

Stronger Together - The Rewarded Life

Ecclesiastes Intro

- Ecclesiastes is a word similar to assembly and it is the name ascribed by the book to its author and therefore the author is often called “The Preacher” as one who addresses the assembly
- Some think “The Preacher” is Solomon, while some feel it is someone later

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

Big Idea: We are stronger together by living in loving relationships with God and each other.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 - Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

1. What is the rewarded life?

The World's Counterfeit

- The world's rewarded life is one in which we gratify our pleasures and multiply our possessions.
- **1 John 2:16-17** - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
- Lewis on desire - “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.” *The Weight of Glory*

God's Rewarded Life

- John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
- Jesus as shepherd – the context of the abundant life is one of togetherness ... the sheep have gathered.

2. What is this abundant life?

- The rewarded life is a forsaking of the love of possessions and pleasures to embrace the love of God.

ESV Study Bible

- “Jesus calls his followers, not to a dour, lifeless, miserable existence that squashes human potential, but to a rich, full, joyful life, one overflowing with meaningful activities under the personal favor and blessing of God and in continual **fellowship with his people.**”

Romans 8: 32, 37

- Romans 8:32 - He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously **give us all things**?
- Romans 8:37 - For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. How does this make us Stronger Together?

- As a result of people embracing God's sacrificial love, the church responds with sacrificial love to each other that is strong enough to bear all things and endure all things.

The Context for the Rewarded Life: A Community Practising Sacrificial Love

- John 10:11
- John 15:12-13

A Blueprint for being Strong Together:

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-6

This is Stronger Together:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7