

Ecclesiastes: The Quest for a Meaningful Life

"Two Are Better Than One"

Ecclesiastes 4:7-16

February 6-7, 2021

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for
their work:*

Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NIV)

Sermon Proposition

By God's design and character, humans live, act, and worship
better in community

1) A Parable Against Cutting Oneself Off (Luke 12)

*Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow
back to you.*

Ecclesiastes 11:1 (NLT)

2) The One Without a Second (v. 7-8)

*The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill
of hearing.*

Ecclesiastes 1:8b (NIV)

3) The Dangers of Traveling Alone (v. 9-12)

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them
two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was
about to go.*

Luke 10:1 (NIV)

4) The Tragedy of the Isolated King (v. 13-16)

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they
succeed.*

Proverbs 15:22 (NIV)

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Discussion Guide
"Two Are Better Than One"
Ecclesiastes 4:7-16

Read It

Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-16 together aloud.

⁷ Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: ⁸ There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless-- a miserable business! ⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰ If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? ¹² Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. ¹³ Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning. ¹⁴ The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. ¹⁵ I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. ¹⁶ There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (NIV)

Open It

Think about a time when the result of your work was unsatisfying. What made it feel that way?

What do you think are character qualities of someone you would work with to make miserable tasks more bearable?

Consider It

Read Luke 12:13-21. Why do you think people often strive for more when they have enough? Is that something that you do?

Why do you think the writer of Ecclesiastes calls this vanity or futility in verse 8?

How do you think American individualism inhibits our ability to develop community?

What are the examples that Solomon gives in verses 9-12 that show that it is better not to be alone?

What do the following Scriptures show about the value of living out our lives in community or together?

- Genesis 2:18
- Matthew 18:16
- Luke 10:1
- Romans 12:4-5
- Hebrews 10:24-25

Read John 17:11. What is Jesus's prayer for His followers? What does Jesus's relationship with the Father show us about God?

We could summarize all of Ecclesiastes under the question, "What's the point?" Why do you think there is a prioritization here of a thing (community, or the wise youth) that is better than another thing (being alone, or the foolish old king), if it all seems to be pointless?

What would you say to someone who says that life is pointless, since we are all just going to become "worm food" no matter what we do? Isn't this what Solomon is saying in verse 16?

Live It

Who is someone that you can befriend this week?

What would it take for us to build community in which there is trust and transparency?