

THAT'S FROM THE BIBLE



Sermon 4 – “Eat, drink and be merry”

This will be the last time for 2018 that connect group questions will be prepared. Leaders – thank you so much for your faithful leadership throughout the year. Thank you to all you have taken part. I trust you will commit to being part of a connect group in 2019.

1. How is this phrase often used today?
 2. What insights have you gained from Mark or Chris’ talk? Did the talk raise questions for you?
- Mark referred to four times this phrase is used in the Bible.

DON’T eat, drink and be merry – while ignoring God’s judgement - Isaiah 22:1-13

3. What attitude is behind the phrase as it is used here?
4. Do you know people who know very well that God is going to call us to account and yet react by saying ‘who cares – let’s eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!’

DO Eat, drink and be merry – if there’s no resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:20-34

5. Why does Paul say – look – if there’s no resurrection and Christ has not been raised – then ‘let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’?
6. Why is Jesus’ resurrection essential for Christian belief?

DON’T eat, drink and be merry – if that’s ONLY what life is about – Luke 12:13-21

7. Jesus tell us a story of a man with a problem. What’s the problem, what’s his plan and what’s the issue with his attitude?
8. Why do you think Mark and Chris claimed that greed is a silent sin among Christians in the west today and something to which we are blind? Do you agree? How is it seen in Christian’s lives?
9. How is the whole of life geared towards greed?
10. Jesus said – “watch out – be on your guard against greed”. How do you think we can do that?

DO eat, drink and be merry – as a gift from God! - Ecclesiastes 8:9-17

11. Why might we initially be confused at the commendation in this verse to ‘eat and drink and be glad’?
12. What are the conditions under which we ought to feel free to ‘eat and drink and be glad’?
13. How can we ensure that are eating, drinking and being glad, in a way that matches what we’ve learnt from these passages and is pleasing to God? (Re-read the re-cap towards the end of the message.)

Pray that never ‘eat, drink and be merry’ while flying in the face of God’s judgement

Pray that we will cling to our hope Jesus’ resurrection and ours!

Pray for that we’ll never be overcome by greed and so live as if life only consisted in the abundance of our possessions and in partying,

Pray that we’ll enjoy eating and drinking, as we fear God, know there IS a better world to come, that this is NOT what life is all about and with a grateful heart to God from whom comes all good gifts!

Pray that we will continue to love and encourage one another as connect groups take a break

Date: 25 November 2018
Services: 730, 930 P and 930 T (via video)
Series: That's from the Bible!
Passage Isaiah 22:1-13; 1 Corinthians 15:20-34;
Luke 12:13-21; Ecclesiastes 8:9-17
Title: Eat, drink and be merry

Outline

1. **DON'T eat, drink and be merry – while ignoring God's judgement**
2. **DO Eat, drink and be merry – if there's no resurrection**
3. **DON'T eat, drink and be merry – if that's ONLY what life is about**
4. **DO eat, drink and be merry – as a gift from God!**

INTRODUCTION

I found some very important information when researching for this sermon – here it is from the Independent newspaper in the UK

Be a couch potato for the evening, indulge in a bar of chocolate every now and again, fear not that extra glass of wine. Scientists have discovered that a little of what you fancy really does do you good.

The health conscious, work-out world of the 1990s could in fact be doing more damage to people because of the guilt it instils in those who seek a modicum of physical pleasure through eating, drinking or just lolling about.

Research into the "pleasure pathways" of the brain has found that happy people are healthier and live longer, even if they do not always follow the advice of the diet planners and fitness freaks.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/secret-of-a-long-life-eat-drink-and-be-merry-1577843.html>

Now – the article actually dates back to 1995 – but I'm not going to let that worry me if you don't!! //

We **love** the thought of 'eat, drink and be merry' don't we...? – and coming up to Christmas – BWS will trade on that desire!

It speaks of a life of **comfort and ease**...

An **cruise** that goes **forever**...

Summer holidays that last the year **round**...

A **round the world** trip that never **ends**...

Retirement without any **responsibilities**... or **chores**!

Sounds great!!

Eat, drink and be merry!/

I'm sure not many people realise though that this phrase is actually from the **Bible**...

...and it's **used** there in a **number** of ways...

So we're actually going to spend a little time looking at 4 times this phrase is used... and this morning – I'm not going to tell you the outline in advance... I'll just let things unfold along the way...

The first use of the phrase is a negative one; namely:

1. DON'T EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY – WHILE IGNORING GOD'S JUDGEMENT

- Now because we're looking at 4 different passages this morning... I'm not going to ask you to flick over – but I'll put the passages on the screen and include a little of the context of each one. So look with me: Isaiah 22 verse 5, and then we'll skip to vv12 and 13

- *The Lord, the Lord Almighty, has a day of tumult and trampling and terror in the Valley of Vision, a day of battering down walls and of crying out to the mountains.*

- So the Lord has announced judgement on his people Israel – this is 900 years or so before Jesus – judgement because they’ve turned their back on him and followed other gods... but instead of causing the people to **reflect** and **repent** and **turn back** and **seek God’s forgiveness**, they decide simply to **party!**: vv12-13

*The Lord, the Lord Almighty,
called you on that day
to weep and to wail,
to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.
13 But see, there is joy and revelry,
slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep,
eating of meat and drinking of wine!
“Let us eat and drink,” you say,
“for tomorrow we die!”*

- **Staggering arrogance** in the face of God and his judgement!
- This is the attitude which simply says to God in one way or another – I don’t **care**... I just **don’t care**...!
If you announce your judgement God, and say we’re all going to die... then – we’ll just **party** until that finally **happens**... !
- This hard-hearted attitude to God practically says to God and his announcement of judgement – **bring it on – see if we care!**
- There’s no pause for **introspection**... there’s no **weeping** over **sin**... there’s no move toward **repentance**... no no no - *Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!* **BLANK SLIDE**
- Brothers and sisters, the great sadness is that there are many people living just this way **today!**
- **You** know them... **I** know them... // they know about God... but they – as it were – shake their fist at him and say – “**we don’t care**...”
- And even though they know Jesus will one day return as judge and hold them to account... there is **no pause** for introspection... there’s **no weeping** over sin... there’s **no move toward repentance**... no it’s just - *Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!* ///
- It may be that this is **you** this morning. //
- You **know** about God.... But you’re busy doing your **own thing**... and life is lived at a **shallow** and **superficial** level... “*eat, drink and be merry – for tomorrow we die...!*”
- I want to urge you this morning – to **weep** and **wail** – that is: – to realise the **offence** of your **rebellion** against God and to come in **repentance** and **trust** to say ‘**sorry**’ and seek God’s **forgiveness**... //
- Let’s look at a **second** use of this phrase – this time from 2 Corinthians 15 – when the instruction is to

2. **DO EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY – IF THERE’S NO RESURRECTION**

- ...have a look with me from the screen – Paul is arguing that the resurrection of Jesus is **real** – it **happened** – it’s the **truth**...
- He has been exploring the implications if it DIDN’T happen: look with me -

29 Now if there is no resurrection.... why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31 I face death every day – yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

- Jesus' resurrection is absolutely **central** and **crucial** in the **Bible**... in fact – if Jesus' **didn't** rise from the dead – the whole thing falls **over**...
- Earlier in this chapter, Paul had laid out some of the implications if Jesus didn't in fact rise: Paul's **preaching** is **useless**, the Corinthian's **faith** is a big waste of **time**, the **apostles** are **false witnesses**, and the **people** are still in their **sins**. /
- And now he's saying if Jesus **didn't** rise from the dead... 'why would I put my life on the line **every day**'?!
- "Why would I be prepared to face **death** every **day** for a **lie**?!"
- What would be the **point** if it was all for nothing more than what he calls '**human hopes**' – that is – the things of **this** world!?? // **BLANK SLIDE**
- No / look / he says – face **facts** – if the **dead** are not **raised** – if **Jesus** is not **raised** – than life is **simple** – **far less complicated**... far less **dangerous**... let's simply *eat and drink for tomorrow we die*...!
- For if Jesus **didn't rise**... than God **didn't** visit this **planet**
- If Jesus **didn't** rise – there **is** no God – we're **fooling** ourselves
- If Jesus **didn't** rise – I'm not going to put my **life** on the **line** or put myself **out** for **others**...
- If Jesus **didn't** rise – it's all been a farce...
- ...if Jesus **didn't** rise – than by all means just go find a **party somewhere** – for there's nothing **else** to live for – there's **no life beyond this** – there's **no hope** for **forgiveness** – there's **no new creation**... **this** life is all there is and when you're **dead** you're **dead!** *Eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die*... //
- But brothers and sisters... Jesus did **indeed** rise from the dead... and our life in him – our **relationship** with him – our **walk** with him – is **real** – and **rich** – and **wonderful** – and **rescues** our life from the superficiality – the **flippancy** – the **shallowness** of '*eat, drink and be merry – for tomorrow we die*'....
- Jesus is **worth** putting your life on the line for - no matter **what** that might mean...!!
- Praise **God!!** ///
- So let's recap – **DON'T** eat, drink and merry – while ignoring God's judgement
- **DO** eat, drink and be merry – if there is no resurrection
- Third:

3. **DON'T EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY - IF THAT'S ALL LIFE IS ABOUT**

- On the screen – Luke 12
- Jesus tells the story of a man with a problem... his problem is that he had a bumper **harvest**... and doesn't have **anywhere** to store his **crops**...
- So we pick up Jesus' story at v18

18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

21 "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

- Now – a **great problem to have!** – some of our farmers out west may wish to have this problem – to have **so** much to store that you have to build bigger **barns**... /

- But the bumper harvest **wasn't** the **issue**...
- It was the fact that this man's **possessions** had become **all he lived for... /**
- He lived a life centred on **self**... and **amassing** so much wealth that he could simply put his **feet up** and take it **easy**....
- And the **irony** of course – was that he couldn't take any of it with him! When his life was suddenly required of him... that was it! /
- The reason Jesus told this story was to illustrate the point he had just made in v15 – namely - *Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions*
- Greed is the silent **sin** among Christians today
- The one we're most **blind** to
- We don't realise how **attached** we are to our **possessions** and **investment portfolios**
- And Jesus says to us this morning – **watch out!** Be on your **guard** against **greed**.
- **Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions!! // BLANK SLIDE**
- We often **live** like it does don't we?
- We gain comfort and security from our material wealth...
- Life in the west is **geared** around this... do **well** at school so you can do well at **uni** so you can get a **good job** so you can buy a **nice house** and have **nice holidays** and so you can save for your **retirement** so you can put your **feet up** and **eat drink and be merry!** /
- But if that's **all** life is about – you've **missed** the **boat** – or missed the **point!**
- If that's what your life is about, says Jesus – than one day you'll **die** and someone else will have everything you have prepared for **yourself**.... **Meaningless!**
- No – the key says Jesus, is to be **rich** toward **God!** "Treasure in heaven" he will call it elsewhere.
- What **is** that **treasure?**
- The **riches** of **relationship** with God... the **treasure** of a **life lived** in his **service** – his **honour** – the **value** of a life lived in **love** for **others** – the value of **denying one's self** – **taking up one's cross** – and living it **entirely** for **Jesus!! //**
- Friends – watch out – be on your **guard** – and **DON'T** eat, drink and be merry, as if that's **all** life is all about!! //
- So far we've seen:
 1. **DON'T** eat, drink and merry – while ignoring God's judgement
 2. **DO** eat, drink and be merry – if there is no resurrection
 3. **DON'T** eat, drink and be merry if that's all life is all about!!
- finally:
 4. **DO EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY – AS A GIFT FROM GOD**
 - From the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes... Ch 8 v15 - *I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.*
 - Now if you're **confused** right now – that's good because it means you've been **listening**...!
 - On the surface, this seems to contradict all the **other** verses we've looked at!!
 - *Nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad!*
 - And we want to say '**what**'? /
 - But there's something really important here to note...

- The text says: *Nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad!* – then – *joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.*
- The writer commends eating, drinking and being glad – SO LONG AS YOU RECOGNISE THAT LIKE YOUR LIFE ITSELF – THEY ARE A GIFT FROM GOD! [BLANK]

- So – let’s be clear....

- God is not a **kill-joy** //

- Do you enjoy **food**?

- It’s **God’s good gift.**

- Do you enjoy a **drink**? A beautiful cold glass of **water** on a **hot** and **humid day**...!

And while I know some of you think differently from me on this – and that’s **OK** – but the Psalmist says that **wine** is a **gift** from God to **gladden** the heart of **man**...

- And just as **binging** on **food** is bad for you – so is **drinking** to **excess** – please know that the Bible **forbids drunkenness**... !

- But **food** and **drink** (of whatever kind) *are* God’s good gifts... to be enjoyed in **moderation**... AS A **GIFT FROM HIM!!**

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- Brothers and sisters here is what we’ve seen this morning

1. **DON’T eat, drink and be merry – while ignoring God’s judgement**
2. **DO Eat, drink and be merry – if there’s no resurrection**
3. **DON’T eat, drink and be merry – if that’s ONLY life is about**
4. **DO eat, drink and be merry – as a gift from God!**

- When you acknowledge as James says that **every good and perfect gift comes from God** – you’re on the right track...

- It’s **eating, drinking** and being **merry** - while flying in the face of God’s **judgement**, or

It’s **eating, drinking** and being **merry** - because you think there’s no **resurrection** and therefore “what the heck!” – or

It’s **eating, drinking** and being **merry** and thinking that is **ONLY** what life is all about...

It’s **eating, drinking** and being **merry**... without any notion that these are God’s good and perfect gifts...

- **that’s the problem!!**

- but – to end with the **positive**... ----

- when you **fear God!**

- when you **know** there **IS** a better **world** to come

- when you know that life **doesn’t** consist in your **possessions** or in **partying**...

- ...then – **eat, drink and be merry** –

as a **great** gift of our **heavenly Father**... !

And.... as a **foretaste** of the **end time feast** he’s **preparing** for you in **eternity!!!**
