

More Better

I. Slide1 Intro:

II. Slide2a Title: MORE BETTER (1-14)

- A. What's your view on *suffering, pain, sorrow, adversity, or hardships*?
1. Some seek to escape it, others to despise it...we need to find the **value** of it.
 2. Do you learn more about God during difficult times or during happy times?
 3. Do you try to avoid sorrow & suffering at all costs?
- B. Suffering & adversity are not necessarily signs of Gods disfavor. In fact, **adversity** is often a greater good than that of **prosperity**.
- C. Eccl. 6:12 asked, *What is good for man in life?*
1. *It is a hook on which a string of Proverbs are hung.* Kaiser
 2. Slide2b Note: **Good** (1,11,18,20) and **better** (1,2,3,5,8,10).
 3. Let's remember, *the better life involves some bitter things.* But...
The **bitter** things can make life **better**.
- D. Solomon uses various proverbs w/similar sounding words (Hebrew).
1. Slide3 A figure of speech called *paronomasia* (pun/play on words).
 2. (vs.1) **Name** = *shem*. **Perfume** = *shemen*
 3. (vs.5,6) **Song** = *shir*. **Pot** = *sir*. **Thorns** = *sirim* [eg, as the noise of nettles under the kettles]
- E. Slide4 A **Good Reputation** is better than **Expensive Perfume** (1a)
1. A good name (reputation) is a fragrance that reaches far beyond its owner.
 2. Actually *precious ointment* was **olive oil** or *good oil*.
 - a) In the ancient world, an abundance of oil was a sign of wealth.
 3. After the *American Civil War* the managers of the infamous *Louisiana Lottery* approached **Robert E. Lee** and asked if he'd let them use **his name** in their scheme. They promised that if he did he would become rich.
Astounded, Lee straightened up, buttoned his gray coat, and shouted,
"Gentlemen, I lost my **home** in the war. I lost my **fortune** in the war. I lost

everything except my name. **My name** is not for sale, and if you fellows don't get out of here, I'll break this crutch over your heads."

F. Slide5 **Your Death-day is better than Your Birthday** (1b)

1. Solomon was not contrasting birth & death because you can't die unless you had been born.
 - a) He was contrasting 2 significant days in human experience. The day you receive your name **and** the day you show up in the obituary column.
 - b) The life lived between those two events will determine whether that name leaves behind a lovely fragrance **or** a foul stench.
 - (1) **How do you smell today?**
2. Every man has 3 names: **one his father and mother gave him, one what others call him, and one he acquires himself.**
 - a) *Prov.10:7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot*
 - b) **Mary of Bethany** anointed the Lord Jesus with expensive perfume & its fragrance filled the house. *Jesus told her that her name would be honored throughout the world, and it is.* Warren Wiersbe
 - c) **Judas Iscariot** sold the Lord Jesus into the hands of the enemy, And his name is generally despised. *Judas was born and given the good name Judah which means praise. By the time Jesus died, he turned that honorable name into something shameful.*
3. We will all have on our headstone 2 dates & a dash in between...and it's the dash that matters. **Recognize your mortality.**
4. **What does your name mean? Are you living up to its meaning?**
 - a) Bummer for **Mahlon** & **Chilion** = *Sickly & Pining.*

G. Slide6 **Funerals are better than Feasts** (2)

1. Solomon isn't getting morbid on us, he's not saying let's go hang out at a funeral home or at Murrieta cemetery.
 - a) He answers **why** he makes this statement, after the word *for*.
2. The most positive side of doing memorial services is that I believe God gets most everyone's undivided attention regarding life & death.

- a) Most people don't even think about their death.
- b) But it is helpful...*why?* It reminds us there is still time to change, time to examine, time to confess, time to forgive, & time to plan ahead.

3. Jesus said, *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

H. Slide7a Sorrow is better than Laughter (3,4)

- 1. Sorrow can teach us lessons that will not be learned any other way.
- 2. Slide7b The Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz* says to the Tin Man, "*Hearts will never be practical until they are made unbreakable.*"
 - a) We know that quite the opposite is true. The hearts that are **fragile** is what makes them **practical**.
- 3. Slide7c In **sorrow**, remember 2 things: [1] There is a **lesson** to be **learned**. [2] There is a **work** to be **accomplished**.
 - a) *Ask:* What might be some of those lessons to be learned? (patience, long suffering)

I. Slide8 Being Criticized by a Wise Person is better than being Praised by a Fool (5,6)

- 1. Don't you hate when you know when someone is simply trying to flatter you & you know they don't mean it?
 - a) Would you rather feel good or know the truth?
- 2. Prv.27:6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*
- 3. (6) **Sound/crackling of thorns** - Just as thorns burn quickly and provide little heat, foolish laughter is short-lived and accomplishes little.
 - a) Produces a lot of noise, draws attention, bursts quickly into flame, *however* it gives off no lasting heat.

J. Slide9 Easy Routes become Expensive detours (7)

- 1. **Bribery** appears to be *a quick way* to get things done, **but** it only turns a wise man into a fool & encourages the corruption already in the heart. **Far better that** we wait **patiently** (8) & **humbly** (8) for God to work out His will, **than that** we get **angry** and demand our own way (9).
 - a) **Joseph** began as a **slave** **but** ended up a **sovereign**.
 - b) **God** saves *the best wine for last*. **Satan** usually starts with *the best* as bait, then pretty soon has his victim caught in his snare.

2. They say money talks. How much can you be bought for?

- a) Bribes are given to **hurt** those who tell the truth & **help** those who oppose it.
- b) Some say everyone has a price, **but** those who are truly wise cannot be bought at any price.

K. Slide10 **Finishing is better than Starting** (8a) *Working out :*

1. **By faith** see what the end will be, and with patience expect it.

- a) **Better** was **the end** of Moses's treaty with Pharaoh, when Israel was brought forth with **triumph**, **than the beginning** of it, when the trial of bricks was doubled and every thing looked discouraging.

L. Slide11 **Patience is better than Pride** (8b)

1. Hudson Taylor said, **As a rule, prayer is answered and funds come in, but if we are kept waiting, the spiritual blessing that is the outcome is far more precious than exemption from the trial.**
2. **Story:** I was once given some **weed killer** to spray on my back hill. I thought, *more* was **better & faster** (if a little weed killer killed the weeds in about a week I thought more weed killer would kill them in a couple days). **Well it killed them really quick...but only on the surface** (It only burnt the top & didn't drink it down to the roots).
 - a) **Moral of the story:** No patience, worked into waiting about a month for them to all grow back, to be able to spray again & do it the right way.

M. Slide12 **Living for Today is better than Living in the Past** (10)

1. **Oh the good ol days** - It has been said, ***The good old days are the combination of a bad memory & a good imagination.***
 - a) Don't live in the past, decide to live for today.
2. The Roman poet Horace said, ***carpe diem, seize the day!***
 - a) This doesn't mean we *shouldn't* learn from the past **or** prepare for the future.
 - b) It means that we must **live today** in the will of God **and not** be *paralyzed* by **yesterday** **or** *hypnotized* by **tomorrow**.
 - c) **Joseph Hilaire Belloc** (Victorian Essayist) said, ***while you were dreaming of the future or regretting the past, the present, which is all you have, slips from you and is gone.***

N. Slide13 **Wisdom is better than Wealth** (11,12)

1. **Wisdom** is good with (*or* added to) a generous inheritance.
 - a) **Money** can lose its **value**, *true wisdom* keeps its **value**.
 - b) **Example**: A person who has **money** with **no wisdom** will only *waste his fortune*.
The person who has **wisdom** will know how to **get & use money**.
2. **Wisdom** is like a **defense/shelter** (a protective shade). **It gives greater protection than money**.

O. Slide14 **When Crooked is better than Straight** (13)

1. This echoes the earlier proclamation that God makes everything **good** or **appropriate** in its time. (*see* 3:14)
2. An ol' preacher said, *Learn to cooperate with the inevitable*.
3. Notice the way God does things; **then** fall into line. Even when His way looks **twisted & ugly?**...even then.
4. Read Job's response to Zophar. **Job 12:13-25**

P. Slide15 **Adversity and Prosperity, are Appointed by God** (14)

1. *When prospering be thankful & rejoice*. When in adversity *consider the goodness of God & the comprehensiveness of His plan for you*.
2. He knows exactly **how much & how long** is best. [**His hand** is on the thermostat...**His eye** is on the thermometer]
 - a) Paul learned, *I know how to be **abased**, and I know how to **abound**. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be **full** and to be **hungry**, both to **abound** and to **suffer need***. Phil.4:12
 - (1) We need to learn how to profit from both **pain** & **pleasure**.
3. **Man can find out nothing that will come after him** - God's work is ultimately *unknowable*.