



**“Risk or Opportunity? Living Life Out On a Limb”**

**Eccl. 11:1-10**

August 23, 2020

**Eccl 11**

- 1 **Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.**
- 2 Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.
- 3 If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.
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- 9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.
- 10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

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- Taking calculated risks is the path of wisdom.
- To illustrate this, Solomon uses two risky professions in the ancient world; exporting by ship and farming.

**Illustration #1 – Exporting grain by ship.**

- “cast” - **פָּלַג** - shaw-lakh – to send, to push away.
- This is not a picture of throwing some bread on the water.
- As someone has said, “if you cast your bread on the waters, the ducks will eat it.”
- Solomon was deeply involved in international trade with countless merchants (1 Kings 9:26;10:11). Then as now, one of the main trade commodities was grain. The merchants of Solomon’s day would load their grain ships and send them off.



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  - The idea here is sending your grain out on merchant ships to foreign lands.
  - The term “bread” refers to grain and wheat from which bread is produced.

### Think about it:

- Abram would never have left Ur of the Chaldees.
- Moses would never have returned to Egypt and faced Pharaoh’s court.
- Noah would have never built an ark.
- Joshua would never have taken Jericho.
- David would never have left the troops and faced Goliath on the battlefield alone.
- Christ would never have come to earth.
- Paul would never have gone on any of his missionary journeys.

- But that involved risk: The ship could get caught in a storm, pirates could raid the ship, the ship could hit a reef, it could catch on fire, and lose its cargo.
- It would be months or years before they would return (1 Kings 22), so this would take faith & patience.
- Solomon is saying that it is wise and good to work for a return that could not be immediately seen.
- Instead of putting your grain in a boat and sending it off, you could keep it and make bread.
- “A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.”
- Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
- “The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing and becomes nothing.”
- Jesus’ parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30.
  - The parable condemns the man who fails to invest the one talent that his master had given him.
  - He did not want to take any risks, so he lost all potential gain.
  - In the end, his master took away even the gift he had received.
  - Paralyzed with uncertainty, fear, and doubt, he lost the gift due to its disuse.

### Don’t say –

- “I can’t get married. What if difficult struggles come up between me and my mate?”
  - “I can’t have children. What if they rebel?”
  - “I can’t start a business. What if it folds?”
  - “I can’t join the military. I might get deployed.”
  - “I can’t share the gospel. What if I get rejected?”
- \* Don’t play it safe. Move out of your comfort zone.
- \* Look at your calculated risks as opportunities.
- \* Go out on a limb because that is where the fruit is.
- \* I know that is true from my own life.

### Remember -

1. Don’t expect your ship to come in if you’ve never sent it out.
2. When your ship does come in don’t be at the airport. Don’t abandon praying for a return on your investment.
3. Build many ships and build big ships.

### Ecc1 11

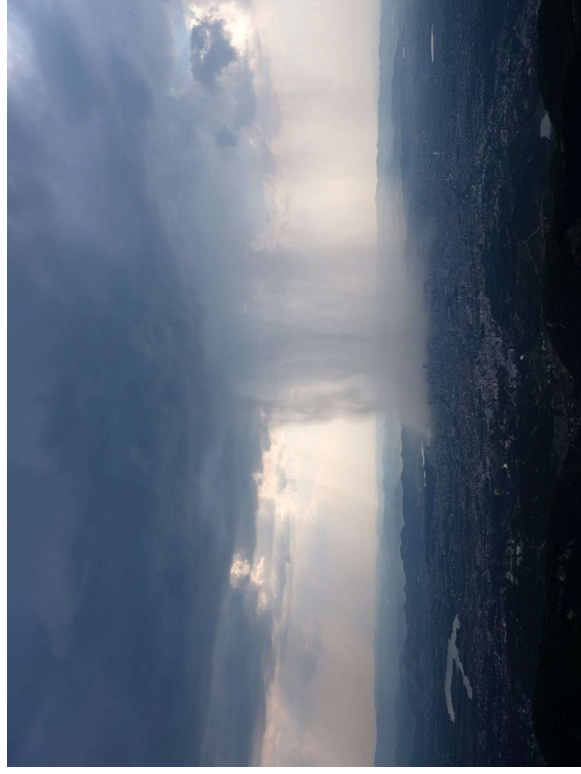
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- 2 *Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.*
- 3 If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.
- 4 He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.
- 5 Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.
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- 8 Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him come will be fertility.
- 9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of your manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.
- 10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

## 2 Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

- Send out many ships. 7 = perfect number + 1. Do all you can, invest all you can, and then a little more.
- You don't know where disaster might strike; but it doesn't strike *everywhere* at once. You may lose a ship or two but not all of them.
- Four times in chapter 11 Solomon says "you do not know" (once here in verse 2, twice in verse 5 and once in verse 6). Therefore our dependence is on our sovereign God.
- Don't put all your grain in one ship.
- Put your wheat in several ships and send it out in many directions on different seas.
- In other words, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket."
- Don't be reckless: we ought to make our plans, use our brains, study the situation, take all factors into consideration, seek wise counsel, do the best we can, and then leave the results to God.

## 3 If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.

- God controls the size of clouds which hold the rain and God controls the wind which topples trees.
- If you magnify every difficulty (clouds and wind), you won't ever work. If you sit around and wait for the ideal circumstances, trying to avoid adverse conditions, we won't ever get anything done.



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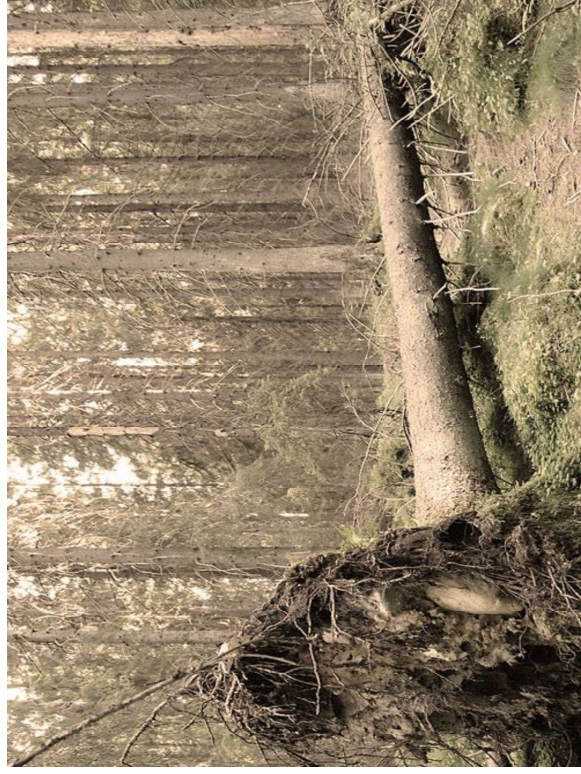
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- If you magnify every difficulty (clouds and wind), you won't ever work. If you sit around and wait for the ideal circumstances, trying to avoid adverse conditions, we won't ever get anything done.
- It is God who controls the fall of the tree out in the forest - whether it falls to the south or the north. But where it falls, that is where it is to be. Solomon is saying to us, "Where God has put you, this is where you are to be. That is God's personal providence in your life."
- "Bloom where you are planted."
- Don't use the possibility of disaster or misfortune as an excuse for inactivity.
- Don't be paralyzed by what you don't know.



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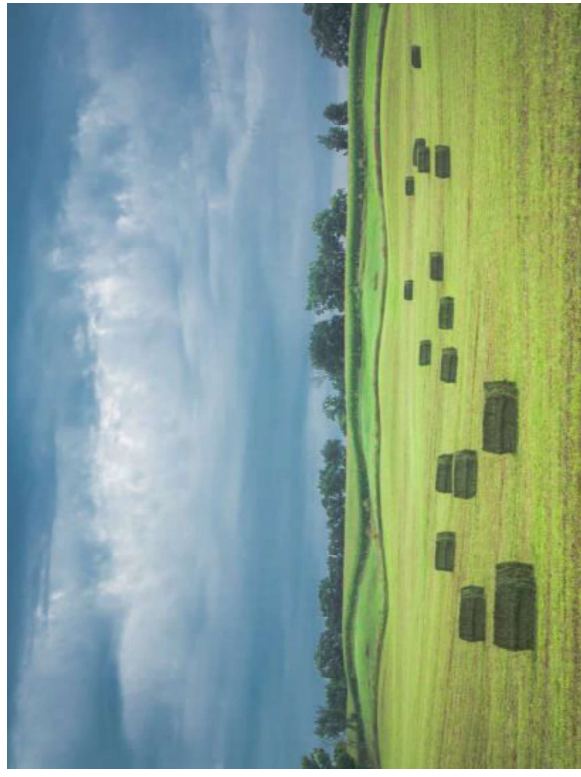
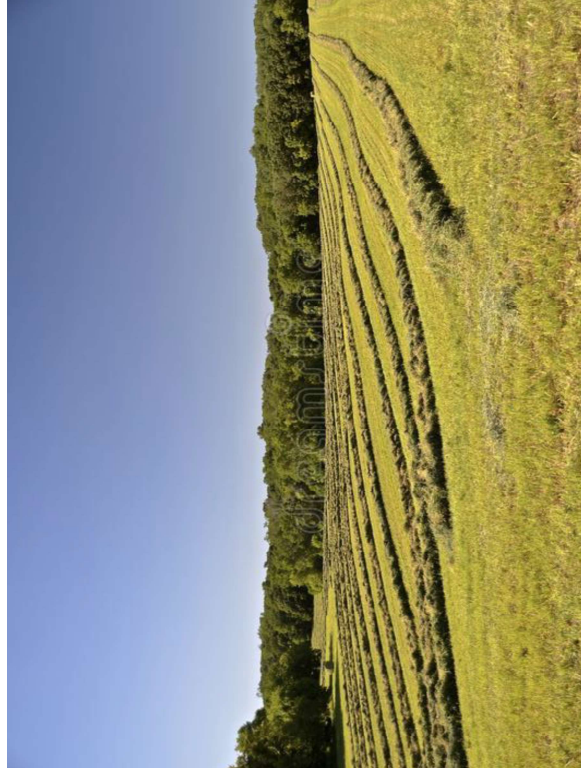
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##### **Illustration #2 – Farming**

- Farmers: Risks – Bad weather – drought or too much rain, hail, insects, disease. Much like ships.
  - This proverb criticizes those who are overly cautious.
  - Solomon says, ‘Don’t wait for conditions that will never exist!’
- if you’re:**
- looking for the perfect church, you’ll never join one.
  - looking for the perfect ministry, you’ll never serve in one.
  - waiting until you have enough money to live on, you’ll never give.
  - waiting for a certain amount in the bank before you have children, you’ll never have kids!
  - looking for the perfect time to share the gospel, you never will.



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##### Illustration #2 – Farming

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- It's paralysis by analysis.
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##### If you're:

- looking for the perfect church, you'll never join one.
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- waiting for a certain amount in the bank before you have children, you'll never have kids.
- looking for the perfect time to share the gospel, you never will.

Evangelism is sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.

- if you wait for perfect conditions, you will miss valuable opportunities.
- Inactivity can never lead to productivity.

Keep on working through the seasons

In the sunshine and the rain;

Earnest prayer and faithful sowing

Yield a wealth of golden grain.

– Richard W. De Haan

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- Certain aspects of God's working on earth defy explanation:

##### 1. Path of the wind –

##### John 3:8

8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

##### 2. Bones of an embryo -

- We do not know how bones are formed in the womb of a pregnant woman - how certain cells are diversified from other cells to specialize in the formation of bones rather than soft tissues.



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- **2. Bones of an embryo -**
- We do not know how bones are formed in the womb of a pregnant woman - how certain cells are diversified from other cells to specialize in the formation of bones rather than soft tissues.
- Since the future is in God's hands, the wise person continues his work diligently.

## **6 Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.**

- Don't stand around and try to predict the best time for sowing, diversify and sow both in the morning and in the evening, and all day. The reason is because you do not know which sowing will succeed, or whether both of them perhaps will be good.
- Getting something done is better than getting nothing done. At least then there is the prospect for success.

## **7 The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.**

- It is good to be alive and enjoy life, to see the sun, to rejoice in the goodness of God and His creation.
- Life is the gift of God and if you are not enjoying life then you are not living it the way God intended.

#### **John 10:10**

- 10 I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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- That means rising each day looking to rejoice, finding pleasure, finding joy, finding good in what you accomplish. That is the way to live.
- “Blessed is that man who enjoys the routine, blessed is that woman who delights in the mundane, for they shall discover that God is in the details of life.”
- The older we get the more thankful and content we should become.

**9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.**

- George Bernard Shaw - “Youth is such a wonderful thing. It’s a shame to waste it on young people.”
- It is easy for young people to squander their youth.
- 80% of all those who come to Christ occur by the age of eighteen.

### **Ps 37:4**

4 Delight yourself in the Lord;

And He will give you the desires of your heart.

- if you are delighting yourself in the Lord, His desires will naturally become your desires.
- Solomon wants youth to understand that the actions of their youthful years were not going to pass away and be forgotten. The day was going to come when they were going to face judgment for how they used those years. (Heb. 9:27)

**10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.**

- Youth goes fast. Don’t waste your life in sorrow and anger. All of it causes emotional stress which deprives you of joy.
- if you want to avoid being an older crabby person....don’t be a young crabby person.
- Don’t cause physical harm to your body which you may have to live with for the rest of your life.
- A man in his 90’s said, “I don’t go out much now because my parents won’t let me...Mother nature & Father time!”

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“Time is like a circus - always packing up and moving away”