

Ecclesiastes choral reading

CHARACTERS: Teacher, Leader, All

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes/page

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Selected passages from Ecclesiastes 1-12 (HCSB)

TEACHER: Listen to my teaching and be wise.

ALL: Who are you, teacher?

TEACHER: I, the Teacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

ALL: What have you done?

TEACHER: I applied my mind to seek and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven.

ALL: What have you learned?

TEACHER: If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen its edge,

ALL: then one must exert more strength;

TEACHER: However, the advantage of wisdom is that it brings success.

LEADER 2: Because of laziness the roof caves in,

ALL: and because of negligent hands, the house leaks.

TEACHER: Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.

ALL: For if either falls, his companion can lift him up.

LEADER 2: Pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.

TEACHER: Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm.

ALL: but how can one person alone keep warm?

TEACHER: And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him.

ALL: A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

TEACHER: What is lacking cannot be counted.

LEADER 2: What advice do you have about money?

TEACHER: The one who loves money is never satisfied with money,

ALL: and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income.

TEACHER: Better what the eyes see than wandering desire.

ALL: A good name is better than fine perfume,

TEACHER: It is better to listen to rebuke from a wise person

ALL: than to listen to the song of fools

TEACHER: The end of a matter is better than its beginning;

ALL: a patient spirit is better than a proud spirit.

TEACHER: Don't let your spirit rush to be angry,

ALL: for anger abides in the heart of fools.

TEACHER: Wisdom makes the wise man stronger than ten rulers of a city.

ALL: The calm words of the wise are heeded more than the shouts of a ruler over fools.

TEACHER: Wisdom is better than weapons of war,

ALL: but one sinner can destroy much good.

TEACHER: When the sentence against a criminal act is not carried out quickly,

ALL: the heart of people is filled with the desire to commit crime

TEACHER: Although a sinner commits crime a hundred times and prolongs his life,

LEADER 2: yet I know that it will go well with God-fearing people,

ALL: for they are reverent before Him.

TEACHER: However, it will not go well with the wicked,

LEADER 2: and they will not lengthen their days like a shadow,

ALL: for they are not reverent before God.

TEACHER: There is an advantage to wisdom over folly,

ALL: like the advantage of light over darkness.

LEADER 2: Teacher, tell us of the cycles God created on the Earth

TEACHER: The sun rises and the sun sets;

ALL: panting, it returns to its place where it rises.

TEACHER: Gusting to the south, turning to the north, turning, turning, goes the wind,

ALL: and the wind returns in its cycles.

TEACHER: All the streams flow to the sea, yet the sea is never full.

ALL: The streams are flowing to the place, and they flow there again.

TEACHER: If the clouds are full, they will pour out rain on the earth;

LEADER 2: Just as you don't know the path of the wind,

TEACHER: or how bones develop in the womb of a pregnant woman,

ALL: so you don't know the work of God who makes everything.

TEACHER: Remember your Creator in the days of your youth:

LEADER 2: When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is:

TEACHER: Fear God and keep His commands, because this is for all humanity.

ALL: For God will bring every act to judgment,

LEADER 2: including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

TEACHER: God will judge the righteous and the wicked,

ALL: since there is a time for every activity and every work

TEACHER: a time to give birth and a time to die;

ALL: a time to plant and a time to uproot;

TEACHER: a time to kill and a time to heal;

ALL: a time to tear down and a time to build;

TEACHER: a time to weep and a time to laugh;

ALL: a time to mourn and a time to dance;

TEACHER: a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;

ALL: a time to embrace and a time to avoid embracing;

TEACHER: a time to search and a time to count as lost;

LEADER 2: For what is lacking cannot be counted

ALL: a time to keep and a time to throw away;

TEACHER: a time to tear and a time to sew;

ALL: a time to be silent and a time to speak;

TEACHER: a time to love and a time to hate;

ALL: a time for war and a time for peace.

TEACHER: There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and enjoy his work.

LEADER 2: I have seen that even this is from God's hand,

ALL: because who can eat and who can enjoy life apart from God?

TEACHER: To the man who is pleasing in His sight, He gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy,

LEADER 2: but to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and accumulating

ALL: in order to give to the one who is pleasing in God's sight.