

GRADUATING TO HAPPINESS!

Matthew 5:1-12

INTRODUCTION: Well it is time to honor our high school graduates; Arianna and Eric Barancik as they have reached a new milestone in their lives. As they move to the next phase of their lives one of the questions I am sure they are asking is "Will I find fulfillment and success and happiness in this next phase of my life? King Solomon had much to say to us about this subject: Ecclesiastes 6:6. Our Lord Jesus told us that it is not just about how many years you live or how much financial success you gain but how much you honestly enjoyed your life that counts most. True happiness eludes so many people. Solomon tried five different things to find happiness but he was looking in all the wrong places.

I. DEAD ENDS TO HAPPINESS!

- 1.) Learning: Ecclesiastes 1:16-18. Education is important but alone it will not bring true happiness.
- 2.) Happiness through lust: Ecclesiastes 2:19-11. Solomon took whatever he lusted after, but he learned that that leads only to heart ache. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. So many people really believe they can improve on God's plan of one man and one woman for life, but it cannot be done.
- 3.) Solomon tried liquor: Ecclesiastes 2:3. So today people are trying to find happiness through liquor or to escape reality through mind altering drugs. Solomon said it was all vanity.
- 4.) He sought for happiness through labor. Solomon was a true workaholic: Ecclesiastes 2:9. Solomon's work became more important to him than his relationship with God, his family, all 700 of them. Satisfaction is not found in work if that becomes the center of your life.
- 5.) Solomon tried to find happiness through luxury: Ecclesiastes 2:17. With all that Solomon achieved he did not find happiness. 1000, years later another man; Jesus Christ told everyone where they could find true happiness.

II. GOD'S WAY TO HAPPINESS!

- 1.) Get to know God: How happy are those who come to know their need to acknowledge God in their lives: Matthew 5:3. The word "blessed" means "happy." God must be at the center of our lives or the things of life can never satisfy us. True happiness is found always with a living relationship with our God.
- 2.) Trust God! We need to learn to trust our God even when life disappoints us: Matthew 5:4; John 16:33.
- 3.) Trust God to meet your needs! Matthew 5:5.
- 4.) Follow God's instructions: Matthew 5:6. God will satisfy you fully when you are seeking Him and following His leading. God has given us spiritual principles with which to order our lives. Proverbs 3:5-6.
- 5.) Cultivate a forgiving heart! If you want the mercy of God in your life you must extend that to others that are in your life: Matthew 5:7.
- 6.) We must maintain a clear conscience: Matthew 5:8; 1 John 1:9.
- 7.) Build healthy relationships! Matthew 5:9: conflict destroys happiness. As we make peace with others a priority we will learn how to eliminate the strife that conflicts create.
- 8.) Live with eternal perspective! Matthew 5:10-12. Satan will do all he can to keep you from doing the right things and take a bold stand for Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. One day the Bible tells us that God is going to bring judgement on those who don't live with an eternal perspective. Are you moving forward to a great reward in heaven? Mark 8:34-37. Solomon gained the whole world of his time but it profited him nothing! Sin undermines our true happiness both now

and for all eternity. True happiness only comes and stays with us as we put our Lord Jesus at the center of our lives and live for His glory.