



KIAMA ANGLICAN  
CHURCHES

## **Remember Your Creator**

**Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**

**Sermon – Zac McCann**

**13 September 2020**

You know when I was first given this passage to preach on, I was pretty worried. Who am I, a 25 year old, to get up here and talk about life, ageing and death? And as I prepped for this, I became more and more aware that I totally lacked that sage-like wisdom you get when speaking to mature folk.

But it was encouraging for me, and hopefully for you as well, to know that all authority rests in God's inspired Word...that the power to save and transforms our lives comes solely from his spoken Word and the work of the Spirit.

So as we begin to open the passage, how about I pray that God might lead us to him?

Heavenly Father, we desire to know you more. Give us ears to hear your message clearly and hearts that are ready to live for you.

I want you to imagine there is a bank account that each morning gives you \$86,400 to spend. It's yours to use however you like. The only catch is that the left over money in the account doesn't roll over. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use.

How would you use the money?

Think of the holidays you could have! The cars you could buy! The houses you could live in! I bet the Youth Group skate crew would be eating at Red Rooster every night.

Whatever you'd spend the money on I think we could all agree that each of us would make sure to spend it all!!! You'd be silly not to.

Would you be surprised to know that each of us has such a bank account? Its name is 'time'... Every morning, it gives you 86,400 seconds to use. Every night it writes off whatever you didn't spend. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. Whatever you didn't use, is your loss.

What would you do with your time?

In this life there are many things that we can spend our time on. I really love surfing, going bushwalking, drinking coffee, and probably watching way too much Netflix.

But life is fleeting, our bodies are ever ageing and all, ultimately, breaking down. So, what is the best use of our time?

Today as we explore the Teacher's final remarks, we are going to unpack what to do with our time, the nature of life and the ultimate end for all under the sun.

And if you forget everything I say today, please just remember this. The best thing you can do with your time is to 'remember your Creator'.

Well if you've got your Bible open, we are starting in verse 1 where the Teacher opens his final statement with, 'Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come.'

Throughout the book the Teacher has always referred to God as God. But here his language shifts. He uses the word 'Creator'.

Initially 'Creator' evokes in my mind passages like John 1, Romans 1, Colossians 1...and all the imagery of the hope found in Christ.

But as we read, we need to remember that the Teacher does not fully understand God's plan for salvation as we do today. We need to ask, what did 'Creator' mean to the Teacher? And, as lecturer at Moore College, George Athas, points out, the word 'Creator' in Hebrew sounds exactly the same as the word 'Grave'.

Let me try my best to pronounce the words and you try and tell me the difference.

Creator – Bor'eyka

Grave - Boreka

There isn't a lot of difference. The Teacher is using a play on words. That yes, God is Creator. He is the God who spoke and all of creation came into being. And yes, he is the God who controls the Grave. He is the one who appoints the time for all men to die. God is sovereign over all things. Over creation, over life, and over death. And so, young man... 'Remember your Creator'.

We may not be able to make sense of why things happen. To see the meaning behind certain events. To understand why God allows some things to take place, but not others. That the wicked prosper and the righteous die early.

No matter what we do, what we say, what we think, what we cannot understand...God is still God and we are not.

He is the Creator, the Author, the one in control over everything. And we are to spend our time remembering him.

I remember when I was a kid and trying to learn my timetables. I always found 7 the hardest. In order to help me remember them mum, put a big print out sheet behind the toilet door so I would see them every day.

If we turn our Bible to Deuteronomy 6, my mum's method isn't too far off God's. In Deuteronomy 6 verse 6 God commands Israel to:

*"Write the commandments of God in your hearts. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates."*

In light of these verses, remembering God should be a constant thing, it should be never ceasing. What we also see is that remembering is intentional and active. It involves a transformation of how we view the world.

When you see a rainbow, remind your children of the promises God has made to the world. When you eat a good meal, praise God for his creation. Before you draw your next breath, remember that God is the one who freely gives it.

In light of this, every opportunity is a chance to worship and serve our Creator. Remembering your Creator, is the setting aside of yourself and giving all of your life, all of your future, and all of your opportunities to God. To spend your whole life acknowledging that God is God and we are not. He is the one who is sovereign over all creation, not us... And praise be to God for that!

And when are we meant to remember our Creator? In the days of our youth.

Going back to Deuteronomy 6 in verse 5 we read:

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”*

God’s people Israel are called to give their all to the Lord. The best of what they have to him.

Do you see this avocado? It looks quite nice doesn’t it?!

Well how about this one? Not so good right?

Which one would you rather have on toast?

And as we think about our own lives, what are we giving to God?

Are you giving him the best of your heart? The best of your soul?

The best of your strength? Or are you delaying, thinking that in the future we will be in a better position?

If remembering our Creator is the best use of our time, we should give be best of our energy towards it.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.

For the young, it's a rather encouraging word. But it could as be a pit of a prod. For the elderly, maybe this brings you great joy, knowing that from your youth you have given your all to God. Maybe for others it is a disappointing reminder of what could have been. This is how God's people we are meant to spend their time.

In a world full of inconsistency, events that we cannot fathom or make sense of, wicked prospering and righteous deeds being swept under the rug...the Teacher reminds us to breath, to take a step back and remember that God is in control. He is sovereign, we are not.

But any positives that may have arisen from the first 2 verses are quickly erased as the Teacher moves to describe the nature of life and the ultimate end for all under the sun. He calls them 'the days of trouble'.

Well if you're scratching your head to know what they are, have a look at verses 2-5. The days of trouble that are ahead of us all, is old age.

The teacher uses metaphorical language to describe this process.

- *The keepers of the house tremble* – that's our arms and hands getting weaker
- *Strong men stoop* – we hunch over
- *Grinders cease because they are few* – our teeth fall out

- *Those looking through the windows grow dim* – our eyesight fails
- *Doors to the street are closed* – you're no longer let outside
- *Sound of grinding fades* – your hearing fails
- *When the almond tree blossoms* – that's your hair going grey
- They say women peak sexually in their thirties... men in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s... But, men, even that too fades over time.

This is the way of all who live under the sun. It doesn't matter how much Shane Warne colours his hair, all of humanity is destined for these days of trouble. Our mind will fail, our limbs will stop working. The day for all of us will come when we find no pleasure in life.

And just when you think it couldn't get any worse...you die. Or, as the teacher would say, *'Your dust returns to the ground where it came, and your spirit returns to God who gave it.'* This isn't a glorious picture of returning to heaven. No, this imagery should call our minds back to Genesis 3 where, because of man's rebellion to God, choosing to discern what was good in our own eyes, God declares to Adam, *"For dust you are and to dust you will return."*



Ageing and death are a result of sin. Just as a rainbow is a reminder of God's promises, so ageing and death are a reminder of the alienation we have made between us and our Creator. As we read in Genesis 6:5: *"Every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart are only evil all the time."* Because of sin we have cut ourselves off from the source of life itself.

We must remember that, for the Teacher, he has no concrete concept of where he's going when he dies, as he states in chapter 3:21. It is a terrifying thing to face death and not know what is after. And a rather sad reality knowing that this life was all for nought.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!"

What was gained remembering our Creator in the days of our youth? Spending all our time, orientating our entire lives around God if at the end we simply cease to exist? If the same fate awaits those who don't Remember their Creator?

It seems a rather futile task in the end and a chasing after the wind. Because in time you will find that life will slip through your fingers. You will simply return to the dust you were taken from.

For the Teacher... death has the final say.

For the Teacher... life sucks, and then you die.

But that is such a BC view of the world isn't it?! Because in and through Jesus everything changes. In the time after Jesus' death, AD, God's vision for his people is fully revealed. This new vision

completely changes how we see our ageing bodies, death and how to use our time.

In 1 Corinthians 15 verse 21 Paul says, *“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”*

Paul says that, through Adam, sin spread to all men. But the Creator himself, Jesus, takes the punishment for our sin on himself, by dying. Jesus does not stay in the grave, as the Creator of the grave, he conquers death in resurrection. In his resurrection, new life is offered to all men for those who believe. For all those who have who faith in the Jesus, they will be saved.

Is your faith in Jesus? Have you let Jesus death cover your sins?

Well for those who have Paul will go onto say in verse 55, *“Death therefore has no victory.”*

So what comes of the teachers faith? Of all those before Jesus who, like the teacher sought to fear God and keep his commandments? Was that all for nought?

No! Hebrews 11:39, when talking about the faith of Abraham, Isaac and David, says this:

*“These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”*

God's plan from the beginning was always to have his people made perfect, through faith, by the grace of Jesus.

So in faith, as God's people remembered their Creator...even though at the time it may have seemed meaningless...it was the exact thing that saved them.

Well what about us today?

Ephesians 2:6 tells us that those who believe are seated with Christ in Heaven. The New Testament paints this picture of heaven being a continuation of the now, but not yet, reality of our lives.

As the Spirit of God works in us, day by day we are being recreated into the image of the Son. In this life we will still have to face death. But in Christ it has no sting. For death is the beginning of life.

So in light of all that Jesus has won for us...how does that change how we use our time?

Well if death has no victory, then remembering our Creator from the days of our youth is vitally important. Each day God gives us 86,400 seconds to use. How will you spend them? Will you spend them setting aside yourself, giving all of your life, all of your future, and all of your opportunities to God? Will you do that now?

One helpful thing to ask and to keep asking ourselves is this...

What I have I done this week that matters in light of eternity?

To close I just want to make one last point. The Teacher was adamant that we should remember our Creator in the days of our youth.

As I showed you this avocado, maybe many of you could relate. You say to yourself, “I am old, what do I have to offer God?” Well in light of eternity let me just say that we are all quite young. 70, 80, 90 years aren’t even a blip in light of eternity. Now is the time to remember your Creator. Now is the time to set aside your life, all of your future, and all of your opportunities to God.

I was reminded of the story Jono told, about the old the man who would come to church and tell jokes to the youth. It wasn’t a heroic feat. Nor was it showy or up the front. But it was intentional. It was an act of discipleship that mattered in light of eternity. Despite the frailty of his body, his actions showed that he was trying to use every opportunity to serve God.

Will you, in light of eternity, and in light of the life that is already yours in Christ...

**REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR in the days of your youth?**