular matter, mainly on a physical level. Now, on a spiritual level it doesn't appear that there was a lot given in the sense of what he could actually "see" in the sense of spiritual, spiritual understanding and wisdom, but he was given God's thinking (to him) so that he could "see" certain things. Now, the depth of his understanding, we don't fully know, but we do know that God granted him this ability to see a matter on a physical level.

Ecclesiastes 1:1—The word of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. So he was king in Jerusalem on a physical level. On a spiritual level, we understand Jesus Christ is the King of kings, which is going to be established when He returns on a Day of Pentecost in the future. So, Jesus Christ is the King of peace. So if we look at it here on a physical level, here we have Solomon as king in Jerusalem—and of course, Jerusalem means "peace." On a physical level, he was the king of Jerusalem. On a spiritual level, we know that Jesus Christ is the soon coming King of Jerusalem, King of peace.

And Solomon goes on now and what he has learned out of all these experiences and what he has seen in life, **Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.** Now, the word "vanity" means, "empty or empty act, futility," and another way to put it is, "It's all a waste of time. There is no advantage to it."

Verse 3—He asks a question: **What profit, (what gain, what advantage) has a man from all his labor, for all his work that he does (this is on a physical level), In which he toils under the sun?** So this is the question that is being asked. "Well, what advantage is it if you just work all the time and you toil, and therefore, what's the end result of it?" Well, we know the end result of it, man dies. So he's asking this question, "What profit has a man from all his work (all his labor) in which he toils under the sun?" And we can look at that now on a physical level. Well, what *is* the advantage? Well, there is a gain in physical wealth and the ability to provide for a family and provide for a person individually. But what is the profit on a spiritual level? Well, there is none without God's holy spirit. There is none.

Another way of looking at it: "What is there to show for a lifetime of work, a lifetime of working ones' fingers to the bones?" What it means, really, is there is not a lot of profit on a physical level. So the answer is given in verse 4 on the physical meaning of life.

So **verse 4—One generation, one time period of time, a generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever.** The land remains for a long period of time. "Physical life, then physical death follows. It's the endless cycle. But the earth (the land cycles) continue while humans live and die." So one generation comes, one goes, on a physical level, and the earth continues. This is what Solomon is seeing at this point. That it just continues.

Verse 5—The sun also rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to its place where it arose. Time passes by. The sun comes up, the sun goes down, then it comes up again, and it goes down again. It's the same old round every day. What's the purpose of it all? What trials we are in; it too will pass.

So we know that life continues on for a period of time, and God has granted seventy years, and after seventy, by strength, it's a blessing. And for some people life is not a blessing (in the sense on a physical level) because their life, that seventy years that they may be granted, can be very burdensome. So without God, they don't understand the purpose of life, they don't have this spiritual understanding that we have. So if we are called, how great a blessing is it that we actually understand the purpose of life and have the meaning of life? This is great spiritual understanding to have - if we have been granted that.

Verse 6—The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north; the wind swirls about continually, and comes again on its circuit. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the river comes, there they return again. It's this cycle. Like the sun, like the weather, like the wind, it's a cycle. Now, we can look at this on a spiritual level. Spiritually, God is the

source of the holy spirit. God is the source of the holy spirit. It flows from Him into us to our benefit *and* to the benefit of others. Because it is dual. Because with God's spirit we can then begin to "see" spiritual knowledge. We can *hear* spiritually. And therefore, the benefit is that we can then come to *understand* a matter. We come to understand it on a spiritual level, *why* it is that it is, *then* we can begin to live it. So we can put it into our life (so there is this benefit to us), but if we implement it into our life it then benefits others. So God's spirit is to benefit us, but it is also to the benefit of others.

We will never be full of God's spirit, God's thinking. God's spirit *is* like a cycle. It *is* like the wind, and it can come and go. It continues around like the sun because we only have an aspect or a measurement of God's spirit. And when we sin, we cut ourselves off from that flow, from that ability to live love out to the benefit of others. So this cycle, which is God's spirit flowing into us, can stop, but it can start up again based on our repentance. It comes from God, and the purpose is that it will *return* to God. Isn't that beautiful when you really understand what God has called us to? God's spirit is given to us for the purpose of benefitting ourselves, firstly, because it has to be in us, that we yield, that we choose to think differently. And when we choose to think differently, God's spirit can then flow out to the benefit of others because of the way that we *are*, the way that we think, the way that we speak, the words that we use, and our behaviours change. So it does flow out to the benefit of others because it is God living *through* us out to the benefit of others.

Now, this cycle can be cut off (as we understand), but in the end it returns back to God. Why's that? Because at some point we will enter Elohim where the flow of God's spirit will be continual and it will never be cut off because we won't be able to sin; therefore, it completes a full cycle. It is from God and to God, because we will be living love to all those in Elohim. It's a complete cycle.

Verse 8—All things, all words we speak, **are full of labor** (weariness). All things that we do, everything in a physical level, are all full of labor. There's a weariness connected to it because there is this cycle that we have to go through in life. You know, the sun comes up, the sun goes down. We are awake for a period of time, then we have to rest the body because of the weariness and we have to sleep, then we have to get up and we have to do it all again.

Man cannot express it. So it's the *same* in all things. It's a continual cycle. It's this same thing all the time. Another way of putting this, "Everything is boring—utterly boring; no one can find any meaning in it."

The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Now, this is an incredible statement. The natural mind always wants more because the physical eye (what we see) is never satisfied with what it sees. Once it's seen it, it's seen it, and it desires more; it desires to see more. "...nor the ear filled with hearing." It's never satisfied. The human mind, the natural selfish human mind, is never satisfied, hence it is selfish. And that's what the definition of this selfishness is; it's always going to be taking, it's always going to be absorbing, it always desires more, believing it is fulfilling itself. And that's the natural mind. The natural mind is really unthankful. It gets bored with what it has access *to*. It's never satisfied.

Now, on a spiritual level, it is different. On a spiritual level, we desire to see *more* of God's way, *more* of His thinking. We desire to hear *more* about God's way of being. Now, that is the real difference. So this spiritual eye that we have, we always will desire to "see" more. We desire to understand more. And if you look at what prophecy, the natural mind desires to *know* things, whereas, with a spiritual eye we understand that God has a plan and that we won't "see" all things. Although we desire to know more *of*

God and more of God's plan and more detail of God's plan—like timing—they are all things that we desire.

The reality is that we will never be satisfied while we are in this human flesh. Never! Because it's impossible. Now, on a spiritual level, we can understand that God has a plan and has a purpose, and He will reveal things as He sees fit to us, all for the benefit of creating a family.

Verse 9—That which has been *is* what will be, so this is that cycle of life, **that which *is* done is what will be done.** It's the same thing repeated. It's a repeated action. ***There is nothing new under the sun.*** There are no new ways of thinking within mankind. His behaviors and ways will repeat themselves. Now, this is not talking about "nothing new," because we understand that USB's are new, we understand that the technology is new, that microchips are new, all these things are new. So there is something "new" in the sense of God allowing man to create something (because it is all coming *from* God - it is the ability that God has given to a person that they can develop these things), because God has to give it. But what this is saying is, "there is nothing new under the sun," in the way of man's behavior, because man has been selfish from the beginning. Man has been selfish from the beginning. Because everything that man does is always about acquiring something for himself. Man has always had pride. He has *always* sinned. Since Adam and Eve, he has always sinned, and therefore, there is nothing new.

Man's behaviors are not new. What is going on in our society today with the lack of respect for the elderly, the lack of respect for things that are made by others, and the vandalism, and the graffiti, and all of the sins of mankind, the sexual immorality, none of that is new. None of that is new because that has been going on from the beginning, all because of this selfishness. So the ways of man are just repeating themselves. His behavior, his ways just repeat themselves. And what have we got to look forward to? Exactly the same, the continual degeneration of the mind of man. And there won't be anything new happen because it's all going to be the same. There'll be different aspects of it, but it's the same thing. Sin will follow sin. Greed will follow greed. Adultery will follow adultery. Lying will become more accepted. Idolatry, murderers, hate, ill will, covetousness will repeat themselves within every human.

Now, some people have (to a degree) a level of human self-control, and depending on their environment (where they are born), they do not fall into certain aspects of these particular sins. In other countries people are born into these things and children don't have much hope. They don't have much hope because all around them is the continuation of a way of living. The only way that they can survive is to lie and to manipulate. The only way is to murder, to kill or be killed. So they are born into these environments, and therefore, that's what's going to follow. One thing will follow another. And it just won't get any better. It'll just get worse.

Verse 10—Is there anything, in the way of speech or sayings, **of which it may be said, "See, this *is* new"?** **It has already been in ancient times before us.** There is nothing new from mankind's thinking on this earth. Year after year, it's the *same old thing* and it's talking about something that is spiritual. It's talking about the nature of man. It's not talking about something "new" in the sense of something physically made. It's talking about something spiritual, which is the way man is. There is nothing new. Does someone cry out, "Hey, this is new! Don't get excited. It's the same old story." It's the same old story because it's based on greed. It's all based on human nature.

And the problem is, of course, that human nature does not change. It does not change. It is based on selfishness. There is no new way, nothing new from within mankind's thinking until God calls a person to His way of life. So that is what is new. It's when a person is called, this *transformation* that takes place.

Now, as we head into the Day of Pentecost and the purpose of what God was doing over a period of time, of 6,000 years, which was the work of Pentecost, it is a beautiful thing to understand what God did, because man continued on as he always was. There was nothing new *until* God called a person out individually to make them "new," to develop "a new person," "a new way of thinking," which was granted by God through the power of His holy spirit, which is given this spiritual knowledge. This spiritual understanding then enables the ability to *live wisdom* out to the benefit of others, which is to live God's way of thinking out to the way, out to the benefit of others.

It's a beautiful thing to fully understand, what is going on within our lives today, which is God calling us into His way of thinking. And that is this spiritual understanding that we have, where mankind does not have it.

Hold your place there and turn to **Ephesians 4:17—This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the gentiles walk, in the futility (this emptiness) of their mind,** this carnal, pride-filled motive that is in all humans. Pride motivates (drives) all the words and all the actions of a person that is not called. Now, they can't help it, because that's the way we were... that's the way we were.

Verse 18—having their understanding darkened, and it's "darkened" because of sin, **being alienated,** which is "cut off" **from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.** So they're not called to change. They are not called at this point of time to change the cycle of life, the cycle of their thinking. They simply move from sin to sin because it's the only ability that they have. We, brethren, have been called out for a different reason. We have been called out to change the cycle of our life. And that's what happens when we are called, because we change our life on a physical level, but God requires us to gain this spiritual knowledge, then to have this spiritual understanding, and then implement it into our life, which is the beginning to live this wisdom, to *live* what God has showed to us through the power of His holy spirit. And therefore, we move from sin into righteousness, all powered by God's holy spirit.

Verse 19—who, being past feelings, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Well, that's the way society is. Everything is based on greed!

Verse 20—But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts (these wrong desires). Now, this is that cycle that humans are in, but we've been called to put it off, to get rid of it, and not to conform to our "former way of conduct," of the old man, it's saying here, which is, of course, selfishness and pride. And that "grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts." Now, within us we don't always "see" our own desires. We don't really "see" what really motivates why we do what we do. But that is something with a calling that God gives us this knowledge of ourselves, that we begin to "see" ourselves, and then He gives us the understanding. And that understanding is the ability to "see" motive and intent. So this understanding that we can get, we begin to "see" motive and intent.

Now, without God's holy spirit we will never be able to draw down into ourselves to "see" why we do what we really do. With God's spirit we can "see" that our nature is based on pride and selfishness, that we do things to satisfy, to please the self, whereas, God has called us to something different, which is to work on the selves, to deny the self, to overcome the self to the benefit of others. To sacrifice to the benefit of others.

Verse 23—and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, (verse 24) that you put on the new man which was created according to God, so this is *after* God's mind, *after* God's way of thinking, **in true righteousness and holiness.**

Verse 25—Therefore, putting away lying, so this is that motive which is to do with pride, because the reality is, that when a person lies it's about pride. They are protecting the image that they have built up within themselves; therefore, they will lie, they will justify, they will defend this image. And here it is saying, "put away lying." Well, this is being insincere. To be insincere is lying. We're actually lying because we're not genuine, we're not open and honest, we're not dealing with reality, we're covering it up, which is this lying, this false image that we're portraying out to others.

So any time a person puts on a show and never reveals the true self, put's on an act, they are actually lying. They are in the spirit of lying because they're not being genuine. They're not being open and honest. Because people don't like to see hypocrites. So what they don't understand is the more they become a hypocrite, the more they act out a role, the more that other people see that they're acting out a role. But because they're acting it out in their mind, they don't see it. They think they're holding their own integrity, their pride.

So **verse 25 says... Therefore, putting away lying,** this deceit! Because lying is deception. It's the deceitful behavior, deceitful thinking. "**Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,**" so this is talking about straightforward. Well, to "speak the truth with our neighbor," it's about being genuinely open and honest, no image protection, **for we are members of one another.**

Ephesians 5:1—Therefore, be imitators (followers) of God as dear children. And to be "a follower of God" is to be humble. So this is that "seeing" spiritually. We have this spiritual understanding, that we have to follow the way that God has instructed us to live, which is one of righteousness. And this can only be done, of course, through the power of God's holy spirit, and this requires humility. Now, we need to humble ourselves and *yield* to God's spirit. Because when we raise ourselves up we will not yield to God's way, we will not yield to the truth. So when we resist truth, it's a lack of humility. It's pride getting in the way because we're using our own human reasoning. We think we know better! We *believe* that we are right, and that someone else is wrong. So, "therefore, be imitators (followers) of God," which means we have to yield to God's holy spirit "as dear children."

Verse 2—And walk in love, so this now requires an action. This walking requires an action. It requires a change in behavior, to "walk in love" **as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us.** Now, this is that sacrificing, this giving of the self, the denying of the self. **...an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.** So we are to sacrifice our own will, our own desires, put ourselves out to the benefit of others.

Colossians 3:5. Now, these things we're discussing today are things that Solomon did not "see" and he did not understand, because God never gave him this ability. He was given wisdom and this understanding, and a lot of it had to do with physical concepts or physical behaviors, but the deeper, weightier matters of the law hadn't been given to him. So we, brethren, are so blessed, because it's on a spiritual level that we can "see" how God is... we can see how God is. We can "see" God's character. We can "see" His nature. We can "see" what He requires of us. We understand the 10 Commandments. We just don't know them; we understand them. And God has given us the power (the true power) of wisdom (true wisdom) which is the ability to live them out to the benefit of others. Now, this is an

incredible understanding to have, that we have this understanding of the purpose of life, of what is required of us by God.

Colossians 3:5—Therefore put to death your members... so this is about destroying them in our thinking. Now, it's not talking about members of the Body. It's talking about things going on in our minds which are to do with sin, which are to do with selfishness and pride, **which are on the earth**, which is the natural carnal mind. The things that go on in our mind, we are to get rid of them. And what are they? **...fornication.** Now, fornication is something that is illegal before God. God says that there is one way to live in a sexual relationship, and that is in marriage only. Outside of that it is considered unlawful. Now, the other fornication can be on a spiritual level, having an unlawful relationship with something else. Putting something else before God is an act of fornication. It's an unlawful relationship.

...uncleanness, passion, evil desire. Now, this "evil desire" can be the desire for ill will to others, **and covetousness, which is idolatry.** Now, idolatry is anything we place before God as a priority. God must be first in our life. So these are the things that we should be working on in our life.

Verse 6—Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, so the world is now going to face a tribulation, because it is the only way to bring them into humility to begin to accept what is ahead of them.

Verse 7—in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. So this is the way we were before we were called. Before our calling we walked in all of these attitudes that were listed before. We walked in "fornication." Now, a lot of people will say, "I haven't committed fornication. I haven't committed adultery." But the reality is it all took place in the mind. It takes place in the mind. It may not be the physical act, but it took place in the mind because that is the natural carnal mind of all men and women, which is one of "fornication." It's the way we think. It's wrong thinking towards an individual.

Now, the "evil desire." We've all walked in that. We've all walked in "evil desire," ill will to somebody in our life. So when we're carnal, that's the only way the natural carnal mind works. It thinks about itself first, and others are secondary...others are secondary.

And "idolatry"—everybody has walked in idolatry before they were called, every single human, because that is the natural carnal mind.

So we once walked in them, but we've been called out of this, this knowledge and understanding that we have on a spiritual level, we are to no longer walk in that way of life. Now, when we don't walk in it we are now living wisdom.

Verse 8—But now, because of a calling something new is required of us, **you yourselves are to put off these things.** So these are the changes that must take place within our life. Now, this can only happen through the power of God's spirit. We can only put these things off by yielding to and choosing to yield to God's thinking that is being given to us. So we're to put off these things: **anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another.** So this is about being genuine, about being sincere, being open and honest, not maintaining an image (which is deception, which is lying), **since you have put off the old man with its deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge.** So this is the knowledge that has been given to us. Every time a truth is given that is a renewal of knowledge, *more* increased knowledge of God and God's plan. Because that's what truth is. The truth that is given to the Church is about a renewing of knowledge, this knowledge. And we are to put off this old man and we're to put on a new man because of this renewing of the thinking,

according to the image of Him who created him, so according to the image of God the Father who created him.

Verse 11—where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all. So here we see the reason for this change. We are to take on the very thinking, the mind of Jesus Christ, which was the Word, the Logos, the very mind, the very thinking of God himself. So we are now to take on this image of Him, which is God, and we are to renew this carnal mind by getting rid of it and *renewing* it in the way it thinks. So this renewing is a new way of thinking, and this new way of thinking starts with knowledge then it moves into *understanding* the knowledge, the *why* the need for the knowledge, then to implement it into our life, and then to live it, which is that living of wisdom.

Verse 12—Therefore, as *the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies;* Now, this is that renewing that has to take place. We're to put on, we're to change our thinking to "tender mercies." We are to live mercy to others, to come to understand why people are the way they are. Well, they are the way they are because of the natural carnal mind. Well, we're to be merciful to them because they haven't been called; they do not understand God's ways; they don't have God's knowledge; they don't have God's understanding, and they don't have wisdom. It's impossible for them to have these things. Well, we should be putting on this "tender mercies" to others and also within the Body of Christ. Each person is called as a servant of God, and we should be very careful how we treat other servants of God, that we don't raise ourselves up as servants to look down on other servants. Because everyone that is in the Body of Christ is taking on the role of a servant of God. And therefore, we should "never criticize another man's servant."

...kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering. These are all fruits of the spirit. "Humility" is the ability to think our true worth, to *know* our true worth. Because when we know our true worth, when we "see" what we really are, we will not raise ourselves up. We will humble ourselves because we understand our true worth. And we only have value *if* God's holy spirit lives in us. And we can only truly have humility if we "see" who God is, and that God gives us the ability to realize what we are really like without Him...which is nothing. So we become humble when we have a balanced thinking of who we really are and what God is really doing and the glory of God, how great God *really* is. *Then* we can have this humility. We won't exalt ourselves; we won't lift ourselves up.

"Meekness, longsuffering" **...bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.** So we can never hold anything against anybody else because Christ has set the example where He sacrificed Himself and forgave us. So we should also have this same attitude, this same way of thinking, this new understanding that we have, this spiritual understanding. Because that's what it requires; it requires a spiritual understanding to be forgiving. It requires God's holy spirit to be forgiving.

Well, God says here that we must be forgiving...we must be forgiving. So we have looked at scriptures before, where to be forgiven we have to be forgiving, and if we refuse to forgive, if we *refuse* to forgive somebody else, God cannot forgive us.

Verse 14—But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. So we are to put on this new way of thinking, which is God's spirit living and dwelling in us, the way God thinks. We're to yield to God's spirit, "which is the bond of perfection." So, "become perfect." We are to put on the very mind of God. We are to *choose* to *yield* to God's spirit.

Verse 15—And let the peace of God, which is mercy and forgiveness, rule in your hearts. So this is what has to govern (rule) our thinking, the peace of God, the way that God thinks, which is mercy and forgiveness, holds no ill will to anybody. That's what we have to do. Hold no ill will to anyone. **...to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.** Well, brethren, we are so blessed that we have been called into the Body of Christ, the Church of God—PKG. How thankful should we be for that? How thankful should we be for everything?

Back to **Ecclesiastes 1:11—*There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after.*** The wise things of God are not remembered. It's incredible what man does, because man (you would think) could learn from history, but as a generation passes, he soon forgets. Wise concepts of God are not retained by man. Mankind does not learn lessons from the past. Now, we would like to think that they do, but the reality is when you look at all the wars and all the hatreds, the hatred between families, what's the end result of it? Suffering and pain. The things of God that were written in the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the first five books of the Bible, are they remembered? Well, they're not. There are some beautiful concepts that God has given to mankind. Well, they could be remembered on a physical level, but they're not; they're soon forgotten.

Wise concepts from God, from the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, they're not retained. They're not even taught anymore in schools or in education, because really, the reality is, that if you were to have a wise son or a wise child in the education system the first thing that would be done is you would turn to the book of Proverbs and you'd start in Proverbs 1 and you'd work your way through that whole book of Proverbs, because in that are the wise concepts of God. There is great *wisdom* on a physical level, but also things that are of the spirit, the spirit and intent of those things. Now, a lot of that could be taught, but it's not, because mankind doesn't want to retain the things of God. He just doesn't. The natural carnal mind thinks it knows better and it's created its own education system.

So we have people that come out of education hardly educated, that cannot live a good lifestyle toward others. They don't have the manners. They don't have the respect. But they've taken it to themselves that they are educated. So what does it do? It generally lifts the self up to say that, "Oh, well, you don't understand. I'm educated. I've got 'this.' I've got 'that,'" when the reality is the more important thing would be to learn the concepts of God, to live the things that God has put in place, to say "this is wise."

And if we get time in this sermon, we will look at some of those things, about what is "wise" and what is not, things that should be remembered, things that should be retained.

"Nobody remembers what happened yesterday and the things that will happen tomorrow. Nobody will remember *either* of them!" Don't count on being remembered on a personal level because the reality is that time just passes. A lot of people try to build up a reputation and become famous, but as time goes on nobody knows who was around in the year 1200, and nobody cares, because time just passes on and there is no point in trying to build up a reputation...which is what the movie stars and all those people do. They've got to be in the news to be remembered, and if they are out of the news, their media people would say, "You aren't in front of the people. People will forget you!" And that is true, because humans don't remember things very much unless it's a big advantage to them. They just move on. And the new fad will come, or a new person will come into the entertainment world. All of these things just happen. Things just go on.

Now, things that aren't remembered are, for example, about relationships. People don't remember what is right and wrong in the end because they're not based on God's law. They "lean to their own understanding." All types of sexual immorality, all unlawful relationships on a physical and spiritual level will end in personal unhappiness and lead to death. Now, *that principle* has been lost. That principle has been lost by mankind, that all types of sexual immorality outside of a God ordained marriage relationship, all unlawful relationships on a physical level, and all unlawful relationships on a spiritual level, will end in personal unhappiness and lead to death. Now, *that* is something that is not taught. It's not remembered, and nobody *wants* to remember it. But that is actually a true statement.

Hold your place there. **2 Peter 2:5**—cutting into a thought here. We will start in **verse 4**—**For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to** (which is a confinement on the earth) **and delivered *them* into chains of darkness,** so they're restricted to this on a spiritual level. They cannot "see" light, they cannot "see" truth or understand it, **to be reserved for judgement,** which is a time to come for them, **and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who would afterward live ungodly...*** so this example has been forgotten. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after. And that's exactly what's happened. Because God has clearly demonstrated what will happen to anybody that enters into an unlawful physical or spiritual relationship. It will lead to death! And God gave this example, that He didn't spare the world of times past, and only saved eight. And as we understand, there was Noah, a preacher of righteousness, (which is God's way of thinking, God's way of being), and all the ungodly were destroyed. And He also destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of an example of what would happen if we are to enter into unlawful sexual relationships. That is going to end in unhappiness and death. And so they all were destroyed...and that's the outcome. But that's not taught. That's not taught in schools. And in today, it's the complete opposite.

It was interesting. I had a phone call from a friend of mine from way back when I was in my early twenties. I grew up with a particular person in a country town in Western Australia, and he was around about 15 years older than me and Italian nationality, and we've kept in contact on and off over the years. And as time has gone on we've lost contact. And now and again he would call or I might call him, but the majority of the time he would give me a call. He understands that I'm a little bit different than his Catholic background. He mentioned a particular point, which was that he had... long time back he had bought about, I think it was about seventy acres of sand, and he used to move this sand with a truck and he would sell the sand from the block. Well, as time has gone on that block of land has grown in value and he would want to now use it for different purposes. And he said developers ask him about the land and they want to buy the land from him and he refuses to. But he understands a principle (to a degree on a physical level, being a Catholic) that he believes that God has granted him such a blessing that he owns that land. And he had set out to, now to honor God (in his own mind) that he wanted to build a big cross (would you believe) on the block, because it's on a main road, this seventy acres of sand. And he wanted to build a big cross to give honor to God for what God had given him. And he was explaining this to me on the phone, and it's sometimes very difficult not to get too involved in these things. Anyway, he explained it and he then was (I could hear in his voice) he was very agitated because he'd been to the council and the council had said to him, "You can't do it. You can't." He said, "Well, it's my block of land. I want to do this because I want to honor God and Christ and I want to put this cross up," being Catholic. And the council people had turned around and said, "You can't do that." And He said, "Why?" And they said, "Because you might offend another religion. You might offend, particularly, the Muslim religion." Well, this, of course, triggered something in him, which was *great* frustration that

he felt that he could put it up. It's his land. He could do it and, "What do you mean I could offend another religion?" And he was carrying on about how today's society (in Australia in particular) was no longer "Christian," in the sense of putting that in brackets, "Christian," as he understands it, and other religions have taken over, and therefore, he couldn't do this anymore because he might cause an offence. Well, this is all boiling down to the fact that God's ways aren't taught anymore. God's ways are not taught anymore as based on the Bible, the true ways of God, because they've been twisted and perverted by mankind.

Mankind soon forgets God's ways and seeks to satisfy his selfishness at any cost to others. Because his own selfishness, he hurts himself. He doesn't understand it, but he hurts himself. And others, well, they don't come into it. The main point of that conversation, really, comes down to the fact that when a person is not called, they're deceived. They can't "see," and he is so stuck in his Catholic beliefs that he will do what he wants to do.

It's very interesting because over time many of people have looked down on this particular person. I remember, also, one time when he came over to Melbourne and we visited with him and he wanted to stay and go and visit some various businesses, and I said I'd drive him around and we did that (and this is going back a few years now), and he wanted to take us out for a particular meal in a particular area, which was like a "better end" restaurant area. And he took us in there and he walked in, and because of who he is and his country background he had a pair of shorts on and thongs and a t-shirt. And we sat down in this "better end" restaurant and the waiter came over and we could see the contempt on the waiter's face, how he looked down on this particular person. And he didn't realize that the person was so wealthy that he actually could have bought the restaurant easily. He could have just pulled out a check book and written it, because the man's actually a multi-millionaire, and yet he was treated with disdain because of his appearance. And of course, that should have been taught. If you go through the book of Proverbs and other scriptures, it's clearly taught that you shouldn't judge a person based on appearance. Well, the education system today doesn't teach any of those Godly principles. It just simply teaches man's wisdom, what will gain employment.

Now, there's nothing wrong with certain educations, but there's certain aspects that are lost in this education, and it all goes back to a way to live. We've often told our grandson that it's not about being academically smart. It is far better to be a nice boy. It is far better to be thankful. It is far better to be gentle. It is far better to be open and honest and sincere and think of others and show respect to elders and be a better person, as an individual. And in the end we know that that advice will pay off, because they are Godly principles. Well, here it is saying here that all this has been lost, all this has been forgotten.

Jude 1:7. The point being that nobody is remembering what God has established as examples. God has established these things as examples of what will happen, but it's all forgotten. From one generation to another, it's not passed on, and therefore, man is heading for death and destruction, misery and unhappiness. It's the only thing that he can do because he is not following God's ways, what God has given as an example. Now, these things could be followed on a physical level. Even if they weren't followed on a spiritual level, they could be followed on a physical level.

Jude 1:7—...as Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. So they have been "set forth as an example." Now, there are many things "set forth as an example." Now, often when we read things like "Sodom and Gomorrah,"

it's automatic that we just think homosexuality, but the reality is the penalty for homosexuality and the penalty for adultery, the penalty for fornication, are exactly the same. "The wages of sin is death," and it has to be repented of.... it has to be repented of.

So these things were "set forward as an example," that any relationship that is outside of what God has ordained—that is *any* relationship that is outside of what God has ordained on a physical level and on a spiritual level—will earn the same penalty. And we have examples of these things. All through scripture it is clearly outlined, what the penalty is, and that is death. "The wages of sin are death," unless it is repented of.

Back to **Ecclesiastes 1:12—I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task (this business) God has given to the sons of men, by which they are to be exercised.** "God has given to the sons of men, by which they may be exercised..." So they are going to be *occupied* with it, afflicted, or humbled by this. So this task—Solomon lived it all on a physical level. So he searched it out by actually living it, by doing it. He wanted to experience it all, believing he could understand it *by* experiencing it. Now, this is a great concept to understand, brethren, that we don't actually have to *live it to understand it*. Because? God's holy spirit. We have an education system within God's Church called, "the Sabbath and Holy Days," where God educates us. He gives us knowledge. He gives us this spiritual knowledge on a Sabbath and Holy Days where we can "see" spiritually. And from that we can gain spiritual understanding of it all for the purpose of living it out to the benefit of others. But we can come to *understand the why* of a particular commandment.

So the knowledge, for example, can be just a Commandment: keep holy, the Sabbath day. Oh, isn't that great to *know*?! But now to understand, it is *why*. Why is the Sabbath so important? Well, that's that spiritual understanding. And once we understand it and the light goes on, we go, "Ah, now I understand why I need to keep the Sabbath." We understand its motive and intent, why God gave it to us, then we live it. And when we live it, we are living wisdom. It's wise to live God's way, what God has given to us to live.

Now, if mankind could just apply the basic principles of God's law – the book of Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes – into his life, what a great society we would have, without God's spirit. We would have a better society! Now, we're always going to have Satan and his demons and that temptation that comes into the mind, and people will give into their natural selfishness, but we could have a better structure of a community if they were to live and to learn from the examples that God has given us to live and to learn from.

An example, Israel in the wilderness. There are so many examples there of the way we should live our life, but mankind has forgotten it and rejected it and now nobody wants to know anything about it.

Now, we'll never have a "great" society until the return of Jesus Christ and the 144,000, because without God's spirit man will always be selfish...man will always be selfish. But things could be better than what they are. And the reason we have so many problems is nobody will follow the examples that God has given us. He has clearly shown us through the book of Proverbs, through the 10 Commandments, a way of life... a way of life to live. But man rejects it. Man doesn't even teach it because he thinks he knows better in himself.

Now, we don't have to experience something to come to understand it. We don't actually have to experience it to understand it. There's many a sin that we can "see" and we can be educated in, that we can come to understand because of the power of God's holy spirit; therefore, we don't have to do it to understand its effect and its penalty, because God will convict us to *know* it. Life is generally that we only learn through experience. That is generally the way we learn everything. Even on a spiritual level, often we have to go through something so that we experience it, so that we actually come to know it, to *understand* it, because we've lived it. We understand it because we've lived it.

Now, this can apply to aspects of life and death, because it's not until somebody close to a person has lost a person, experienced a death with somebody that is either a husband or a wife or a part of a family, that going through that experience the emotions and all of the feelings that are there and the experience of all that, that's the only way that you can have that empathy, to come to understand it, because of the suffering that goes in the self. The self suffers, then we begin to "see" the suffering of others around us as well; therefore, we experience it, we become stronger, we experience it, we are "exercised" by it. Therefore, we come to understand it and "see" it on a deeper level. And somebody that hasn't actually experienced it cannot relate on the same level. It's just not possible because they've not gone through that experience of those feelings and emotions that affect the self.

On a spiritual level we are to seek what is spiritual. That's important. Now, man doesn't want to do this. Man doesn't want to know anything about seeking something spiritual. But we, brethren, have been called into this.

Matthew 6:33—But seek first (it's our first priority in life) **the Kingdom of God**, which is God's way of being. So we are to "seek first" the knowledge that God has given to His Church, to us, as a first priority in life. We are to "seek first" the understanding of God's knowledge, which is, to come to understand *why* it is important, why has God given us this knowledge, and that is the understanding of it, the deeper meaning of it all, what it really means. And then we are to "seek first" God's way of being by *living* it out to others. So God is first, **and His righteousness**, His character, His spirit. So we are to seek this first. This goes back to a previous sermon where we were talking about "asking," (knocking), "and it will be opened to us," because it's about asking for God's spirit. We want to take on the very mind of God. We want to *live* wisdom. That's what we desire.

The world doesn't want wisdom. They reject all of God's wisdom in the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and all through God's word. It's just a book of wisdom. It's the mind of God. It's the revelation of God *to us*. Well, man doesn't want it. Where we've been called to "seek this first," to seek God's ways, to seek His character, **and all these things**, these physical needs and things that we need in life, **shall be added to you**. So they're needs, not wants. And this is something for the natural carnal mind... it's very difficult. Because what we think we need is often what we think we *want*. It's what we think we want. We want this because we think we need it. But the reality is we don't. And some of our wants will probably do us a lot of damage in our spiritual life, if we're not careful.

God is the one who provides knowledge, understanding, and wisdom on a spiritual level. And it can only come through the power of God's holy spirit. "Wisdom" is the thinking of God. Isn't that incredible to have? The fact that any time that we "think wisdom" and we implement this wisdom into our life and we *live* it, we're living the way God thinks. And it's an exciting thing, when you go through the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and you understand that God has *revealed* much on a spiritual level to us that we can "see" these things, and therefore, we can implement them into our life.

Back to **Ecclesiastes 1:14**—**I have seen all the works that are done under the heaven; and indeed, all is vanity and the grasping of wind.** So trying to hold onto the wind, trying to hold on to moving air is impossible, and it's a waste of time. Just trying to grasp it, it's just a waste of time. Well, we look at this on a spiritual level. Without God in the picture, physical life is meaningless and a waste of time. Now, if you were to say that to physical human beings they would say, "No, it's not," because they're out trying to *acquire* things, trying to make life better for themselves. And therefore, they would say, "It's not all a waste of time!" But the reality is, it *is* a waste of time, because without God we will just simply live. We'll acquire all these things and then we'll die, and someone else will get it and waste it or do whatever they want with it. So what was the point of it all? It was all temporary. It went really quickly.

The point is, without God, it *is* all a vanity. It's *all* a vanity. It's all a waste of time because what good is it going to lead to? Nothing. It'll just create more unhappiness because in the end we're going to die empty.

To leave the fellowship of God and His people is a human vanity. I'd like to repeat that. To leave the fellowship of God and His people is a human vanity. It is a spiritual waste of time because we cannot fulfill or fulfill our purpose of *life*. So if we're not connected or associated with God in fellowship with God and God's true Church (and with God's people), we cannot fulfill our true purpose of life. Because the true purpose of life is to enter Elohim. And we can only do that by taking on spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding. We have to have that understanding of the knowledge—and that is the purpose of life—and then to live it.

Verse 15—*What is crooked cannot be made straight*, so we cannot change things by our own human power or strength. We cannot change them by our own efforts. So we can't think spiritually based on our own efforts. We can't gain spiritual understanding by our own efforts. If God made a tree crooked, you cannot straighten it by human effort. You can't walk up to it and bend it and put it back into place. And this is just simply looking at it on a spiritual level. If something is crooked, if something is sin, we cannot make it righteous. So something that is sin cannot be made righteous because it's contrary to God. And that's the spiritual analogy. So something that is crooked, something that is sin, that is, for example, like adultery, like fornication, it's sin. We can't make it straight. We can't make it righteous. You can't change it. There is only one way, and that is God's way!

Verse 15—and what is lacking, (what is "defective or deficient"), **cannot be numbered**, can't be counted or added to a number. If something is a "minus," it won't add up. It reduces. If we lack God's spirit, we are defective. If we lack God's spirit, we're defective and we cannot be numbered with the righteous. We cannot be counted as God's people.

So we'll look at that physically. If something is a "minus" in a number, you can't add it up. It can't add up to more. It can't make something greater. It can't be numbered *up* because it's lacking.

Well, look at it on a spiritual level. If we lack God's spirit, we cannot be numbered with the righteous. We can't add up *as* part of the righteous. We cannot be counted as God's people, as part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God.

Verse 16—I communed with my heart, this is his "inner thinking," speaking to the self in the mind, because we all do that at times. We think within our minds. Well, that's like speaking to the self, **saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained (added) more wisdom than all who have been**

before me in Jerusalem. My heart has understood," and that is to "see or perceive," "**great wisdom and knowledge.**" Now, "wisdom" is to know the *why* of a matter. So we come to "see" it, which is that understanding aspect of it. We understand it and we go, "Ah, why!" Now we've had this wisdom because we see the reason *why* of a matter, as we talked about the Sabbath. We've got the Sabbath – that's knowledge – but the *why* the Sabbath, ah-ha, that's the understanding. Now, to implement it, now we have wisdom. So once we understand a matter we have the ability now to live this understanding, which is the living of the wisdom we have.

Verse 17—And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. It's all going to be a waste of time. To just live this "madness," this "folly," to live sin, to live it all out, it's just all going to be a waste of time.

Verse 18—Why?—For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge (this is about life) **increases sorrow.** The more you know, the more it hurts. So the more knowledge that we have about humans and about the self, the more, actually, it hurts, because it hurts our pride. Because we "see" what we really are. So we have this "more knowledge" (God reveals it to us) and we go, "Ah!" Now it starts to hurt because it affects us. To know about the way a man is—selfish—is to "see" and understand cause and effect. It brings human sorrow. Because we now "see" we are selfish, we "see" mankind's nature is selfish, then we understand cause and effect. So if we do one thing we know there's going to be effect. If we act selfishly there is going to be an effect. And what does it bring? Human sorrow. It's going to bring unhappiness because that is what selfishness brings. And that's what we've been called to come out of, to come out of the selfishness, to put on the very mind of God.

To "see" the way man thinks, the way he sins to satisfy the self, will bring sorrow because sin brings about the destruction of the human potential—man's potential. So this sin, we know, leads to death. And the more that we "see" it, the more we "see" the downturn within mankind's thinking, and we "see" people suffer. We know that it's going to bring *more* sorrow because it's sin upon sin.

On a spiritual level we know and "see" the truth brings joy and not sorrow. We "see" the truth brings us joy and *not* sorrow. We rejoice in the truth, but understand and "see" what man is doing to himself, and it brings a "vexing of one's spirit." So now we "see" the truth. So God has revealed it to us and we rejoice in the truth and we understand it. We rejoice in that spiritual understanding, but in the same time we "see" another aspect, because we can now "see" what man in his selfishness is doing to mankind, what he's doing to himself, and it brings a "vexing of the spirit," because there is a frustration in it all, in "seeing" all of this. But of course, there is a joy knowing God has a plan and that it's nearly over, and when that part is over and Satan and his demons are removed that there is a time of great rejoicing. Because then people will not have to "vex their spirit" as we do today because the suffering is going to stop.

There is going to be a degree of suffering because of human choices and human reasoning and the manufacturing and the manipulation of the media, and also the things that are seen to be "righteous" in the eyes of man, which is all the false religions, will be taken away and all the promoting of sin through all the billboards and TV programs. Once we remove all that we then have the potential for man to fulfill his potential on a spiritual level, because humans will not be suffering to anywhere near the degree they suffer today.

This "vexing of the spirit" is we "see" what humans do to each other. We "see" human nature. We see it hurts itself and it hurts others. We see "the wages of sin is death" on a spiritual level. The more God gives to us, His mind, understanding, wisdom, the more we "see" what we are really like, our nature. This "seeing of the self" brings repentance.

So that is the purpose of why we "see" what we see, because it brings repentance. We acknowledge we are wrong. We acknowledge who we are before God. And we want to declare to God that we reject what we are, *who* we are, and we don't want to be this way anymore. Well, that is actually repentance.

Ecclesiastes 2:1—I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore, enjoy pleasure"; but surely, this also is a vanity. There is another way of putting it: "Let's go for it! Experiment with pleasure," this human pleasure. "Have a good time," lots of drink, lots of other things, "but the end of it all was empty and hollow. There was no pleasure in it really at all." To focus on the physical is a complete waste of time, as it is not fulfilling. The physical is temporary and passing away.

And that's the main point of what Solomon came to learn, that everything physical is temporary. There is a temporary pleasure in sin, but it is *temporary*, and that's the most important thing to come to understand. All of these things are *temporary*, and once they've been satisfied and taken to the self, that's it! That's it! Then what? Well, the human mind, as we've seen before, is never satisfied. It will just want more! And that's why we see this world going down the path of more perversion because a little bit is not enough.

And if you look back at different TV programs, and you see them from the 1930's and the 1940's, they're totally different. The movies that were made, they were totally different. There were little subtle things about sin in them – nowhere near as obvious as they are today! And then over a progression of time, things have just become accepted by the natural carnal mind. So that in the fifties and sixties somebody that might have just said something or moved their body a particular way, people were shocked and horrified at it. Any level of nudity was sort of, well, people were just in shock! Whereas now, entertainment and everything, it's full on, because the mind is never satisfied. The physical mind is never satisfied. And if it's let to go down the path of no self-control, more and more perversion, more and more sin is going to be made obvious. Hence, when you look at what's happening in our societies, every level of every sin is being magnified and pushed out as being greater and more perverse, but now accepted! Things are becoming accepted. Once something that would be never spoken about or never seen, now is open discussion, openly seen, because the natural carnal mind goes down that path and it sees a temporary pleasure in sin, well, it wants more. And it just becomes *more* perverted, *more* perverted, *more* perverted because of this temporary pleasure. It seeks to satisfy itself. And what it leads to? It passes away. It passes away and it will die.

Now, the difference of that is the spiritual. The spiritual is permanent. *The spiritual is permanent*, and it's not empty and hollow, and there *is* a great spiritual pleasure in righteousness...in righteousness. It's a wonderful thing to experience and to know.

Verse 2—I said of laughter, and this is in the terms of "derision or mocking" —"**Madness!**" This boasting, **and mirth** (rejoicing), "**What does it accomplish?**" A so-called "fun filled life" of party and pleasure is a sign of selfishness. To focus on the selfish pleasures is spiritual insanity! When we look at this, he is talking about something on a physical level; we look at it on a spiritual level. To focus on selfish

pleasures is spiritually *insane* because we understand that selfish pleasures lead to death and that spiritual pleasures lead to life.

Someone that mocks another is just lifting themselves up in pride. Someone that rejoices in other's sufferings, what does it prove? It proves their carnality! Now, this is something for us, brethren, to consider, this understanding that we have on a spiritual level. If somebody is pulling somebody else down and belittling them or deriding them, the first thing that enters our mind is that the person doing the speaking is sinning and they're just revealing their carnality. Anybody boasting about something, something *they* have acquired or something *they* have done—what are they really revealing? They are revealing their carnality.

Verse 3—I searched in my heart (inner thinking) **to gratify my flesh with wine**, so he's going to go out, and this is about banqueting, drinking a lot, drawing out the experience, **while** (at the same time) **guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly**, how to lay hold on this foolishness, **till I might see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under the heavens all the days of their lives**. "So with the help of a bottle of wine and all this wisdom I could muster," all the wisdom that he thinks he's got, "I wanted to get a handle on anything useful where morals might be doing some good during the years we spend on this life." So he's trying to look at this by going out and partying, but trying to keep a clear mind to see what wisdom he could learn. Well, the reality was it was just all a waste of time.

Now, this is a physical focus that he goes through. **Verse 4—I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards**. So this is all something he did on a physical level that he's trying to learn something from this, to see what it's all about. "Is this going to bring pleasure?" Well, brethren, we can focus, to build ourselves a spiritual house as part of the Body of Christ, the Temple of God. We are to build this spiritual house. And how do we do it? And we've looked at a sermon series about working. We are to work on ourselves. And we *can* build a spiritual house that God is building *in* us as a stone within the Temple, that we can build because of our yielding to God. That's the only way we can build our house, is to yield. Now, we can't do it of and by ourselves other than the *choice* we have. When God places His spirit in us to think a particular way, we can yield to God's spirit. Hence, it is God that's building the House! It's God that's building the House. It's *God* that's being the Master Potter that is shaping and molding and fashioning us. But our part in building is that we have to yield....we have to yield.

Verse 5—I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. I acquired male and female servants. I had servants born in my house. So they were his servants that had servants that were born, children born, and they turned into servants. **Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me**. So he had them more than *all of them*. This is what he had built up.

Well, if we look at this, brethren, we can see instantly that this is not wisdom. Because this acquiring is not wisdom. Wisdom is giving, not acquiring...not acquiring! Now, to be a servant, Christ said, was the greatest thing that we could do. Not to acquire servants to serve us, but how we served others. Now, that is spiritual understanding, when we understand that being a *servant* is more important and more valuable to God than being served. And having these greater possessions of wealth, of herds and flocks, than anybody else, well, these possessions mean nothing. They are all meaningless! It's about the way we think about what we have (what God has given us or allowed us to use) is more important.

So whatever we have, whether we think it is great or not, whether we think it is less or not, is not the relevance of it. It's the way we think about it. Do we think, do we *understand* on a spiritual level that everything comes from God? Everything comes from God. God allows us to have access to things for a spiritual purpose. Now, the most important thing is the way we think about what God allows us to have. Are we thankful? Or are we unthankful? Are we satisfied on a spiritual level about what God is allowing us to have and rejoice in that? Or are we unthankful and displeased and trying to acquire more for self rather than trying to seek God and please God on a spiritual level?

Verse 8—I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of all the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds. So he's acquiring all this. He's having it, he's experiencing it all... all for the purpose of trying to establish whether there is a satisfaction in this.

Verse 9—So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. So what God had given him, his understanding on this part of the knowledge that he had – he understood aspects of it on a physical level that God gave to him but he didn't understand it on a spiritual level in the sense of understanding the *truth* that God had given.

The spiritual principle that Solomon could not "see" was "it is more blessed to give than receive." So this is that part. We've been through all this, looking at it, all the things he acquired for himself, he got for himself, but the spiritual principles that we "see," the first one, "It is more blessed to give than receive." Now, to understand this on a spiritual level is a wonderful thing, because the human mind of selfishness? It's better to get! The human mind thinks it's better to get. And when it gives, it gives for the wrong reason. It gives to get. It gives to get.

Now, that's something spiritual that we understand about our nature. So God has said, "It is more blessed to give than receive." To give of ourselves, to give out to benefit of others, that is God's way. And another point is, "Happiness is in the giving, not in the getting for self," which is something that Solomon couldn't "see" at this point, and he's going through all of this life experience. But we understand, because God has given us this ability to "see," that true happiness is in the giving and it's not in the getting for the self. It's not about acquiring for the self. True joy and fulfillment is in the sharing...it's in the sharing. It's *how* we share with others.

Now, we have a great advantage within God's Church that we can share of ourselves, we can share the truth with each other, and we can share by allowing God's spirit to live out to the benefit of others. And in that we share!

I had an opportunity a long time back to give a sermonette, and in that sermonette, just to prove a point of this particular part of "being more blessed to give than receive," what I did was I had some money and I called up three girls from the one family and I gave them \$5.00, and another one I think I gave \$10.00, and another one I gave \$20.00. And I asked the congregation, "Who was more blessed?" Well, the natural mind would think straight away that the one who was more blessed was the girl who got the \$20.00, when the reality of the answer was, I was, because "it is more blessed to give than to receive." But often our thinking is twisted, that acquiring something, building something up...which is what Solomon was doing. He was acquiring all this. And people would have looked at him on a physical level and said, "Boy, isn't he blessed! Look at all the wealth he's got! Look at all this. It's all blessed!" But the

reality is that it's a spiritual matter, that God says, "It's more blessed to *give* than it is to acquire and receive all these things."

Now, if we have the blessing from God to be able to receive certain things, God then looks at our heart to see what we will do with what we have. What will we do with it? Will we give? Will we give of ourselves because we have this access to this particular wealth? What will we do with it? Well, God looks at the heart.

So the happiness is in the giving. The happiness is in the sharing. It's in the sharing, having somebody else there with you to share the experience. So the beauty and the fulfillment is in the sharing.

Well, these are all attributes of God that we've just covered. Because God is a giver! That's what God gives, God is giving out of Himself. Happiness is in the giving. That's what God's character *is*! It's not about acquiring for the self! True joy and fulfillment is in the *sharing* because that is God's *character*. He desires to share.

Verse 10—Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart (this inner thinking) **from any pleasure**, perceived human pleasure, this is, **for my heart** (inner thinking) **rejoiced in all my labor**, which is....selfishness, **And this was my reward from all my labor** – which is? Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is what he acquired from it all, what he acquired, what he got from it.

We are warned to guard our minds and do not let spiritual trash enter into our eyes. We are to keep things, withhold things from our eyes and our inner thinking. So it's the opposite to what has happened here. He said he did not withhold from his inner thinking *any pleasure*. He allowed them in. He took on whatever he could to experience it, and he rejoiced in his labor, everything that he did. And what was his reward for his labor? It was self-satisfaction.

Well, this warning is that we are *not* to please the eyes. We are to guard our eyes. We are to guard our minds from these things. And if we do, there is a protection in it. The battle is for the mind! And that is something that we have come to understand and that we know, this is a battle! We are in warfare for the mind; therefore, we must not give ourselves over to these temporary pleasures.

True pleasure can be experienced by sharing and sacrificing to the benefit of others. That's where true spiritual pleasure comes from. If we are spiritually minded, the joy is seeing others receive. We can rejoice in what we overcome by the power of God's holy spirit. So we can look back at our personalities and see where we were, to where we are today, and we can rejoice and give all the credit and glory to God and thank God for what He has allowed us to achieve by the power of His holy spirit. Because there is a level of us achieving by our yielding, the choice to yield, but it is God that molds and fashions us. But we have to yield.

Verse 11—Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; and indeed, all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. Nothing physical will be fulfilling, as the natural carnal mind is never satisfied (which we've gone through). It always desires more!

I know from working in different cultures that I learned that certain particular cultures, that more is not enough...more is not enough. So whether I worked eight hours, I should have worked nine. If I worked

nine, I should have worked ten. It was never enough. If I worked five days, I should have worked six. It was never enough. They all wanted to work seven because more was never enough. And it was something that I had to learn, to moderate my own thinking, to learn to adjust my thinking because I had my family suffer because of my workaholic attitude and that I had never learned this thing of "more is not enough." I didn't understand that the natural carnal mind is *never* going to be satisfied and that some bosses are never going to be satisfied with six hours or seven hours or eight hours or nine hours or ten hours. It's *just* not enough because there is always more! And that's something that I didn't learn until well into my fifties.

Nothing physical will fulfill the spiritual gap that exists within mankind. Everything physical is temporary, not permanent. So it's never going to be satisfied. That's the way the natural carnal mind is. Well, we've been called out of that so we understand that what needs to be filled is a spiritual component. And we have the blessing and the mercy of God that we can fulfill that yearning that is within us. We don't desire the physical, we desire the spiritual. We desire this spiritual understanding of God's Word.

Verse 12—Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness, which is "boasting in madness," **and folly** ("foolishness"); **For what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king?—Only what he has already done**. So he's saying that, "Well, here I am as the king and I've done all this and I've got it all and I've done all these things. And ever who follows me, well, what's he going to be able to do, because I've already done it all!" Why is boasting madness? Boasting is lifting the self up, which is pride. Pride or taking any credit to self is spiritual insanity! When we boast we have lost sight of who and what we really are on a spiritual level.

So he is looking at this on a physical level, and he considered who he really was. Well, we should look at this on a spiritual level (because he looked at it on a physical level, we look at it on a spiritual level). So, what is it? Well, we know that boasting—any boasting or any pride—is actually madness! Pride, or taking any credit to ourselves, is spiritual insanity. We've lost our minds because we don't understand! We've lost sight of who it is that gave us any spiritual knowledge or understanding in the first place.

All credit must go to God. We can take *nothing* to ourselves! What are we? Who are we that we would ever boast or think we are something? The reality is we are nothing! Without God we are nothing.

So this ability to "see the self" that God has given us is a great blessing. And any time that we lift ourselves or think we're important, we've actually lost sight of God. We've lost sight of God because it is God that gives us the ability to "see" spiritually. And the moment we've started to lose our spiritual perception of who we really are, we've obviously lost sight of who God really is. When we boast we lose sight of who and what we really are on a spiritual level.

Verse 13—Then I saw (and this is "come to understand, perceive") **that wisdom excels** (which is "more profitable or better") **folly**, so wisdom excels (is better than) folly, **as light excels** (better than) **darkness**. It's better to be smart than stupid. It's another way to look at it on a physical level. So he thinks it's better to be smart – which is wisdom – better than being silly, being an idiot. "...as light excels (better than) darkness." Now, if we look at this on a spiritual level we can compare truth with error. It is best to have the truth, or better to have the truth than error, which is not truth. Wisdom, the mind of God, compared to the mind of man. It is far better to have the mind of God compared to the mind of man.

God's mind (wisdom) excels the mind of man (folly). So it's far better to have the mind of God – which we have access to.

Physical knowledge compared to spiritual knowledge. It's far better to have spiritual knowledge, spiritual understanding, than it is to have *all the physical knowledge* of the world, and *all the physical understanding* of the world. Education system – all of it – is all worthless compared to spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding. It is far better to have the mind of God, which is flowing out to the benefit of others, than to have ill will, which is selfishness.

Verse 14—The wise man's eyes are in his head. He looks where he is going in life. He considers his actions. So someone that's wise on a physical level, his eyes are in his head. In other words, he's looking around, he knows what he's going to do. He's working out, "If I do this, this is what's going to happen." So he's considering his actions – cause and effect. "This is what I do." He's looking down the path, "This is the outcome. This is what will happen." **But fools walk in darkness.** So they don't consider their path or their actions. **Yet I myself perceived that the same event happens to them all.** What is that? That's death. That is physical death.

So whether we are smart and wise on a physical level and get an education and do certain things, well, that's good. And a fool, he walks in darkness. He doesn't get an education (which, we all need an education), but he's a fool because he doesn't get one and he doesn't really consider where he goes and he, whatever he does, he causes pain and sorrow to others. It doesn't bother him. Well, Solomon is saying that he perceived that the same event happens to all – they both die... they both die.

On a spiritual level, we should be using the spiritual eyes God has provided us to consider our paths, the way we live towards others. Consider our attitudes and spirit we reflect out to others.

So this is where we can look at it, brethren. We should use our spiritual eyes, the vision that God has given us in the sense of "seeing" something on a spiritual level. We should consider the way we walk, what's going on in our life, the cause and effect in our life, and that we shouldn't be foolish and not use God's spirit to make our decisions. Because, we *would* be fools and we will be walking in spiritual darkness. Yes, the same event will still happen to us all. We are all heading for death. But the reality is we are heading for life.

This event that is going to happen to all mankind, which is the opportunity for life. So we walk in it. We perceive that at some point in time God will call everybody into a relationship with Him. Now, there are some, of course, that have committed an unpardonable sin, and they won't have that opportunity. But going forward, there are many going to have this opportunity to walk in God's way of life.

So we are to consider now how we walk. We are to reflect God's spirit—God—out to the benefit of others. If we are spiritually foolish, we will not consider others in our thoughts. We won't consider loving them or examine our attitudes. If we're foolish, we won't be there examining ourselves, judging ourselves. We won't do it.

We all face physical death, but we also face spiritual death—every one of us face that potential—if we do not repent when we see our wrong attitudes. So as we "see" attitudes on a spiritual level, this spiritual sight that God has given us, and we have the knowledge through the law and the understanding that God has given us, which is "the wages of sin is death," and we can "see" our wrong attitudes and we

can "see" the things that are wrong in our life through pride—that all things are driven by pride and selfishness in our life—then we have this opportunity to repent, to continue to go before God so that we can change our thinking, this transformation can take place. And it's all powered by? God's holy spirit, which points us to the Day of Pentecost, the work that God has been doing in the work of Pentecost, which is the transformation of 144,000 for the purpose of entering Elohim. What a great plan God has!

Verse 15—So I said in my heart, "As it happens to the fool, it happens to me, and why was I then more wise?" So why is he thinking that he is superior, because he's going to face the same thing? He's going to die. **Then I said in my heart, "This also is a vanity."** Pride is a vanity. Because he'd taken to himself and thought he was "better," he was more *wise* than others (because he'd taken it to himself). Well, he's saying, "Well, this is all a vanity! Being wise and taking it to yourself is a vanity!" And it is! It is an absolute vanity. It's all a waste of time and it's empty!

What's the profit of human wisdom, human intellect, if we all die and end up in the same place, in a resurrection back to a physical life for a hundred years? So human wisdom, human intellect, thinking we are superior because of an education in mankind's reasoning, is of *no spiritual value*. Only God's thinking will last forever. Only God's thinking will last forever.

Verse 16—For *there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever, since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come.* Question...**And how does a wise *man* die? As a fool!** Both are the same if they die just as human reasoning, education, or not educated in man's ways. Both are going to die; doesn't make any difference. The only value we can have is God's mind in us, this knowledge and understanding and wisdom. To have God's spirit makes us wise and of value. To have God's spirit separates us from mankind's natural thinking.

I think we'll end the sermon there, with that particular point, and maybe in the future we will pick up more of this aspect of God's love for us and the fact that He has called us and given us spiritual knowledge and spiritual understanding. And the understanding is the most important thing, to understand *why*, to understand the why of God's way of life.□