

Reading Ecclesiastes

Vanity of Vanities?

Smoky Hill church of Christ

FALL
2023

5. VANITY AND VANITY (5.1-6.12)

BEFORE THE END?

VIEW OF RELIGION?

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Return to Religion? (5.1–7)

MAKING OFFERINGS

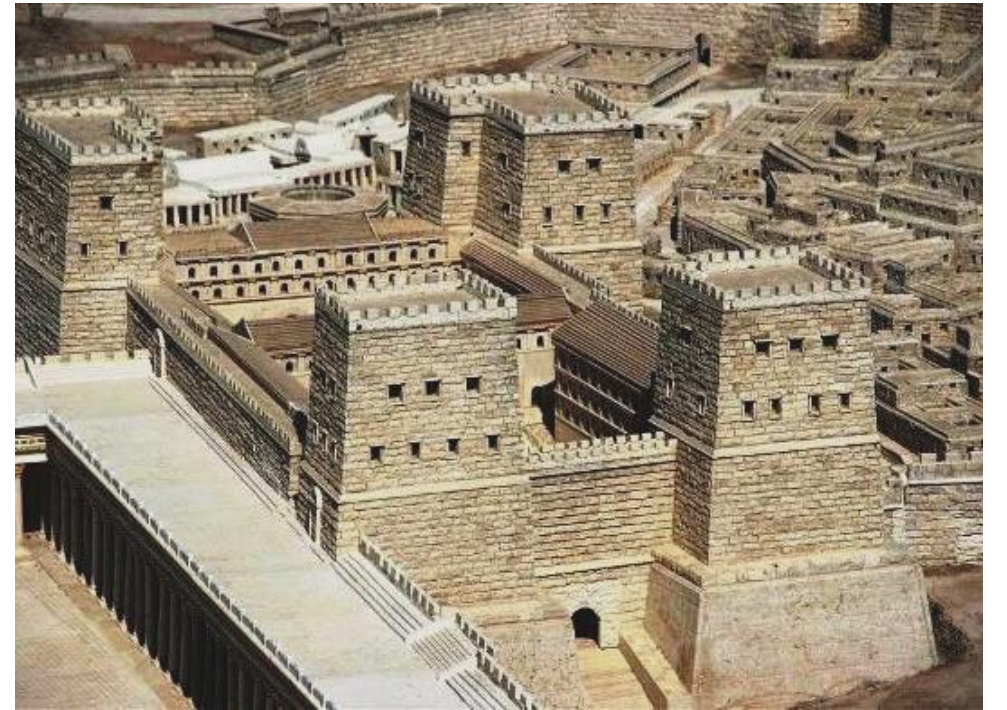
What guides the wise? How is it better?

SPEAKING WORDS

Into what pitfalls does the fool fall?

FULFILLING VOWS

What is their purpose? Their danger?



The Vanity of Life

ECCLESIASTES 5.8-12
STRUCTURE

●
OPPRESSION OF STRENGTH

Ecccl 5.8-9 // 6.10-12

●
MONEY & TOIL

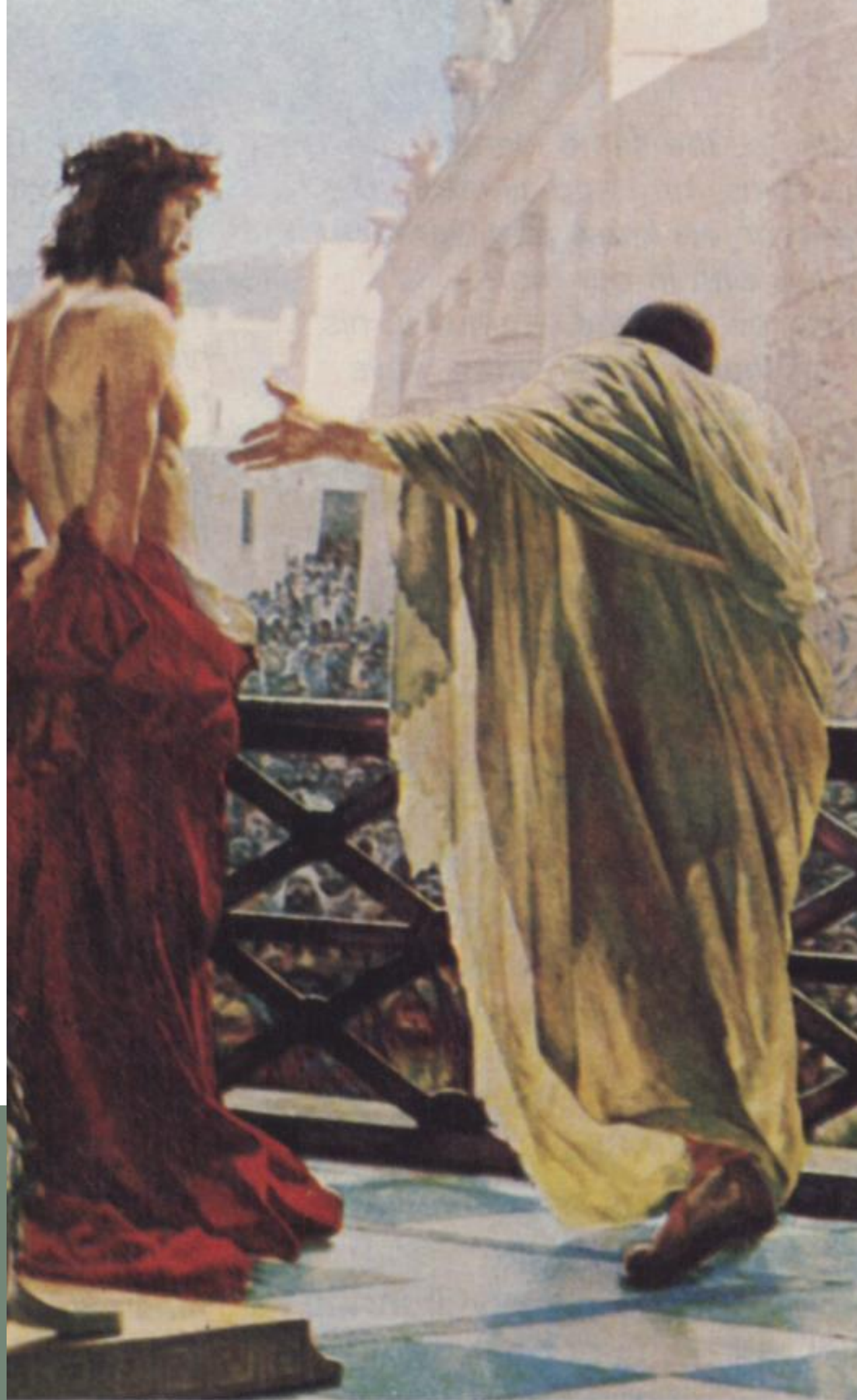
Ecccl 5.10-12 // 6.7-9

●
DEATH & TOIL

Ecccl 5.13-17 // 6.1-6

●
LIFE AND TOIL

Ecccl 5.18-20



Oppression and Strength (5.8–9; 6.10–12)

DON'T BE **AMAZED**

Ecccl 5.8–9 (type of oppression?)

BECAUSE OF **STRENGTH**

Ecccl 6.10–12 (type of oppression?)

ECCLESIASTES 5.10-12; 6.7-9

What is the point of having more than you need? How is this connected to what comes before and after?

Insatiable Appetites.

WHAT GAIN IS THERE?

Death.

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“This is Good”

ECCLESIASTES 5.18-20

THE GOOD AND BEAUTIFUL

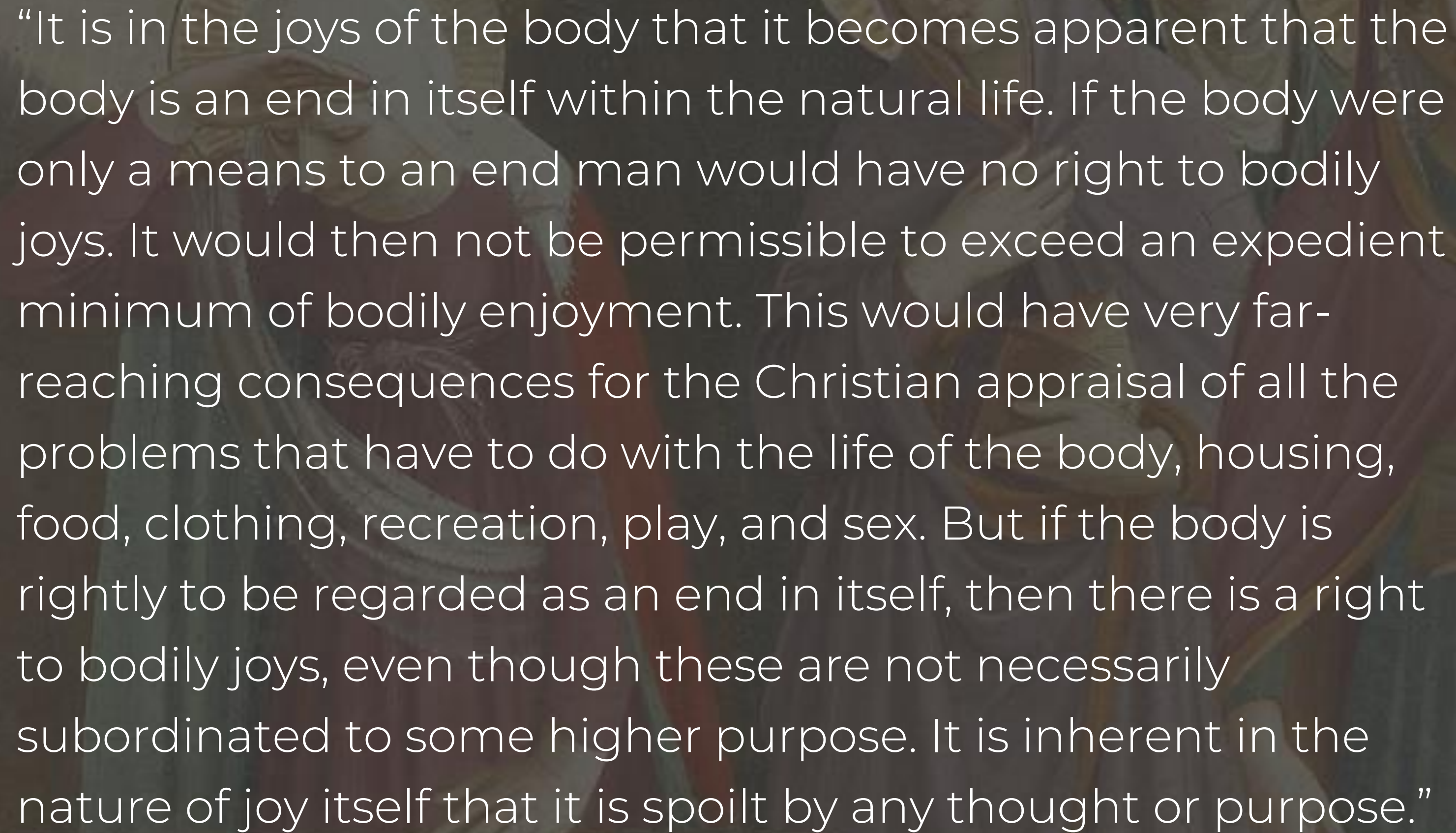
Not just “better”! But still limited by sight.

GOD BUSIES THEM WITH JOY

cf. Eccl 2.1, 10, 26; 5.20; 8.15; 9.7

A PICTURE OF COMMUNION

Dtr 12.5-7; Jer 31.10-14



“It is in the joys of the body that it becomes apparent that the body is an end in itself within the natural life. If the body were only a means to an end man would have no right to bodily joys. It would then not be permissible to exceed an expedient minimum of bodily enjoyment. This would have very far-reaching consequences for the Christian appraisal of all the problems that have to do with the life of the body, housing, food, clothing, recreation, play, and sex. But if the body is rightly to be regarded as an end in itself, then there is a right to bodily joys, even though these are not necessarily subordinated to some higher purpose. It is inherent in the nature of joy itself that it is spoilt by any thought or purpose.”

Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* 113.

THINKING ABOUT THE BODY: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

“If Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead....”





READ

Ecclesiastes 7.1–13



QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the difference between Ecclesiastes' "good" & merely "better"?
- 2) What advice does the author provide to us for living life?
- 3) Are we surprised by it?
- 4) Do we even agree with it?



Next Class

6. WHAT IS GOOD? (7.1-13)