Everyone in this room at some point has had a really bad day, a really bad month, or a really bad year, maybe more.

This morning we are going to talk about how God is involved in our bad times and how these bad times have the potential to have a far better outcome than you might ever expect.

One of the main reasons I believe this is so important for us to get, is that if we’re not careful, all of us are prone to fall victim to an issue that can be so destructive.

Issue of misunderstanding who God is and how He works.

Put it another way , we become victims of some really bad theology that would have us believe that when you’re a Christian, nothing bad happens to you, or that if you will just give your life to God it’s all going to work out in your favor. In fact all you have to do is live right, speak and think positively, go to church most weeks and maybe drop a few more dollars in the plate and you can bet that you’re destined for the good life.

This sounds great. It sounds fair. But it couldn’t be further from the truth.

I am not sure where this bad teaching came from, but I am sure that it is detrimental to our spiritual health.

Now don’t hear what I’m not saying. I am not saying that following God is a miserable way to live life and that you’re going to be the victim of calamity after calamity.

Jesus said, “ In this world you will have trouble.”

Does God allow his children to suffer? Yes.

Then why? Why would a good God do this? I

Is there really any good that can come out of this? Is there more to this than meets the eye? Is it possible that we are missing something?

Just in the last few weeks we have seen an example of this unfold right before the eyes of our nation as a disturbed and evil young man walked into a church prayer meeting, was welcomed in with open arms by the pastor and the rest of those in attendance, and before the night was over, after sitting with them through they’re entire prayer service, senselessly murdered a group of God’s children who were doing nothing more than being faithful to our own Lord’s commands to meet together and worship and pray.

How in the world does a good God allow atrocities like this to take place? How in the world can we find any good in it?

Thankfully for us, our study Ecclesiastes and of Life Under the Sun finds us right here this morning answering this very question.

As we find ourselves in Chapter 7 this morning, Solomon’s wisdom and his chase for meaning manifests itself in some proverbs.

When I read this passage I can see Solomon sitting on his throne, thinking about what he knows about life, what he knows about his kingdom, what he knows about his own self, and he starts to jot down some thoughts and ideas.

Maybe as we read through them this morning for the first time, you’ll find hear them in a negative light, but my hope is before we are done that you may find these proverbs to be extremely positive and life-giving.

* Character is better than precious things
  + God wants us to have a good name
  + He wants to mold us and change us
  + How does He create holiness, character, and real joy in us?
  + Through pain and suffering
* Day of death better than the day of birth
* Funeral home is better than the frat house
  + Solomon says it makes you, It makes you think.
* Sorrow is better than laughter
  + Laughing doesn’t allow us to face reality
  + Learning much when we’re having a good time
* Wisdom is found in mourning
* Better to be rebuked by a wise man than to be praised by fools
  + Hard times make you smarter
* To wait on God’s timing is better than to demand it in your timing
* It’s better to enjoy the day you have than wish for the one you used to have
* It’s better to be wise than to be rich

All of this reminds me of the quote by AW Tozer who once said, “ God cannot use a man until he hurts him deeply.”

- A fool’s laughter is brief ad deceptive

- The end of a matter is better than the beginning

A Wedding. Starts with a bang….but that isn’t what matters

Verse 9- Do not be angry

10- Don’t long for yesterday

Wraps it all up with this conclusion in verses 13-14:

Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?

Solomon reminds us here that there are some things we just cannot change, and what we must do is trust that they are the work of God. Romans 8:28 – And we know that God causes all things to work together for the good.”

In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

What Solomon teaches us here is this: That if you’re willing to look for it, adversity is sometimes better for you than prosperity.

**If you can trust Him in the good, you can trust Him in the bad, and you can trust that only God can make bad work for the better**.

While we were on vacation I read a book by Mel Blackaby titled, “ Going the Second Mile.” In it Blackaby recounted a time when it seemed everything went wrong for him and his family.

His basement flooded and ruined much of his home, and wasn’t covered by his insurance company as an act of God. Then when it was repaired the hot water tank rusted through and began to leak, their daughter hurt her arm in an accident, one of their horses went lame, his wife’s back went out, while visiting another church on vacation their minivan was hit in the church parking lot by a young lady with no insurance. After returning home from vacation they discovered that their freezer quit working a quarter side of beef had rotted, and their 13 yr old dog died.

He said that the one verse that kept coming to his mind during this time was Psalm 73:28, “ the nearness of God is my good.”

**Mel seems like a man who clearly understands that if you can trust God in the good, you can trust Him in the bad, and that only God can make the bad work for the better.**

Why is Solomon telling us this?

Because bad times are coming.

We will all have days of mourning. We will all have to spend our time in the funeral home.

We will all have days where it seems like God has made them “crooked.”

But good times are coming too, and God wants us to enjoy them.

But in order to enjoy the good days, we must learn to deal with the bad, and doing so while we are here “under the sun” requires us to remember that “only God can make the bad better.”

Solomon is inviting you into this wisdom. Consider this. Just think about it.

Will you trust God’s timing?

If your retirement doesn’t work out as planned? Forced to change career’s midstream?

Your marriage? Illness or tragedy in your family?

What if we grab this as a reality? That even in the bad, God is making good.

What if, like our brothers and sisters in Charleston who’s lives have been forever changed by evil we can show the world what trusting God looks like.

What if we could share a story with others about how God has worked bad for good?

Maybe, like Solomon we can find rest under the sun, not because God doesn’t allow pain, and not because he makes the pain go away, but just resting in the fact, that God, through our relationship with His son, Jesus Christ, can make the bad work for the better.

So here’s what I want you to do. An exercise that I hope will help you grow in your trust of the Lord.

Will you take some time this week, to just go back in your life, and write down times that God has worked out something bad in your life, in a way that made the bad better.