Today as we resume our series from the Book of Ecclesiastes, please turn with me in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter eleven, and we are going to begin reading in verse 9 and continue through the first eight verses of chapter twelve.

**ECCLESIASTES 11:9 - 12:8 (NKJV)**

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

**Chapter 12:1-8**

1 Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them”:
2 While the sun and the light, the moon and the stars, are not darkened, and the clouds do not return after the rain;
3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow down; when the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows grow dim;
4 When the doors are shut in the streets, and the sound of grinding is low; when one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of music are brought low.
5 Also they are afraid of height, and of terrors in the way; when the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails. for man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets.
6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the well.
7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.
8 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “All is vanity.”
INTRODUCTION

Do you ever find yourself forgetting things and worrying that it might be more than just forgetfulness?

For example, you come out of Wal-Mart and can't remember where you parked your car.

Or you walk into a room in your house and can't remember why you are there.

Or you can't remember where you laid your eye glasses, and after nearly turning the whole house upside down looking for them, you realize they are on top of your head.

Or you put the gallon of milk back in the cabinet instead of the refrigerator.

Moments like those really make you wonder if you're not starting to lose your memory, don't they?

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When it comes to growing old you have to keep a sense of humor, like this old fella....

He said, "I sure have gotten old. I've had two by-pass surgeries, a hip replacement, and new knees. I've fought prostate cancer and diabetes, I'm half blind, I can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine. I take 40 pills a day that make me dizzy, nauseous, and constipated. I have bouts with dementia, poor circulation, and can hardly feel my hands and feet any more. But thank the good Lord, I still have my driver's license."
As Solomon penned the words to the text we are looking at this morning, he was in the twilight years of his life. As I mentioned in a sermon several weeks ago, Solomon didn't live to be an old man. He was just twenty years old when he became Israel's king, and he died after reigning as king for forty years. So he was only sixty years old when he died. Do you think having 700 wives might have had something to do with that?

After wasting most of his earthly life on worldly living, Solomon seems to express a tone of regret as he writes these verses. It's as though he is giving us some words of wisdom he wishes he himself had followed.

First of all Solomon offers some…..

I. Words of Wisdom To The Young Folks (11:9,10)

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

1. I want all you young people to listen up, because Solomon is speaking some words of wisdom to you in these two verses.

(A) First of all, Solomon is telling you to REJOICE in your YOUTH. (v.9a)

The New Living Translation says it this way: “Young people, it's wonderful to be young; enjoy every minute of it; do everything you want to do, take it all in.” (Ecclesiastes 11:9a NLT)
Young people, some times you probably get very frustrated with being a young person. Perhaps you wish your parents would give you more freedom or you wish they would stop treating you like you're a little kid, and start treating you like an adult. And maybe there are times you wish you could hurry up and grow up so you can be out on your own. But Solomon is reminding you that you will only be young once, so ENJOY YOUR YOUTH WHILE IT LASTS!

Although there are many challenges and difficulties that go along with being young, you are at that wonderful stage in life when you are not yet weighed down with the burdens and responsibilities of adulthood.

- Your bodies are strong and agile, and only getting stronger.

- Your mind is sharp and you can learn things and remember things much easier than someone who is old.

- You are full of energy, and enthusiasm, and passion, and laughter. Life is a great adventure when you are young. This is a time of discovery.

- You can run faster, play harder, and sleep more soundly than someone who is old.

- You still have your whole life ahead of you, and you are free to “dream dreams” and to take risks, and if you fail, there is still plenty of time, the good Lord willing, to change directions.
Young people, enjoy this time in your life, because every older person here today will tell you, that you are going to “blink your eyes” and before you realize it you will have gone from sixteen to sixty just like that! (snap fingers)

But after telling you to **REJOICE in your YOUTH**, Solomon warns you in the very next breath to.......

(B) **REALIZE the **DANGERS** of your youth.** (vs.9b, 10)

> vs. 9b,10 Walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for these God will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.

When Solomon says, “Walk in the ways of your heart” he is not saying, “Party hard” or “Sow your wild oats while you are young.” He is saying, enjoy your youth, but be soberly aware of the many dangers and temptations you will face.

Young people, you need to realize you are at that stage in life when you are very vulnerable to **peer pressure**.

Your peers may pressure you to drink alcohol...or do drugs...or to smoke cigarettes...or to engage in pre-marital sex...or to rebel against your parents or any number of things.

And you need to understand that **the impulsive, foolish choices you make in your youth** can have lasting consequences that will effect your life for many years to come.
As we move on to chapter twelve, Solomon now offers some.....

II. Words of Wisdom To The Older Folks (12:1-8)

1. Solomon begins this twelfth chapter with an urgent plea.

   Ecclesiastes 12:1a (NKJV) “ Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ' I have no pleasure in them.'

2. Solomon is reminding us just how critically important it is to turn to GOD while we are young, and not wait until we are old.

3. Let me share some very sobering statistics with you. Listen carefully.

   85% of all people who accept Jesus Christ do so before they reach their 18th birthday. (85%)

   The chances of someone accepting Christ between the ages of 18-25 are 1 in 5,000.

   The chances of someone accepting Christ between the ages of 25-35 are 1 in 25,000.

   The chances of someone accepting Christ between the ages of 35-45 are 1 in 80,000.

   The chances of someone accepting Christ between the ages of 45-85 are 1 in 1 million.
4. When I looked back through my own Ministerial Record Book I saw proof of these statistics I just shared with you. Only two of those I have baptized over the past thirty seven years, were 65 years old or older. Most were between the ages of 12-18.

5. Now I want to make it perfectly clear that this doesn't mean the older a person gets it becomes impossible for them to accept Christ; but rather it means as one gets older, his or her mental faculties and physical strength diminishes, and they get more set in their ways, and their heart becomes more resistant to change, making it very hard for them to surrender their life to Jesus Christ after a lifetime of rejecting him.

6. In vs. 2-8 Solomon uses the most beautiful, figurative language in all the Bible to describe the aging process everyone of us goes through. Now, I preached a message from these verses almost eight years ago, so what I am about to share with you, you have heard before. But if you're like me, you forget things over time, so it never hurts to hear something a second time.

7. What I would like to do is go verse by verse and explain these figurative terms Solomon uses to describe our “aging process.”

* In verse 2 Solomon says that we are to “Remember our Creator” while the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are not darkened.”

Solomon is describing how we lose our memory as we age. Our mind isn't as bright and sharp.
* Also in verse 2 he says, "And the clouds do not return after the rain." What Solomon is saying here is that as we age we have a fading capacity for joy and excitement. We often experience more bad days than good as we get old.

* In verse 3 Solomon says, "the keepers of the house tremble." He is describing how the arms and hands shake and it is harder to hang on to things.

Then Solomon says, "the strong men bow down." As we age our shoulders slump, and our legs grow weaker and more feeble.

Next Solomon says, "the grinders cease because they are few." The "grinders" of course refers to our teeth. You know you are getting old when you sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

Then Solomon says, "those who look through the windows grow dim." Here he is describing our eyesight diminishes as we get older. In fact, many of us eventually reach a point where our arms aren't long enough to hold reading material far away enough to read.

* Moving on to verse 4 Solomon talks about "the doors are shut in the streets." As we age, our ability to hear diminishes, and the doors of our ears are shut to the conversations going on around us.
Next Solomon talks about “the sound of grinding is low.” Remember in verse 3 we learned “the grinders” refers to our teeth. So when Solomon says “the sound of grinding is low” he is likely referring to one “gumming” his food because he has few, if any teeth left. Obviously Solomon wrote this in the days before dentures.

Then Solomon says in verse 4, “one rises up at the sound of a bird.” Solomon is saying, as we get older we become “light sleepers” and we are often awakened by sounds we “think” we hear.

Next Solomon says, “all the daughters of music are brought low.” Once again, Solomon is talking about how our hearing deteriorates as we get older. This phrase can also describe how the elderly person’s own voice grows weaker as they age.

* Moving on to verse 5 Solomon says, “they are afraid of height, and of terrors in the way.” As we age we become more and more fearful of falling. Older people often become fearful of cracks in the sidewalk, or climbing up stairs. They don't like to drive at night because of “the potential terrors in the way.”

Next Solomon talks about “the almond tree blossoms.” This is clearly a reference to the hair turning white or gray as one gets older.
Next Solomon says, “the grasshopper is a burden and desire fails.” Here Solomon is describing the slow, shuffling walk of the aged, and the loss of sexual desire. You know you are getting old when you turn the lights down low for economic reasons rather than romantic reasons.

Then Solomon says, “a man goes to his eternal home and the mourners go about the streets.” Solomon's point is very clear: we get old, we grow more and more feeble, and then we die.

* Moving on to verse 6 Solomon describes the various ways we may die.

“Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed or the golden bowl is broken.” The “silver cord” refers to the spinal cord, and “the golden bowl” refers to the brain. Most likely this is a reference to dying from a stroke.

“The pitcher shattered at the fountain” is a reference to the heart. Most likely this is a reference to dying from a massive heart attack.

“Or the wheel broken at the well” This is most likely a reference to our circulatory system and the hardening of the arteries.
* And then in verse 7 Solomon states a very simple, yet profound truth about what happens to us when we die.

“Our bodies will be returned to the dust from which we came, and our spirit will return to God who gave it.

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CONCLUSION

Modern technology has helped solve a lot of the problems Solomon has described in these verses. When we lose our hair we can we a wig or a toupee. When we lose our “grinders” we can wear dentures. When our eyesight diminishes, we can wear eye glasses or contacts. When our hearing diminishes, we can wear hearing aids. When the legs grow weak and feeble, we can use a cane or a walker.

But despite all these advances that have helped ease the burden of growing old, the fact remains, everyone of us has an appointment with death. “For it is appointed unto man once to die and then to face the judgment.”

And so as we come to our time of decision this morning, I want to impress upon those of you who have never accepted Jesus Christ to realize you have no promise or guarantee that you will live to see tomorrow, let alone live to a ripe old age.

Now is the accepted time! Today is the day of salvation! Remember your creator before its too late!