

Ecclesiastes 3 (gospel)

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I would like to read a verse before I start, in Ecclesiastes. We have sung about eternity.

Quite a solemn word.

Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verse 11.

He hath made everything beautiful in its time. Also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. He hath set the world in their heart. It seems that particular word also means eternity.

He hath set eternity in their heart.

[00:01:01] Every human being has some kind of a sense of eternity in his being.

Though we cannot understand or fathom the light of eternity, nevertheless there is always this little voice in the heart of every man, that if being frank with himself, he is always going to be brought to that point of thinking about eternity. Eternity.

Eternity.

A king has once asked the question, how long is eternity?

Maybe you've heard this before. And the answer was something like this. There is, O king, in a far country, [00:02:02] a mountain of grass, which reaches high into the heavens, way above the clouds.

And once a year, a little bird comes to the top of the mountain, and he sharpens his beak, I don't know if that's the right word, on the top of the mountain. Once a year he does that.

And he says, O king, once the mountain has been hewn down to the ground, that is one second of eternity.

I hope you follow me.

And we might even add that not even a second of eternity. We would really want, if there is anybody here who doesn't know the Lord Jesus as Savior, to be conscious of this fact of eternity.

[00:03:04] The great reality.

Not just a word, but the reality.

There are three kinds of people in general in the world, relative to the faith of God.

You have the indifferent heart, that is those who don't care at all. But I don't want to talk about those tonight. I don't want to touch any like that here tonight. There are those who trust upon their own righteousness.

Now we meet a lot of those. Maybe there is some here tonight. Those who confide on their own righteousness. That's a great class of people. And there is the other class, those who don't have any righteousness at all, [00:04:04] but who do see their need for a Savior.

And I would like to consider with you two man scriptures, which will display more or less these two characters. It could be in Mark chapter 10.

Mark chapter 10.

Mark chapter 10.

Verse 17.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running a needle to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? [00:05:01] And Jesus said unto him, Why art thou being good? There is none good but one, that is God. And thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear witness. Do not father thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest. Go thy way and sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come, take up the cross and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. Verse 26.

And they were astonished, out of measure, saying among themselves, [00:06:02] Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them said, With man it is impossible, but with God, but not with God, sorry, for with God all things are possible. Turn to verse 46, same chapter.

And they came to Jericho, and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, allowing Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the wayside begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried the more, a great deal, [00:07:01] thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. And they called a blind man, saying unto him, and he casting away his garments, rose and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee well. And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the way.

The whole purpose of this meeting is to bring you, to bring all of us to the very last verse 52 we have read, to follow Jesus on the way.

[00:08:01] Now, the rich young ruler, he's really an image of so many people today. And maybe you are one of those. I know I was. The self-righteous man. The one who says, well, I'm not too bad. The one who says, I'm not that bad. The one who always compares himself, himself with the worst one.

This young man, he came unto the Lord.

Now, there is one thing I'd like to bring up first of all. The way he approaches the Lord. He says unto the Lord, good master. Now, as we have read, the Lord sort of rebukes him in a gentle way. He says unto him, why callest thou me good? There is none good but me, that is God. [00:09:01] This man looked upon the Lord Jesus only as a good man.

The Lord's perfect life was indeed revealing his perfection as a man.

And today there are lots of people who look upon the Lord Jesus either as a great man or either as a great prophet.

But I would like to tell you tonight that the Lord Jesus is far more than just a great prophet. He is a great prophet.

He is far more than a great man. He is a great man. He is God manifest in the flesh. And if you could just see this tonight, that this here is the very God of heaven and earth [00:10:01] in the person of the Lord Jesus actually walking on the earth and actually calling you, not the one sitting beside you, but calling you.

If you were the only one in the hall tonight, he would be calling you. And even if every seat was full tonight, he would still be calling you. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

This man was conscious of eternity. This word eternity must have tickled him somewhat. You know what I mean by that? It exercised him. It worked him up. I was exercised when I used to think about eternity. I used to lay down in my bed and I used to start thinking about it and I got scared. I stopped thinking about it. Well, this man was conscious of eternity and we hope that you are conscious of eternity too. [00:11:03] And not only was he conscious of eternity, but he was conscious of eternal life. I hope you are conscious too, of eternal life. Not just eternity, but eternal life. Now there was one little thing that this man had to learn, which was indeed the great thing. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? He thought that by doing something he might get eternal life. So though he was conscious of eternity, though he was conscious of eternal life, there was one thing that was missing. He wasn't conscious or he didn't know how to get it, frankly. He had this notion that so many of us have that we have to do something to get eternal life.

[00:12:01] Well, just want to say that if you come to the Lord with this thought in your heart and in your mind of doing something to get eternal life, the Lord is going to answer you according to that approach. If you go to the Lord on the basis of doing things, the Lord is going to give you an answer on what you must do. And if you come to the Lord with that thought in your heart, we're afraid that you will be disappointed. And so this is the only reason why the Lord answers this man as he does. He takes him on his own ground. We will see a complete contrast to this in the next man. Jesus said

unto him, Thou knowest the commandments. If you notice, he quotes five commandments. [00:13:03] All of those commandments which have to do with man, not stealing, not killing, not bearing false witness, etc.

This man has not even risen to the level of God.

He was only looking on the horizontal scale and the Lord answers him in consequence. And you know, this man says, I have observed from my youth all these, all these.

You know, when it comes to exterior things, it's, I would say, fairly easy. You know, you know what I mean by that. Fairly easy not to kill, you know, not to steal, etc.

The Lord was introducing the great commandments. [00:14:01] This is the verse that I usually say when people tell me this thing about, oh, I forget the commandments. I usually quote them the first commandments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, I mean, this point, with all thy soul and with all thy strength. And beloved, if you listen to that verse and if you are frank with yourself, you will have to admit that you don't do it. Nobody does it. There is only one that has done it, the Lord Jesus. Well, the Lord looks to him, loving him.

He loves him. This is the love, the evangelistic love you could say. The Lord here loves him.

It is not the love of a relationship. It's just the love. He loves him as he loves every one of us. [00:15:02] And the Lord said to him, one thing thou mightest. You've got everything that you need, but you're missing one thing. One thing thou mightest.

I just want to use a little illustration. I heard this a long time ago. Imagine yourself having two, how could I say, two cliffs separated by a big gorge. Very deep, very deep.

I don't know if you've ever been to the Grand Canyon in the States. Incredible depths. And the space between these two cliffs is 80 feet.

Two men approach the cliffs. [00:16:01] One of them, a weak man.

The other one, an Olympic jumper, gold medalist. And you look at the cliff, you look at the space between the two, you look down, hundreds of feet. He says, well, I'm going to try. That wasn't just an illustration. So the weak man gets back. He starts running, tries to jump, of course, 80 feet.

Too much?

He jumps, but he's moving. Well, now you have the other one, the Olympic medalist. He gets back, gets himself all psyched up, works himself up, gets a good running, he runs, he jumps, 75 feet.

[00:17:01] It was 80 feet. The distance between was 80 feet. He had only jumped 75 feet. You know where he went? The same place that the weak man went. That's just an illustration. The very best of men in this world cannot reach to the heights of the God of glory. Remember that verse? Romans 3, 23. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

You might be a very good jumper, you might be very good, you might have good works, you might

have a perfect life, but don't forget, the distance between yourself and God is more than you can ever jump, more than you can ever do. When it comes to a question of salvation, we all work, [00:18:01] we all stand on the same platform. And the distance can only be bridged by the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know, in this illustration, this third man, a wise man, comes in, puts down a big piece of wood, whatever you call it, a plank of wood, and he just walks across it, quite simply, gets to the other side. You know, the bridge is Christ.

He has bridged the distance between you and God.

And all it takes is to simply accept what he has done and to walk through. You won't be crushed under the body. You'll get on the other side safely. Well, one thing thou lackest, you know, thou lackest five feet. This man lacked five feet, but it was five feet which brought him down to his destruction. We hope that you don't lack this thing. [00:19:03] And the Lord answers him, sell whatever thou hast, give to the poor, thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross and follow me. And he went sad, as they say, and went away grieved for he had great possessions. Yes. That was the peg that searched the heart of this man. That was the very thing that brought out what was really the heart of this man. Though he did desire eternal life, though he did know about eternal life, nevertheless his heart was filled with possession. And if you read in the other verses, the Lord didn't say at all that possessions prevented you at all. He just said that it was harder because if they displace God, then it's impossible. [00:20:01] So, this man went away sad, went away grieved. I think immediately of another man in Acts 7. If you remember well, he was coming up from Jerusalem. He was going away from Jerusalem. He had come in Jerusalem to worship, it seems. But he had not been satisfied with what had been there. Of course, the Lord Jesus had been rejected, crucified.

He was coming away, and he was found in the desert. And you know, that man must have been some kind of a rich man. He was working in the court of a certain queen, I think. That man was sort of rich. And you know, I think it's Philemon, the priest of the hand of Jesus. And you know what we read at the end of that circumstance? It says, he went away rejoicing. That man went away rejoicing. [00:21:02] Both were rich, and he desired to know what God really was like. And he found it in the person of Christ. He went away rejoicing. And we would surely like you to go away rejoicing tonight. This first rich man went away grieving for he had lost a possession. We hope that you're not one of those. And even if you are one of those, there is ever the occasion to change. Let's talk about our second man. Verse 46.

Now I like this stuff. I know that the gospel is concerning his son Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. And you know, we're going to try and present to you [00:22:02] everything that the gospel wants to do in 45 minutes or so. So although the gospel is concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, in some way it concerns us a little bit. I'm not trying to take away from the precious truth concerning the Lord Jesus. But the gospel also wants to present to us what we are before God. And then it presents to us the person of his beloved son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So this is why I'm taking these two examples tonight. The second man. Verse what is it? They came to Jericho. Jericho.

I don't know if this is the first time that you're in this meeting. Or maybe it's the first time you're exposed to the scriptures. [00:23:01] Or maybe it's the thousandth time that you're exposed to the scriptures. But I would just like to show you a little part of Jericho.

Quite simple. Jericho in scriptures represents that which is cursed in the eyes of God. And you know the gospel like we're just saying is vast.

It can extend infinitely.

Why? We can talk about it for a long time. As Michael Tyson talked about it for all eternity. But it also can be compressed quite in a little message. And I think that this first part of the first verse is really a summary of what Christ has done. I just like to read they came to Jericho. The Lord Jesus this is just a picture came to Jericho. [00:24:01] He left heaven the glory of heaven. He put it aside. He came down this world.

You know what Genesis 3 says cursed is the ground. Well not only did the Lord come upon the ground that had been cursed. But the Lord Jesus went to the cross of Calvary and he died on the cross of Calvary.

And you know what? I think it says in Galatians cursed is the man that hanged on the tree. That's Jericho. The Lord Jesus came to the cross. You know he says I'm wearing a crown of thorns on my head.

You know he says I'm wearing the gospel he said now is my soul troubled.

[00:25:01] And what shall I say? Deliver me from this hour.

And he says this is why I have come. This is why I have come. From the hour of the cross. But the Lord went to the cross. And you know if your righteousness would have been sufficient to bring you to heaven the Lord would not have moved one All Yoda from heaven. God would have left you to work it out by yourself. But because you and I were powerless he sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ. He came to Jericho.

He came to the cross. And there he gave himself a perfect sacrifice for righteous holiness.

You know God is perfectly righteous.

Every little sin [00:26:02] needs to be judged.

You know I remember reading a book a long time ago.

A long time ago. Four years ago or so.

It's a long time for me. And the brother was trying to tell the person how much he had sinned.

And he said something like this.

This is a long time.

Let's say you didn't sin until you get to five years old. Let's say you didn't sin. Let's say you started sinning when you were five years old.

Let's just say that.

And let's just say that you made one sin a day. That's one little sin. Now I have to confess that I

fortunately knew more than that [00:27:01] one day.

More than many thoughts come in one day you know.

But let's just say that in one day you do one little sin. Well you know after one year that would be 365 sins. If you reached 65 years old you would have done about something like 20,000 sins. 20,000 sins. That's just one sin a day. You think you're not guilty?

The word of God says the whole world is guilty.

The word Jesus came to Jericho to take your sin. Your sin. It came to Jericho.

And as you went out of Jericho this is [00:28:01] part of the gospel too. We're reminded that must be the resurrection of Christ.

The Lord Jesus didn't just stay on the cross.

He didn't stay in the tomb.

He was there.

He came out of Jericho.

He came away from the cross.

And he came out of it with not one sin left. God was satisfied.

You know when you think about great man of religious, religious man you know, think of, I don't know if I should mention anybody, but they are still in the tomb. They may not have great preaching but they're still in the tomb. The Lord Jesus Christ, he's out [00:29:01] of the tomb and he's in heaven.

He's out of Jericho.

This is it. Came out of Jericho.

And the Lord Jesus, as he came out of Jericho, man in the world, in the world, God came out of the tomb and the Lord came [00:30:01] out of the tomb and went through the cemetery and went through the building and went to the heaven and went through it and went out of it and that is a picture. Try and picture yourself, a man, blind man, sitting in a dark room and [00:31:08] chained. This is about it. This man needs to have his eyes open. He needs to have the light enter the room and he needs to have the chains broken from sitting. This is a picture of what we are, every one of us, the first being spiritually, blind, in darkness and chained to sitting. And the Lord Jesus goes by. That's where you are. Face it. That's where you are. Just by the wayside. Nothing to offer the Lord. Nothing to offer God. And he cries out. You know, you don't have to cry out aloud to us. Just cry out to the Lord in your heart. The shortest prayer in Scripture is three words. Lord, save me. You know when [00:32:13] we usually ask the Lord to teach us to pray. Well, you know the best way to learn to pray is when you are in difficult situations. When you are in need. Peter was in need. He was sitting in the water and he said, Lord, save me. You know it had been said that if he would have made a long prayer, he would

have drowned. He just said, Lord, save me. And the Lord saved him. The Lord doesn't want from you a long prayer. The Lord simply wants to hear you cry out, Lord, save me. This blind Bartimaeus, you know what he said? He cried out and said, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Have mercy on me. He was conscious [00:33:05] of his needs. He knew what he needed and he looked at the Lord as the one who could satisfy all that he needed. Have mercy on me. He was conscious of his need of mercy. Standing before God on any other platform of mercy, he would have been consumed by the holiness of God. Have mercy on me. You know, many stopped him. You know, many charged him, shut up. Shut up. That's about what he needed. To give you peace. Shut up. The people here, the crowd here, you know what it represents? It represents anything and anybody that will keep you from coming to Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. I think of the woman. The Lord was going through a certain place and there were lots of people around him. There was a crowd [00:34:03] following the Lord and this woman, she went through the crowd to touch the hem of his garment. The crowd was not, wasn't any obstacle to her. But the crowd represents anything that might keep you from coming to Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is it? Maybe anything.

Maybe just a simple cry, you know. Have mercy on me. The crowd would stop him. He didn't even see. He just went. He just cried. And you know when you cry, the Lord will turn around. You know what he did? Jesus stood still. He stood still to listen to the cry of this man. And he commanded him to be calm. They called a blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort. Rise. He called him. He called you. I repeat, not the one beside you, [00:35:06] but you. He is the one. You are the one that the Lord is calling. And right now, the Lord is calling you right now. This is a wonderful thing about what Bartimaeus did. He was so happy to hear that the Lord was calling him, we read in verse 50, casting away his garments.

You know, Bartimaeus was a beggar. He had nothing to offer the Lord. And the very little that he had, his garment, he threw away. He even threw away his cup. He came to the Lord.

He rose and came to Jesus. This is what you would like you to do. To rise and to come [00:36:01] to Jesus. Jesus answered and said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. This man knew what he needed. And the Lord specifically asked him, what do you want me to do? He knew.

He knew what he needed. And he said, Lord, that I might receive my sight. That I might see, not just physically, that I might see the truth as it is. You know, I was looking for the truth before. I was looking for anything. It didn't matter what it was. I thought it was the truth. And I erred here and there and everywhere until I found the Lord Jesus Christ. And I stopped. My eyes opened and I saw the truth in him, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[00:37:10] This is what we would like you to realize tonight. The truth as it is in Jesus. All that he's done, all that he is, all that he said, the truth as it is in Jesus. Well, Jesus said unto him, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee well, and immediately he received his sight. You know, just a little word on this in the evening. You won't have to wait until eternity. You won't have to eat your nails out to wonder if you're going to have eternal life or not. You won't have to worry about that. You won't have to worry on whether or not you'll be saved or forgiven immediately. Right now, tonight, immediately. You can have [00:38:09] forgiveness of sin. You can have that spiritual insight given to you. You can have eternal life. We're talking about eternity. Eternal life. You can have it right now. This afternoon was trying to have a nap. And there was some music coming from our neighbors. So, you know, we have ears so we can hear. And there was a song. And I think it was, I really, and it just happened that

the people were playing the record over and over again, always the same song. So I had to go into another room. And some of the words that really crashed me was this. It's now or never. Tomorrow might be too late. Funny. That's what the words [00:39:07] of the song said. It's now or never. Tomorrow might be too late. And that must have played about ten times. And I went out of the room. It's now or never. Tomorrow might be too late.

When's the better time to come to the Lord Jesus? It's now. Now. Right now. It's that time. And you see what I mean? We're playing with you. And if you come to the Lord Jesus right now, He's not going to wait for tomorrow to give you forgiveness of sin. Right now He's going to give you forgiveness of sin. Right now He's going to give you eternal life. Right now. Even if you get hit by a car or killed, you'll go straight to heaven with [00:40:01] Him. Oh, dear friend. Immediately, you will see His sight. But He might not bring you to heaven right now. He might just leave you here for a while. And then you'll see His mighty hands. He followed Jesus on the way. This is what you want to do. To follow Jesus on the way. Where was the Lord Jesus going? Verse 32. They were on the way going up to Jerusalem. And Jesus went before them. Jesus went before them. What a precious love. You won't be left alone to face whatever the world, its opposition. The Lord Jesus will be going before you. Oh, there's our two men. The rich ruler. The righteous man. And you know, I allow myself to read a verse in Philippians. Chapter 3. Though I might also have confidence [00:41:13] in the flesh, verse 4, if any other man thinketh that he hath reasons for which he might trust in the flesh, I more. If you think that you have something to offer God, Paul has more than you. Doesn't matter how much you have, Paul has more to offer God than you have.

It says here, if any other man thinketh that he hath reasons for which he might trust in the flesh, I more. What does he say after that? He says, what things were given to me, those I count with love for Christ. And I count all things but love for the excellency [00:42:04] of the knowledge of Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but with you, that I may win Christ. If you think your righteousness will bring you before God, Paul has more than you have, and he counted them as love because of the excellency of Christ Jesus. Now that's just extreme. Maybe you think you've said too much.

Maybe you think that you've done too much harm against God. Well, that's a good thing.

It's a good thing to be aware of the things we've done against God. This is really a prerequisite to enjoy salvation. But if you think you've done too much sin against God, let's just read another verse concerning Paul and 1 Timothy chapter 1. He says, This is a faithful saying [00:43:10] and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Nevertheless, for this cause I obtain mercy. If you think you've sinned so much against God, I would just like to tell you tonight that there is one who has sinned more than you. Paul, he was the chief of sinners. You can't be the chief of sinners. You are the chief of sinners. You're the second one, if you're that bad. There was one who was worse than you. And what did he say? I have obtained mercy. If you have obtained mercy, you're going to have obtained mercy too. He was the chief of sinners and he obtained mercy. The grace of God is not limited by any amount of sin. Where sin [00:44:02] abounded, grace overabounded. Well, this is the end of my little message. We do pray and we do desire that the Lord would bless His Word to your hearts, from the youngest to the oldest, that you might be made aware, first of all, of the solemnity of eternity.

Think of it. Think of how long eternity is. Think of the joy and the presence of God, Christ, peace, life, light. You may find faith simply in Christ. It is yours for the taking.

Think of it. It is the free giving of God through Christ Jesus and under heaven and [00:45:01] from the solemn thought of being separated from God. Darkness, gnashing teeth, tongue twisted. Eternity, far from God. And with a thought in your mind that you could have been God. You could have been with Christ. I don't know if you're going to hear the voices of joy in heaven, but you're going to hear it in your heart. You're going to hear the voice in the presence of God. Eternity. Eternity. Well, the dawn has come, but we would like you to be conscious of this. God is offering eternal life in His beloved Son.