

Ecclesiastes 04 - The Vanity of Selfish Toil; The Value of a Friend; Popularity Passes Away

III. Solomon's search for meaning in business (Eccl 3:1—5:20)

- (2) Frustration of the quest (Eccl 3:16—4:8)
 - (B) Search frustrated by injustices (4:1-3)
 - (C) Search frustrated by rivalries (4:4-6)
 - (D) Search frustrated by laboring without an heir (4:7-8)
- (3) A superior way (Eccl 4:9—5:17)
 - (A) Cooperation (4:9-12)
 - (B) Political success through wisdom (4:13-16)

Ecclesiastes 4

(B) Search frustrated by injustices (4:1-3)

1 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold, *I saw* the tears of the oppressed and *that* they had no one to comfort *them*; and power was on the side of their oppressors, but they had no one to comfort *them*.

1 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold *I saw* the tears of the oppressed and *that* they had no one to comfort *them*; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort *them*.

1 Next I turned to consider all kinds of oppression that exists on earth. Look at the tears of the oppressed— there is no one to comfort them. Power is on the side of their oppressors; so they have no comforters.

1 So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.

2 So I congratulated the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are still living.

2 So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.

2 So I commended the dead who had already died as being happier than the living who are still alive.

2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

3 But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

3 But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

3 Better than both of them is someone who has not yet been born, because he hasn't experienced evil on earth.

3 Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

(C) Search frustrated by rivalries (4:4-6)

4 I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is *the result of* rivalry between a person and his neighbor. This too is futility and striving after wind.

4 I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is *the result of* rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

4 Then I examined all sorts of work, including all kinds of excellent achievements that create envy in others. This also is pointless and chasing after the wind.

4 Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.

5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.

5 The fool crosses his arms and starves himself.

5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

6 It's better to have one handful of tranquility than to have two handfuls of trouble and to chase after the wind.

6 Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

(D) Search frustrated by laboring without an heir (4:7-8)

7 Then I looked again at futility under the sun.

7 Then I looked again at vanity under the sun.

7 Then I turned to re-examine something else that is pointless on earth:

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

8 There was a man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches, *and he never asked*, "And for whom do I labor and deprive myself of pleasure?" This too is futility, and it is an unhappy task.

8 There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches *and he never asked*, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

8 Consider someone who is alone, having neither son nor brother. There is no end to all of his work, and he is never satisfied with wealth. "So for whom do I work," he asks, "and deprive myself of pleasure?" This, too, is pointless and a terrible tragedy.

8 There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

(3) A superior way (Eccl 4:9—5:17)

(A) Cooperation (4:9-12)

9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor;

9 Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.

9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 for if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up!

10 For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

10 If they stumble, the first will lift up his friend—but woe to anyone who is alone when he falls and there is no one to help him get up.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone*?

11 Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone*?

11 Again, if two lie close together, they will keep warm, but how can only one stay warm?

11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.

12 And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.

12 If someone attacks one of them, the two of them together will resist. Furthermore, the tri-braided cord is not soon broken.

12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

(B) Political success through wisdom (4:13-16)

13 A poor yet wise youth is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows *how* to receive instruction—

13 A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows *how* to receive instruction.

13 A poor but wise youth is better than an old but foolish king who will no longer accept correction.

13 Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.

14 for he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.

14 For he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.

14 The former can come out of prison to reign, while the latter, even if born to kingship, may become poor.

14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.

15 I have seen all those living under the sun move to the side of the second youth who replaces him.

15 I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.

15 I observed everyone who lives and walks on earth, along with the youth who will take the king's place.

15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them. Even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him; for this too is futility and striving after wind.

16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.

16 There was no end to all of his subjects or to all of the people who had come before them. But those who come along afterward will not be happy with him. This is also pointless and a chasing after wind.

16 There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.