

## Learn from Life

Ecclesiastes 4.13

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • July 21, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2019  
Scripture Reader and Reading: Terry Rathbone – First Kings 22.5–8  
Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – No Suggestions

### **Prelude:**

#### **I. I know that you are eager to see the photos and video**

- A. that we took on the trip that four of us made recently to the Middle-East.
- B. I have over 2,200 photos and videos of my only to review,
  - 1. plus what the other three took.
  - 2. However, next Lord's Day I plan to begin showing you some,
    - a) which I will incorporate into sermons
    - b) on subjects that pertain to what I will show you.

#### **II. I plan to present them in one of two ways.**

- A. First, I will show the ones that make a connection with a biblical topic.
- B. Second, I will show the extras at a non-worship time.

#### **III. We left on Wednesday, June 26th and**

- A. returned on Sunday, July 14th at 1.00am in Medford, but
- B. Jennifer arrived without her luggage.
  - 1. She did finally receive it.
  - 2. All of us had arrived in Israel without our luggage, but
    - a) we found out that was our fault.
    - b) I can explain that later.
- C. By the time Kerri and I got home, it was 2.00am.
  - 1. I arrived with a illness, but
  - 2. I am receiving treatment for it.

#### **IV. We have much to show you and to tell you.**

- A. For now, let me give you a teaser.

B. [Keynote Presentation]

**V. Let me say a few things for now.**

A. Brother Dale Manor spoke of the intensity of the sun in Bible lands.

B. Someone referred to it as “oppressive.”

1. They were right.

2. Jennifer pointed out to me the UV Index in Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, comparing it to the Index for Grants Pass.

a) It is higher over there.

b) The UV Index is calculated by four things:

- The thickness of the ozone layer over your city
- The cloud cover over your city
- The time of year
- The elevation of your city

<https://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/climate-weather/atmospheric/question160.htm>

3. I think nearness to the equator is also a factor.

4. However, another factor affects you while out in the sun over there.

a) There is little vegetation, especially in Jordan and Egypt, and

b) many of the buildings, the ground, and the mountains,

(1) are of a light beige color

(2) that reflects a lot of light.

**VI. It reminds me of Jonah,**

A. although he was in Assyria, but

B. I think the experience is the same:

**5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he**

made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. 6 And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

**– Jonah 4.5–8**

1. None of us got angry and wished to die, but
2. we did get faint and have other problems.

**VII. Also, I went on this trip,**

- A. mainly to dig in the Land of Promise,
- B. to find things from 3,000 years ago where we were working.
  1. I also went to see and to discover things in Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, but
  2. I discovered somethings about myself.
    - a) Most of my time prior to the trip
    - b) was spent on getting there,
      - (1) not preparing myself mentally for where I was going.
      - (2) However, later, I would suddenly realize where I was and
        - (a) that I was seeing and experiencing things
        - (b) that I never believed I would see and experience.
- C. For our tours of part of Israel and of Jordan and Egypt,
  1. we had an itinerary of what we would see and do.
  2. However, I never really looked it over.
    - a) I wanted to participate in the archaeological dig at Beth-Shemesh
      - (1) for two weeks and

(2) then return home.

b) However, the three ladies who accompanied me,

(1) wanted to go on these tours and

(2) so I let them decide what we were going to do.

D. When we got to Jerusalem,

1. it suddenly occurred to me all the people from the Bible

2. who had lived or spent time where we were.

a) I remembered that on Sunday mornings,

b) I am teaching the Book of Jeremiah, which takes place in Jerusalem.

(1) It overwhelmed me when I realized

(a) everything that had taken place there

(b) that I have known about for four decades.

(2) I know that may sound odd, but

(a) I just never thought about it until we were there.

(b) I never had a dream of traveling to Bible lands.

3. Even after I volunteered to work on the dig at Dale Manor's request,

a) I really did not think about it.

b) Then during lunch at the dig one day,

(1) Dale pointed out to me a place across the valley not far away.

(2) That is where so and so lived.

(a) What? He lived right over there?

(b) Suddenly what I have read in the Bible and

i) what I have taught and preached for years

ii) was right before my eyes.

(1) Kerri, Jennifer, and Denise probably thought

(2) that I was school-boyish.

(3) This biblical character no doubt roamed the very hill

(a) we were excavating.

(b) Then Dale pointed me in the direction

i) where this man got his first wife, not far away.

ii) Let me just say that I tried to imitate a feat of this man, but

(1) I was not successful and

(2) several told me that my hair was too short or that I should not have cut off my beard.

4. That is when everything started changing for me.

E. In Jordan, one of the directors of the dig from Canada,

1. took us to a place that I had always wondered about.

2. I saw something that a very famous biblical character saw and

a) it was just as the Bible had said.

b) I could see what he saw and I did not want to leave the site.

F. From there, we crossed over the Jordan River, and

1. went to the oldest city in the world, Jericho.

2. I pictured the children of Israel surrounding the city and

a) imagined the fear that struck the hearts

b) of the wicked inhabitants of that city.

3. Then the guide made a reference to something

a) that I had discovered in the Scriptures in 1981.

b) However, I had been thinking about it as we were standing on the remains of ancient Jericho.

(1) The guide made a passing reference to it,

(a) thinking that it was nothing,

i) that it was only water and

(b) the way that he referenced it made most of the people laugh.

- i) You had to pay extra to see this thing and
- ii) I was willing to do it.

(1) I then witnessed by experiencing it

(2) the *result* of a biblical miracle.

(a) Something that I never imagined I would do.

G. With the little bit that we got to see and experience in those three nations,

1. it shows that the biblical narrative is true.

2. The people and places, events, and so on,

a) that the Bible shows,

b) truly happened.

(1) By contrast, you cannot take a tour of America and

(2) see the places which are in the Book of Mormon.

(a) That alone does not prove the Book of Mormon false, but

(b) it points you in that direction.

H. I could keep going.

1. Let me mention another thing.

2. I saw something that I had known about for four decades, but

a) I never knew that I would see it for myself.

b) It is something that made the Edomites in the Book of Obadiah

(1) believe that they were invincible.

**3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,  
You who dwell in the clefts of the rock,  
Whose habitation is high;  
You who say in your heart,  
“Who will bring me down to the ground?”**

**– Obadiah 3**

(2) However, the Lord testified that He would bring them down:

**4 “Though you ascend as high as the eagle,  
And though you set your nest among the stars,  
From there I will bring you down,” says the LORD.**

**– Obadiah 4**

I. I know that I have left you with many teasers.

1. Starting next Lord’s Day I will show you wonders we saw.

**VIII.I said earlier that I went to discover things over there, but**

A. that unexpectedly I discovered things about myself.

B. That shook me up.

1. So this morning I want to speak about keeping yourself open

2. to the Lord’s teaching and correction throughout life.

**IX. Learn from life’s experiences.**

A. I ran across something in Ecclesiastes 4 a long time ago

B. that has always haunted me:

**13 Better a poor and wise youth  
Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more.**

**– Ecclesiastes 4.13**

1. What good is an old and foolish king who will not listen anymore?

2. What good is an old and foolish preacher who will not listen anymore?

a) A youth in that kingdom who is poor but wise

b) is better than the king.

C. Old King Ahab was like that:

**7 And Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?” 8 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the**

**LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.” And Jehoshaphat said, “Let not the king say such things!”**

**– 1 Kings 22.7–8**

D. An otherwise good king, Asa of Judah, had some of this problem:

**7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: “Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.” 10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.**

**– 2 Chronicles 16.7–10**

E. Elihu spoke the truth to Job’s older friends:

**6 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:**

**“I am young in years, and you are very old;  
Therefore I was afraid,  
And dared not declare my opinion to you.  
7 I said, Age should speak,  
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.  
8 But there is a spirit in man,  
And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.  
9 Great men are not always wise,  
Nor do the aged always understand justice.**

**– Job 32.6–9**

F. Hear the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs:

**11 The rich man is wise in his own eyes,  
But the poor who has understanding searches him out.**



– Proverbs 28.11

**16 A ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor,  
But he who hates covetousness will prolong his days.**

– Proverbs 28.16

**X. Have you known older people like that old king?**

A. I know that I could fall into the same trap.

1. On this trip to the Middle-East I learned things about myself
2. that taught me I still need to learn from life's experiences.

B. Therefore, on my prayer list

1. for years I have asked God
2. that I be open to rebuking, correction, and instruction.
  - a) He answers my prayers and
  - b) He answered them in the Middle-East.

C. Here are ways to keep yourself from becoming like that old and foolish king.

**Persuasion:**

**I. Be Open to Correction**

**Pro 3.11–12**

**My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor detest His correction;  
For whom the LORD loves He corrects,  
Just as a father the son in whom he delights.**

**Pro 10.17**

**He who keeps instruction is in the way of life,  
But he who refuses correction goes astray.**

**Pro 12.1**

**Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,  
But he who hates correction is stupid.**

**Pro 13.18**

**Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction,  
But he who regards a rebuke will be honored.**

**Pro 15.10**

**Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way,  
And he who hates correction will die.**

**II. The Lord Continues to Work with Us**

A. I do not read anywhere in Scripture,

1. that the Lord eventually quits teaching us,
2. unless we are so deep into sin
  - a) that there is no hope of redeeming us.
  - b) However, I would assume that anyone who is present for worship,
    - (1) such as you are today,
    - (2) still has a teachable spirit.

B. Everything that the Bible says

1. about the Lord shaping us into the people
2. that He wants to become
  - a) can and do apply at any age.

C. Consider this from Romans:

**28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**

**– Romans 8.28–29**

1. The Lord works through the Scriptures
2. to form us into the image of Jesus Christ.
  - a) However, He also does that

b) through life's experiences:

**9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead...**

**– 2 Corinthians 1.9**

D. Therefore, as you go through life

1. try to see how the Lord is using your experiences
2. to form you into the shape of Jesus Christ.

### **III. Do Not Take Everything Personally**

- 21 Also do not take to heart everything people say,  
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.**
- 22 For many times, also, your own heart has known  
That even you have cursed others.**

**– Ecclesiastes 7.21–22**

### **IV. Do Not Take Anyone or Anything for Granted**

**21 “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away...”**

**– Job 1.21**

A. Who ever thought that Tim Braden and his mother would move?

1. If I got sick on Friday, I could call him and he would fill in for me.
2. Who shall I call upon now?

B. The United States

1. Israel, Jordan or Edom, and England and Greece,
  - a) where we had 6 hour layovers, and
  - b) Egypt were once great nations.
2. Egypt in particular was a superpower.

- a) Yet, now Egypt is a Third World nation in fulfillment of prophecy.
- b) Could the United States of America become one?

## **V. Do Not Get So Focused on One Wonder that You Miss Other Wonders**

A. Be focused, yes.

1. Distractions are a huge problem.
2. Pray that you can focus and avoid distractions.

B. However, we can get so focused on a project

1. that wonders pass us by and
2. we do not notice them.

**38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."**

**– Luke 10.38–40**

C. I had been so focused on Beth-Shemesh

1. that it is as though nothing else existed in Israel.
2. Until brother Dale Manor pointed out to me a hill across the valley from Beth-Shemesh.

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. Finally, remember the Parable of the Sower.**

- A. A sower sowed seed.
- B. The seed fell on four different kinds of soil, including this one:

**7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it."**

**– Luke 8.7**

C. Then Jesus gave this interpretation:

**14 “Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”**

**– Luke 8.14**

1. How many people,
2. how many Christians
  - a) does that picture?
  - b) Do not let the world choke out the word in your life.