

SUNDAY - May 24, 2026

The Grind: Ecclesiastes 7:14-29 - Don't be Simplistic because Life is weird

SERMON SUMMARY:

Ecclesiastes 7:14–29 confronts the strange unpredictability of life and calls believers to reject simplistic thinking. Solomon urges people to embrace both prosperity and adversity because God uses each in ways we often cannot see. Good days are gifts to enjoy, while difficult seasons develop grit, wisdom, and dependence on God. The chapter dismantles the false idea of “karma” or earned righteousness, reminding us that life does not always reward the righteous or punish the wicked in predictable ways. Instead of exhausting ourselves trying to earn favor with God through performance or nitpicking religion, the Gospel points us to the righteousness of Jesus Christ freely given by grace. True wisdom learns to trust God through both blessing and hardship.

Solomon also turns the mirror toward the human heart. Rather than constantly judging others, wisdom begins with humility: “Is it I?” People are messy, sinful, and capable of scheming, including ourselves. Relationships, marriage, success, pleasure, and even God’s good gifts can become traps when distorted by selfish desire. Solomon’s own life became a warning of what happens when good gifts are twisted into idols. Yet the answer is not despair but surrender. Through the mirror of Scripture, God exposes our crookedness and begins making us upright again. The call of Ecclesiastes is to stop trying to control life, trust God in its mystery, pursue holiness over shallow happiness, and allow Christ to transform us “from one degree of glory to another.”

SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 7:14-29, Philippians 4:12, Romans 3:10-18, 2 Kings 5, Galatians 2:16, Matthew 26, Hebrews 1:9, Genesis 1, 2 Corinthians 3:18

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to Ecclesiastes 7:14, what two different responses are we to have toward "good" days and "bad" days?
2. What two errors does Solomon warn against in verses 16-18, and what is the danger of each?
3. What does Solomon confess about his own search for satisfaction and wisdom in verses 25-28?
4. According to verse 29, what is the fundamental state God made humanity in, and what did we then do?
5. The idea of "karma" is presented as a false theology. Why is the belief that good people always prosper and wicked people always suffer so appealing, and why does real life consistently disprove it?
6. How can a good gift from God, like food, success, or comfort, become a "snare" or "fetter" as described in verse 26? What is the subtle process that turns a gift into an idol?
7. Solomon's advice in verse 21 is to "not take to heart all the things that people say." How does taking every critical comment to heart lead to the "autoimmune disease of hurt feelings" and destruction?

8. If the primary goal for a marriage or life is not happiness but holiness, how does that change a person's expectations and approach to difficulties within it?
9. Is there a current situation of prosperity you are enjoying but not fully receiving as a gift from God? Or a circumstance of adversity you are fighting against instead of asking what God might want you to learn from it?
10. When you hear about a difficult circumstance befalling someone, what is your first, internal thought? Is it a version of "they had that coming," or is it compassion? How can you train your heart toward the latter?
11. Think of a recent conflict or frustration. Before assigning blame to others, ask the "Metoo" question: "In what ways have I also contributed to this situation or acted in a similar manner?"
12. Identify one good gift in your life—like your career, a relationship, or a comfort—that you may be "scheming" with or depending on for ultimate satisfaction. What would it look like to hold that gift with open-handed, guarded gratitude this week?
13. Where are you most tempted to fall into a checklist mentality of righteousness, believing God's favor is earned by your performance? What is one practical way you can remind yourself this week that righteousness is a status given, not a list to complete?