

SUNDAY - May 17, 2026

The Grind: Ecclesiastes 7:1-13 - Good Name

SERMON SUMMARY:

Ecclesiastes 7 shifts Solomon's focus from chasing pleasure and success to pursuing wisdom and character under God. A good name is shown to be more valuable than wealth because reputation outlives achievement when life ends. Remembering death cuts through the world's obsession with image and temporary success, redirecting attention toward what truly lasts. Solomon also presents sorrow and mourning not as enemies, but as tools God often uses to refine people, expose sin, and produce lasting change, while laughter remains a gift that cannot accomplish the same deep work.

The chapter also highlights the value of honest rebuke, faithfulness, and perseverance. True community requires loving correction that heals rather than flatters, and integrity is measured more by consistency than charisma. Solomon describes humanity as both dignified image-bearers and deeply crooked through sin, unable to fully straighten themselves apart from God. The answer is not pretending to be perfect, but desiring transformation and depending on God's renewing work so that authenticity and holiness grow together.

SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 7:1-13

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to the opening verses, what is said to be better than fine perfume, and what day makes this comparison especially sobering?
2. What are the two different "houses" compared in verse 4, and which one is deemed better for the heart?
3. What does the text say about the rebuke of a wise person compared to the song of fools?
4. What warning is given about looking to the "good old days" in the final verses of this passage?
5. Why might remembering the day of one's death be considered a wise practice, and how could it practically change a person's daily priorities?
6. The text presents sorrow and mourning as valuable. In a culture that often avoids grief, what is the healthy, productive purpose of sorrow that leads to a glad heart?
7. Receiving a rebuke is described as listening to a wise person. What does the willingness to accept loving correction reveal about a person's character and their desire for a good name?
8. The end of a matter is said to be better than its beginning. Why is finishing what one starts so closely tied to building a reputation of integrity and trust?
9. If your name were to be permanently defined by your character today, what single word would you hope most describes it, and what is one practical step you could take this week to live into that?

10. Our culture is saturated with messages about what makes a life valuable. What is one specific advertisement or cultural ideal you are regularly exposed to that conflicts with the values of a good name, and how can you create a "moral compass" to counter its message?
11. Think of a recent season of sorrow or difficulty. Instead of asking why it happened, what might God have been purging, teaching, or refining in your character through that experience?
12. Is there a relationship in your life where a wound is festering because a loving rebuke—either given or received—is being avoided? What would it look like to courageously and gently pursue healing in that relationship this week?
13. Look at a commitment you've made, whether large or small, that you've been tempted to abandon. What would finishing it faithfully, even if inconvenient, communicate about your trustworthiness and integrity?
14. The human condition is described as being both glorious image-bearers and crooked ruins in need of straightening. Where do you most feel the tension between your God-given dignity and your struggle with sin? What is one area where you are actively depending on God's grace for transformation rather than your own willpower?