

Having trouble reading this email? You can view it in your [web browser](#).

Ron and Val Berrus

Easter Changes Everything - JCI #84 April 1, 2010

Just Checking In #84 Easter Changes Everything April 1, 2010

Pilgrim's Process

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Just Checking In #84 Easter Changes Everything Ecclesiastes & Phil 1:21-23

April 1, 2010 Pilgrim's Process (Please forgive the lateness of this JCI. I just changed ministries from ABWE to Bible Baptist Church of Shiremanstown, PA as lead pastor on April 1. I have been slightly busy in recent days, plus was travelling for a final conference in Canada the week after Easter. I will attempt to be more punctual in coming editions of JCI. Thanks for your patience. Ron)

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

A Wise Man Looks Ahead

As is my custom, I read the book of Ecclesiastes in one sitting last month. I was impressed once again at Solomon's **honest evaluations** and **endless frustrations** of living "life under the sun"... that is, **looking at life with death in view**.

Solomon wrote three books. The first as a young man... a book of **romance** called "The Song of Solomon"... the second as a middle aged man, a book of **rules** called "Proverbs"... and the last was written as an old man, a book of **regrets** called "The Preacher" or "Ecclesiastes." In it, he faces the frustration of having lived the last half of his life wandering in the pointless pursuit of a self-made meaning of life after having forsaken the "Maker of Life", and he urges us not to make the same mistake! To make up meaning as you go is to end in utter meaninglessness.

Solomon was unique in that he had the intellectual resources, the visceral drive and energy, the unlimited wealth and political power to quite literally make his dreams come true. That's why he reminds us that no one could ever out do his own attempts to find self-made-meaning in life without its Maker. 2:12

As Solomon walks us through his life-long search for self-made meaning, he poses five key questions and makes five key observations about man in the face of certain mortality. Here are his five questions & answers.

Question #1 What's the point? (The point of life if death ends it all) 1:2

Answer: There is no point... it's all meaningless.

Question #2 What lasts? (What can man gain or retain permanently) 1:3

Answer: Nothing lasts. Every life, every generation "goes".

Question #3 What's new? (What breaks this endless cycle of death) 1:10

Answer: Nothing. It's always been this way. There is no way out.

Question #4 What matters? (What really matters if death ends it all?) 1:12-14

Answer: Nothing. It's all meaningless, like trying to catch the wind. Even if you could catch it, what do you have when you open your hands? Nothing!

Question #5 Who knows? (What man can ever discover the unknowable ?) 5:12

Answer: No one. The future is unknowable and therefore the present is meaningless.

His conclusion to such futile effort in trying to make meaning in life in the face of certain death.... **"So I hated life!"** 2:17

DEATH MAKES LIFE VAIN!

Wow! Bummer of a conclusion, pal... accurate, but agonizing, if death ends it all.

Solomon also made five observations about man.

#1 Man lives with eternity in his heart. Every man does! He sees the reality of temporality everywhere, but knows that eternity exists and he longs for it. 3:9-11

#2 Man is empty. 5:10 Every man is. He is never satisfied no matter what he attempts to fill his inner emptiness with.

#3 Man is evil. 7:20 Every man is. He sins against God and men. No exceptions.

#4 Man is powerless. 8:8 Every man is. He cannot stop death. He can ignore it, he can attempt to postpone it, he can rage against it, but he is powerless to stop it.

#5 Man is mortal. 9:2 Every man is. A man may find a tax exemption, but there is no death exemption.

Now, fast forward a thousand years from Ecclesiastes to Philippians. Another man, another setting, another book.

Solomon was rich. Paul was poor.

Solomon was healthy. Paul was beaten and sick.

Solomon was free. Paul was in chains.

Solomon was surrounded by servants. Paul was stuck in a cell with a Roman guard.

Solomon was on a palace throne. Paul was in a prison cell.

The contrast couldn't be greater, and yet...

Solomon said... "For me to live is meaningless. Death makes life vain."

Paul said... "For me to live is Christ. Christ makes death gain!"

Easter changes everything!

We will rise again. We will see the risen Christ in His glory.

As in Adam all die....(Ecclesiastes) so in Christ, all will be made alive (Philippians 3:10-14) every man in His own order. Christ the firstfruits, then those who belong to Christ at His coming, then the final (resurrection) when Christ delivers up the Kingdom to His Father.. when the last enemy called death will be destroyed! (1 Cor 15:22-26)

GLORY!

A wise man lives in the light of his death.

A wiser man lives in the light of his resurrection!

Easter changes everything! Let us rejoice!

Self Check:

1. Are you convinced that life is worth living? Why?
2. How has this eternal hope changed your perspective on daily life? Work? Values? Priorities?
3. Where are the evidences of hopelessness and despair surrounding you and your world?
4. When was the last time someone commented on your "hope?" I Peter 3:15

For further study:

Read straight through the book of Ecclesiastes and underline every question Solomon asks and the despair in his words. Then read straight through Philippians and note Paul's confidence. List every "certainty" that Paul mentions in this letter. How many times does the resurrection come up in this letter?

"Risen Savior, Sovereign King, Lord of Life, Holder of the Keys of Death and Hades, I bless Your Name and rest in the certainty of Your promises that because You live, I shall live also. Because You live, life has meaning, and death will die. And when that last enemy is destroyed I will stand and sing Your praise in the land of endless life where there is no death, no sorrow, no tears, no crying, no temple, no darkness, no closed gates, no enemies, no sun, no sea, no trace of death in all of the vastness of the new heavens and earth. Blessed be Your Name, O Most High! Amen and Amen."

Amen. "

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you continually.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 *Ron & Val*

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows, spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts. We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.

©2010 Ron and Val Berrus

You received this email because **sample@somedomain.com** is subscribed to our list.

You can *instantly* unsubscribe from these emails by [clicking here](#).