

# Leaving Behind the Fruit of Our Labor

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

In the book of Ecclesiastes, the wise man spoke of the futility of life “under the sun.” One of the reasons he saw this as futile was that he would leave the fruit of his labor to someone else. The one receiving it could squander it or act foolishly with it. This caused the wise man to despair. This raises the question: What should happen with our wealth and/or possessions when we die? Are there principles and instructions in God’s word that will help us? Yes, and we will consider some points here.

## The Reality of Death and Our Possessions

- We first need to understand that death is a reality (Hebrews 9:27)
- We also know that we cannot take our possessions with us when we go (1 Timothy 6:7)
- Our possessions also cannot help us beyond this life (Matthew 16:26) – they can be useful here (Ecclesiastes 10:19; Proverbs 10:15), but that is their limit; therefore, we must not trust in riches (1 Timothy 6:17)
- While we are here, we are free to choose how we use our wealth/possessions (Acts 5:1-4) – not without consequences or accountability before God, but free to choose

## A Worldly Perspective About This

- When the wise man spoke of leaving the fruit of his labor to one who would come after him, he said it was “vanity” (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19) – why?
- One reason was that the recipient may be “a fool” (Ecclesiastes 2:19) – he could squander it; because he did not work for it, he would not appreciate it (Ecclesiastes 2:21); this happens all the time; it happened with the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-14)
- Another reason was that he was focused on things “under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:17, 18, 19, 20, 22) – this book is about the futility of life when we fail to look beyond this life (Ecclesiastes 1:1-4, 14; 2:11); but by the end of the book, the wise man recognized his purpose (Ecclesiastes 12:13); this changes everything

## A Heavenly Perspective About This

- We know we are going to pass from this life – whatever we have will be left behind; we are to do good and share (1 Timothy 6:18); this is especially true in view of our departure from this life (1 Timothy 6:19, 7)
- Just as we are free to choose how we use our wealth/possessions (Acts 5:4), we are free to make arrangements for what happens to them when we are gone – what would that include?
- Taking care of our family – this is our primary responsibility (1 Timothy 5:8; cf. Matthew 15:3-6), even past this life (2 Corinthians 12:14); we are to think of those who

will come after us; this is what the righteous man seeks to do (Proverbs 13:22); this exhibits selflessness, diligence, and stewardship

- Leaving something for the Lord – we do this in life (1 Corinthians 16:1-2); even past this life, we can honor the Lord from our wealth (Proverbs 3:9)
- Leaving something for good works – we do this now as we have opportunity (Galatians 6:10); we are limited now by having to not put ourselves in need (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:8); but once we are gone, we do not have our needs to consider anymore; so that could provide an opportunity to make arrangements to use our wealth for good

## **Conclusion**

- Whatever we have in this life is a blessing from God – we want to be good stewards and do good
- Part of this will involve deciding what to do with our blessings after we are gone – make arrangements so that these blessings can honor God and bring glory to Him