

Ecclesiastes 9:11–18

Managed Expectations

Proverbs sets the pattern and the expectation.
Ecclesiastes interrupts the pattern and the expectation.

Proverbs is the idea and the rule; Ecclesiastes is the exception.

We build our lives with Proverbs; we navigate life with Ecclesiastes.
We structure our lives with Proverbs; we pivot our lives with Ecclesiastes.

A crisis of faith often comes when expectations are disrupted.

Expect Life to Blindsides You (vv. 11–12)

God makes everything beautiful in its time.

Mark 4:34–41

The Sea of Galilee is known for its “sudden” storms:

- 13 miles long, 7½ miles wide at its widest point
- Surrounded by hills; 680 feet below sea level
- Cool air coming down from Mount Hermon through the ravines acts like a wind tunnel
- That cool air collides with warm, moist air from the Mediterranean Sea
- This produces sudden, violent storms

This storm was unexpected—didn’t see it coming.

“Let us...”

Arose — “didn’t see it coming.”

Christ’s presence does not mean no more sudden storms.

It may seem as if He’s unaware or inattentive.

He is sovereign over the sudden (the storm listened to Him).

He has promised the other side.

Expect Life to Forget You (vv. 13–15)

The wise do not live for the applause of man.

Proverbs 29:25 — “The fear of man lays a snare.”

We live for the applause of God.

Galatians 1:10 — “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”

Colossians 3:23–24 — “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Wisdom Is Still Better — Even If...

- It is better relatively
- It is better objectively
- It is better because it is godly

By the wisdom of a forgotten and ignored man, salvation has come.

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Scripture and sermon on Sunday? What stood out to you? What questions do you have?
2. Where have you experienced a “Proverbs expectation” that was interrupted by an “Ecclesiastes reality”? How did that disruption affect your faith or view of God in that season?
3. Think about a time when life blindsided you—something you didn’t see coming. How did you interpret God’s presence in that moment, and how do you see it differently now?
4. Have you ever done the right, wise, or faithful thing and felt unseen or underappreciated? What makes it hard to live for God’s approval instead of people’s applause?
5. If wisdom doesn’t always lead to recognition, reward, or fairness, why is it still worth pursuing? How does the story of the forgotten wise man—and ultimately Christ—reshape how you measure success and faithfulness?