

**Pursuit: Study in Ecclesiastes**  
***“The Necessity of Spiritual Friendship”***  
**Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:16**  
**August 2, 2020 / Pastor Shawn**

<sup>9</sup> Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor; . . .

Ecclesiastes 4:9

**Spiritual Friends:**

**1. Remind us God is \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>16</sup> And I saw something else under the sun:  
In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,  
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

<sup>17</sup> I said to myself,  
“God will bring into judgment  
both the righteous and the wicked,  
for there will be a time for every activity,  
a time to judge every deed.”

<sup>18</sup> I also said to myself, “As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. <sup>19</sup> Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. <sup>20</sup> All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. <sup>21</sup> Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?” <sup>22</sup> So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?

Ecclesiastes 3:16-22

**2. Remind us God is \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>1</sup> Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed— and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter. <sup>2</sup> And I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. <sup>3</sup> But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-2

**3. Confront our Sin by:**

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2

**WE JUDGE OTHERS BY THEIR ACTIONS;  
WE JUDGE OURSELVES BY OUR INTENTIONS.**

**(a) exposing our \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>4</sup> Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind. <sup>5</sup> Fools fold their hands and ruin themselves. <sup>6</sup> Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind.

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6

**(b) prioritizing \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>7</sup> Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: <sup>8</sup> There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. “For whom am I toiling,” he asked, “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?” This too is meaningless — a miserable business!

Ecclesiastes 4:7-8

**(c) challenging our \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>13</sup> It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice. <sup>14</sup> Such a youth could rise from poverty and succeed. He might even become king, though he has been in prison. <sup>15</sup> But then everyone rushes to the side of yet another youth who replaces him. <sup>16</sup> Endless crowds stand around him, but then another generation grows up and rejects him, too. So it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

**4. Provide us \_\_\_\_\_.**

<sup>9</sup> Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. <sup>10</sup> If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. <sup>11</sup> Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? <sup>12</sup> A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

**Ecclesiastes 3:16 — 4:16**  
**Discussion Questions**

1. What was your “A-Ha” from Sunday’s message? Why?
2. Of the issues Solomon identifies in this section (Ecclesiastes 3:16 - 4:16) which one(s) do you identify with most? Why?
3. What are the “benefits” Pastor Shawn outline (based on Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:16) of having a spiritual friend in your life? Which benefit(s) do you need most right now in your life? Why?
4. Have you known people who bailed out when something bad happened to them? Did they come back?
5. Do you have friends that will stick with you in tough times? What forces keep you from forming real relationships? How can you overcome them?
6. How do our expectations of God lead us to disappointment with Him? How do those expectations affect you? How might having a spiritual friend help you?
7. Gary Thomas in his book “Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God,” describes 9 different spiritual styles or “sacred pathways” we all tend to follow in best connecting with God. Understanding your “pathway” along with the pathways of those around you can deepen spiritual friendships. Here are the 9 pathways. Which one(s) do you most resonate with? Identify 3-4 others within PRCC who share this “pathway preference” and work on getting to know them better.
  1. Nature: Loving God outdoors
  2. Sensates: Loving God with the senses
  3. Traditionalists: Loving God through ritual & symbol
  4. Ascetics: Loving God in solitude & simplicity
  5. Activist: Loving God through confrontation & social justice
  6. Caregivers: Loving God by loving others
  7. Enthusiasts: Loving God with celebration
  8. Contemplatives: Loving God through personal adoration
  9. Intellectuals: Loving God with the mind

*(If you'd like to take a Sacred Pathway Self-Assessment, please contact the church office [[office@pasochurch.com](mailto:office@pasochurch.com)] and request the Assessment)*