Can’t Live With ‘em, Can’t Live Without ‘em:
The Pesky Problem of People
by Pastor Kurt Gebhards
Ecclesiastes 4

Introduction
Pastor Kurt began with a clear explanation of his Sunday message. It is a message throughout Scriptures and especially featured in Eccl. 4: You can’t make it going alone! You need to humble yourself and commit to the community where God is working, the local church. So have you made that commitment to wholehearted commitment to Harvest? Are you in a Lifegroup? Are you a member? Have you been baptized? Whatever situation that you may find yourself in, you will be called to interact with people. Are you ready for the task to love, to care give loving correction and to receive correction?

1. The Pesky Problem of People
a. The tragedy of oppression
Maybe you are one of those who understands oppression from your own experiences. Perhaps it was a friend, a family member or a boss that hurt you. This is the price of working with people but there is hope for you. Our world is filled with cases of sin and oppression. Christ followers in distant places are suffering and dying because they are believers. The Voice of the Martyrs website - https://www.persecution.com/ makes known the horrific price believers are paying today for knowing Christ. Have you read any of their stories? Won’t you pray for the persecuted church? Read Eccl. 3:16-17 and consider the reality of injustice against the backdrop of God’s righteous judgments. How does God’s awareness of cases of injustice bring you peace?

b. The wasteful worker
The workplace is a breeding ground for jealousy and rivalry. The standard at work is climbing the ladder at any cost. Have you been one stepped on in that process? According to vs. 5 and 6 what are the two extremes of response that many might choose? Why are both the lazy and the workaholics wrong? How do each breed further strife? What would God call us to do about this?

c. The isolated miser
Read vs. 7-8 and explain, why is this one’s experience most tragic? Why might investing in a heritage that honor’s God have greater value than in the end having a full portfolio?
As Solomon blurs out his thoughts he uses three voices to express himself. He speaks with wisdom, he speaks with truth and he speaks out of frustration. Why is that essential to know? Read verses 2-3 again and break it down, which is the voice that he is using in each phrase?
The gospel offers us the cure to a life of sadness concluding, what’s the use? List the things that the gospel [we heard seven on Sunday] gives us to overcome the oppressive nature of our earthly existence. Have you applied these gospel benefits to your situation?

2. 1+ 1 + survival

Chuck Swindoll’s study of Ecclesiastes, Living Above the Level of Mediocrity, makes the point that we need each other to survive. Sharing in the joys and sorrows of life will minister richly to our souls. That is why we feature Lifegroups as the ministry of the church. It is in this setting that we can help each other together. Read vs. 9-12 and identify each image that encourages our care and love for one another that can make us stronger. Have you ever been downcast and needed the uplift of a strong friend? Have you been the strong friend who stood with another in deep pain? This is what Christian friendship is meant to be; A shoulder to cry on - a sympathetic ear - guidance and perspective – support – understanding. Do you have that in your life? How does Col. 2:1-3 challenge you in the context of your friendships?

Conclusion

Eccl. 4:13-16 talks about teachability and our need to be receptive. People will be fickle. That is why we must all work together in the ministry.

We at Harvest are opposed to “church-lite” – tastes great, less filling. We want more for one another and that is why we don’t stop at nice prayers, cool music or brief talks. We are warned that that is the description of the failing church of 2 Tim. 3:1-7. Here is what we have learned:

We need you here at Harvest. You need us. That is what is so fantastic, we need each other!

You may see a big church and think we should slow down but there is much more ahead if we get on God’s path. When we do join together with God we will see, we need each other.

Mutual Ministry: We all need a Nathan in our lives to get us on God’s path. What do you need to do to correct a broken relationship, forgive or ask to be forgiven? What might you share with your Lifegroup friends that they can hold you to account about especially in the area of relationship?

If you have been struggling or bitter with people, take time to confess this sin to one another (James 5:16), to exhort to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24), to encourage the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:14), to bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2), and to offer biblical edification to one another (Ephesians 4:29). Encourage through the week to keep your eyes on God’s plan to help one another.

Pray for hearts open to the teaching of God’s sovereign and loving plans. Pray as our people to build their faith in the belief that He is a good God Pray for unity in Christ and fulfillment in serving the King. Pray for Lifegroups to lovingly support one another in the battle. Pray for The Well conference.

The “Intercessory Prayer” groups during our worship services 05/04/14:

1st hour – Ward
2nd hour – Barger