

Dennis R. Wiles
First Baptist Arlington
Summer 2022

2022

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Re- . . .

*Re-Flect, Re-Fresh, Re-Store, Re-Vive, Re-Deem, Re-Birth, Re-New, Re-Imagine,
Re-Surrect, Re-Concile, Re-Member, Re-Create, Re-Pent, Re-Plenish, Re-Veal, Re-
Dedicate, Re-Joice,
Re – EVERYTHING!!!*

SUMMER 2022 Re-Create

June 5 – August 6, 2022

Ecclesiastes

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

The voice of the Old Testament has many accents. There is almost everything there, from the impassioned preaching of the prophets to the cool, reflective comments of the wise—and a whole world of poetry, law, story-telling, psalmody and vision in between.

But there is no-one quite like Qoheleth (to give him his un-translatable title); no book in this whole great volume which speaks in quite his tone of voice.

-Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes*, p.13

If Proverbs is like math, mostly dealing in equations in which one thing adds up to equal another, then Ecclesiastes is like music, all mood with melody and tone. If Proverbs is like meteorology giving us indicators so as to predict certain outcomes, then Ecclesiastes is like the actual weather, fickle and unpredictable in its ability to rant with storms or breathe easy with a mid-morning breeze. In Proverbs a good man plus God's love and wisdom equals a good life. In Ecclesiastes a good man plus God's love still dies like the beast or the fool. In Proverbs, wisdom gives us eyes to recognize the storm clouds and what to do in response. In Ecclesiastes, death is a piece of a tornado from which no proverbial basement can shelter us.

-Zack Eswine, *Recovering Eden: The Gospel According to Ecclesiastes*, p.9

Plans for June – July 2022

This summer we will take the time to explore the mysterious but meaningful Book of Ecclesiastes. We will learn the valuable lessons offered in this ancient book. We cannot control life. We have to learn to trust God in the everyday experiences and pursuits of life. Then, we discover the Re-Creating, Re-Storative power of God at work in the everyday.

Goals for Summer 2022

- **Fellowship and Fun across the generations of our church family:** It's summer! It is a time to have fun activities and take advantage of the seasonal opportunities.
- **Camps, Activities, Re-Creation, etc:** It's summer!
- **Community Team/Connections Team**
Ministry Idea: A summer of Re-Creation! We will encourage our church family to engage in an array of summer Re-Creational activities to both have fun and engage our community with personal evangelistic efforts.

Sources for this Study

Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997

Zack Eswine, *Recovering Eden: The Gospel According to Ecclesiastes*, P&R Publishing, 2014

Derek Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes: A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*, IVP Academic, 1976

Michael A. Eaton, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Ecclesiastes*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1983

Andy Crouch, *The Life We're Looking For: Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World*, Convergent Books, 2022

Carl Trueman, *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution*, Crossway 2022

Reading, Studying, and Preaching Ecclesiastes

In some ways, Ecclesiastes seems like such an odd book to be found in Bibles. It does not recount the famous stories of redemption from the life of Israel. There is no reference to the Patriarchs or the Exodus. It has somewhat of a pessimistic tone. It seems to be played only in the minor key.

However, it also may strike a chord with many folks in our current society. It is filled with honest commentary on the human life. The author shares the frustrations that many folks have felt for centuries as they have pursued meaning and happiness in a broken world. There is no

prior Biblical knowledge needed for the casual reader of this material. It just may be a really good evangelistic tool for a 21st century audience.

As Zack Eswine has pointed out, the book seems to long for a re-creation of Eden. There is the sense that something has gone awry, and everyone knows it. The evidence of brokenness are everywhere:

In other words, the best good in the madness under the sun is found when we recover some small resemblance to what we were made for in Eden. We remember that God's gift to humanity has not quit, even though we have and the world now groans. We remember Adam and Eve's season prior to their fall, and we learn to long for that recovery while we are migrants here, worn out among the shanties.

-Zack Eswine, *Recovering Eden*, p. 15

So, as we read and study, let's keep this perspective in front of us. Ecclesiastes is an honest take on life "under the sun" in the context of a longing for the Re-Creation of Eden! We know that Eden is both in our past and our future. Praise God! The Apostle John saw the tree of life in the new earth (Revelation 22:1-5).

As we preach through Ecclesiastes, we will acknowledge the reality of the brokenness of our world post-Fall. There is now denying the pain, shame, hurt, and frustration the writer references throughout this book. However, there is much wisdom both shared and gleaned in this study. We will attempt to capture the essence of the many strands that fashion the mosaic that is Ecclesiastes.

In the following outline, I will offer a brief synopsis of the messages I will be sharing --- and I will also offer an explanation of why I have chosen the texts for the Guest Preachers each week.

SUMMER 2022 Re-Create

June 5 – August 6, 2022

Ecclesiastes

June 5, 2022: *Real Life in a Broken World*

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

The Opening section of Ecclesiastes is one of the most recognized sections of the entire book. It sounds a pessimistic tone with unmistakable clarity. It is raw, honest, emotive, and real. What a great introduction to this two-month conversation for our church! "Under the sun" – the world is just filled with . . . *emptiness!*

Daily Bible Readings

June 6:	Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
June 7:	Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:11
June 8:	Ecclesiastes 2:12-26
June 9:	Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
June 10:	Ecclesiastes 3:12-22
June 11:	Re-Flection

June 12, 2022: *I Can't Get No Satisfaction!*

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

Every human being has the desire to live a fulfilling and meaningful life. How is that accomplished? Where can we find meaning and fulfillment? That quest forms a unique bond among humans. We all know that search can lead to all manner of frustration and emptiness. Again, our writer offers an honest account of just how elusive ultimate meaning can be for all of us.

Daily Bible Readings

June 13:	Ecclesiastes 4
June 14:	Ecclesiastes 5:1-17
June 15:	Ecclesiastes 5:18-6:12
June 16:	Ecclesiastes 7:1-14
June 17:	Ecclesiastes 7:15-29
June 18:	Re-Flection

June 19, 2022: *Wise Guys*

Ecclesiastes 2:12-16

Ecclesiastes is listed among the “Wisdom Literature” of the Bible. There is much wisdom to be gleaned from our study of this ancient book. The writer acknowledges the limitation of wisdom and yet, its superiority to foolishness! In spite of the darker tone of his assessment, there is hope for us as we become “wise guys” in our journey of faith.

Daily Bible Readings

June 20:	Ecclesiastes 8
June 21:	Ecclesiastes 9
June 22:	Ecclesiastes 10
June 23:	Ecclesiastes 11
June 24:	Ecclesiastes 12
June 25:	Re-Flection

June 26, 2022: *Nothing Better!*

Ecclesiastes 2:17-26; 3:22

For many people, ultimate meaning and fulfillment is always ---- just around the bend, just beyond the next turn, ---- or, in the next pasture, the next job, the next relationship, --- or in the next big dream. The wisdom gleaned from the author of Ecclesiastes is that we can actually find great fulfillment and meaning in our ordinary lives. We will search the phrase “nothing better” in Ecclesiastes in this message.

Daily Bible Readings

June 27:	Proverbs 1
June 28:	Proverbs 2-3
June 29:	Proverbs 4
June 30:	Proverbs 5
July 1:	Proverbs 6
July 2:	Re-Flection

July 3, 2022: Re-Deem the Time!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

Guest Preacher: Curt Grice

Without question, this is the most famous page in the book! It was read at JFK's funeral (and countless other funerals!). The rhythmic cadence in this passage celebrates the appropriateness of all types of human experiences. The author seems to hint to us that we have to be discerning to know the time and wise enough to redeem it.

Daily Bible Readings

July 4:	Proverbs 7
July 5:	Proverbs 8
July 6:	Proverbs 9
July 7:	Proverbs 10
July 8:	Proverbs 11
July 9:	Re-Flection

July 10, 2022: *God's Word(s) Shape God's People*

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

Guest Preacher: Dr. Gary Stidham

God's people need to gather together for worship, community, revelation, and inspiration. It is better for us to arrive in God's presence with our souls prepared to hear from the Lord than to always gather to express ourselves in our humanity. As we listen to the Word(s) of God, our lives are formed and shaped, uniquely prepared to do His will. May it be so!

Daily Bible Readings

July 11:	Proverbs 12
July 12:	Proverbs 13
July 13:	Proverbs 14
July 14:	Proverbs 15
July 15:	Proverbs 16
July 16:	Re-Flection

July 17, 2022: *Consider God!*

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

Guest Preacher: Katy Reed-Hodges

After the author leaves God’s presence in His house, he continues to encounter the inequities of the post-Eden world. Injustice, poverty, death, etc. – it is all still there. However, God is at work in the midst of it all. God’s plans are in place in spite of the brokenness of the human experience.

Daily Bible Readings

July 18: Proverbs 17
July 19: Proverbs 18
July 20 Proverbs 19
July 21: Proverbs 20
July 22: Proverbs 21
July 23: Re-Flection

July 24, 2022: *Good Governments!*

Ecclesiastes 10:16-17

Guest Preacher: Dr. Jack Goodyear

God has ordained that human beings govern themselves. It has proven to be a grand endeavor, to say the least. Obviously, the governing of human beings functions at the highest level when the leaders are qualified and good! We have found that the best governing seems to somehow honor and protect the liberties of those governed.

Daily Bible Readings

July 25: Proverbs 22
July 26: Proverbs 23
July 27 Proverbs 24
July 28: Proverbs 25
July 29: Proverbs 26
July 30: Re-Flection

July 31, 2022: *The End of the Matter*

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Guest Preacher: Luke Stehr

We finally come to “the end of the matter.” Living in a dynamic relationship with God leads to a life of fulfillment and meaning. Honoring God by doing His will is the secret to a full and rich life.

Daily Bible Readings

August 1: Proverbs 27
August 2: Proverbs 28
August 3: Proverbs 29
August 4: Proverbs 30
August 5: Proverbs 31
August 6: Re-Flection