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## Wisdom That Stands the Ravages of Time

### Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 11

*Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun. Even those who live many years should rejoice in them all; yet let them remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.*

*Rejoice, young man, while you are young, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Follow the inclination of your heart and the desire of your eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Banish anxiety from your mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.*

*Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain; in the day when the guards of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the women who grind cease working because they are few, and those who look through the windows see dimly; when the doors on the street are shut, and the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low; when one is afraid of heights, and terrors are in the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because all must go to their eternal home, and the mourners will go about the streets; before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher; all is vanity.*

*Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs. The Teacher sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly.*

*The sayings of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings that are given by one shepherd. Of anything beyond*

*these, my child, beware. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*

*The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 11:7-12:14 NRSV)*

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### Reflection and Discussion

- If a friend asked for your advice about building a life so it would bring pleasure at the end- what would you say?
  - How do you react to this picture of old age?
  - What do you think about his analysis and advice?
  - What do you think is the most important perspective here?
  - What do you think is missing here?
  - What would you add?
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## Wisdom Prayer

*Wisdom, permeating creation and informing all peoples, come and bring us the mind of God.*

*Shaper of people, guide us into the ways of true greatness.*

*Bedrock, Sign of community, come to places of instability and root them in realities that nothing can destroy.*

*Key to destiny, unlock our potential and our capacity to befriend and serve others, that we may be spiritual friends amid a needy people.*

*Light-Bringer, illumine places of darkness, despair and disease.*

*True Fulfiller of Desire, harness our deepest longings to your infinite purpose of love.*

*God with Us – the Presence that cannot be taken from us may we live with you and may you live in us forever.*

*For Jesus' sake, Amen.*

*(#85 Celtic Prayers For Life Today Ray Simpson, Kevin Mathew)*



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