

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Introduction: How many of you have ever seen the movie, “Jerry McGuire?” For those of you who haven’t Tom Cruise plays a sports agent who believes less is more. He goes out and starts his own sports agency and falls in love with a girl who left his old job with him. They have an up and down relationship until he realizes that he needs her. In one of the more well known scenes of the movie Jerry McGuire comes into the house and says “you complete me.” It got me to thinking about people. We are born as incomplete people. We all long to feel needed, loved, and important. So we try to fill the emptiness in our life with various things trying to become complete. But no matter what we try to fill that void with we still feel empty. Is it possible to be a complete person, a whole person? That is what we are going to examine this morning in our final study in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Breakdown of the Text:

V. 13: Solomon has come to the conclusion of his writing. He says “let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter.” The word “hear” means to listen to with the intent of obeying. In other words I want you to understand this and then do it. The “whole matter” here is the previous eleven chapters. Solomon has said over and over everything is “vanity under the sun.” In other words, living for things here on earth is pointless. Solomon has said that knowledge won’t make you happy in chapter 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, and 12. He has said that possessions won’t make you happy in chapter 2, 5, and 11. So now Solomon finally gets to what he has been saying all along. It is found at the end of this verse. The main idea of the text as well as the book is for a person to be complete in God. Notice it says in the end of verse 13, “this is the whole (the King James adds the word duty) of man.” In other words life is about what I just said. Now it may seem odd that the main idea of the text is at the end of the verse, but maybe this will help explain why. In English we read and write from left to right. In Hebrew however, they read and write from right to left. So in a sense in Hebrew the verse would say, “The whole of man is to fear God and keep His commandments, this is the conclusion of the whole matter.” So now that we know what Solomon wants us

to be, we need to unpack how to be “whole.” First thing He says is to “fear God.” The Hebrew word for “fear” here is used over 300 times in the Old Testament. It means to revere or to frighten. The fear of God is a double-edged sword. If I am going to fear God I have to have this inner adoration of Him. I have to genuinely love God for Who He is. There is a God who created everything in six days and rested on the seventh. There is a God who is sovereign over all the events of earth, and He knows my name and thinks I was worth dying for, and He genuinely wants to have a relationship with me. And because I have this inner adoration, this love for Him I have a desire to keep His commandments. Because God loves me and I love Him, I want to please Him. John 14:15 says, “If you love me, keep My commandments.” In Matthew 28:20 that we studied Wednesday night it says “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The word “observe” there means to obey. If we combine Ecclesiastes 12, Matthew 28, and John 14 we learn this: my obedience to Christ is a proof that I love God. That is why Luke 6:46 is such a stinging rebuke when Jesus said, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” The word “love” in the Bible is not merely an emotion or feeling, it is an emotion or feeling that leads to action. In other words love is demonstrated by how you act. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world. How did He prove that love? By sending His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Romans 5:8 says “But God commendeth (demonstrates) His love toward us, how did He do that? The rest of the verse says “in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Therefore we need to understand what Solomon is saying. He is saying if you say you love God then you will keep His commandments. By having the inward adoration for God and by it being lived out in your life you are complete before God. In other words a relationship with obedience equals a right relationship with God.

V. 14: There is another side of the “fear God” sword and Solomon discusses it in this verse. If I am going to revere or be in awe of God, I have to be frightened of God. Let me explain what I mean. I need to realize two things if I am going to be in awe of God. First I have to recognize that He is holy and He is perfect. God does not like my sin, He does not condone my sin, in fact God hates sin so much

that He judges it. Secondly I need to recognize that I am not holy or perfect. By nature I am the enemy of God because of what I do. James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." When James talks about "friendship with the world" he means that we are living and acting like the world which is a reference to the sinful system. So when we live and act like the world we are the enemies of God. When we come into God's presence and we see Him for Who He is it is a frightening thing because we realize just how bad we are. Isaiah had such an encounter. It is recorded in Isaiah 6:3-5 which says, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isaiah was in the presence of God and he saw himself as God sees him and it broke him, because Isaiah saw that although he was made in the image of God, He didn't look like or act like God. In this verse Solomon gives us a few reasons we should be frightened of God. First of all notice there is a judgment day. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." It is inescapable, every person will stand before God in judgment. Another reason we should have the fear of God is that the secret things will be revealed. Matthew 12:36 says, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Paul wrote in Romans 2:16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Notice in that verse the standard of judgment is the Gospel, that is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What do you believe about the Gospel? Is it the only way for a person to be saved or do you believe there are other ways? God is going to judge us based on what we did with His Son.