

## Transcript\* - Know What You Don't Know – 3/1/2026 – Pastor Jay Gjurjevich

Hey good morning everybody.

Great to see you here this morning. Hope you're having a good weekend. Sure has been a eventful weekend in our world with what's going on over in Iran. And, I don't know how much you've been paying attention to that, but, I think I'm just going to with respect to what we're going to be talking about today and uncertainty and not speaking about things that we don't know how they're going to end.

We're going to be talking about that actually a lot today in Ecclesiastes. I'm just going to say we don't know exactly what's going to happen, but I think there are some things that we can celebrate and praise God for and actually pray for as we're looking forward to the future. And, one thing, of course, is that a brutal, oppressive terrorist regime seems to be crumbling.

Not only a regime that has oppressed its own people, but many people throughout the world. And so that's a good thing. We've also been told, over the past several years that one of the fastest growing churches in the world is actually in Iran, and they've been operating under this oppression and. Yeah, and, you know, imagine what might happen if they now have the freedom to worship and the freedom to share the gospel and the freedom to, be Jesus, the hands and feet of Jesus in their country as we go forward.

And so a lot to be praying about. Obviously, none of us wants a long war. Hope for a decisive and quick end. All of this. Let's pray for all of that. But many things to be praying about it. Things are changing over there in the days, weeks and months to come. And so, this morning, though, as we, continue into our series on the book of Ecclesiastes, we're actually in our last couple of weeks in this series.

If you guys enjoyed this series so far. Yeah. Good. I'm glad to hear that because we've we've talked about through the series. At times when you talk about the book of Ecclesiastes, these people will, sometimes, have a misunderstanding about it. Sometimes they avoid it. They're they look at it and they feel like it's just such a depressing, difficult book.

I'd rather just avoid it altogether. And I hope that you've seen throughout this series that that's a misunderstanding about what the book is all about. In fact, I think sometimes the book of Ephesians or Ephesians, Ecclesiastes is a lot like, it's a lot like that person that you meet for the first time. And there's there's something about them that you're not really sure about.

And so you're not really. And so you don't really click with them for whatever reason the first time, but then you get to know them a little bit and you realize you like, start like them a little bit more. And then as you get to know them even more, they actually become like a lifelong friend to you. Right.

Do you have any friends like that? Like when you first met him, you thought I'd never be friends with that person, and then now they're a lifelong friend. Maybe that's kind of what the book of Ecclesiastes has been for you. At first it was like, I'm not sure about this thing. And then as you got to know it a little bit more, it's actually becoming like a lifelong friend, because that's our hope for you, because the book is a book of wisdom.

It's part of the wisdom literature of the Bible. And so as we come back to it over and over again, especially in wisdom literature, depending on where you're at in your life, what you're facing in the moment, what life stage you're in, this book actually has a lot of different things to say depending on what you're coming to it with.

It's almost like holding a diamond up and looking and twisting the diamond and seeing the light as it plays off the different facets of the diamond. I mean, that's God's living word in general, but that's especially true about wisdom books. And so I hope that you consider Ecclesiastes. He's now a lifelong friend for you. As we leave over the next couple of weeks, as we begin to to win this down.

Because one of the things we realize and you may have heard this before, but, you remember and retain probably about 20% of what you're taught. So on Sunday mornings, that's a really sobering thought for pastors. But at the same time, it's the reality for most people. They only remember about 20% of what they're taught. And so the hope is that this won't we won't just leave this series just based on what you've been taught on Sunday, but you'll reengage with this book to mine the resources and the depth and the richness of all that's there on your own as well.

And so that it's not just a study, an exercise in studying, but it's something that changes and transforms your life. So with all that being said, we're going to get into the last few chapters of the book, which are really going to bring home what the author, who we believe is Solomon, is trying to say and bringing to conclusion from the very beginning.

Now, one of the things that we've noticed throughout this book is that Solomon spends a lot of time talking about what he would call life under the sun, right? The broken things of this world, the meaningless things of this world. He spends a lot of time. That's what makes this book a little depressing, because he spends more time talking about that stuff than he does really about the other stuff.

But he does that for a reason. He draws us in almost ad nauseum to force us to look at the things that are broken and meaningless and difficult in this world, so that when he goes to tell us what is wise, the things above the sun, we're really ready to hear it, right? In other words, we're in a place where we're in so much despair.

By looking at the broken things in the world, we're almost disheartened by all of it. That right in that moment, the contrast of the good things, of the things over the sun, the things that are wise and good and righteous according to God, then become this beautiful contrast that gives us hope. And I think it's a really effective way of teaching.

Actually, parents might do this with their kids from time to time, or grandkids or grandparents with their grandkids. Right? If you know your kids are thinking or doing certain things in a different in a certain way, and you can see where that thinking or where that behavior might lead to damaging consequences in their life. You might even sit them down and paint out the picture of what those consequences might look like if they continue to live, or to think or to speak a certain way.

Right. And that's kind of what Ecclesiastes is doing for us. But then in that moment, just as they're kind of like realizing the consequences of where that might all lead them, you leave that, you turn, he's flip the script, so to speak, and give them hope of another way of living, a more wise way of living. And that's exactly what Solomon is doing for us in Ecclesiastes.

So in all of this, there's a simple and really profound encouragement in it all. Now, what is being said, in all of this, is that the stakes matters so much that it's not really just enough for us to just nod and say amen on a Sunday morning, as important as that is, don't quit doing that. But yeah, there you go.

But we're not to leave it there, right? This is supposed to be something that changes and transforms our life, because it flips our perspective in such a way that we come to the conclusion that there is no other way to live than the way of the wise man. As Solomon puts it in Ecclesiastes. And I'm sure we've all been in situations before where someone has come to us asking for an answer, looking for guidance.

Again, maybe it was a child grandchild, maybe a coworker or a friend. And depending on what they're asking for, maybe you have a lot of knowledge in that subject, or a little bit of knowledge or whatever it may be, but as the conversation goes, you get to a place where you realize you're at the edge of your knowledge now, right?

You've told them everything you know, and in that moment you have a decision to make. Do I continue to pretend like I know what I'm talking about, even though I may not know what I'm talking

about, in order to save face or not disappoint them? Or do I admit that I don't know, and that may seem like a small thing, but that decision in that moment actually reveals a lot more about our heart and our character than we might realize.

And one of the morals of the, one of the focuses of the book of Ecclesiastes is that is understanding that true wisdom lies not in appearing to know everything, but in being humble enough to admit what you don't know and being faithful enough to learn it. And if we have that attitude and that approach to the book of Ecclesiastes, we'll be able to mine the riches of what Solomon is communicating to us here.

And so in Ecclesiastes chapter ten. That's especially true by the way of what we're talking about today in Ecclesiastes chapters ten and 11. And we're going to start in chapter ten, right at the beginning of the chapter in verse one. And I'm going to read for you it says this dead flies make the perfumers ointment. Give off a stench so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor a wise man.

Heart. Heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left. And even when a fool walks on the road, he lacks sense. And he says to everyone that he is a fool. And one of the great things about Ecclesiastes, and really a lot of the wisdom literature in the Bible, is that they use a lot of metaphors.

Right? And, you know, a metaphor is good when you can feel it, or you can you can taste it or you can smell it in this case, right? You hear this metaphor of dead flies in the perfumers ointment. And honestly, that in the ancient world, right. This was a common way of getting rid of the smell of dead things, was to use an ointment to kind of cover that smell.

And whether or not we know what dead flies smell like, we all know what a bad smell smells like, especially when we've tried to cover it with a good smell, like an air freshener or perfume. It's almost like in most cases, it's almost like it smells worse than the bad smell in the first place. I remember when I was a kid, a friend of mine had left a gallon of milk in his mom's van, and he was unloading the groceries, and somehow the gallon of milk, like, rolled under one of the seats.

And he didn't see it. And this was in the summer, in the middle of the summer in Phoenix. So you can imagine what that smell like. And it took them a few days to figure out what was actually going on. They got in the car like, it smells, it smells, it smells. And then one day it was just so bad they had to find out what that smell was.

They found the gallon of milk under one of the seats. And I got to tell you, you can probably imagine what that smell smells like. But I got to tell you, it was so bad that it was gag inducing. And I know that from firsthand experience, because I had to ride in that van all the time. And like a day after they

found that gallon of milk, we were on the way to a baseball practice, and I was gagging the entire way there.

And, look, it didn't matter what they tried to do to cover that smell. They had the entire van professionally clean. I mean, they put air fresheners on every square inch of that thing on the inside. That smell never went away for years. You would open the door and the first thing you would smell in that van is that still that rotten smell of milk underneath the other smells.

And Solomon is writing and he describes that very thing, that very reality. And he's writing in this way to warn us about how important it is, how critical it is to take account of what we believe and what we say. This metaphor illustrates well that when it comes to foolish speaking or to foolish thinking, right? These things give off such an odor in the end that there's nothing you can do to cover it once it becomes apparent.

And he calls them death odors of death. Because of course, foolish speech, foolish thinking is not life giving. And so it's death. But foolishness, as he continues as well as wisdom, leads us down different paths in life. It's not just about what we think. It's not just about what we say, but foolishness or wisdom has the power of actually leading our lives in different directions.

And he says, the wise man goes to the right and the foolish man goes to the left. Now, that's not a reference to politics, by the way. I know some of you were thinking that, so I needed a you should clarify that.

The metaphor is about them going in opposite directions and what it looks like that they share nothing in common. Basically, they they lead your life in two different directions completely. And then the final warning brings it all together. In verse three, he talks about the importance of all this together, the foolishness or or the foolish person will walk down the foolish path, believing the entire time that he's walking down the wise path and telling everybody how wise he is, highlights the deceptive ness of foolishness in our lives when it continues to breed over and over again.

Look, nobody lives life saying, look how much of a fool I am. Come follow me. Right? Instead, the fool walks that path because he believes that he's being wise. And as you take this metaphor to the end, what you realize is that what starts with the stench of death as a fool, as a as as foolishness. A few foolish words or actions will lead you down a path to death and ultimately will cause you to celebrate your own death as you move towards your destiny.

And it's a tragic picture that Solomon has painted here. There's a reason for that. He's trying to wake us up. There is a lot at stake here. Understand how important this is to know. And I think in many ways you can use these three verses to sum up the entire message of Ecclesiastes. Why does wisdom matter? Why should we seek it?

What are the dangers of living a foolish life under the sun? Well, here it all is. Right here in these three verses we continue in verse or chapter ten, verse 12, and it says this. The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil.

Madness. A fool multiply his words, though no man knows what is to be. And who can tell him what will be after him? The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city. The Solomon continues, in talking about what we might call the fruit of foolishness, or the fruit of wisdom and the fruit of foolishness.

He focuses on speech, but then he also talks about toil. So the actions that we live out, verse 15, the toil of a fool wearies him, because he thinks he's on the way to a destination, or to the city, or to whatever it is he believes that he's walking towards, only to find out that when he gets there, he goes to grab it, and it's like vapor that slips through his fingers.

And so it frustrates him and wearies him because his work is for not. But then he focuses on before that he focuses on speech and he talks about the power of foolish speech, which we could also, I think, equate with actions at the same time. But he goes as far to say that the speech of a fool will consume him, and the next verse after that begins to flesh out what that might look like and what we get.

The picture of really is this downward spiral of how foolish words begin to consume somebody and build in somebody's life. Foolish actions are the same way. Think about it this way, and in the end, he says, you get to this place of evil madness. Now, I don't want to call anybody in here like an evil mad man or mad woman, but I would say probably that we can relate to a situation where our speech or our behavior has gotten out of hand and gotten into a downward spiral.

Right. Think about this. Maybe you've gossiped about somebody or said something harmful to about somebody behind their back. And I know that would never happen in here. So you've got to use your imagination right? You use your imagination. Let's say that happens one day and you say this to so-and-so, and then they go and they tell that person what you said about them.

That person confronts you and you don't want to admit it. So you lie about what you said. No, I never said that. I never said those things. And then you go and hunt down so-and-so after you've got something now, lied about your gossiping and you got words of anger for so-and-so. I can't believe you said that. I can't believe you told this person what I said that was supposed to be.

Just read between you and me. And then they return words of anger, and before you know it, you're in a full fledged argument, that phrase or maybe and severs that relationship. And before you know it,

words have built on words, and foolish words have built on foolish words. And you're in a downward spiral that looks like evil madness in some ways.

We see that happen all the time in our world with words get nastier and nastier and sometimes turn into violence. We know that throughout history, world leaders have in some cases led nations to the brink of war or even into war because of a war of words. In fact, many historians believe World War One actually started because of a breakdown in diplomatic messaging, which is just a fancy way of saying their foolish words got out of control.

So the world went to war. And the question that's being the question in all of this, though, that is, is being begged to be asked, is what is it that makes speech foolish and what is it that makes it wise? Is it what we say? Is it the words that we say? Is it how we say it? Maybe you've been told before, especially if you're married.

It's not what you said. It's how you said it. Well, there's certainly wisdom that we can use in those things, but I don't think this is what Solomon is getting at. Ultimately, he's getting at really the nature of why we say what we say or why we do what we do. That it comes from the heart, comes from a foolish or a wise heart.

Take a look at Ecclesiastes chapter 11 and verse one. He says this cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it. After many days. Give a portion to seven or even to eight for you, not for you know not what disaster may happen on the earth. If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth.

And if a tree falls to the shore, to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. He who observes the wind will not so, and he who regards the clouds will not reap. So this section begins in the first two verses, with kind of a strange metaphor, and then a figure of speech right behind it.

And both of these things are actually saying the same thing. There's parallelism that's happening here. And the first metaphor is, is basically saying when it says bread go out into the water, it's picturing daily bread or basic necessities. And when it's essentially saying is that with everything in our lives, we should live open handedly, that even down to the daily bread, that would be our daily necessity.

Everything. Like we should live in such a way that we're willing to cast it all out or hold it open handedly, everything in our lives. And it's not just material things, it's everything. And in verse two, he backs it up and he says, give to a portion of seven, which is seven, of course, in the Bible represents completeness or the whole thing.

So he says, give the whole thing, be willing to give the whole thing even to an eight, even to the point of eight, or a portion of eight. Right? Which is hyperbole of saying even more than you have. Now the question is, why would he say this? And what's the point? Second half of verse two tells us why he says, he says this for you know, you do not know what disaster may happen on the earth.

Now I want you to think about that for a minute. Consider this. What he's saying seems backwards from conventional wisdom, right? We're told, save for a rainy day hoard, so that you make sure that when disaster comes that you don't know when it will come, or when that rainy day will come, that you have enough to get you through that disaster.

But Solomon is saying exactly the opposite. Live with open hands. Live with a perspective of having open hands and give it all. Because you know that a disaster may come at any moment. Which is a strange way to put it. But he says it's when it's when certainty is in place usually that we believe that generous generosity takes place.

But he says, in the midst of uncertainty in every situation, you can be generous. Now, it's not only uncertainty that the author highlights here, but also our lack of control of things. The farmer, he says the farmer can't control when it rains or how much it rains. When the clouds fill with water, it rains. And when a tree falls in the forest, it may fall to the north or the south.

But wherever it falls, there it lies. We don't have control over where it falls, what it falls on top of. And he uses these very simple examples from creation to say, look, even these things are out of your hands and out of your control. Which is a humbling thought, especially for those of us who believe that we're masters of our own destinies.

And that's the idea behind this. So the question is, how is the lack of control in the midst of an uncertain world something that would encourage us to live in this way, can encourage us to live with open hands and giving hands? Well, he continues in verse five to tell us why this is actually good news, as you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child.

So you do not know the work of God who makes everything in the morning. So your seed and at the evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper this or that, or whether both alike will be good. Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. And so he's just talked about examples from nature that we can't control.

It rains when it rains. It rains when clouds fill with water. Trees fall where they may north or south. And then he brings it home to something more personal and intimate. So just as those things are out of

your control, it's very self-evident that your life and your being and you coming into being was completely out of your control, right?

God didn't come to you and say, hey, when do you want to be born? What do you want to look like? What kind of family do you want to be born to? Or do you want to live? How tall do you want to be? If that was the case, I'd be six foot four on a spring training field somewhere in baseball right now.

But I said, I'm here with you, which is actually even better when you look at it. But here's the thing. The point is, is that God is control, is in control of it all. He's even going in control on a daily reminder of that fact is that he has created us to be who he, who we are according to his will.

And so, just like we don't understand that, we don't understand the way that God is bringing everything according to his his plan and purpose. And so there's a focus here. If God is sovereign creator, the one who creates according to his own will and sustains creation and sovereignly rules over it as well, and we can make a list a mile long of the things that we don't understand in creation.

But nothing is more personal than the fact that we can't even control our own creation. How we live, and how we come to being. And so what should be our response to this? Well, Solomon says, engage in sowing. In other words, live life, work, start projects, engage in activity knowing that some things will succeed and be like you want them to be, and other things will fail and will end up not like you wanted them to be.

But here's the point in all of this he's describing living a life of freedom. And he says, live life. Anyway, because of the freedom of knowing that you are not in control, you catch that. The message here is live life freely because you are not in control. And again, if you really think about this, we might notice that this is at odds with conventional wisdom because everything in our world tells us the more control you have, the freer you can be.

Right? Control brings freedom. The more control you have over your environment, your resources, your livelihood, the more freedom you have and you may hear people say, well, money doesn't always bring happiness, but at least it brings freedom. And that's probably true. In fact, it is true in some practical ways in our world. If you have money, you have the more freedom to do what you want.

You can retire earlier, you can live comfortably, you can go on vacation whenever you want. You can give away your money to whoever you want to help, whoever you want. But if we've been paying attention to this book so far, we should know that Solomon is not talking about that kind of freedom. He's not talking about freedom under the sun in this world.

He's talking about freedom above the sun, the freedom that matters, the freedom that will carry on after this world passes away and after your life passes from this earth. And so how do we make sure we have that freedom? I think one of the places that we can look at to glean some practical advice for that and guidance is in the book of James.

James chapter four, verses 13 through 15, say this come now, you who say today or tomorrow will go into such and such a town, and spend a year there, and trade and make a profit. And yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Instead you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that. Now this is a familiar passage for many of us. I have to admit, for a long time, every time I would come to this passage, I would think of it as so restricting and so legalistic in some ways, because as I as I interpreted it, it was almost like this phrase if the Lord wills was like a magic cloak that I could place over my plans so that God doesn't strike my plans dead.

So if I wanted to go to like, lunch tomorrow with a friend, I would say, we're going to have some pizza. If the Lord wills to make sure that that doesn't get interrupted. That's how legalistic it would get at times. And as far as how I understood it. Instead, what I've come to realize is that James is not adding restriction or burden on us.

When he's saying this. He is actually giving us freedom by changing our perspective in the same way that Solomon is encouraging us to leave freedom in Ecclesiastes, that by giving up our need to control and our need to know things that we aren't meant to know, we experience freedom. Get this to the degree that we are able to turn the need to control and the need to know over to God's capable hands.

We experience freedom in that way. Think about it. There is true freedom in being able to say, I don't know your experience have before somebody ask you something, you feel the burden initially of like, I got to figure this out and then you just say, I don't know. And there's just freedom that comes with that experience. That Lord, as a pastor, it's fun to say, I don't know, sometimes, especially if you're able to trust in the one who does know all things.

You know, for some people, saying I don't know is one of the scariest things they can say because they don't know the one who knows all things, and they feel like I've got to be the be all, end all. Because if I don't know, then nobody's going to know who's going to know if I don't know. But of course, we know the one who has created all things and who has promised to bring all things under his righteous good and sovereign rule for eternity.

And that's how saying I don't know, or even more than that, living a life of, I don't know with that attitude brings true freedom in the end. As we close this morning, I want to give you three key aspects of freedom that I believe are important to embrace in this way and as we live them out, I think we experience more and more of this freedom that God's offering us.

The first one is this know the difference between pride and humility and what those things do in our lives. You see, pride tells us the lie that we need to be in control, and we need to know it all. And we need to be in control of the future of our world, even of our lives. And in Ecclesiastes and James, pride is the evil that causes us to forget God and to operate under the illusion that if I can just gain enough control of my circumstances, I'll finally have freedom.

That is the foolish way of thinking. Under the sun, the wise man is able to recognize his place under his creator, as the one who gives life and holds the future in his hands. And he also knows that that creator is a personal God who has a will for his creation, and that everything in his creation is subject to that will so that he can rest in God.

Number two, thrive in uncertainty. Look, one of the truest things we read today is that you do not know what disaster might happen to you around the corner. That's true for a lot of us. We've experienced that in our lives, but the realization of that should not cause you to be paralyzed, but to live with even more freedom and generosity.

So you can hold. You can hold things, Lucy. Including, as James would say, your own plans because your plans or your money or your limited control over your life does not bring you freedom. Your trust in the certainty of God's goodness and God's generosity is what brings you freedom. And number three, depend on God. In the end, God is sovereignly in control.

We see that over and over again in the book of Ecclesiastes. To such a degree that it seems to be a foundation of wisdom. Biblical wisdom is that in order to be truly, biblically wise and free, we not only agree with the idea that God is sovereign, but we begin to celebrate that in our lives and live it out in a practical way that if God is truly in control of everything, if I really believe that, then I can release my fingers and my white knuckled grip on my need to have control.

And once we get over the pain of prying our fingers off the things that we believe will bring us control in this world, there is great freedom there. And that's what the author of Ecclesiastes wants for us. That's what God Word wants for us in the end, is that we would have freedom and joy in all of these things.

And many of us, of course, would not our heads and say Amen this morning. And of course, that's a good start. Yeah, that's a good start. It's important, but at the same time, we're not to leave it there.

The question of whether or not we truly believe this is seen in the way that we live our lives. Does our life show the kind of wisdom?

Are we walking down the path of the wise man? And it's an important question to ask, because, look, the reality of it is that none of us are fully walking down the path of the wise man. There are places, pieces in our hearts, pieces of our minds, that are wandering down that foolish path. There are things in our lives that are wandering down that foolish path, threatening to take our hearts with it.

And maybe you aren't sure what that might be in your life, so I'd encourage you to take an inventory. My thought life. Is it my speech? Is it my trust in things in this world that I shouldn't be trusting in? Is it my money, my job, my family, my addiction? Is it pain in my marriage? Is it my pride?

Is it my fear or my hatred? And on and on and on. But here's the thing. I believe that if you ask the Holy Spirit, he will be faithful to reveal those things to you. So as we close this morning, the reality is, as we see what God reveals to us by His Spirit, we need to be willing to give those things over so we can live more fully with him.

Because, look, that's what you're going to be doing for eternity anyway. Might as well start it now, right? That's the calling of Ecclesiastes to live the life over the sun while you're living the life under the sun. Let's pray. Lord, we ask this morning, just as Solomon asked so many years ago, Lord, would you give us wisdom? We admit that in so many ways we don't know how to come out, how to how to how to walk out, how to make the first step.

Sometimes. And Lord, we ask that you would help us to see in which ways our hearts, our minds might be wondering. We are mindful of the fact that you've told us this morning that the fool and the heart of a fool, the nature of the heart of foolishness, is that it disguises itself very well, and it causes us to celebrate thinking that we are wise, when in reality we're acting like fools.

And so, Lord, we ask for your truth spirit. We ask that you would do your work and that we would be faithful to listen. We'd be humble enough to realize that we don't know it all. And it's okay to say, I don't know. As we're bowed at the feet of the one who does know.

So, Lord, we ask that you would give us wisdom and insight into our hearts and give us the faith to turn and walk the path of the wise man.

And Lord, we thank you for your goodness towards us in every way. We thank you for Your Word that is living and active. And because it's living and active, one of the things that it does is.

Mine into our hearts deeply. And so, Lord, thank you for that gift. We pray these things in Jesus name.

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