

Mirth in the House of Mourning (or “Judge Me Jesus!”)

Ecclesiastes 6:7-7:24

#7 in our series from Ecclesiastes

November 13, 2016

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Prayer

Glory be to you Lord God, and to Jesus the Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit we say it and we ask that you would help us to preach.

Message

Sorry, this is a bit crass... but Louis CK sounds just like Solomon.

Clip from the *Conan O'Brien Show*

Loius CK: *The thing is, you need to build an ability to just be yourself and not be doing something; that's what the phones are taking away—the ability to just sit there. Like this (...Louis just sits there.) That's being a person. Right? No one can....uuumm... (...acts out checking his phone). You gotta check because underneath everything in your life there's that thing—that forever empty. Do you know what I'm talking about?*

Conan O'Brien: *Yes. Yes, I know what you're talking about. (Background laughter)*

Loius CK: *The knowledge that it's all for nothing and you're alone. You know? It's down there. And sometimes, when things clear away—you're not watching and you're in your car and you go, “Oh no! Here it comes, I'm alone.” It starts to visit on you—this sadness. Life is tremendously sad, just by being in it. So you're driving and you're like “Aaaaa...” That's why we text and drive. I look around and pretty much one-hundred percent of people are driving and texting. They're killing; everyone's murdering each other with their cars. But people are willing to risk taking a life and ruining their own because they don't want to be alone for a second because it's so hard. I was in my car one time and a Bruce Springsteen song was on, and it made me really sad. It's like Jungle...something....?*

Conan O'Brien: *“Jungleland”*

Loius CK: *It's the one where he goes, “huurrrraaaarrrr!” (Sounds a bit like Tarzan) He sounds far away . . . you know? “Arrrrheehhh.”*

Conan O'Brien: *That's half of them.*

Loius CK: *It gave me a fall back to school depression. It made me really said and I'm like, “OK. I'm getting sad; I've gotta get the phone and write like, ‘Hi’ to fifty people. Somebody cool writes back, and then somebody not as cool writes back and I'm like, “(Bleep) nah, I'm not gonna....I'm gonna wait for somebody better. But uh..*

(Crowd laughs)

Other Guest: *Hey! How come you didn't answer my text?*

Clip from *The Conan O'Brien Show* continued

Loius CK: Yeah...well. 'Cause he wrote first (pointing to Conan O'Brien). So, anyway, I was starting to get that feeling sad feeling; I was reaching for the phone and I said, "Don't. Just be sad. Just let the sadness be. Stand in the way of it, and let it hit you like a truck." I let it come. I started to feel it like, Oh my God. And I pulled over and I just cried like a bitch. I cried so much, and it was beautiful. It was just this beautiful...it was sadness; it was just poetic. You are lucky to live sad moments, and then I had happy feelings because when you let yourself feel sad, your body has like anti-bodies; it has happiness that comes...

Conan O'Brien: Rushing in!

Loius CK: Rushing in to meet the sadness. So I was grateful to feel sad and then I met it with true, profound happiness. It was such a trip . . . ya know? And because we don't want that first bit of sad, we push it away with a little phone (bleep) for the food . . . and you get a little kind of . . . you never feel completely sad or completely happy. You feel kind of satisfied with your product and then you die. So...that's why I don't want to get a phone for my kids. That's what I'm saying.

"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity," writes Solomon
"What does man gain by all his toil under the sun?"

Well, Louis CK and Solomon both have gained some knowledge...
"This knowledge that all is for nothing," in the words of Louis CK.
"And you're alone." Death and loneliness...

Louis CK says, "We'll risk taking a life" just to avoid that feeling,
Just to avoid facing that sadness, and mourning that knowledge... We'll take a life; I think that's called sin. He then describes facing the sadness and being surprised by beauty and joy...

It's like he loses his life and then finds it.

It's like he confesses that he's alone and then realizes he's so very not alone.

It's like he takes knowledge and dies...

Then, lives and shares Wisdom with Conan O'Brien.

It's like Louis CK sees something very real that we all encounter. He describes it, but He isn't sure what it is—maybe it's Wisdom.¹

¹ John 1:9 "The true light which gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him."

John writes that the Light is The Word—the Logos, meaning, reason or even wisdom.

In Proverbs Solomon taught that Wisdom is a person, whom he calls "a tree of life" (3:18) through whom God creates all things (3:19). In the New Testament, Paul just states the Jesus is the Wisdom of God.

Hopefully, you remember that in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, Solomon asks for Wisdom, which he also refers to as the ability "to discern between good and evil."

I think Solomon wants the "knowledge of Good and Evil," which he also calls Wisdom, which he also refers to as a "tree of life." In chapter two we read how Solomon took this wisdom, like fruit from some tree and then writes "he who increases knowledge increases sorrow." Yet He told us in Proverbs "blessed is the one who finds wisdom."

God had basically told Solomon, "I'll give you Wisdom and all things with Wisdom."

Which sounds like Paul who wrote, "God has given you his son, will he not also with him give

In our text today, Solomon tells us, “*It’s better to go to the house of mourning than the house of mirth...for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.*”

See? I think Solomon and Louis CK are testifying to the same thing. They encounter it and describe it, but don’t know what or who exactly it is.

And I think that’s good for us, because sometimes we think we know a thing, just by naming a thing, labeling that thing, and judging that thing—when, in fact, by doing so we kill the thing we want to know and don’t know it all. Actually, it could be that the thing we have encountered, and want to know, is naming us, and judging us, and even creating us.

See? I think Louis CK and Solomon are encountering the Word of God, the “*light that enlightens all men,*” whom we wrapped in swaddling clothes and then placed in a manger and crucified on a tree in a garden. I think they’re encountering Jesus—the Judgment of God.

If you think you understand Jesus, you probably don’t know Jesus.

- And you probably don’t pull your car off to the side of the road and cry like a b...aby.
- And you’re probably getting impatient with Ecclesiastes and maybe me.
- You probably wish Jesus were some knowledge—like a list of rules—that you could apply to your life... rather than “the Life” that insists on applying you to Himself...

Well, this is our seventh message from the book of Ecclesiastes, and I hope you realize that Solomon really hasn’t given us the kind of knowledge that we could apply to our lives in order to make ourselves beautiful or good.

And yet, Solomon is testifying to something that is beautiful and good. Solomon is encountering Jesus, but he doesn’t yet see Jesus in the body of a man.

So what does he see?

Well, from his writings, and from his place in history, we know that—with his mind’s eye—he saw the tree in the garden. In Proverbs, Solomon wrote that “wisdom is a tree of life” and he referred to wisdom as the discernment of good and evil. Genesis talks about two trees in one location—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. In the New Jerusalem, there is only one tree—the Tree of Life . . . and yet, everyone there knows the Good already—for the Good has known them. “*God alone is good,*” said Jesus (Luke 18:19).

Solomon saw that “*ha adam,*” the man who is us, took knowledge of good and evil from that tree, as if wisdom were something we could capture and possess. And when Adam did that everything seemed to die and the garden turned into the “house of mourning.” And yet God gives wisdom on the tree which is Life that turns a human heart into a

you all things.”

And, “We are heirs of God and fellow heirs [inheritors] with Christ provided that we suffer with him that we might also be glorified with him.” And Jesus said, “You must lose your life... for my sake, to find it.”

house of mirth or a garden of delight.

We all took the life of Jesus in a garden on a tree.
And there, God *gave* the life of Jesus in that garden on that tree.

Solomon couldn't yet see Jesus hanging on the tree we call the cross. Yet, he did see wisdom, which seemed to kill him and set him free. In today's text he writes, "*Don't make yourself to wise, why should you destroy yourself?*" (Ecc. 7:16) as if gaining wisdom is the death of yourself. And yet, he also writes, "*Wisdom is good with an inheritance...*" (Ecc. 7:11).

Well, because *ha adam*, the man that is us, took the life of Wisdom on the tree. God sentenced him to loneliness and death and kicked him out of the garden. He placed two cherubim at the entrance to the garden and a flaming sword. A flaming sword is judgment—the sword divides things and the fire purifies things.

"*Wisdom is a tree of life,*" wrote Solomon...

Well, if *ha adam* is to ever have eternal life, he must return to the tree . . . he must surrender the knowledge that he took, perhaps, even the life of wisdom.

God told Noah, The life is in the blood and I require the lifeblood of every *adam*. To live forever, man would have to return his life to the tree—like your veins return your blood to your heart. And to do that Man, "*ha adam*," must pass through the flaming sword, which is the Judgment of God.

Well, Solomon saw the tree and Solomon saw the house.

[Drawing of the temple]

Solomon thought he had built the house—God's house, which was at first a tent, often called the tabernacle.

[Drawing of the tabernacle]

If you've read the whole Bible, I'm sure you've been bored to tears and utterly perplexed at all the detailed descriptions of the tabernacle and the sacrifices. You would think the Old Testament would be full of laws governing behavior, and there are lots of laws—along with the history of how God's people broke them all. Yet, an immense portion of the Old Testament is a description of God's house and the sacrifices to be made at the entrance to the house in order to enter the house.

In the center of the house was the inner sanctuary. And in the inner sanctuary was the Ark of the covenant. It was literally "the knowledge of good and evil" (in the form of the ten commandments written on stone), which were encased in a gold box, covered by the "Mercy seat," upon which the high priest would sprinkle the blood of sacrifice. The Mercy Seat was also the Judgment seat and throne of God. From this spot the Glory of God, would speak to Moses and give Him Wisdom.

This throne was guarded by two cherubim built into the top of the ark. And later, Solomon built cherubim into the temple over the ark. Orthodox Jews still believe this spot is the spot where God creates Ha Adam.

SO, I think God wants us to get this incredible picture:

- The throne of God is guarded by two cherubim...
- Like the tree is guarded by two cherubim...
- As if God is enthroned on that tree as Wisdom, which is His Judgment.

In the Revelation, John sees a slaughtered lamb standing on the throne of God. And we all know that he was enthroned on a tree in a garden on the temple mount.

As you know, a curtain separated the people from the throne. And before the curtain on the altar in the house of God, the people of God were commanded to make sacrifices and offerings. There were all sorts of offerings and sacrifices for all sorts of situations, but they all meant atonement with God. They were all surrender to the Judgment of God. And it was clear that the worshiper was to somehow identify with the sacrifice. In other words God wasn't asking for sheep and goats he was asking for worshipers.

The priests would cut the sacrifices with knives or swords. And the offerings would be received by fire—fire that came down from Heaven, it was the breath of God (the *ruach* of God, the Spirit of God, the very presence of God) that is God.

You see, if "*ha adam*," the man that is us, is to get back to the garden and receive the Life of God, which is the Wisdom of God, which is the Word of God, which makes man in the image of God, he must pass through those flaming swords.

In the book of Romans, Saint Paul spends the first eleven chapters describing the Judgment, and judgments of God. Then he writes, "*God has consigned all people to disobedience that he may have mercy on all* (that He might judge all and have mercy on all) *Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments and inscrutable his ways!*" (11:32).

In other words, we can't understand all of His judgments,
But we can see that His Judgment is Good and Good for all.

Then he writes, "*For from Him and to him and through him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen!*" Next verse (12:1) "*Therefore... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is your logical worship.*" "Become a living sacrifice." And "*be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

Solomon never read the book of Romans, but I think he saw the book of Romans in the House of God and on a tree in a garden. Solomon saw Jesus, even though he didn't yet see Him in a body of human flesh.

Well, let's pick up where we were last time. I can't explain it all, but hopefully I can help us all get the picture:

Ecc. 6:7 "*All the toil of man (ha adam) is for his mouth, yet his appetite (nephesh, soul) is not satisfied.*"

Remember what we said last time: *ha adam*, the man, is all humanity and yet one man. It refers back to the first man and anticipates the last man, the *eschatos* man—Jesus. Paul wrote, "*As in Adam all die so in Christ all will be made alive*" (1 Cor. 15:22). *The*

first Adam was a living nephesh and the last Adam was made a life giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:22).

The story of “*ha adam*” is your story.

In Genesis 2, “*ha adam*,” the man who is us, is alone in the presence of God because he does not enjoy God... who is the Good. He doesn’t know what Solomon and Louis CK are beginning to know. He doesn’t have knowledge of Good and evil².

Ecclesiastes 6:7-11

All the toil of (ha adam) is for his mouth, yet his (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?”³ Better (literally “gooder,” from towb—good) is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite (nephesh, soul): this also is vanity and a striving after wind (ruach, Spirit).⁴ 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 (ha adam)?

Remember that after “*ha adam*” took knowledge of the Good from the tree in the garden, God found Adam and Eve hiding in the trees . . . and Adam began to dispute with God:

- Adam took his new knowledge of Good and evil and began to justify himself.
- But the more he tried to justify himself, the more he incriminated himself as one who took knowledge of the good from the tree.

The more you try to justify yourself, the more you incriminate yourself as someone that has believed the lie that you could make yourself in the image of God with knowledge that you stole from the tree. You incriminate yourself as someone that thinks they are

² In Gen, 2 on day 6 creation, before Adam takes knowledge from the tree and so begins to know the good and the not good, God says, it is not good that the Adam is alone...Adam is in the presence of God, who is Love and is his helper, but Adam is alone, because he does not enjoy God, He doesn’t have faith in Love, He doesn’t know that God is His Helper... His Husband. He doesn’t know Jesus. He doesn’t know that the word of God is Good.

In Genesis 2 Adam is alone, but doesn’t know he’s alone...He doesn’t know what Louis CK knew on the side of the road...He doesn’t know, until he takes knowledge from the tree in the middle of the garden... and then he begins to know. He knows that he’s not good, but he longs to be good. Well, he takes his knowledge of good and begins to act good, which just reveals that he’s not good.

³ He can act alive, but that doesn’t make him alive.
Adam can act good which reveals that He’s not Good.
Knowledge of the Good reveals your not Good, but it can’t make you Good.

⁴ Remember that God alone is Good and God is *ruach*, Spirit. Adam took the life of the good in flesh like fruit hanging on a tree...And we took the life of Jesus on a tree, trying to make ourselves in the image of God. Whenever we try to make ourselves Good, we strive after wind, we take knowledge of the Good and we crucify Wisdom, the Word of God.

their own helper, their own savior, their own judge and even creator—someone not good.

Verse 12:

For who knows what is good (towb) for man (ha adam)...

It's interesting that after God pronounces the curse over Adam and Eve, and all creation, He makes them clothes out of an animal's skin. That must have been the very first sacrifice and I'm thinking it was a lamb.

- Well since Ecclesiastes 2:3 Solomon has been asking, "What is good for the Adam?"
- And that is also Adam's question, "What is Good for me?"
- And isn't that your question and my question?
We're constantly trying to consume the good, or take knowledge of the good, to soothe this desperate longing for the good—deep within our soul.

Well, from the start, in Genesis 1, God tells us what is Good:

It is to be made in the image of God.

In Genesis 2, we discover that this is communion with God.

For it's "not good that Adam is alone."

Well, Jesus is the perfect image of God. And Jesus has perfect communion with God. And Jesus is the firstborn of all creation—firstborn from the dead. So, of course, the Good for Adam is to become just like Jesus, which reminds me of a cartoon:

[The first image is a person in bed praying, "Oh Lord, make me more like your dear son Jesus!" The second image shows that person on the cross saying, "Crap!!"]

"Oh Lord make me like your dear son, Jesus! . . . "

"Crap!"

A cross is sorrow that turns into joy.

Verse 12:

For who knows what is good (towb) for man (ha adam) while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?

So *ha adam* is like a shadow under the sun . . .

A shadow is defined by what it is not—it's the absence of Light.

If a shadow could reason, what would it consider to be the greatest terror? Wouldn't it be the sun? To be exposed to the sun?

Psalm 144:4 *"Adam is like a hebel, a vapor, a vanity; his days are like a passing shadow."* A shadow self, must be false self, like the self that Adam constructs before God with all of his self-justification—pretending to be good because he's not good.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-4

A good (towb) name (shem) is better (towb, "gooder") than precious (towb, good)

ointment (shemen), [It's gooder to be good than smell good.] and the day of death [is gooder] than the day of birth.

That may mean it's good that the act is over or that we've acquired some good on the journey or maybe both

It is better (towb, "gooder") to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind (ha adam, the Man), and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better (towb, "gooder") than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

What is the house of mourning?

Well, I imagine it might be a funeral or a house where someone just died.

And what is the house of mirth?

Well, I imagine a hospital room where a baby has just been born.

You know the temple must've been a house of mourning . . . with huge knives animals were slaughtered in the temple and offered in the fire... that's a lot of death. And yet, something was being born.

The temple was a house of mourning and yet also a house of feasting and great joy. It was like a giant sing along, dance, and barbecue. Over and over the Israelites were commanded to feast on roast lamb, broken bread and red wine, giving thanks with glad and generous hearts while singing, *"The steadfast love of the Lord endures forever."* That's the most repeated line in all the Bible.

Well, the Temple was a house of mourning that turned into a house of feasting. And for 1500 years the Israelites must've wondered: What's on the other side of that fire? Where do the burnt offerings go? God doesn't eat sheep or goats—so what does He do with them? And what's on the other side of the curtain, on top of the Ark, between the two cherubim on the throne of God? What's His Judgment?

Well, Solomon would go to the house of mourning and it would turn into the house of mirth. Louis CK, faced the profound sorrow that it was all for nothing and he was alone, and then he felt profoundly happy. Nine years ago, I sat in a parking lot down on Federal. My church and my career had blown up in my face and I realized that all my toil was for nothing. It was the vanity of vanities and I was so very alone. ...And then having mourned my own death, I suddenly realized that I was so very not alone... and I was free.

So you don't have to go to the temple. It's like you are the temple, so you can go to the house of mourning anytime you like. *"And by sorrow of face the heart is made glad."* (Ecc. 7:3b)

Ecclesiastes 7:5-10

It is better (towb, "gooder") for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fools; this also is vanity. Surely oppression drives the wise into madness, and a bribe corrupts the heart.

So, thank God for the rebuke of the wise because it can take you to the house of mourning. Thank God for “oppression,” and for *realizing* that “*a bribe corrupts the heart*”—that is, *realizing* that people don’t enjoy the good, but need to be motivated by the bad, in order to fake the good... *That realization* will take you to the house of mourning.

Better (towb, gooder) is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools. Say not, “Why were the former days better (towb, gooder) than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask this.

Why were the former days better than these?

- Some of you have been asking that non-stop for the last five days since Election Day.
- Some of you were asking that for the eight years before Election Day.

Solomon says all that asking is not wisdom...

So, I think he just called all of us a bunch of fools.

He says the end of a thing is “gooder” than the beginning of thing, which means the Good is being added to the thing through time...which implies the Good is telling a good story in time...So, a day may seem evil and you may judge it as evil, but even then, God is revealing the beautiful in time.

If you think you’re in charge of telling the story, you have a proud spirit that has believed the lie. But if you think you’re part of a good story, that’s being told, you have a patient spirit that waits for the revelation of beauty.

Do you have a proud spirit or a patient spirit?

- If you have a proud spirit, you think that you’re the author of the story and anger will lodge in your heart because God’s Judgment is different than your judgment.
- If you trust God’s Judgment, you’ll have a patient spirit, for you believe the truth that God makes all things beautiful in their time.

He makes all things beautiful with His Word, which is His Judgment, which is Jesus, which we meet in a garden on a tree that we call the cross—on which the Lamb of God offered Himself.

Ecclesiastes 7:11-12

Wisdom is good (towb, good) with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. For the protection (literally, shadow) of wisdom is like the protection (shadow) of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of (or literally “saves”) him who has it.

You know if we take Scripture literally here and when it says that Jesus is the “Wisdom of God,” then Solomon just wrote:

The advantage of knowledge is that Jesus saves him who has it.

The advantage of *ha adam* taking knowledge from the tree is that God gives the life of Jesus on the tree, who saves the Adam.

“For the shadow of Jesus is like the shadow of a roof, (bought with money).” It’s like we exist in the shadow of Jesus, who protects us from the burning light of the sun . . . but one day we’ll be filled with Jesus—who shines like the sun.

Verse 11: “*Wisdom is good...*” That means Jesus is Good, and Jesus makes us good. We are his *inheritance*. “*Wisdom is good with an inheritance.*”

Verse 13: “*Consider the work of God:*” This is what God is commanding you to do: “Stop (shabbat—sabbath) and “*Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked? In the day of prosperity* (from *towb*, good),

Literally “good.” I’m including the literal translation in all these places cause all of Ecclesiastes is about asking, “What is the good!” And the whole Bible is about wrestling with this thing we took from the tree—the “knowledge of *towb*, good and evil, *ra*.

be joyful, and in the day of adversity (ra, evil) consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.”

It’s like God wants us to know the Good and truly enjoy the Good, but then mourn the loss of the Good, realizing that we can’t control the Good. We can only thank God for the Good.

Verse 15-16: *In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing. Be not overly righteous, and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?*”

How’s that for a life verse: “*Be not overly righteous.*”

What would that mean? Like you can be level five righteous, but level six would be too much. Like don’t be Ben Carson level righteous, but Donald Trump would be OK. Does righteousness come in degrees that you could measure and judge and then use to compare yourself to your neighbor? Solomon told us that “*all the toil of man (the adam) was envy.*”

Ecclesiastes 7:17-19

Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

If some people can’t form an identity with righteousness they’ll try wickedness.

It is good (towb, good) that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them— the sin of trying to create an identity with wickedness or righteousness.

Solomon writes as if they were really both the very same thing...

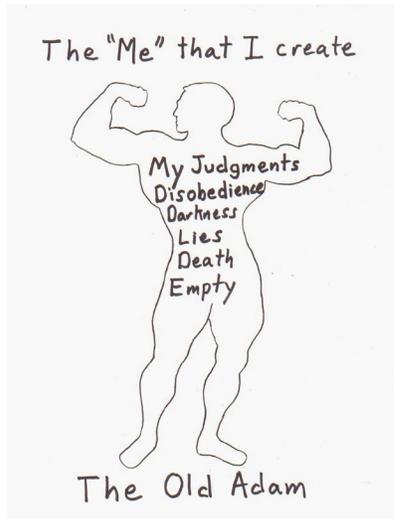
Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

Surely there is not a righteous man (adam) on earth who does good (towb, good) and never sins.

Did you catch that? “*There is not a righteous man on earth who does good...*”

- That means that any man who thinks he’s righteous, is only acting righteous, which is very unrighteous.
- He might know about the Good, but he is only acting Good, which is very not Good.
- He imitates the form of the Good, but is empty of the Good, like a shadow.

- He is the vanity of a vanity.
- He is the “Me” that I think I create.

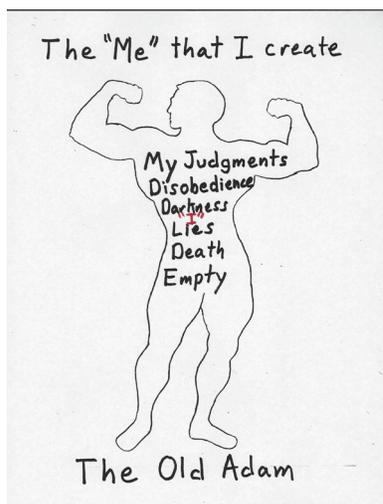


This is a picture from our series on Ephesians, for in Ephesians Saint Paul talked about the very same thing that Solomon describes in Ecclesiastes.

He calls this the Old Adam—the old man.

I create him with my judgments—I take fruit from the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil and discover I’m evil and try to make myself good, which only makes evil. In other words, I begin to justify myself with my judgments and what I create is vanity. Some call it a human ego or pride. It’s disobedience, for I’m not trusting the Good, who is God, to create me with Grace; I’m taking the Good, who is God, to create myself with my own flesh.

See the Old Man is the product of believing a lie that I am my own creator, judge, savior and redeemer. It’s the product of the lie and what I create is nothing. A shadow self, an empty illusion, darkness . . . in which “I” am trapped.



You see there is an “I” in this self that is the breath of God. I didn’t create I, but when I create a “me.” I become trapped in “me” and I think that’s called death. So, Saint Paul writes, *“Who will deliver me form this body of death?”* (Rom. 7:24) Who will save me from this body of death?

I create the old man by crucifying wisdom and taking knowledge. And then realize that “I” am alone and dead in the house of mourning that is “me” . . . an empty stone temple.

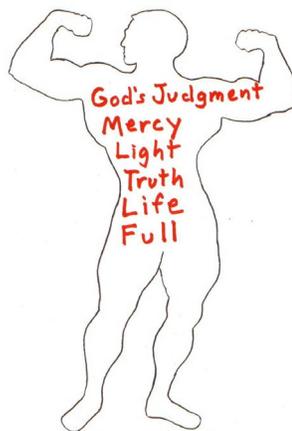
But listen again to what Solomon wrote in verse 19: *“Wisdom gives strength...”* Did you catch that? Wisdom is active like a person . . . Wisdom isn’t knowledge to be taken, but a person to be received.

Verse 19-20 *“Wisdom gives strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city. Surely there is not a righteous man (adam) on earth who does good and never sins.”*

So none is righteous . . . but Wisdom (who is Jesus) gives strength to the wise... I guess that’s why they are wise—they are known by Wisdom.

You know Saint Paul also writes that we have a “New Adam” *“created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

The “Me” that GOD creates



The New Adam

See there is a “me” that God creates. Paul calls him the “New Adam” created through the *“Eschatos Adam”* who is the life giving Spirit. We strive after the Spirit, and He strives after us. We take the life of Wisdom on a tree—that is our Judgment. And God gives the life of Wisdom on a tree—that is God’s Judgment. God’s Judgment is to make me beautiful in time.

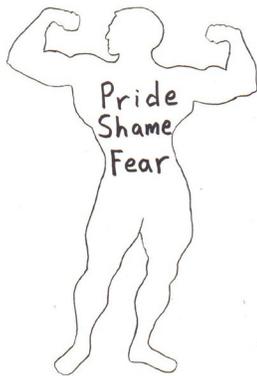
My Judgment is disobedience, and God’s Judgment is Mercy.
My choice is pride, and God’s choice is humility.
My choice is envy, and God’s choice is sacrifice.
My choice is darkness, and God’s choice is Light.

My choice is lies, and God's choice is Truth
My choice is death, and God's commandment is Eternal Life.
My choice is empty, and God's choice is full.
My choice is what I am not, and God's choice is I am.
My choice is loneliness, and God's choice is communion.

Do you see that the New Adam, which is the life of Christ, is revealed in the empty old space that you thought was yourself? For *"where sin increased, Grace abounded all the more"* (Rom. 5:20). *"You were once darkness,"* writes Paul, *"but now you are light in the Lord"* (Rom. 5:8).

The Old Adam is the product of my pride, shame, and fear.
(See the image on the next page.)

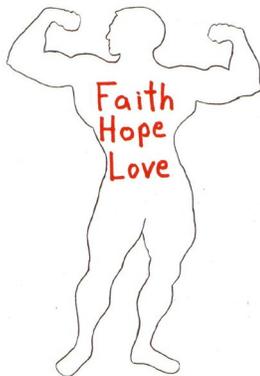
The "Me" that I create



The Old Adam

He is the creation of my choices in time—the proud spirit.
The New Adam is the manifestation of Faith Hope and Love.

The "Me" that GOD creates

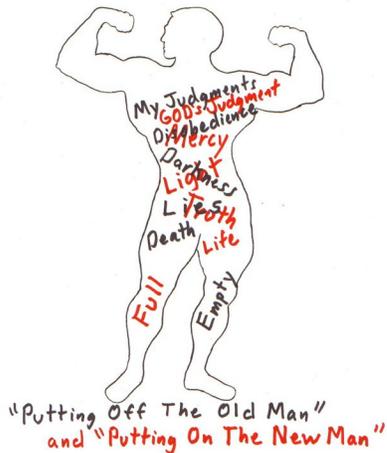


The New Adam

He is the manifestation of God's eternal choice revealed in time—through the patient spirit. Christ's Spirit. The True Me, is God's Eternal Creation being revealed in this beauty pageant called space and time.

And yet, right now, I am both.
(See the image on the next page.)

Me being created
in Space and Time



And the degree to which *I make my choices* in pride, shame, and fear is the degree to which I'm trapped alone in darkness lies and death.

But the degree to which *God's choices* of Faith, Hope, and Love manifest in me is the degree to which I'm free to enjoy the Good and be Good—which is the eternally happy image of God.

But here's the rub: I can't judge between God's Judgment and my judgment,
... cause that would just be more of my own judgments.

In the words of Jesus, I can't separate the wheat from the tares.

In the words of Paul, "*I don't even judge myself... it is the Lord who judges me.*" (1 Cor. 4:3)

So what do I do? How do I change?

Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 7:20-24:

Surely there is not a righteous man (adam) on earth who does good and never sins. Do not take to heart all the things that people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you. Your heart knows that many times you yourself have cursed others. All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me. That which has been is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?

I think this is the point of Ecclesiastes: Solomon can't find Wisdom, but Wisdom finds Solomon. Solomon can't make himself Wise, but Wisdom makes Solomon. Wisdom is the Judgment of God. And where did Wisdom meet Solomon? He met Solomon, in the

House of Mourning, as he sat before the Judgment of God.⁵

Something happened to me nine years ago that forever changed the way I view the Judgment of God. Susan and I have a friend that we prayed with and for over a span of about fifteen years, who was horribly abused in a satanic cult as a child and then a young woman.

In those fifteen years, we had seen the Lord deliver her from incredible bondage. He would usually do it by having us pray through old memories that would turn into visions in which He would appear. Both Susan and my friend would see him and hear him. And whenever and wherever my friend would lift her eyes and see Him, demonic spirits and even satan himself would lose his power and have to flee.

Well, nine years ago she went on a mission trip to Africa. And one night at a campfire she watched some Africans sacrifice a goat in that same fire. The evil one used it to remind her of some horrid memories of abuse, fill her with fear, and make space for him in her soul—a space of shame.

So, when she returned, we prayed through that memory. And I asked her to look for Jesus in the memory. She couldn't see Him and she was terrified to look at the fire. Finally, I said something like, "If you don't see Him, look at the fire."

She did and said, "He's standing in the fire!"

He motioned to my friend showing her where she held on to shame. She handed him the shame, but then said, "I'm really angry." She was angry that God had let this all happen. She was angry that she had been so fragile and easily deceived. She was angry at God's Judgment. And then I said, "I'm angry too!"

My church had just imploded and I had just been defrocked. I was angry that it all seemed to be for nothing and I had been left alone. Never before had I experienced such sorrow or mourned so deeply. I knew that God was in charge. I was really angry at God's Judgment . . . And Jesus is God's Judgment. Susan said, "I'm angry too." And Jesus was still standing in the fire. He held out His arms . . . as if He wanted us to join Him in the fire. I said, "Let's all walk into the fire." So, we held hands and said something like "Baptize us with your fire." I now see that we were presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice.

See? Jesus didn't come so that you would no longer sacrifice. He came to help you sacrifice yourself to the Judgment of God.

And so we presented ourselves to the Fire.

⁵ And who is the true Solomon? He is the Prince of Peace and Son of David, who builds God's house. He is no longer Solomon, but Christ who lives in Solomon, His house.

After a time, I said to my friend, "What do you see?"
And she said, "You're ugly."
And I said, "No, in the vision."
She and Susan both said, "Yeah. In the vision you're burned up, charred, and really ugly. We all are!"
Then Susan said, "Peter, ask Jesus to blow on us."
I did . . . and He did . . . and then I heard my friend gasp in wonder.
She exclaimed, "I'm not fragile."

Then she and Susan told me what they saw:

- Jesus blew on us and all the ash—the ashes of the old man (*adam*)—they blew away revealing these incredible bright, white, not fragile, indestructible and eternal beings.
- And for a few wonderful minutes, that house of mourning turned into the house of mirth—none of us were alone, each of us couldn't help but worship. We were happy and free.

And now, I hope you realize that this not only happens in late night deliverance prayer sessions. And it not only happens in the temple in Jerusalem; it can happen every moment in the temple that is your body, in the garden that is your heart.

- As Paul writes, "*In God we live and move and have our being*" (Acts 17:28).
- In other words, "We're surrounded by the antibodies that destroy our body of death."
- As John writes, "*This is the Judgment, the Light has come into the World*" (John 3:19) Light is always now. (It is eternal.)
- And Jesus said, "*Now is the Judgment of this world.*" (John 12:31)

See?

It happens when we *shabbat*, when we stop and consider the Judgment of God.
It happens when we stop running from God, and sit in silence before the Judgment of God, that is His Word, the Light of the world . . . "*...the light that enlightens all men...*" (John 1:9)

It's happening right now. [Peter points to the cross and communion table behind him.]
This is the tree.
This is the throne.
And this is the Judgment:

Communion

Wisdom took bread and broke it saying, "This is my Body given to you. Take and eat."
And in the same manner, and having given thanks, He took the cup and poured it saying, "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins, drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me."

Do you know what's on the other side of God's Judgment?
Do you know what's on the other side of the Fire?
Sheep, goats, lambs, even babies—all made new—and you, in the image of God.

See? I think that maybe the darkest lie of the devil is that we should run from the Judgment of God. And He's even convinced the church to teach it to the world.

He teaches us to run from the Judgment of God, when we should run with every bit of energy we have *into* the Judgment of God. For on the other side is the New Creation and on this side is darkness death and *hades*. So come to the table, and present yourself to the Judgment of God. Believe the Gospel.

Benediction

Now . . . live in this moment. If you're like me, there are moments when it can be really hard to live in this moment. For me, it's usually the middle of the night or after someone has criticized me for something or things aren't going well.

What I do is I begin to question all of my judgments. There was a time when I thought it was the pastor's job to analyze everything and give everyone his judgments, but I've given that up because I just don't know stuff. I don't know exactly who you should vote for or exactly what our stance should be on all the social issues; I really struggle with that. There is one thing that I *do* know and that is that the Judgment of God is good. So, since that experience (that I mentioned in the sermon) one thing I have learned to do when I wake up stressed about all my own judgments is I'll just imagine myself lying before God naked and I'll say, "God, This is me. You know that I like beer. You know that I watched some shows and that I'm not sure if you think I should watch that or not. God I just don't know. I don't know if it was good or bad. I get confused. I'm just telling you. I am presenting myself. Lord, send your Fire." And then I just imagine the Fire.

When you imagine something that's true, I think that's called faith. And God is sending the Fire all the time. And you see? When I do that, the house of mourning becomes a house of mirth because I'm God's and He will take care of me with His Judgment, and His Judgment is that He loves me more than I can imagine. I'm worth Jesus to God, who is His very own heart. So you see, that's a moment too. We are called to live in that moment all the time because there will come a last moment, and in that last moment you will see Him and he'll be shining like the sun.

Why is it so important for you to believe that God's Judgment is good? So you'll run into the sun. Not away from the sun. Do you know why it gets so hellish in this world, at times? I think God uses it to teach us to run into His Judgment. The day will come when you run into His judgments and He says, "Sweetheart, the nightmare's over. Welcome home. You can live that way right now in faith. In the name of Jesus, believe the Gospel. 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.