

Lessons From The House of Mourning

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 July 2026

Preacher: Dov

[0:00] Today we're going to be continuing in our series in Ecclesiastes. We're in Ecclesiastes 7 verse 2. We are doing a deep dive, zoom in, on one verse.

And the message, the title for today's message is Lessons from the House of Mourning. Lessons from the House of Mourning. And the main idea, and like I said earlier, we are going to just cannonball into the deep end of the pool this morning, the main idea for today's message is that death forces us to face reality and those who lay it to heart become wise.

Death forces us to face reality and those who lay it to heart become wise. And don't we as a church want to live wisely. So, church family, if you could do anything this afternoon, if you could have an ideal Sunday afternoon, what would you want to do? Would you be interested in getting lunch with some friends? Maybe going to someone's pool? Maybe catching Bobby Witt playing a Royals game? How about taking a nap? How many of us would choose to go to a funeral?

Not necessarily the activity you'd envision for an ideal Sunday afternoon, but, talk with me. Kohelet, the teacher of Ecclesiastes, he's going to drop some wisdom on us this morning.

And he's going to argue something a bit strange, maybe a bit counterintuitive. He's going to instruct us that it's better to go to a house of mourning than to a house of feasting.

[2:00] And what does he mean by that? What does he mean by that? That's what we're going to be talking about this morning. Think about it. Funerals can be incredibly perspective-altering.

You know, for me, I remember my grandmother's funeral, my grandma Lee. I've talked about her before. I remember my grandfather standing on the stage next to my uncle Gary, who gave my grandfather's eulogy for my grandmother because my grandfather just wouldn't be able to get through it. Because of the mourning and the loss. And yes, the gratitude for his wife of decades. And I remember that moment. I remember the sobriety of sitting there listening to the theology. And how it cut through the frivolity of life and put much into perspective.

That being said, there's nothing like a funeral to sober you up. Funerals force us to face reality. They remind us of some key truths about God and life and eternity. They remind us there's an end to our time here on earth. They remind us of one day, we will meet our creator. And they provide reflection time.

And what's truly important in life. So for those reasons and more, thinking about funerals and the end of our lives and the brevity of life can really be a fruitful exercise. And it's in that vein today that we're going to be thinking about death and dying in funerals through looking at Ecclesiastes 7.2.

[3:55] And we're going to take the advice of Kohelet, the teacher, and we're going to lay this truth to heart. So let's read the passage. It's brief. It's one verse. Let me read it to you.

It's better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting. For this is the end of all mankind. And the living will lay it to heart. Dear God, would you bless the preaching? Holy Spirit, would you come now?

Would you anoint my words? Would you bless the preaching of your word? All right. So now, in considering Ecclesiastes 7.2, let's first consider the context of this passage.

We are back in the book of Ecclesiastes. We're continuing our series in Ecclesiastes. Let's remind ourselves that Ecclesiastes is a book about life.

Life in a fallen and therefore frequently confusing world. Ecclesiastes is a book seeking to make meaning out of a world that sometimes can appear meaningless.

[5:08] It's a book that reminds us frequently of the tragic reality of the fall and its implications in daily life. It reminds us that ultimately all of life makes sense only in the fear of, and the presence, and the light of God.

That kuramdea in the face of God, ultimately everything falls into place. So that's where we find ourselves in the Bible today, in the book of Ecclesiastes.

And today's text is one of those texts that will help us to remember and find meaning in it all. So let's dive in. Let me remind you of the text. It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.

So to start, let's consider the house of mourning versus the house of feasting. Now, I'm a church potluck guy. I don't know if anyone else here loves church potlucks, but I love a good church potluck.

These afternoons are filled with friendship, and laughter, and connection, and story sharing, and of course, good food. Think about it. What do you see, hear, and taste at a church potluck?

[6:33] You see friends spending time together. You see church members conversing. You experience warmth, and fellowship, and connection over life.

And you taste some great mac and cheese, maybe some smoked queso, maybe some pulled pork. These are rich times that build bonds, memories, friendship, and spiritual strength.

Now, let's contrast that with the sights, and sounds, and tastes of a funeral.

At a funeral, you see people mourning, comforting, and yes, for believers, celebrating the passage of a loved one into the presence of Jesus Christ.

You hear a message that reminds you of the finitude of life. Conversations about memories of the departed individual. Sometimes cries, sobbing, weeping.

[7:36] Sometimes laughter, gratitude, and praises. purpose, a more meaningful one, one that we should lay to our hearts. There's something in the way that God created us. Yes, while politics can fill us with joy, funerals fill us with something deeper. At a funeral, there's a loss, a hole, a cutting, the departure of a loved one.

At a funeral, we're more bare, raw, exposed before the Lord and before each other. And so we seek a deeper comfort from the Lord at a funeral. Essentially, a house of mourning is better than a house of feasting, because a house of mourning reminds us of some key eternal realities, including the end of our lives. So the question comes, why is it good to consider the gravity of life?

I thought we'd come to church to be built up, edified, encouraged. Death can appear simply to be a loss or an end, right? Well, the scripture encourages us to lay the wisdom of considering death to heart. Ecclesiastes 7.2 says, lay this to heart if you want to be wise.

And we want to be wise. Let's practice it. So thinking about death serves a couple of key purposes for us. Two major points for the message today. Two major points. First, considering death puts life into perspective. Considering death puts life into perspective. Second, considering death revokes us to be increasingly grateful for Christ. So let's consider the first one. Let's put life into perspective. Let's look at Luke 12, 16 to 21, the parable of the rich fool. Jesus tells us, our Lord Jesus tells us to consider this, the land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, what shall I do? For I have nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I will do this. I will tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you. The things you prepared, whose will they be?

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. So a few observations from the story. First, there are people in this life who live for this life.

[11:06] Who live for this reality. People like this forget. They forget that their lives have an ending point. And they forget that they'll be called into account for how they used their lives.

A second observation. Life is finite. We don't get all the time that we want here on earth. Rather, God can call us to himself at any moment. At any moment, he can call us to himself and require our souls of us. Third, this moment, this moment will bring instant clarity. Instant clarity.

It's at this moment that we'll see the end for which we're living. We'll have the clarity. Whether we're living for this world, and ultimately that that was a waste, or if we were living for the Lord. And when we remember that our souls can be required of us at any moment, yes, there will be a soberness about us.

Not a somberness because we have hope and joy in Jesus. But yes, a soberness and a seriousness that we need to be investing our resources into pursuits that will bear fruit more and more for the Lord.

It reminds us of the excess time on YouTube. It reminds us of the lack of using our gifts to serve others. It reminds us of the wasteful spending that will be called to account.

[12:47] It can sober us. So the question is, are we living wisely? Are we living foolishly? Are we building bigger barns for ourselves, investing our time into the things of this world?

Or are we investing our time into the Lord? Now friends, if the sermon ended here, when we all just leave discouraged.

Because every one of us has wasted time. Every one of us has built bigger barns. Every one of us has failed to be as rich towards God as we should be. Which means that we need more than wisdom.

We need a Savior. And thank God. Thank God that he has provided that Savior. And praise God that there is so much evidence in this church that God has provided Jesus Christ, that Savior, for us personally.

people who show up early to play piano on Sunday. People who change diapers unto the Lord.

People who meet up for coffee to study God's word and apply it to their lives.

[14:09] At the same time, let us message to add just a little bit of sobriety to our daily pursuits. May we open our eyes each day grateful for the opportunity to know and honor and follow Jesus Christ for one more day.

May we close our eyes grateful for the day we just had knowing that we may just not wake up again in the morning. And may each moment in between be an opportunity to invest all of our time and talents and treasure into things that will bear fruit for Jesus.

So, thinking about death puts life into perspective. Second, thinking about death provokes us to be increasingly grateful for Christ.

Now, if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, I don't want you to hear this merely as a lesson about living wisely. the most important question is whether you are ready to meet God.

And the good news is that Jesus Christ came precisely for people who are not ready to make us ready. My message to you today, if you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, is to turn and trust and follow Him.

[15:41] But for those of us who do love, know, and follow Jesus, truly death can be less of a scary, mysterious phenomenon. And rather, it can be three things.

Number one, it can be a changing of clothes, a taking of a rest, and a commencement of the full enjoyment of God. Now, what in the world could I mean by those things?

Let me unpack that for you. Look at 1 Corinthians 15, 53. Let's consider a few scriptures. First of all, for this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. What is death? Death is going into your bedroom after a long day's work and changing into different clothes. More comfortable clothes.

Clean clothes. Truly glorious clothes. It's taking off the imperishable, dying, decaying, mortal body and putting on the clothes of immortality.

[16:46] Who here would turn down a body that doesn't get sick? You can't bust your ankle. Or a body that wouldn't be wracked by inflammation.

Or a brain that wouldn't face dementia. Or a body that couldn't catch croup. Who would turn down a body that will live forever healthy, joyful, satisfied, and whole in the presence of Jesus Christ.

When you think of death, remember that for the Christian, it is a changing of clothes from mortal to immortal.

and that's all because of Jesus. And for that, we can be grateful. Now second, death for the Christian, and I'm speaking to the Christians, death can be the taking of a rest.

Look at 1 Corinthians 15 20, but in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. The Bible loves to speak about death as the taking of a rest, of falling asleep.

[18:07] So consider, for the guys who took part in the MRF a couple months back, what did you want to do when that was done? Yes, eat a great hearty meal.

Yes, band it up your blistered hands. But yes, maybe right after, maybe a little bit after, didn't you want to take a rest? Didn't you want to just take a rest, lie down on the couch for a minute, and relax?

Friends, life can be a MRF. Life can be stressful, strenuous, and stretching.

It can exhaust us, pull us in different directions. It can, at times, disorient us. And while Sunday afternoon naps are great, just consider how great our eternal rest will be.

Rest from sin, rest from temptation, rest from relational hurt, rest from mistakes, rest from self-inflicted pain, and pain inflicted by others.

[19 : 23] Eternal life will be utterly meaningful, utterly glorious, utterly restful to our souls, while we're busy with the things of heaven, which will not be boring.

So when you think of death, because of Christ, remember that it will be a rest. So if you're tired today, physically, spiritually, emotionally, know that a rest is coming because of Jesus.

And so be grateful for Christ. All right, third, Christians know that because of Christ, death is a commencement of the full enjoyment of God.

Look at Philippians 1. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I'm to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose, I cannot tell.

I'm hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and to be with Christ, for that is far better. Now, yes, I want to be sensitive.

[20 : 37] Death can be painful and scary, but yes, death is also the commencing of the eternal happiness of the enjoyment of God.

Think about commencements. Typically, they occur after a long, hard-fought pursuit of a significant goal, like a high school or college graduation. They mark a transition, a movement from one phase to the next.

They mark an end, but truly they mark a beginning. They are commencing something new. So what does death commence for the believer? Death commences the direct presence of God.

Death commences reunion with your loved ones in Christ who have gone before you. Death commences life in an immortal, glorious body. Death commences new adventures that will all help us to know and love Jesus increasingly, now and forever.

So friends, when you think of death, remember that because of Christ, it is a commencement ceremony. It's starting you off on your eternal enjoyment of God.

[21 : 54] So for that, be grateful for Christ. Remember, apart from Christ, what would be commencing for you. Thank God for Jesus.

God so this all begs the question, it's better to go to the house of mourning than the house of feasting if we remember this, if we remember to our end and to lay it to heart.

How do we do this daily? How do we do this practically? How do we stay sober? How do we stay mindful? How do we, with Jonathan Edwards, think much on all occasions of our own dying and the common circumstances which attend death?

We may live fruitfully unto the Lord. I've got three praxes for you that the Bible suggests and these will change your life daily, incrementally.

the first, stay sober. Think about it, the scriptures are a wonderful cup of sobering coffee after the hangover of a day of work.

[23 : 07] I'll say it again, the scriptures are a wonderful cup of sobering coffee after the hangover of a day of work. The scriptures are a splash on the face of water to remind you that God is God, that you are not, that life is consequential, that Jesus is glorious, that sin is real, and that so is heaven.

So, stay sober by reading God's word every day. Guys, Satan loves to distract us, does he not?

He loves to intoxicate us with the potential mirth of career and family and entertainment and Apple watches and just stuff. Every day we need to hear from God.

We need to abide in God. We need to splash ourselves with cold water, drink something that will sober us, hear something that will help us to remember the Lord.

God's I just cannot stress this enough. If you're not regularly reading the Bible, then you are in danger of worldly!

[24 : 25] worldly intoxication. We're in danger of that enough, even when we are reading the Bible. What happens when we let go of the rudder of life?

So, stay sober by abiding in God's word. Second, take every chance you get to attend a funeral.

I was talking to my dad a couple weeks back about this mess, preparing for it, and he mentioned to me just how helpful it has been in his life to attend funerals, and how meaningful it has been for him that he always learns something really important at a funeral.

As we've spoken about, funerals are sobering, meaningful, significant, helpful reminders of great, glorious, eternal truths.

At a funeral, it's as if God is standing above the preacher looking you square in the face saying, remember me.

[25 : 34] Remember that I'll require your soul from you, maybe sooner than you think, consider how you are living, and trust in Christ. So when providence gives you the opportunity, don't avoid funerals, but embrace them.

All right, and third, is application, live on the precipice, meaning live on the precipice of eternity. Live every day, remember that eternity is only a breath away.

So consider, what do you want Jesus to find you doing when he requires your soul of you? Do you want Jesus, when he returns and calls you to himself, to find you complaining, or gossiping, or disrespecting someone, or bitterly yelling at your kid?

Don't you want him to find you writing a note of appreciation to your wife? Or sitting at Costco over some ice cream with your kid, talking, fellowshiping?

Or typing away humble and respectful emails at your job that you're working so hard to provide for your family at? friends, use this morning's message as a fresh reminder, a fresh rededication to love God, to be about his business, and to connect everything in your lives to him.

[27 : 07] To live on the precipice of eternity. Consider Hebrews 12. Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And in living in that way, we will live wise lives, laying the scripture to heart. Lives when Jesus returns or calls us home, he will smile, and smile, and we will just be grateful for him.

we've covered a bit of ground this morning. We've considered how, while potlucks are good times, the house of mourning is just so much more meaningful.

We've considered how, while potlucks, we've considered how remembering death sobers us, reminds us of eternal truths. We've considered how remembering death can make us grateful for Christ.

We've considered ultimately for how the Christian, death can be a changing of clothes, the beginning of a rest, and the commencement of an eternal enjoyment of the presence of God.

[28 : 36] So let us every day find ways to remind ourselves of the truths of a funeral, that God is God, that our lives are finite, and that we should connect everything in our lives to him.

In that, we will live just a bit wiser, just a bit more meaningfully, and truly, just a bit more pleasing to the Lord.

For death forces us to face reality, and those who lay it to heart become wise. Ultimately, for God's glory, and our joy.

Let's pray. Dear God, we praise you because you are wise, and good, and loving.

Lord, we thank you that you speak to every aspect of life, including the beginning of our lives, the middle of our lives, and even the end of our lives, and into eternity.

[29 : 47] So we thank you for the full counsel of your word that addresses our hearts, and helps us to stay sober, and mindful of you. So I pray that the seeds that were planted through this message go deep, and bear fruit, ultimately for your glory.

Praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right, now for communion this morning, and truly every Sunday morning, we have a chance to enter a house of mourning, to remind ourselves of a death, of the death that has brought us life.

Every funeral reminds us that someone died. Communion reminds us that someone died, and then walked out of that grave. We will together be proclaiming the Lord's death, but let's also remember that Jesus is not still dead.

Rather, Jesus is truly alive. The death we proclaim this morning, that we remember this death was a temporary one, a lot like ours will be.

His death, a horrific, gut-wrenching, wrath-absorbing, and ultimately sin-atoning. This death lasted for three days, and then after three days, this death, it ended.

[31 : 13] It was over as Christ rose from the grave, conquering death, securing our justification, and earning for us eternal life. What hope.

What hope. So as you take the bread and wine this morning, yes, confess your sin. Receive forgiveness afresh.