

“The Pursuit of Happiness”

(Ecclesiastes 2:1-26)

The American Dream:

V1 Hedonism: Pleasure is my God.

- ✓ V2 Comedy
- ✓ V3 Partying
- ✓ V4a Real Estate
- ✓ Vv4b-6 Gardening
- ✓ V7a Leisure
- ✓ V7b Animals
- ✓ V7c Wealth
- ✓ V8a Music
- ✓ V8b Sex
- ✓ V9 Fame
- ✓ V10 Etc. (i.e. work, sports, fishing, gambling, eating, shopping, exercising, reading, traveling, _____)

We tend to believe that happiness is the result of rearranging our external life, but in reality it is the rearranging of our internal life through repentance of sin and close communion with Christ.

The American Nightmare:

Bitter Truth

Verse 11

(1) Making pleasure your God is a wild goose chase without the goose. The law of diminishing return. (Luke 12:15; Eccl. 5:10)

Note: We are the richest and most affluent people in the history of the world, and strangely also the most depressed and bored.

Verses 12-16

(2) Wisdom can certainly enhance the quality of your life, but eventually everyone dies. (Heb. 9:27; Ps. 37, 49, 73)

Verses 17-23

(3) All the anxious striving (both day & night) at work for the sake of acquiring more stuff to only leave to fools is meaningless.

Quote: Our problem is that we often spend so much time trying to figure out life (through wisdom) and straighten out life (through work) that we die before actually getting around to enjoying life. (M. Driscoll)

Better Truth

Verses 24-26

Christian Hedonism: God is my pleasure.

(1) Our problem isn't that we all greatly desire pleasure, but that we are too easily pleased settling for cheap substitutes that never satisfy rather than getting pure pleasure from God.

(2) Stuff and satisfaction are two separate things:

- You can have stuff without satisfaction.
- And you can have satisfaction without stuff.

(3) God is not a cosmic killjoy, but He intends for us to enjoy the pleasures of life as gifts from Him and not as the ultimate.

(4) The deepest and most enduring satisfaction is ultimately only found in the Savior. Not from God, but in God. The law of increasing return. (Ps. 16:11, 34:8, 36:8, 37:4, 42:1-2, 63:1, 84:1-2, 4, 10, 12)

Next Weekend: “**Rhythm or Blues**” (Eccl. 3:1-22)



Growing

August 13, 2006

desert breeze community church

1) What is Hedonism? How and why has hedonism really become the American way of life? Do most people believe happiness is rearranging our external or internal life?

2) Solomon tried everything with no restraints. Describe the various avenues he tested in his quest for satisfaction? (Vv1-10) What advantages would he have over the average person in his search for satisfaction? (Eccl. 1:16, 2:10; 1 Kings 3:10-13) How have you with more limited resources carried out a similar quest?

3) How has the American dream become a nightmare? Why is making pleasure your God a wild goose chase without the goose? What is the "Law of Diminishing Return"? (Luke 12:15; Eccl. 5:10)

4) What is Christian Hedonism? Explain this statement: The longing to be happy is not bad, but good as long as we don't settle for cheap substitutes. (Heb. 11:25-26; Phil. 3:7-11).

5) The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God. Not from God, but in God. Explain. (Ps. 16:11, 34:8, 36:8, 37:4, 42:1-2, 63:1, 84: 1-2, 4,10,12) Pray that God will increase your appetite for Him and experience of Him beyond anything else.