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Week 4 | Mist | January 31

Key Focus: Wisdom gives you the power to look sad things in the eye and still find joy.

Opening Up:

Are you a practical joker? Explain.

Do you like being surprised (or even frightened) by a jokester? Explain.

Explain your sense of humor. What makes you laugh?

Reference: Ecclesiastes 7 - 8

Discuss:

1. In 7:15 and 8:14 the preacher explains sickness of the world. How have you witnessed a righteous person being treated like an unrighteous person or an unrighteous person being treated like a righteous person? How does the unfairness of the world make you feel? What have you done in response to the unfair world that we live in?
2. In what ways have you found it impossible "to make straight what [God] has made crooked?" (7:13) When have you relied upon God to do what only God can do?
3. In 7:1-2 the preacher encourages us to engage death and mourning over birthdays and celebrations. It seems like he saying, the funerals add more to wisdom than birthdays. How might this be true? What sad thing in life has made you wiser and increased your joy?
4. In 7:5-6 we see that conflict (rebuke) avoidance is foolish. Are you tempted to be a conflict avoider? Have you ever tried to push conflict away through laughter (or some other avoidance strategy)?
5. In 7:11-12 the preacher says that wisdom is like really good insurance or savings, like an inheritance. Wisdom can be there to save you when life goes bad. How have seen this to be true? (Maybe you have seen life go bad without the insurance of wisdom.)
6. In 7:14 we see that adversity and prosperity happen to everyone and that sometimes life is unfair (7:15). Some people respond by being overly religious and some by being overly rebellious (7:16-17). When life is unfair, are you more likely to become too religious or too rebellious? Explain.
7. In 7:25 the preacher searches out the "schemes" of the things. He fell pray to the "scheme" of sexual sin (7:26; 1 Kings 11:1ff). What makes sexual sin a unique trap?
8. The preacher asks, "Who can fix what only God can fix? (7:13) This leads us to the gospel. "I can't fix what only God can fix. God has fixed it through Jesus. In Jesus the unfixable is going to be fixed. What do you need to trust Jesus with today?
9. Pray.