

Hearts Set on Eternity

A thorough examination of the wisdom literature unearths all kinds of precious truths. Perhaps none more revealing than what is found in the pages of **Ecclesiastes**. For it's here we find a phrase whose implications are far-reaching and profound.

He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

Ecclesiastes 3.11 (NASB95)

In light of my father's recent battle with cancer, I've been thinking a lot lately about eternity. Many of you I'm sure have done the same at one time or another in your life. Those advanced in years. Declining health. The passing of a loved one. Life events that change our perspective on a dime. Some expected. Other are not.

"He has set eternity in their heart."

Eternity. Forever. Never-ending. At times, it's a difficult concept to wrap our heads around. Hard to comprehend. Mind-boggling to say the least. But despite the knowledge of the brevity of life and the ever-changing nature of our circumstances, we all have within us a feeling that there is something more to life.

C.S. Lewis wrote, *"If you really are a product of a materialistic universe, how is it you don't feel at home there? Do fish complain of the sea for being wet? ... Notice how we are perpetually surprised at Time.... In heaven's name, why? Unless, indeed there is something in us which is not temporal."*

Perhaps man is surprised at times because we are all temporal. But neither are we timeless. There are moments in our lives that we wish could go on forever. Your wedding day. A vacation with family and friends in a quaint, country cottage. The long-distance conversation with a loved one. Experiences that feel like they reach up, beyond time, into forever. And then there are the occasions that feel like an eternity although we wish they didn't. Events, sometimes seconds, which feel like they last forever. The longest hour of our lives. Pining for the anxiety to end, and end quickly. The empty spaces that fill our minds and hearts with thoughts and worries.

Moments made eternity.

Everyone ponders the meaning of life. Everyone wonders about life after death. We all have a thirst for eternity. And isn't that exactly what the **Ecclesiastes** writer meant? An innate longing inside each and every one of us. Understand this... we were made for forever.

We should long for the day when we are finally reunited with our God. That moment made eternity.

For some, eternity is seen simply as a succession of moments which always form the present. A mindset captured by many in the last stanza of Robert Frost's poem, *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

But for the believer, those of us who know there is a God, we understand we aren't promised tomorrow. And that time, as we know it, will end. For all **(2 Peter 3.7-10)**.

And furthermore, we are comforted by the myriad of promises our Father has declared to us in His Word. Promises of rest. The assurance of a home with Him. One where every tear is wiped away, where death has no reign over us, and where there is no mourning, nor crying, nor pain **(Revelation 21.3-4)**. It's the truth that life gives way to death, and death gives way to the infinity that follows death. The promise He made to us through His Son.

This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

1 John 2.25

And so, in our temporal shell, shackled by the constraints of time and mortality, we wait. Patiently. And come to the realization that we too have promises to keep. To Him. And the statement the **Ecclesiastes** writer made so many, many years ago has a profound, practical effect on us.

Is our heart set on eternity?

For if it is, then every waking moment of our lives needs to be lived in complete and utter adoration for the One who has given us life and the promise of life eternal. Daily walking in the light, glorifying Him. And sharing His promises with others.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that we need lives full of memorable experiences or marvelous adventures in order to live complete, satisfied lives. No. We need but fill our lives in service and devotion to the One who has prepared eternity for us. A life which glorifies Him with very fiber of our being. Understanding the paradox before us. Eagerly awaiting eternity. In our finite state. Surrounded by moments in time. We wait for the everlasting.

Embrace the eternity.

Have hearts set on eternity.