

3 is better than 2 is better than 1

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 Good Fri & Great Sunday: Communion - Crosswalk - Easter Services
- B. Slide3 Movie Fourth World: 3pm sanct.
- C. Slide4 Women's Retreat
- D. Slide5 Opportunity with ICA - ICA has 2 single moms with 1 to 3 children, that are here from another country that need housing from 3-6 months. There is need for assistance as we are trying to get them on their feet. If you have a room available or a couple of rooms available that you would like to help a family, please contact charlotte, and she can give you more details.

II. Slide6 **Intro: 3 is better than 2 is better than 1** [Solomonic Math]

- A. G.Cambell Morgan said, *This man (Solomon) had been living through all these experiences under the sun, concerned w/nothing above the sun...until there came a moment in which he had seen the whole of life. And there was something over the sun. It is only as a man takes account of that which is over the sun as well as that which is under the sun that things under the sun are seen in their true light.*

III. Slide7 **THE OPPRESSED & THE OPPRESSOR (1)**

- A. Oppression and injustice are a part of life.
- B. Note **power** i.e. the bully, the stronger taking advantage of the weaker.
 1. **Injustice** can be defined as, when a **stronger person** abuses his/her power by taking from a **weaker person**, what God alone has given the weaker person, God judges this as sin.
 2. God doesn't just get angry about injustice **but** does something about it.
 - a) Ps.35:10 **All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like You, Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?**

IV. Slide8 **THE DEAD & THE LIVING (2,3)**

- A. Solomon will express his dissatisfaction with the *wretched human situation* in extreme terms, using *exaggeration* to drive home his point.
1. Jesus did the same. He really did not want us to literally *pluck out our eyes* or literally *hate our parents*.
 2. Statements such as *better than both is he who has never existed* are **not to be taken as literal assertions** that the world would be a better place if people were never born.
 3. **Nor** are such declarations an indication *of a depressed or suicidal state* on Solomon's part.
 - a) Hebrew wisdom literature operates by **encircling an issue and approaching it from a variety of viewpoints**.
 - b) So when Solomon saw all the *oppression* to which people were subject, and noted their *tears*, he decided that *the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive*.
 - c) *We'll also see*, because of the context of *human suffering*, those with **friends** are better off than those who are **alone**. *But ultimately all are vulnerable*.

V. Slide9 THE WORKAHOLIC & THE LAZY-AHOLIC (4-6)

- A. (4) Envy prevents people from finding satisfaction in their work.
1. *Keeping up w/Joneses* (growing up in Whittier, do you know who lived next door to the Bells? *The Joneses*). *We didn't keep up...we surpassed.* :) jk
- B. (5) *The fool folds his hands* or *refuses to work with his hands* - Refers to someone who refuses to work. Laziness leads to destruction - a common theme in Wisdom literature.
- C. (6) Just as laziness is harmful and should be avoided, *so is working without the ability to enjoy one's work*.
1. The proverbs are set side by side to force the reader to consider the folly both of **laziness** and of **working to exhaustion**.
 2. The proverbs are not *contradictory*, but *complementary*.
 3. The challenge is to strike a balance... *Work, but do not work too much; enjoy life but do not be lazy*.

VI. Slide10 **WORK FOR WORK-SAKE, ACQUIRE FOR ACQUISITIONS-SAKE (7,8)**

- A. These verses paint a portrait of the workaholic.
- B. (8) It is senseless for a person to accumulate wealth *without* the ability to enjoy it.
 1. This person works for the sake of work & acquires for the sake of acquisition.
 2. Why do we human beings learn *so much, so soon, about technology, and so little, so late, about loving one another?*

VII. Slide11 **2 IS BETTER THAN 1. 3 IS BETTER STILL. 4 REASONS WHY (9-12)**

- A. Solomon's mathematical formula for **friendships**: *1 is not good. 2 is better. 3 is best.*
- B. When *Go West young man* was being encouraged (now it's Tourist go home), it was squatters rights that drew people from the comfort of their eastern homes.
 1. They went west, staked their huge claim and built their cabins smack dab in the **middle** of their property.
 2. Photographers returned w/wild eyed women. Stopped, gaunt, prematurely old men. And haunted looking children.
 3. They were easily defeated by Indians, & by the elements...going it alone.
 4. They finally realized they had a better chance of making it if they *moved their houses towards the corner of their property closer to their neighbors.*
 - a) Where is your log cabin on your property?
 - b) Is it time you moved your cabin closer to the corner of your field?
 - c) Is it time you installed a **gate** in your high forbidding **fence**?
 - (1) It could make a difference in your life & in your Survival!!!
 5. Slide12 An **arch** consists of two weaknesses, which leaning against one another make a strength.
- C. **Friendship** is one aspect of life that the Teacher *does not* declare to be **vanity** (cHaber).
 1. Efforts spent at maintaining **strong friendship** are wisely expended.
- D. Slide13 **WORKING** (9) Working together leads to more satisfying outcomes than working alone. [You'll accomplish twice as much]
 1. You'll get more difficult jobs done by encouraging one another.

2. Cooperation among friends makes for more efficient labor.
 3. Two friends working together could build houses for each of them much easier than the two could do by working individually on their own houses.
- E. Slide14 WALKING (10) Roads & Paths in Palestine weren't paved or even leveled.
1. i.e. Hidden rocks in path. Fall into open pits. *You'd need a lift to get up or out.*
 2. Friends can **assist** one another when trouble strikes.
 3. **Falling** can represent *any kind of trouble*.
 - a) Trouble in the form of *mistakes, sin, danger, temptation*.
 - b) Trouble in the form of *illness or injury, emotional trauma* (such as the death of a loved one), *loss of employment*, or any other of the countless ordeals that **overwhelm people**.
 4. When we **spiritually stumble**, how nice it is to have a close friend to pull us up & help us walk straight.
 5. Remember a friend will **lift up**, not **tear down**.
 6. And remember. *It's better to keep a friend from falling, than to help him up after he falls.*
- F. Slide15 WARMTH (11) Keeping warm together alludes to the fact that desert nights were often *very cold*, and travelers had *nothing but each other* to keep them warm.
1. Metaphorically, the body warmth which **friends** give to each other represents *the solace and encouragement one gets from a friend*, particularly from a friend who shares the same hardships.
 2. **Physical warmth** = Companionship. **Emotional warmth** = Friendship.
Spiritual warmth = Fellowship.
- G. Slide16 WATCHCARE (12) The author highlights the **protection** enjoyed by numbers.
1. This was also needed in **traveling**.
 2. While **one** person might be overcome, **two** people can withstand an attack, and a group of **three** is stronger still.
 - a) **Physical harm** (in the marriage setting, most **cave-men** stop here, "*me protect woman*")
 - b) **Spiritual harm** (pray/devotions)

- c) **Emotional harm** (cutting words, or hurtful words of others)
3. **Friends** can protect each other in **the work environment** from **an unscrupulous employee** who gets ahead by **slandering colleagues**.
- H. **So**, If they **work together**, they'll get more accomplished. If one **falls**, the other can help. If one **is cold**, the other can provide warmth. If one **is attacked**, the other can defend.
- I. **True friendship** is a precious possession in this mortal life. People who find **true friends** are richer than persons with **money only** and wiser than those with **learning only**.
- J. **Slide17** (12b) **Threefold Cord** - By bringing **Jesus** into your marriage, He becomes that 3rd strand that braids, ties, & strengthens your marriage together.
1. He brings **peace, order, purpose, & agape love**.
 2. Anyone can have a wedding, **but** only **Jesus** can create a **healthy** marriage.
- K. **Jesus** would agree with this 2 or 3 idea...**this union in exercise**... **this working in concert**.
1. Mt.18:19,20 *If **two** of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. For where **two** or **three** gather together as my followers, I am there among them.* [also Jesus sent the 70 out **2 by 2** in Lk.10:1]
- L. **Slide18** Paracord example: *paracord*, orig used for the suspension lines on parachutes are small but mighty. **550-cord = 7 inner yarns** 35 lb. test, **3 strands each** 11 lb. test, the **sheath** is rated at about 300 lb. test by itself. **thus 550 lbs.** [I guess **Jesus** is our sheath/covering] :)

VIII.Slide19 **PRISONERS & POTENTATES (13-16)**

- A. It's better to be a poor but wise youth w/a prison record **than** to be a rich but foolish king.
- B. (13-16) This text is an **example story**, a narrative that tells a **short story** w/a **moral lesson**.
- C. (16) Even though the wise youth ascended to the throne, he is eventually forgotten, ultimately rendering his wisdom useless.
1. He will be forgotten soon & replaced w/another.
 2. **Slide20** I like what Walt Disney said about **being popular**, "As far as I can remember, being a **celebrity** has never helped me make a good picture...or command the obedience of my daughter, or impress my wife. It doesn't even seem to help keep fleas off our dog, **and** if being a celebrity won't give one an advantage over a couple fleas, **then** I guess there can't be that much in being a celebrity after all."

D. It is better to be **faithful** than **famous**.

E. Don't confuse **fame** with **success**. *Lady Gaga is one, and Helen Keller is the other.*