

Sunday the 7th of February 2021

We read from the Bible: Ecclesiastes 3,16-4,12 (Djomee)

Theme: Would-be happiness of meaningful life (4): Together is better

Introduction

There is a nice poem from Godfried Bomans: I am sitting in the livingroom. I have nothing to do. I am bored. I wish that I was two little dogs. Than I could play together.

This tells us about our deepest longing: to be together.

But there is a lot of loneliness, especially during this corona crisis.

The author makes clear that you can have a lot of work and that you can earn a lot of money, but what is the profit of this when you are alone? Tom Cruise, a famous actor, once said: All the money and fame of the whole world is of no use when you are lonely.

So the author of Ecclesiastes says: togetherness is better, it is an antidote against loneliness: 4,9.

And he gives 3 examples to make this clear:

- verse 10: when you travelled in the Middle East in his time it was not easy. Especially during the night. There were no lights. See for this: Genesis 14,10. There were also animal traps. You could fall in them. And than you needed somebody else to come out of these traps. In our time we have buddies to help one another
- verse 11: when you travelled you only took your coat and no blankets. Your coat was important: Exodus 22,26 but not enough when it was cold. So you needed one another to get warm
- vers 12: in the city, inside the walls, you were safe. But a journey could be very dangerous. There were robbers along the road. Jesus tells about these dangers in a story: Luke 10,30. It is better to travel with another person. Then you can defend yourself. In our time we say: do not go outside when it is dark. And if you want to jog, do not go alone.

After mentioning these examples he tells us in verse 12 a proverb: 3 make a strong rope. After repeating 2-2-2 he comes to 3: 3 is even better! In our lives the central theme should be: Love (Leviticus 19,18 and Matthew 22,37-39):

Together is necessary

Relationships are important for us. When God created the earth everything was good, very good (Hebrew=tob). But one thing was not good: that man was alone: Genesis 2,18. You have to be with 2 or more, maybe marriage or other connections. We see this in teamsports or in an aeroplane: it is good to have a copilot. We need one another. This is very fundamental. God in Himself is three. These three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit love one another, they appreciate one another, they honour one another. It is a relationship of love and harmony. They appreciate the identity of the other person. They do different things, but are always together. And we as human beings are created according to His image: Genesis 1,27. So we are like Him. We want to make connections. And it is important for us that others like us, affirm our identity. Than we can flourish. So it is normal that we do not like to keep distance of 1,5 meter and that we can not meet one another during this corona crisis. We are made for relationships. That is how we are. We are made to love God and one another!!

Together is difficult

But what is the most important for us is also a reason for problems and frustrations. Friendships are broken, marriages go wrong and teams fall apart. You can read this also in 7,28. The author writes this as a man; but it can be the same for a woman. Out of frustration and broken relationships you may say: is there a real good person in this world? I can not find this person ... Maybe you yourself have the experience of broken relationships. There can be a lot of pain ...

This is the result of the sin of men: Genesis 3. Adam and Eve broke the relationship with God and the result was also a broken relationship with one another. They hid themselves before God and each other (Genesis 3,8-11). And we do the same. It can be very difficult to express our feelings. Maybe you hide them for God and other persons ...

Together is possible

How can our relationships be restored? First of all we need the relationship with God. We can not expect a perfect relationship with a human being. Than we expect too much from somebody else. No one can love perfectly. We can find this perfect love in God. And than we can relax. He loves us deeply and expresses this in the coming of Jesus Christ. How He loves you!!

When you know that God loves you deeply, and this is the most important for you, your love for others will grow. God loved you when you were a sinner. It is not the other way round. It is not: because you became a perfect person, He loves you. No!! But what a surprise: because He loved you when you were a sinner, you will change into a person of love! (Romans 5,8).

To love someone means restrictions for you. You have to deal with the wishes of somebody else. But Jesus did the same. He gave up His beautiful life in heaven. He was God and became man with all these restrictions on earth. But otherwise He never could have shown His love so deeply. So, yes, loving somebody else means dealing with restrictions. But it is worth while! You can be very meaningful for another person!! It also means a risk. Jesus risked His life and gave all His love. You may experience that other persons don't react in a positive way. So what? Only love is the greatest possibility to change enemies into friends (Romans 12,21)!

Conclusion

Jesus was the most lonely Person in the whole world when He was crucified. He shouted: Why have You forsaken me (Matthew 27,46). We earned complete loneliness. Because of our sins God should withdraw from our lives. But He gave Jesus the punishment we earned. And Jesus was bearing our sins. He was lonely so that we should never be alone. The cross is the guarantee that God loves you completely. He does not want you to be alone.

Why should you not accept this deep love? It will change your life. Together with Him and others is better!!

God bless you!

Pastor/minister Jan Bosch.