

*If the young person becomes too focused on “now” they lose hope. When the future arrives, it will be abysmal for them—a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those in the prime of life must invest in a hopeful future whatever the current circumstances of darkness.*

## Living through the Uncertainties of Life

Jerry Cisar — August 2, 2020

Text: Ecclesiastes 11:1—12:7    Keyword: Sun (Sunshine)

### Introduction

- C. Storms are coming... each of us will have a personal storm or storms. So live now in view of that!

***Rejoice in the sunshine with an eye on the approaching storm!***

### LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.*

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- In 11:1, if bread represents both our labor and that which sustains life (food), how might we understand the verse?
- If casting bread upon the water was a recipe for beer, how might one understand the context?
- What kind of context might we glean for this text from the rest of the book? How does that influence our understanding?
- How does the way we live our lives either express hope in God for the future or not? How would your life answer to this?
- Why might it be important for the Preacher to tell young people to live life to the full? What temptations might they face?
- Might Jeremiah 29:5-7 speak into a similar circumstance as the Preacher? Explain.
- What did Jerry mean by the phrase, “personal apocalypse” as a description of 12:1-7? Do you think that fits?
- How did Jesus walk in the Wisdom of this text?
- How does Jesus’ death and resurrection enable us to walk in the truth of this text?

### I. Sip and Sow (11:1-6)

#### A. Casting Bread Upon Water

- i. Keep working and laboring to sustain life ... who knows what will prosper.
- ii. *No matter how bad the future looks, don’t stop celebrating life!*

#### B. Two Wrong Responses to Evil that Result in Inaction

- i. V3 fatalism
- ii. V4 paralysis of analysis

Zack Eswine: “Since we are tempted to get stuck trying to solve what we cannot know, the Preacher gives us an illustration of a farmer who resists his work because storm clouds rise. Speculating about the clouds, the farmer will neither sow nor reap. He will have no produce. “But,” he might say, “it looked like it was going to rain! The wind was starting to blow!” “The trees might fall!” Such a farmer forgets that he does not know “what disaster may happen on earth,” whether the threatening

storm will amount to anything or simply fade with a fuss (Eccl. 11:1–4). Storms come, winds blow, trees fall. Who knows whether it will happen now or ever? This is beyond what we can control. All that we can do is to give ourselves to tend what we've been given."

C. Who knows what God is going to do.

*Whether he is telling us to sip a little, or sow a lot, the Preacher is calling us to trust God.*

## II. Sunshine is Good (11:7-10)

A. Life is good! (7)

B. Rejoice in all of your life. (8)

i. Darkness will come soon enough.

ii. "Since your youth is fleeting enjoy it while you can."

C. Don't let the future hold you down. (9-10)

i. V9 is unusual in the context of Wisdom literature.

a) Let your heart either do what is pleasing or do what is good in the days of your youth.

b) Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.

ii. In an Upside-down World

a) When the future looks bleak, young people often get depressed and turn away from life-flourishing activities.

b) Carl Henry pointed out that young people always want to know whether life has any real promise for them or if they are in the apocalyptic generation. In other words, "do we have any hope?" or, "Is all a lost cause?"

iii. If life is good, and youth is when vitality is most felt and experienced, then use that youth for what is life giving!

*The Preacher wants to remind us not to waste our youth!*

iv. Remember, God will bring you into judgment (9).

a) What did that mean? I've usually taken it to say, "But don't have too much fun."

b) However, rightly or wrongly, a 3rd century Jewish rabbi commented, "Man will have to give account for all that he saw and did not enjoy!"

## III. Storms are Coming (12:1-7)

A. The Preacher turns his attention from life to death.

i. In v1, the Creator is mentioned.

ii. In v2, everything that was done in creation on days 1, 4 (light be and the setting in place the ordering of life by sun, moon, stars...), is now undone! This is "uncreation."

B. Personal Apocalypse

i. The Preacher is talking about old age and the many days of darkness that, given the length of life, we will all experience.

ii. Man returns to his eternal home... dust returns to dust (de-comp) and the spirit or breath returns to God who gave it.