

Power to Enjoy (or “The Problem with Cows”)

Ecclesiastes 6

6 in our series from Ecclesiastes

October 30, 2016

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Prayer

Lord God, we pray that all glory would be to Jesus the Christ—the Lamb standing on the throne and, for that reason, we ask Lord God that you would help us to preach your Word. Lord, may we not only proclaim your Word—maybe we could even see your Word. We invite your Word, Lord God. Help us to preach. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Message



This is a cow pasture just a couple miles west of my house.

I drive by it whenever I go hiking on Mt. Falcon, just to the south of the Red Rocks. For years, whenever I’d see cows in this field, I’d think, “*What a great place to be a cow!*”

When I was in seminary, in California, Susan and I used to drive up the coast toward San Simeon.

[Image of a rugged coastline with cattle grazing in a green field]

I used to always say, “*What a great place to be a cow!*”

One day, recently driving by the pasture west of my house, I was thinking, “*What a great place to be a cow,*” I thought, “Wait a minute . . . those cows aren’t even enjoying the scenery.”

See? That’s the problem with cows!

Check out these pictures:

[Image of cows grazing with their heads down in the grass without taking a break to look up]

The cows don’t even notice the beauty.

[Image of cows grazing on a beach with their heads completely down]

The name of this beach is “Paradise Beach.”

[Image of a green field with cows grazing with beautiful rugged mountains in the distance]

That looks like Colorful Colorado.

See? Cows are beasts that don’t enjoy beauty.

These cows have no appetite for beauty, only for grass.

See what I mean?

[Image of beautiful girls in bikinis with cows absorbed in eating grass right next to them]

These cows are at a beauty pageant... and they don’t even care!



So, recently I just got angry at the cows.

To be honest, I was jealous of the cows—and their view from the field.



So I went and found the cows and I tried to reason with the cows saying,

- *“Colorful Colorado is at hand!”*
- *“Why would you stare at the earth, when you could lift your eyes and gaze on beauty.”*



I started screaming at the cows,

- *“Lift your eyes and appreciate that beauty... or else!”*

You know it is their choice to stare at the earth and eat grass.

They could look in the direction of the Red Rocks.

BUT I don’t think they can choose to appreciate the beauty of the scenery.

They don’t have the power to enjoy beauty.

They are “but beasts.”

Well enough about cows, let’s talk about us.

Ecclesiastes 5:18 *“Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting [yapheh: beautiful].”*

In Genesis 1, God makes all things and calls them “Good” (*tov*)

In Ecclesiastes 3:11, Solomon told us,

“God has made every thing beautiful (yapheh) in it’s time.”

- The ugly is temporal and fading away.
- BUT the beautiful is unfading, indestructible and eternal.
- SO space and time are like a beauty pageant.
- In Ecclesiastes 3:18 we read, *“God is testing us that we might see that we are but beasts,”* . . . at a beauty pageant.

Solomon says, *“I have seen what is good and beautiful.”* He seems to equate “The Good” with “The Beautiful.” The word translated “Good” is common in Scripture, but the word translated “beautiful” (*yapheh*) is rarely used in Scripture, yet it’s used extensively in the Song of Solomon, for Solomon’s bride is “beautiful.”¹

You know, no one had to tell Solomon, “Hey you really should enjoy your beautiful bride

¹ It’s like Solomon is saying that all God’s creation is good and beautiful—as if creation itself is like a woman in a beauty pageant or a bride walking down the aisle to meet her groom. It’s like we’re meeting her all the days of our life... or could be meeting her all the days of our life... if we had the power to see her or enjoy her. And then it turns out that we *are* “her.” We are God’s creation.

Well, God’s creation is good and beautiful, for creation reflects the *glory* of her creator.

So, maybe we’re meeting Him all the days of our life . . .or could be meeting Him all the days of our life... if we had the power to see Him or perceive Him—the Beautiful One.

. . . or else,” and yet most religion is all about telling people, “Hey you better be good . . . or else.”

Ecclesiastes 5:18-6:2

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting [beautiful] is to eat and drink and find enjoyment [see good] in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind [literally the man—ha Adam]: a man [ish] to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor [literally glory-kabod] so that he lacks nothing [literally: “so that he lacks nothing for his soul”] of all that he desires [“covets”]. [It’s the same word as used in the commandment: “Thou shalt not covet”].

So, Solomon writes: *“This evil lies heavy on the Adam: a man lacks nothing of all his soul covets, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil.”*

So, a man can be surrounded by the Good, and not enjoy the Good, and this is a grievous evil. Perhaps he doesn’t enjoy the Good, because he covets the Good... Whatever the case, a man can be surrounded by the Good and not enjoy the Good.

But imagine if everyone enjoyed the Good. Not just good things, that they could covet and consume, but The Good itself.

Imagine if everyone enjoyed the Good—then everyone would choose to *be* good . . . And we would not need any one to tell us, “You better be good... or else.” No police, no military, no grumpy preachers
-There’d be no taxes. People would just happily contribute.
-There’d be no locks on doors.
-There’d be no borders, for all would be welcome.²

² “Imagine a world without war, without hate,” writes Jack Handy

“And I can imagine us attacking that world, cause they’d never expect it.”

See I can imagine us wrecking that world, cause we covet the good, but we don’t enjoy the good for we can’t perceive the good and so we aren’t good... we’re beasts.

You know, if a man covets a beautiful woman, and so rapes that beautiful woman, he’ll no longer perceive her as a beautiful woman.

- Maybe “the Adam” can covet the good, but doesn’t perceive the good so can’t enjoy the good.
- Or perhaps he doesn’t perceive the good and so covets the good, but can’t enjoy the good.
- Or maybe both...

Imagine . . . You see? Being good is enjoying the Good, which is the Beautiful.

- To really be a good friend, you must enjoy your friend.
- To be a good wife, you must enjoy your husband, a husband doesn't want a bride who only pretends to love him.)
- To be a good child, you must enjoy your parents—on some level.
We discipline our children in the hope that they wouldn't just *act* good, but actually *be* good . . . and enjoy us, not only the gifts we give.
- Well, how could you be a good Christian, if you didn't enjoy Jesus, the Christ?
- Being good is *enjoying* the Good.

If you don't enjoy the Good, I bet you're using knowledge of the Good, in order to act good because you covet the Good, even though you really don't know the Good . . . which means you're not good, and are constantly committing a grievous evil.

People desire the knowledge of the Good, so they can act good, cause they're not good. In other words, people desire the law, so they can justify themselves, which only incriminates themselves.

If you must try to act good, it reveals you're not good—to the extent that you must make your self act good—which is faking that you are Good, which is very *not* good.³

Well, I'm just saying that enjoying the Good is being Good.
And Being Good is enjoying the Good.

BUT... a person can't just decide to enjoy the Good! That's like telling a cow to enjoy the scenery.⁴ A beast cannot simply decide to enjoy the beauty—let alone decide to become beauty-full. To be good is to enjoy the Good. And "*God alone is good*," said Jesus.

Well, Solomon continues in Ecclesiastes 6:3a: "*If a man fathers a hundred children [The Hebrews thought that was the greatest of goods—lots of children] and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many [long life they saw a another great good], but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things [literally: "satisfied with good"], and he also has no burial...*"

I'm not sure what Solomon means by that. But I do know, from experience, that if you haven't learned to be "satisfied with good," you're not yet finished in the image of God—

³ Maybe part of you is good, but you don't have to tell that part to be good because it simply enjoys the Good, so it is unselfconsciously good and beautiful. But when you are self-consciously good, when you are forcing yourself to be good, how can that part of you actually be Good, for it obviously doesn't enjoy the Good?

⁴ Diogenes Alan wrote, "I recall a clergyman once telling me after a wonderful concert that for the first time in his life he realized that by enjoying the beauty of the music he was obeying God." That's a wonderful thought unless you're a beast and can't enjoy the beauty.

who *is* the Good.

I don't have time to tell you the stories but I do know that ghosts, weeping and gnashing their teeth in outer darkness, are not satisfied with the good, for they haven't seen or won't look at the Good . . . in flesh, the Beautiful One—our Lord and savior Jesus the Christ, who descends into Sheol and preaches to the spirits in prison.⁵

So, maybe Solomon means that even if a man is surrounded by the Good but can't enjoy the Good he's already stuck in Sheol.

Maybe it means, if he never dies, he's already dead, for he can't enjoy the life that's all around him.⁶

Solomon writes, *"If a man has all this good—children, long life—but he has no power to enjoy the good so his soul is never satisfied with good... I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy [see] no good—"*

—Ecclesiastes 6:3-4

You must *be* Good, to enjoy the Good
And enjoying the Good is *being* Good.

If you enjoy no good, you're not good, and you can't just decide to be good...

However, you may covet the good, which means you'll try to act good, even though you don't know what the Good actually is. And so, all your efforts to be good will actually be very bad . . . but not only bad, they will be comical.

Clip 1 from the sitcom *The Good Place*

[A crowd, in the middle of a pristine town square, sits patiently waiting. A screen pops up. "THE GOOD PLACE—ORIENTATION—DAY ONE" is written on it. A man in a blue velvet suit, accented with a blue bowtie, cordially welcomes the crowd.]

Man in blue suit: Hello everyone and welcome to your first day in the afterlife. You are all, simply put, good people. But how do we know that you are good? How are we sure?

[The words "Good vs. Bad—An Explanation" pop up behind the man that is talking.]

⁵ if you can receive it, I've had experience with ghosts—they're not demons—but like shadows of people trapped in the outer darkness of Sheol. On those of your occasions in our past lives, which was valuable, depending on how much you reached the Good Place and on how close you didn't see it but others see and on those occasions, as he has appeared. The ghosts that look at Hiccup with him, and are transformed by him. But those that don't look sun-like pass in the presence of beauty. Every day in the darkness, every time you fear and shame, every single thing you did had a ripple effect that rippled out over time and ultimately created some amount of good or bad. [Multiple decisions and their scores fill the screen, then a picture of three individuals in coffins appears on the screen.] *When your time on earth has ended we calculate the total value of your life for a simpler, perfectly accurate measuring system.* [The screen fills with multiple images of people in coffins and their scores, either positive or negative above them.]

Clip 1 from *The Good Place* continued

Man in blue suit: *Only the people with the very highest scores. The true “cream of the crop” get to come here—The Good Place.* [An image of a woman in a green dress with all her high scores appears on the screen.] *“What happens to everyone else?” you ask. Don’t ask. The point is you are here because you lived one of the very best lives that could be lived.* [The man reassuringly walks towards the woman on the screen and put his arm around her.] *And you won’t be alone. Your true soul mate is here too.*

[The scene changes to two young adults having a conversation.]

Young man—Chidi: *I swear that I will never say or do anything to cause you any harm.*

Young lady—Eleanor: *Good because those aren’t my memories. I wasn’t a lawyer. I never went to the Ukraine. I hate clowns. There’s been a big mistake. I’m not supposed to be here.* [Amusing music plays in the background.]

Chidi: *Wait! What?*

A couple of weeks ago, Kathleen told me that I should watch that. It’s the new sit-com, *The Good Place*. Eleanor ends up in the Good Place by accident. She wants to stay in the Good Place, because she’s terrified of the bad place, but she doesn’t really enjoy the Good. She doesn’t know what it is. She covets the Good . . . and so actually wants the bad.

Well, you get what you want in the Good Place, so Eleanor is actually destroying the Good Place, by secretly wanting the bad by trying to act good. She uses the Good to want the bad. She gets her soul mate, Chi, to make a covenant—“to never leave her nor forsake her.” She wants him to help her act good.

Clip 2 from the sitcom *The Good Place*

Eleanor: OK. OK. *We don't know this is because of me.*

Chidi: *This place is a perfectly made Swiss watch and you are a wrench in the gears. Actually, you're a hammer just smashing the gears in the dust.*

Eleanor: (At first not quite sure how to respond) *Well...then...this system sucks! What? One in a million gets to live in paradise and everyone else is tortured for eternity? Come on! I wasn't freakin' Gandhi; I was OK; I was a medium person. I should get to spend eternity in a medium place—like Cincinnati. Everyone who wasn't perfect, but wasn't terrible should get to spend eternity in Cincinnati.*

Chidi: *Apparently, it doesn't work that way. I'm sorry Eleanor, but there's nothing anyone can do.*

Eleanor: *Unless there is something we can do. Unless . . . you could teach me.*

Chidi: *Teach you what?*

Eleanor: *How to be good. That was your job right? A professor of ethics? No one knew I was a problem when I arrived. Things just started getting crazy after I was an ash-hole at the party. [Eleanor groans in great frustration.] You know I'm trying to say ash-hole and not "asshole" right. You got that right?*

Chidi: *I got that. Yes.*

Eleanor: *What I'm trying to say is let me earn my place here. Let me be your ethical guinea pig.*

[The scene changes to the following day.]

Eleanor: *OK. I think it is time to make me good partner. How do we do it? Is there a pill I can take or something I could vape? Where did you get a chalkboard?*

Chidi: *It's the Good Place. You can get anything you want at any time.*

Eleanor: *And you chose a chalkboard? What are you reading?*

Clip 2 from *The Good Place* continued

Chidi: *The Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant. It's a treatise on the aesthetic preconditions of the mind's receptivity to duty. It's a book on how to act good.

Eleanor: *Oh great! So, you've decided to help me?!*

Chidi: *No. There are a thousand questions: Is there a moral imperative to help you? Do I have a greater obligation to my community? Are you taking someone else's spot—someone who deserves to be here? This is my fear about you Eleanor. You are too selfish to ever be a good person.*

Eleanor: *Well...I think you're wrong.*

Chidi: *What country am I from again?*

Eleanor: *Senn..ssadine.*

Chidi: *That is a brand of toothpaste.*

[The scene changes. Eleanor is outside. She is dressed in a work outfit approaches ?? who is wearing cleaning gloves.]

Eleanor: *Well, I have had a pretty full day of being unselfish. I've made some new friends; my areas almost garbage free, so you're going to help me figure out how to stay right?*

Chidi: *Oh... that is a really tough question. Most great philosophers would say helping you is pointless. You can't try to be good when your motivations are so obviously corrupt.*

Eleanor: *Yeah. But what do most great philosophers know?*

(No one is allowed to say certain words in the Good Place so she must say "ash hole instead of "a*shole.")

She asks, "What do philosophers know?" Perhaps they know about the Good. They have knowledge of the Good and evil.

If I could've declared a minor at CU, It would have been in philosophy. One of my philosophy classes was called ethics—that's the study of the knowledge of good and evil. We read the works of the names on the chalk board behind Chi's head in the show: Names like, Immanuel Kant, who postulated the "Categorical imperative." And John Stuart Mill, who articulated "Utilitarianism."

Philosophers struggle to define the Good just like legislatures define the good and we call it law. They all debate knowledge of the Good. But none of them know how to make a person enjoy the Good. And unless you enjoy the Good, you're just not Good.

Well, Chi is good, but he can't figure out how to make Eleanor good.

Clip 3 from the sitcom *The Good Place*

Random lady: *It's raining garbage. Run!*

[A crowd disperses. One man runs back and forth and then goes towards a cart filled with cupcakes to hide under the awning on it. Eleanor runs to Chaney.]

Eleanor: *Chaney, before you say anything . . . that's it. I just don't want you to say anything.*

Chidi: *What did you do?*

Eleanor: *Nothing. It just started raining trash, out of nowhere, for no reason at all.*

[A piece of trash drops in front of them and explodes. Eleanor jumps back in terror and screams.]

Eleanor: *OK. Fine. My bag broke and I ditched the trash instead of taking it all the way to the dumpster. But, in my defense, there were only five minutes left in flying and I wanted to go fly it.*

Chidi: *How is that a defense? You made a bad choice.*

Eleanor: *I-I-I? made a bad choice? We could've literally been flying and all you wanted to do was talk about morals. I mean, you are like the worst part of Superman.*

I love that, "You're like the worst part of Superman."

And you know what she's saying right? "I covet your attributes (that you can fly), BUT, I hate your heart (your judgment—the decisions you make, the way you enjoy the Good... I hate that you are Good).

Well, no mere man can make another man enjoy the good. Solomon already said it in Ecclesiastes 5:19 "...power to enjoy...this is the gift of God."

SO, You don't know how to make yourself good. At best you know how to *act* good, which reveals that you're not good. No man knows how to make another man good, only how to make a man act good. Politicians, legislators, philosophers and pastors can't teach us to be good so they teach us to act good... and call the act "Good". And the quickest way to get a person to *act* good, is to postulate a good place and a bad place:

- Like Las Vegas and prison (in the case of politicians).
- Or Heaven and Hell, (in the case of pastors.)
- You postulate a good place and a bad place, and promise the good place for the best actors and threaten the bad place for the worst actors.

But either way they're actors—faking the Good, which is very bad.

The Good Place and The Bad Place

Solomon continues in verse 6 (there's a dash and then he continues): "*Do not all go to the one place?*" Does that bother you? I think it should bother you, for it clearly implies that all your efforts to make yourself good, or at least better than your neighbor, are just "*the vanity of vanities*," adding up to less than nothing.

Literally Solomon asks, "*Do not the all go to the one place?*" Well do they?

- In 3:20 Solomon said, "*All go to one place*" and that's "*the dust*."
- 5:14, "*They all go naked... as they came*."
- 9:10, "*There is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol*, (also translated "hell") *to which you are going*."⁷

According to Solomon, we all deserve to go to that place for . . .

- In 4:4, he told us, "*All human toil is envy*"
- In 8:11, he will tell us "*The heart (singular) of the children of the Adam is fully set to do evil*." "Fully set!!!!"

It's not just Solomon, but the testimony of all the prophets and the entire New Testament. Paul quotes Isaiah saying, "*No one does good, not even one*." That means every choice you make, which means every action you take, has a negative value—that means red ink on the scoreboard in the Good Place. And that means you create no Good, but only bad.

Solomon says we all go to Sheol . . .

- But in 12:5 He says, "*Man is going to his eternal home*." And Sheol is not eternal.
- In 12:7, "*The dust returns to earth and the Spirit returns to God who gave it*."
- In 3:11 He wrote, "*He has made everything beautiful in its time*."
So if you are any thing, He will make you beautiful (which means good) in time...
And that must be the moment eternity touches time... or eternity is revealed in time.

And think about this—If God makes all things beautiful in time, and you do something beautiful, in time, it's actually not you that's doing it, but the Spirit of God doing it in you and through you in time.

Listen to what Solomon says in 11:5 "*You do not know the work of God, who makes [literally: does] everything*."

See? You think you do things, but if anything actually gets done, you didn't do it; you watched the Spirit of God do it, in you and through you.

And chew on this thought:

If God does everything and everything God does is good, then evil is not something that is done, but an absence of that which God does. And all of that means that every good

⁷ "*to which you are going...*" or in which you may already exist. In the Old Testament Sheol begins on the surface of the earth. It's separation from God. It's the outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth. Outside the camp, the city, the temple, outside the garden.

choice in you is the revelation of God's will in you. That's God's good, and free, and eternal Will in you.

I'm saying that you may be stuck in Sheol, but The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. God's new and eternal creation, is being revealed in the void we call space and time. And God's new and eternal you is being revealed in the void you normally call your self.

I know that's mind boggling, but this is what it means:

- All your choices are bad, and you deserve the bad place.
- And all God's choices are good, and He makes you good by giving you the power to *enjoy* the good, which is your destiny—your eternal home.

In the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." In the words of Jesus, "*I am... the End.*"

So Solomon taught that we all go to one place. And I'm convinced that all of Scripture testifies that we all go to one place. In some form we will each encounter the "no place," the outer darkness, the grave, "the bad place."

We all experience "the bad place" so that we can watch *God* give us the "good place;" so that we won't covet that place, destroy that place and ultimately hate that place; but forever enjoy that place—praising God for that place. *That* place is God Himself. He is your eternal home. "*God alone is Good*," said Jesus.

If it bothers you that all go to the one Good Place. You won't be able to enjoy the Good Place. It will burn you and you'll try to hide, which means you'll hide in the bad place—and that is your choice! Let's hope that God's choice is stronger than our choice. Let's hope that God's Judgment is stronger than our judgment.

But now imagine if you actually believed God's Judgment—that all your works were the vanity of vanities, and all your good will was actually His will in you. Imagine if you actually believed that you couldn't make yourself good, but that God makes you good; that God makes you beautiful in time; that God makes all things beautiful in time—that's His Judgment.

Well, if you actually believed God's Judgment . . .

1. Maybe you wouldn't covet the Good, you'd enjoy the Good.
You wouldn't covet the Good, as if you could own the Good—as your own private possession.
You'd realize the Good must own you. God is the Good.
And enjoys you, enjoying Him.
You wouldn't covet the Good, which is like trapping wind in a jar or nailing beauty to a tree, but you'd begin to enjoy the Good.
2. You wouldn't be proud of the Good in you, but *grateful* for the Good in you.
3. You'd freely confess the bad in you, because you'd only want the Good in you.
4. You'd stop blaming people for not being Good because that's like blaming people for

not enjoying pizza . . . or blaming cows for not enjoying the view . . .

You'd stop blaming people for not being good, and . . .

5. You'd have compassion on people that weren't good . . .

Because clearly they don't enjoy the Good . . .

- Which is like NOT enjoying pizza.
- Or NOT enjoying a great view.
- Or NOT enjoying anything is God's creation.
- Or NOT enjoying GOD,
- Which means NOT enjoying LOVE.

Sinners don't enjoy LOVE and so are already alone . . . and unless they are saved they will soon come to hate all of God's creation.

Maybe the ultimate tragedy of the modern "evangelical church" is that we don't have compassion for sinners, but instead we're jealous of sinners. That's because we don't enjoy the Good.

6. If we enjoyed the Good, we'd want everyone to be good,

- And if we thought God might use us to make someone good, we'd be grateful.
- We'd be grateful for a chance to call, grateful for a chance to encourage, grateful for a chance to sacrifice, grateful for a chance to give our lives—for when we lose our lives, for the GOOD and His NEWS, we find them.

AND #7

7. Would we try to be good?

Well yeah, I think we'd try to be good the way a toddler tries to eat pizza . . . or tries to sing a song or tries dance or walk.

- If they fall, they don't blame themselves and condemn themselves.
- They instantly forgive themselves and try to walk again.

We wouldn't try because we have to, but because we want to.

We wouldn't try in order to *make* ourselves good.

We'd try, because we *enjoyed* the Good...

BUT

You can't just decide to "enjoy the good"

Any more than a cow can just decide to enjoy the scenery.

Any more than a beast can just decide to love Beauty.

Any more than Eleanor can just decide to be Good.

Any more than a person can just decide to have a new heart.

Any more that you can just create yourself, save or redeem yourself.

I said, if you believed God's judgment, you would enjoy the Good...

BUT you can't just *decide* to believe. To put it in theological terms: Faith, Trust, Belief . . . is a gift.

Maybe the ultimate tragedy of the modern "evangelical church,"

is that we teach, “Everything is a gift, *except* for faith, for faith is our part.”
When we should teach, “Everything is a gift, especially faith, for faith is God’s most precious part.”

You know Eleanor loved everything about her soul mate, Chi. She loved his attributes, but hated his heart—his most precious part. She thought it was like the worst part of Superman—his judgment.

Jesus was from “*the bosom of the Father*,” like God’s heart. We crucified Him, because He was like the “worst part of Superman . . .” Not His powers, but His heart.

Well, I was saying: God is Good and His Word is Grace.
Faith is the power to enjoy God and everything created by His Word.
Faith is the power to enjoy the Good.

So how do we get faith?

In verses 6&7 Solomon writes: “—*Do not all go to the one place? All the toil of man* [literally, “the man”—*ha Adam*] *is for his mouth...*”

Now, I need to pause and point to something rather astounding.
As you know “Adam” is the Hebrew word for man and is often translated mankind, but “*ha Adam*”—Adam with the definite article—means “the man.” And so, “*ha Adam*” should be translated “*the man*” as it’s translated in the first three chapters of Genesis because that Adam was a definite and individual man.

- As far as I can tell, Adam (with the definite article) appears thirty times in Genesis mostly in the first 3 chapters.
- It appears a few times in other Old Testament books referring to some particular man or making a rather fascinating point about “*the man*”.
- Well, Adam with the definite article appears thirty times in Genesis and thirty-two times in Ecclesiastes.

See? Solomon is making a thoroughly fascinating point:

- He refers to all humanity as “The Adam,” which means all humanity is one man.
So, of course, we all go to one place for we’re all one man.
- We’re all one man, but not just any man—we’re *Adam*, and *Adam* is us.

Saint Paul wrote, “*As in Adam all die, so in Christ will all be made alive...*” “*The first man Adam, became a living soul (nephesh in Hebrew), the last Adam became a life giving spirit (Ruach in Hebrew).*”

Paul claims that we’re all being united in Him—the last Adam, the *eschatos* Adam, the ultimate man, the Superman. Paul teaches that you and I are like a shadow of that man, in the process of being filled with that man who is the Light. We are the Body of that man—the Christ.

And that’s why I’m begging you to read my book *God and His Sexy Body: The Story of*

Adam and His Bride because I want you to believe that you are the Bride and Body of the Superman.

Well anyway, “*ha Adam*” refers to “the first man,”
AND anticipates the “*eschatos* man,” the “Superman.”
AND it refers to all of us who are currently being made in God’s image.
FOR “*ha Adam*” is God’s Image, being revealed in the beauty pageant of space-time.

Now listen to Solomon in verses 6-12:

—do not all go to the one place? All the toil of man [“the man”—ha Adam] is for his mouth, yet his appetite [nephesh “soul”] is not satisfied. For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? [What advantage has the poor man who knows how to “act” alive. It doesn’t make him alive] Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite [nephesh “soul”]: this also is vanity and a striving after wind [Ruach]. Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man [Adam] is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man [the man—ha Adam]? For who knows what is good for man [the man—ha Adam] while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? [...a shadow self]

—Ecclesiastes 6:6-12

For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?
...which gives light to shadows
...like a “*sun of righteousness with healing in it’s wings.*” (Mal. 4:2)

Well, we were asking: How do we get faith, which is the gift of God?
We don’t have time for details, but I want to give you the big picture.

On the 6th day of creation, God breathed into dust and Adam became a living *nephesh* (a soul). Yet, Adam wasn’t a satisfied soul, for he was alone. It was the first thing God declared not good: “*It is not good that the Adam is alone.*” Adam is alone in the presence of God, who is *Ruach*, who is Love, who is the Good.

See? Adam did not have power to enjoy the Good...

- He was like a beast that couldn’t see beauty
- He couldn’t see the Good...so Adam couldn’t find the Good—His Helper.

Scripture reveals that God is our Helper—our soul mate.

So, God takes “the Adam—*ha adam*” and makes Him, male and female.
And this refers to Christ, (the ultimate Adam) and His Bride, (who is all of us.)
God is teaching “the Adam—*ha adam*,” (who is us) about our soul mate, (who is Him.)

So, “*ha adam*,” the man who is us, didn’t know the Good, *let alone* enjoy the Good . . . until a talking snake basically said, “There’s the Good, hanging on a tree, in the middle

of the garden. Take it.” [Peter points to the cross.]

Well, “*ha adam*,” the man who is us, saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise—it was the knowledge of good and evil.

BUT “*ha adam*,” the man who is us, didn’t know if the Word of the snake was good or if the Word of God was good, who had said, “*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will not eat, for in the day you eat of it, dying you will die.*” So, “*ha adam*” began to covet the good, and so took knowledge of the good, which must’ve been the Good, in flesh hanging on the tree like fruit in a garden.

“*Ha adam*” took the life of the Good and realized that he wasn’t Good, but a beast . . . and so hid from the Good in the leaves from the tree.

When the Good found “*ha adam*,” “*ha adam*”—who is us—began to dispute with the Good who is God, using the knowledge of Good, which isn’t living Good but dead good, like Christ in a tomb, wind in a jar, or wisdom in a book called “the law.” “*Ha adam*” began to justify himself and manufactured a false self and so incriminated himself. So, God sentenced the man—“*ha adam*” to death and kicked him out of the garden and into outer darkness.

That’s the story of all of us and each of us.

Well, about 3000 years ago Solomon lived our story, consuming the good, taking knowledge of the good, realizing he wasn’t good, but trusting that God would make him good. He just didn’t know how.

1000 years after Solomon built the stone temple, another Solomon—THE Solomon, THE Prince of Peace and THE Son of David, THE Last Adam, THE *Eschatos* Man—entered the temple and said, “Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days.” And He was speaking of the temple of His Body.

He is the Good in flesh. He is the Superman. We coveted the Good, which means we didn’t yet truly know the Good. We coveted the Good, which means we loved His power, but we hated His heart—we thought it was the worst part of the Superman.

So, in the garden, on a tree we took the life of the Good.
And in the garden on that tree God gave the life of the Good.

Jesus—the Superman cried, “*Father forgive . . .*” and “*Tt is finished.*”
Then delivered up His Spirit, His Wind, His *ruach*.

The curtain in the temple ripped as Christ’s body ripped.
The Good got out, and then got *in* . . . to us.

Turns out, the worst part of the Superman is the best part of the Superman.
At that moment, a beastly Roman Centurion dropped to his knees and confessed,

“Surely this was the son of God.” In other words, the one who had just crucified the Beautiful One suddenly enjoyed the Beautiful One and became beautiful.

At that tree, eternity touched time.

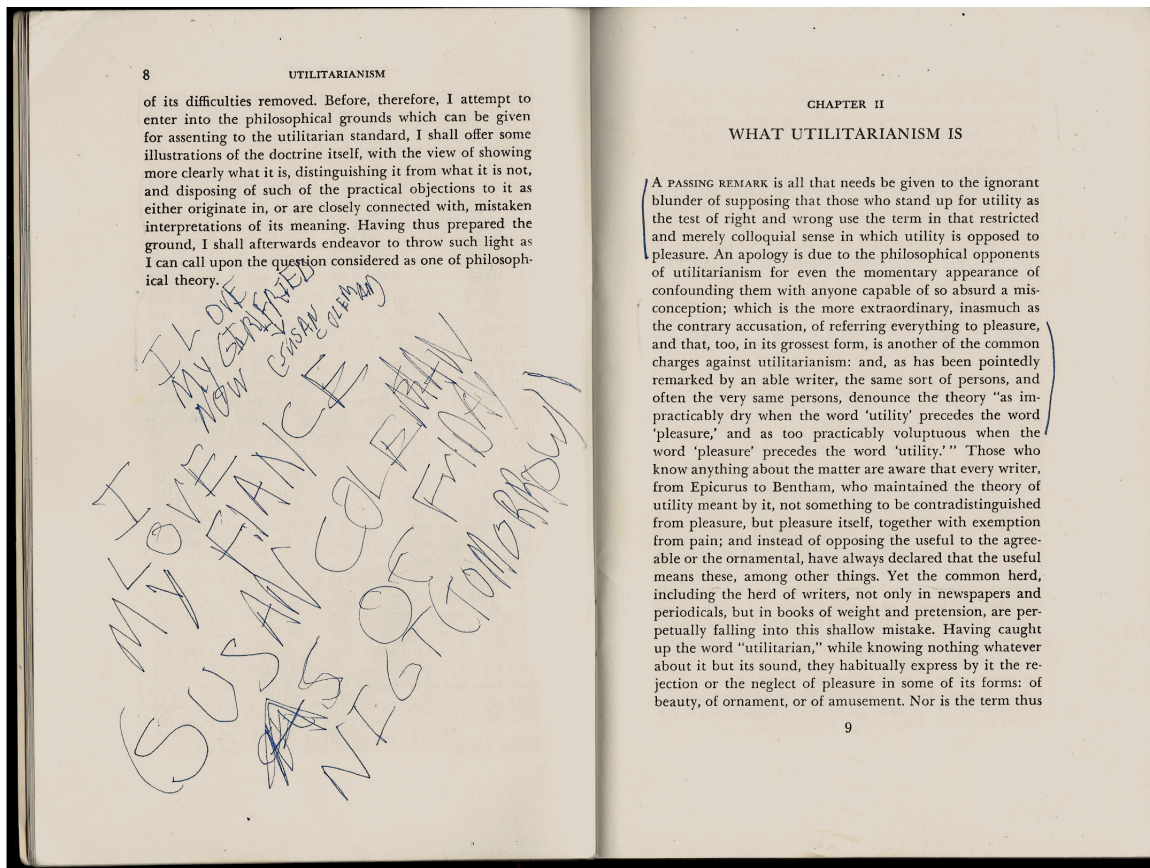
And every beautiful choice—in time—is a work accomplished on that tree.

On that tree He delivered up His *ruach*. The Spirit—*ruach* of Christ—fell on the Church of Christ, and they all began to worship. They shared all things in common and broke bread with glad and generous hearts—no taxes, no locks, and no borders—they were beautiful.

The true Church is Christ’s Bride—not striving after wind but animated by the Wind. And Christ’s Bride is Christ’s Body, growing in this world and transforming *this* time into eternity. Christ’s Bride is God’s Eternal Home, and God is our Eternal Home. He is your soul mate.

Now, I know that’s a lot to digest, but this much I think you can understand: You cannot make yourself good... that’s the “vanity of vanities.” God makes you Good . . .not by giving you knowledge about the Good, but by giving you His own heart... a new heart. That’s His Choice, His Judgment, His Word—the faith of Christ in you.

The other day, I pulled out this old college book on Utilitarianism, by John Stewart Mill, which is all about “the Good,” but can’t make anyone “enjoy the Good,” and therefore actually *be* Good. I pulled it out and it fell open to this page—page 8:



I must've gotten terribly impatient in Ethics class, one Thursday afternoon in college, for I wrote this across the page—I didn't have to write it, I wanted to proclaim it: "I love my fiancé, Susan Coleman, as of Friday night, tomorrow night." "Tomorrow night," which means I wrote this thirty-five years ago today, and the following night—the 30th of October, I dropped to my knees and gave Susan a ring . . . and then I gave her my life, four children, and every paycheck I ever made.

I loved, and love is the Good. And the Good is Love.

And do you see? I didn't have to *try* to be Good. I enjoyed being Good and so I tried. I didn't make myself Good. She made me Good, by giving me her self. Actually, I think God made me good, by giving me Himself, through her. He uses all sorts of means. And don't get too hung up on that [Peter points to the photo of the page from the ethics book] because that's just a reference, and it refers to this:

Communion

On the night we betrayed the Superman, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body, which is for you. Take and eat." And in the same manor, having eaten supper and giving *thanks*, He took the cup, saying, "This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you."

This is the Word of God, in flesh, from the tree.
It's not an argument or a threat; it's a proclamation of God's Judgment.
It looks dead, but it comes to life.

I

It is eternal seed
It is knowledge of Good and Evil—*that's* Judgment
And it is Life—*that's* Grace.
And *it* creates Faith.

Your faith does not determine God's Judgment.
God's Judgment creates your Faith.

Faith is the power to enjoy God.
And God thoroughly enjoys your faith.

You can't make yourself beautiful.
But this is how God makes you Beautiful . . . in time.

Beauty *in* the beast:

[Image of a cow with a huge smile on its face]

God calls you to come to His table and enjoy Him because He enjoys you enjoying Him!
Amen.

Benediction

If that show—*The Good Place*—ends like space and time ends, Eleanor will take Chi's life on a tree in a garden. And on that tree in that garden, Chi will give Eleanor his life, his heart, his will, his choice, his judgment—the very best part of a Superman, his beauty.

You see, I think this will be the incredible surprise at the end of space and time—that God's Judgment is beauty. God's Judgment is undeserved favor. You can only know that if you have the knowledge of good and evil. Favor, Someone has to give you His life and it creates faith—the ability to enjoy the good.

So, how do you get that? The best you can do is expose yourself to God's Judgment.
[Peter points to the communion table.]

So, right now, if you would close your eyes and expose yourself to God's Judgment.

You see? I think this is a great lie of the evil one, and sadly the church has been a part of it and that is that you need to run from God's Judgment. Do you understand that God's Judgment creates you in the image of God? So, let's expose ourselves to God's Judgment. Let's walk back to the middle of the garden. In other words, you are going to walk out of the trees, out of that place that you are hiding, and you're going to walk toward the throne.

The throne looks like a tree and on it is a slaughtered Lamb. But you don't see Him because you are afraid to look. There's a Word that just came into your garden—your heart. The Word was just this reality that God is Good. So, what are you hiding from God? Well, if we just cut to the chase, isn't it yourself, your ego, your pride, your shame, your arrogance? It's all sort of the same thing. You're staring at the ground and there's a snake that whispers, "Do not look up. Do not look up. Do not look up." The snake is a liar. Just say this in your heart, "Lord God, I surrender myself. I took the knowledge to make myself in your image and I can't make myself in your image, so I surrender myself."

Now, in your mind's eye, just look up and see His judgment because it is absolutely beautiful. He says, "I forgive you. I have always forgiven you. I long for you. You are home. I am your home and you are my home. You are my Bride—my Body. You are my Temple."

Believe it and live.

In Jesus' name, let that be the benediction. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.