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 God's disfavor. In fact, adversity is often a greater good than that of prosperity.

C. Ecc. 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.


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*. 