**Ecclesiastes 9:3-6**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/eccl/eccl-9/ecclesiastes-93-6/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/eccl/eccl-9/ecclesiastes-93-6/)

*Death is a common fate for all. Even so, there are advantages to life that will be nullified when death finds us. We have a choice to either lament (or deny) death, or to take its inevitability as motivation to make the most of today.*

Solomon now describes *the fate* that *all men* share as *an evil*. One *evil*is that humans live their lives and *afterwards they go to the dead.*The same *fate*awaits the great and the small.

The other is that *the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.*

The word translated *insanity*can also be translated *madness.*It is often said that *insanity*is repeating the same behavior while expecting a different result. When it comes to attempting to control things we can’t control, humans practice *insanity*continuously. We can’t control the decisions of others, but that doesn’t stop us from trying. We can’t stave off death forever, but we often behave as though we are immortal.

Refusing to face reality isn’t our only problem. The *sons of men*refers to the human race. The *sons of men* have *hearts*that are *full of evil.*It has been this way since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden ([Genesis 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+3&t=NASB95)). In fact, after God destroyed the earth because it had filled with violence ([Genesis 6:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+6.11&t=NASB95)), He instituted human government, and gave man the moral authority to take life for life, in order to prevent the earth from filling with violence again ([Genesis 9:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+9.5-6&t=NASB95)).

The Apostle Paul acknowledged his own heart as being full of evil. In [Romans 7:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+7.18&t=NASB95), Paul says:

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.”

And again in 7:21:

“I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.”

What is Paul’s solution? He provides it in 7:25-8:1:

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”*.*

However, although every person shares the same *fate*to *go to the dead,*there is still *hope.*How? Solomon tells us that for*whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope.*This *hope*cannot be for immortality. Solomon has made it clear that death is a common fate. The *hope*is in being *joined with all the* *living.*So long as we are in the land of the living, we still have *hope.*Solomon then uses an analogy to hammer home this point: *surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.*The *lion*represents the king of beasts, while a*dog*is a comparatively lowly animal. So Solomon’s point is that it is better to still be alive than to be a dead king lying in a fancy tomb.

The *living know they will die*. However, the dead are no longer receiving the “wages” (*reward*) of *living life under the sun*. So long as we remain alive, we have the *hope*of the *reward*of life. But we also must grapple with the inevitability of death. There are two responses: the apathy of doom or the joy of opportunity.

We should, therefore, be grateful for every day we live. For once we die, our *memory*will be *forgotten.*We will *no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.*Our opportunity to make choices in life will perish. While we are alive, we can make good choices to *love*or to *hate.*But once we die, our *zeal,*our energy to act, will have *perished.*

The resulting picture is a complicated swirl. Death is both a reprieve and the end of an opportunity. It is a freedom and a loss. Solomon is setting up some of the conclusions of the book by pointing out that life is short, so we need to embrace every moment and live well.

**Biblical Text**:  
**3This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.4For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.5For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.6Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.**