

# TELLING IT SLANT (2)

ECCLESIASTES 7.14-29



*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

T. M. MOORE

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Telling It Slant (12): Ecclesiastes 7.14-29  
Copyright 2019 T. M. and Susie Moore  
The Fellowship of Ailbe  
[www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org)

*Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All psalms for singing adapted from The Ailbe Psalter. All quotations from Church Fathers from Ancient Christian Commentary Series, General Editor Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006).*

## Ecclesiastes 7.14-29: Introduction

Becoming wise is a challenge, because we're always tempted to turn God's good gifts to our own advantage. We strive to be wise, then we want everyone to know just how wise we are. Or we think we can dabble in sin, just so that we know how to stay away from it; only to be swallowed up and overcome by it.

Solomon had done it all, and he was persuaded, at the end of his life, that wisdom – living our lives before God in all things – is the best way to live. In the second part of chapter 7, Solomon continues to try to persuade his son to hear his words. He uses proverbs and dark sayings to “tell it slant”, giving Rehoboam – and us – much to contemplate.

We are happy to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org), to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our thrice-weekly devotional newsletter, *Crosfigell*, or our daily *Voices Together* devotional and prayer guide.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal  
[tmmoore@ailbe.org](mailto:tmmoore@ailbe.org)

## 1 Unfailing Joy

*Pray 30.1-3.*

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up,  
And have not let my foes rejoice over me.  
O LORD my God, I cried out to You,  
And You healed me.  
O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave;  
You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.14.*

*Prepare.*

1. Over what is God sovereign?
2. How does Solomon express the limits of man's experience?

*Meditate.*

Rehoboam, anticipating his rise to power, was doubtless focusing on all the perks of royalty. He envisioned a life of wealth, power, and ease, and indeed, this is what awaited him, at least in part.

What he could not foresee, and probably wasn't willing to consider, were the many trials and adversities that come with being ruler of a great nation. How shall a man keep a steady outlook and demeanor amid the vicissitudes of life?

By rejoicing, come what may. For, since whatever comes to us comes from the hand of God, we can rejoice in Him, in His sovereignty and wisdom, and in the knowledge that He causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8.28).

Don't seek happiness and a sense of wellbeing in the blessings of each day. Failure to realize those blessings will bring despair. Look not to the *blessings* for your joy, but to the *Source* of both blessings and trials. In Him is joy that never ceases nor fails (Ps. 16.11). None of us can know what's going to happen next. But look to God, and trust in Him, and you can know unfailing joy at all times.

The second half of Ecclesiastes 7 begins an *inclusio*. This means that the passage begins and ends in the same place, and everything in between is related to this keystone idea. Note the phrase, "God has appointed" in verse 14 and compare that with "God made" in 29 (in the Hebrew both words are the same). This is the key idea: God is sovereign. Solomon begins the passage with the prospect of hope: We can know joy if we look to God in all things. He ends it with a sigh of disappointment: When we trust in our own schemes, turning away from the way God has made us, we make life a shambles.

Here in a nutshell is the conflict of worldviews that confronts every generation. Those who try to live apart from God, trapped in the snares of sin, will not be able to know the consistent joy of those who look steadfastly to the Lord through Jesus Christ. Good and bad, blessing and adversity will come to both; but only the believer can know consistency of joy in life, unfailing joy, come what may.

*Reflect.*

1. Why is it possible to know joy in every situation? How?

2. What is joy? Why is joy more important than happiness? How would you explain the difference between joy and happiness to an unbelieving friend?

3. We can't know what tomorrow might bring, except that we can. Explain.

*If mortals do not come to know God and His plan, they will not be able to discern anything about life (3:11) or about what will happen after they are gone. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Notes for Ecclesiastes 7.14*

*I know, Lord, that whatever may come to me today, I can know Your joy; so help me to...*

*Pray Psalm 30.1-5.*

Seek the joy of the Lord that comes from knowing Him, abiding in Him, and resting in Him at all times. Commit the day ahead to the Lord for joy.

*Sing Psalm 30.1-5.*

**Psalm 30.1-5** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

We will extol Your Name!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Our foes retreat in shame –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

You healed us when we cried; safe shall our souls abide;

Hell's claim have You denied –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, we extol Your Name!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Thanks we with joy proclaim –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Anger shall not prevail; grace will for us avail;

Day frees us from travail –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

## 2 Not the Way It's Supposed to Be?

*Pray Psalm 30.4, 5.*

Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His,  
And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.  
For His anger *is but for* a moment,  
His favor *is for* life;  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy *comes* in the morning.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.15.*

*Prepare.*

1. What seems wrong with this picture? Why?
2. But is it really wrong, or just a temporary aberration? Explain.

*Meditate.*

Let's remember: God is sovereign, and God is an unending source of joy, come what may.

Very often in life it seems as though justice is elusive. Things don't work out the way we think they should. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Good men die young. "The best lack all conviction,/while the worst are filled with passionate intensity" (Yeats).

This is how Solomon saw things in his "days of vanity", that is, while he was wandering from God and trying to make sense of things apart from God. But apart from God life seems only vain, wrong, and not the way it's supposed to be.

However, "under heaven" we know that there is a time and a place for everything. We even understand that the things that "aren't supposed to be" actually are just what they're supposed to be. And even though we can't always understand *why* things happen the way they do, we trust in the Lord, Who rules all things and is infinitely wise and good (Eccl. 3).

If you try to make sense of life "under the sun" you'll only end up despairing.

There is no escaping the powerful effects of sin on every aspect of human life. Sin not only resides in the souls of men; it pervades all they do, as well as the creation itself. The believer understands this; however, he is not content with it. Thus, he engages all his relationships, roles, and responsibilities in an effort to restore all things back to God (2 Cor. 5.18-20). And, while we know we cannot attain complete restoration in this life, we keep our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 2.9), and look forward to – and actually *live toward* – the day of full reconciliation and restoration. Then our lives "*under heaven*" will become life *in* the new heavens and new earth, where righteousness dwells.

Keep your eye on that promise as you struggle with the things that seem like they are not what they're supposed to be in your life.

*Reflect.*

1. How widespread are the effects of sin? How do we see the effects of sin far beyond the moral choices people make?

2. Why can believers be content and even joyful amid things that are not the way they're supposed to be?

3. Christ has reconciled the world to God; our job is to restore it, beginning in our own Personal Mission Field. What progress have you seen of late in your own work of restoration?

*Every true believer is ready to say, God be merciful to me a sinner. Forget not at the same time, that personal righteousness, walking in newness of life, is the only real evidence of an interest by faith in the righteousness of the Redeemer. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ecclesiastes 7.11-22*

*Lord, set me at war against sin, beginning in my own life, and extending to my Personal Mission Field. Today help me to...*

*Pray Psalm 30.6-9.*

Thank God that He holds you firmly in His hand. Call on Him to strengthen you for today's work of restoration.

*Sing Psalm 30.6-9.*

**Psalm 30.6-9** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

Firmly in You we stand –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Kept by Your gracious hand –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, when You hide Your face, I cry to You for grace.

Living, I'll sing Your praise –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

### 3 Living in the Tension

*Pray Psalm 30.11, 12.*

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,  
To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.16-18.*

*Prepare.*

1. Trying to be “overly righteous” is clearly not a good thing. What would be an example of trying to be “overly righteous”?
2. Allowing ourselves to become “overly wicked” is just as bad. What would that look like?

*Meditate.*

Taken by themselves, these are some of the most perplexing verses in Ecclesiastes. Why would any believer settle for less than more righteousness? And why would any righteous person want to be wicked in any degree, much less “overly”? And what is “this, and...the other” (v. 18)?

But if we keep these verses in the context of Solomon’s own experience, and his understanding of the sovereignty of God, we can make good sense of them.

Solomon’s pride began to be his destruction when he considered himself wiser and more righteous than any man alive. He had prayed for wisdom appropriate to his need (2 Chron. 1.8-10). He stumbled when he decided to become the wisest man alive, and then congratulated himself on his achievement. If your goal in pursuing righteousness and wisdom is to boast about your achievement, Solomon says, give it up; it will only lead to your downfall (v. 16).

Moreover, Solomon seemed to think he could dabble in folly and still remain wise (Eccl. 2). This happened because he failed to realize the power of sin, and thought he could “handle it”. His advice in verse 17 should thus be understood as, “Don’t give sin any more length in your life than it will take of its own accord; but don’t be content with *any* sin in your life.” Solomon was wicked enough when he was growing in wisdom; his dabbling in sin, then rushing headlong into it, was an act of folly, and destroyed his kingdom.

How can we apply this to ourselves? We must learn to live in the tension between righteousness and wisdom, which we are called to seek (“this”), and the sin we cannot escape, but which we must not allow to rule us (“the other”). At the same time, we must always be on guard against sin, whether of pride in our righteousness and wisdom, or corruption in our thinking we can handle a little sin.

Christians live in a time of tension between the “already” of the Kingdom of God and its “not yet”. The course of wisdom is to keep our eyes on the Lord in the midst of everything we do, lest we be overcome by the travail and folly of our age, and sin that yet abides to our own souls (Col. 3.1-3; Heb. 2.9; 12.1, 2).

*Reflect.*

1. What would be some differences between wanting to be *overly* wise and wanting to be *appropriately*



wise (which is what Solomon sought at the beginning of his reign)? Which is less likely to lead to pride? Why?

2. What might cause someone to become *overly* wicked or foolish? How can we avoid this?

3. How would you counsel a new believer to prepare each day for living in the “now” but “not yet” of the Kingdom of God?

*It is right to place a bridle even on charity and to permit it freedom to roam only insofar as it does not rush headlong over a cliff. Scripture says, in Ecclesiastes, “Do not be righteous in excess, nor think yourself more than you are, lest perhaps you should be struck dumb.” Following this, I can say something similar. Do not love a man “with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with all your strength.” Do not love an angel “with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with all your strength.” In accord with the Savior’s words, keep this command in respect to God alone. Origen (185-250), Homilies on the Gospel of Luke 25.6*

*Help me to love You, Lord, and to hate sin; and help me to seek Your Kingdom today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 30.4, 5.*

Remembering God’s Name can keep you from giving in to temptation and falling through it to sin. Praise God just now by recalling as many as you can of the names that are applied to Him in Scripture. Let those names go with you throughout the day.

*Sing Psalm 30.4, 5.*

**Psalm 30.4, 5** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

Lord, we extol Your Name!

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Thanks we with joy proclaim –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Anger shall not prevail; grace will for us avail.

Day frees us from travail –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

## 4 Once More – For Emphasis

*Pray Psalm 30.3*

O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave;  
You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.19-24.*

*Prepare.*

1. What do we learn about sin?
2. What did Solomon learn about wisdom?

*Meditate.*

These verses cast into proverbs – “telling it slant” – the lesson Solomon outlined in the preceding section (vv. 16-18). Again, he counsels contentment and wisdom without pride (v. 19), acceptance of (though not complacency about) our sin – and of the sins of those who transgress against us (vv. 20-22) – and trusting in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God (vv. 23, 24), which are far beyond what we can know, but in which we may rest.

This is a realistic faith outlook. We must not allow ourselves to become utopian in our expectations, or we’ll think we have all the answers – pride leading to destruction. At the same time, we must not be complacent about the fact of sin – or else our folly will consume us. No, we can’t figure it all out, but we can know and trust the One Who has, and in Whom, by knowing Him, we can find true contentment in life.

This and the preceding passage give us an important insight into God’s approach to communicating His truth. He tells us once, in a narrative based on life experience; then He tells us again, this time in the poetry of pithy proverbs. This is a measure of the grace of God, that He reaches out to us in a wide variety of ways to make sure we hear His truth and can make it our own.

We must labor to communicate with our generation by every available means (1 Cor. 9.19ff.). The message of truth is too important to entrust to one medium of communication alone. Christians must explore all the possibilities available for making known the Good News of life “under heaven” to our “under the sun” contemporaries.

*Reflect.*

1. Wisdom is more important than physical prowess (v. 19). Why?
2. We all sin, and we’ll continue to sin until we go to glory. Does that mean we should simply shrug our shoulders and say, “Oh, well”, where sin is concerned? What is our responsibility for the sin in our lives? For the sin we see in our neighbors?
3. Solomon again introduces the theme of knowing as much as we can, while knowing we can’t know it all (cf. Eccl. 3.11). Should this encourage or discourage us from seeking more wisdom? Explain.

*Solomon, who was the wisest of all whether before him or in his own time, to whom God gave breadth of heart, and a flood of contemplation, more abundant than the sand, even he, the more he entered into profundities, the more dizzy he*

*became. And he declared the furthest point of wisdom to be the discovery of how very far away wisdom was from him. Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389), On Theology, Theological Oration 2 (28).21*

*Give me wisdom, Lord, but give me also repentance and grace, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 30.6-9.*

Thank God that He has saved you, and that you are firmly hidden in Him. Set your daily needs before Him, and thank Him in advance for His provision.

*Sing Psalm 30.6-9.*

**Psalm 30.6-9** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

Firmly in You we stand –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Kept by Your gracious hand –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, when You hide Your face, I cry to You for grace.

Living, I'll sing Your praise –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

## 5 Everyone His Snare

*Pray Psalm 30.8-10.*

I cried out to You, O LORD;  
And to the LORD I made supplication:  
“What profit *is there* in my blood,  
When I go down to the pit?  
Will the dust praise You?  
Will it declare Your truth?  
Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me;  
LORD, be my helper!”

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.25, 26.*

*Prepare.*

1. To what did Solomon apply himself? What was he hoping to accomplish?
2. What did he learn about himself instead?

*Meditate.*

Even the best of intentions can be hijacked by sin when we fail to keep watch over our souls (Eph. 5.15-17).

This, in many ways, sums up Solomon’s struggle. He wanted to be wise and to understand the divine economy – a good thing. He also wanted to be mindful of wickedness and folly – to know it for the madness that it is, which could have been a good thing, but which blew up in his face.

He went too far in seeking wisdom – and ended up prideful; and when he turned to testing the waters of wickedness, he found a snare he could not escape: wanton women.

Every person has his or her own snare. Your weakness may not be sex; perhaps it is alcohol or drugs, pride or material possessions, sloth or wastefulness, or just needing to be the center of attention at all times. That snare is likely to be with you as long as you live. Solomon indicates that, even though he had by the time of this writing made the journey back to God, the snare remained: note the present participle, “find” here (v. 26): “I continue to find.” Know your snares and stay away from them (Prov. 1.17).

“You can’t keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from making a nest in your hair.” So Martin Luther is reported to have distinguished between temptation and sin. There will always be temptations. When temptation comes, we will choose one of two paths: recognize the temptation, resist it, and grow through it. Or recognize the temptation, yield to it, and fall through it to sin.

The temptations Solomon struggled with may not be ours; however, pride and folly are in all our hearts. Thus, no matter the form of our particular snare, we must recognize it and guard ourselves from the pride of thinking we can “handle it”, lest we fall into the folly that waits on the other side.

*Reflect.*

1. Do you agree that everyone has his snare, his “besetting sin”? What’s yours? How do you guard against it?
2. What would you say are the keys to not becoming so spiritual that pride destroys us, or so indifferent to sin that we fall into it?
3. When temptation arises, how should we respond so that we find the way of escape?

*Be admonished, O man: for, if such men as these have been brought to ruin through women, what is your righteousness, or what are you among the holy, that you consort with women and with maidens day and night, with much silliness, without fear of God? Clement of Rome (fl. ca. 92-101), Letters on Virginity 2.10*

*Let me not be naïve about sin, Lord, but give me grace to...*

*Pray Psalm 30.10-12.*

Give thanks and praise to God for the many ways He has redeemed and saved you from sin. Mourn, and seek repentance and forgiveness for any lingering sins in your life, so that you can dance with gladness through the coming day.

*Sing Psalm 30.10-12.*

**Psalm 30.10-12** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

Lord, hear our earnest plea –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

and our strong Helper be –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

You turn our tears to song; praises to You belong.

Thanks is our endless song!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

## 6 The Problem with the World

*Pray Psalm 30.7.*

LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong;  
You hid Your face, *and* I was troubled.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.27, 28.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was Solomon trying to “find out”?
2. What did he conclude?

*Meditate.*

G. K. Chesterton was once invited to submit an essay on the question, “What’s wrong with the world?” He answered in two words: “I am.”

Chesterton was saying that each of us brings our own sin to the world’s problems, and each of us must be primarily responsible for reining in that sin, lest it add to the world’s ills. It’s not our business to blame others for the world’s problems because of their sins; rather, we must encourage them to be responsible to live before God and according to His economy.

Solomon assessed the mess that had become his life, “adding one thing to another” (v. 27) to try to make sense of things, and to figure out whom to blame for his folly. He might have felt justified in blaming the women in his life for all his problems. If just one of them had stood up to him, he might not have given in to vanity. But he could not find one such woman. Instead, he pointed the finger at himself – the “one man” (v. 28) who was to blame for the mess that was his life. This is as clear a statement as we’ll get in Ecclesiastes of Solomon’s sense of having been the architect of his own downfall. We must all follow his example.

In a day such as ours, when so much sin is obvious on every hand, the Church errs when it spends all its efforts in denouncing sin by pointing out the evils that exist in the world. Those are obvious to most people, and the ones that aren’t will be soon enough. The Christian community needs to be more vigilant over its own household. If we were more consistent in dealing with our own sins, striving to become a holy community, one Body before the Lord, the quality of our character and service to the world would make our message more credible (cf. Mic. 4.1-8). As it stands, our practice of blaming the world for all the ills has marginalized us in our society, and made us the scorn of our enemies.

*Reflect.*

1. Is it possible that the Church is actually what’s wrong with the world? Explain.
2. To his credit, Solomon, at the end of his life, added everything up and tried to make sense of things. He will tell us his conclusion later; but for now, what should we learn from him about the value of spiritual self-assessment? Should we conduct such assessments? How?
3. Why does it make no sense to blame our problems and shortcomings on others? What should we do instead?

*Although a perfect apprehension of the truth is at present far removed from us by reason of the infirmity of the flesh, yet it is possible, as the Preacher himself has said, to perceive the madness of the impious, and having found it, to say that it is "more bitter than death." Therefore for this reason, as perceiving this and able to find it out, I have written, knowing that to the faithful the detection of impiety is a sufficient information wherein piety consists. Athanasius (295-373), Letters to Monks 1.2*

*Lord, I don't want to be the world's problem, so help me today to...*

*Pray Psalm 30.6-12.*

Use this time of prayer to prepare yourself to "never be moved" from your commitment to Jesus and His Word. Seek the Lord's favor and strength for all the details and activities of your day.

*Sing Psalm 30.6-12.*

**Psalm 30.6-12** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

Firmly in You we stand –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Kept by Your gracious hand –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, when You hide Your face, I cry to You for grace;

Living, I'll sing Your praise –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, hear our earnest plea –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

and our strong Helper be –

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

You turn our tears to song; praises to You belong.

Thanks is our endless song!

    You have lifted us, O Lord!

## 7      Toward Uprightness Again

*Pray Psalm 30.1-3*

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up,  
And have not let my foes rejoice over me.  
O LORD my God, I cried out to You,  
And You healed me.  
O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave;  
You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

*Read Ecclesiastes 7.29.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was God's original plan for people and for creation?
2. Why do we no longer see this?

*Meditate.*

To have been made “upright” (Hebrew: יָשָׁר, *yashar*) means to have been made precisely according to the divine plan. This is a very important idea in Old Testament theology, which Jesus dramatically capitalized on by healing the woman bent over for 18 years (Lk. 13.10-13).

God made men to be one way, but, by our many schemes, men have turned away from God and away from the contentment and wellbeing hinted at in verse 14, the beginning of this section. Certainly, Solomon saw the truth of this in his own life, and he tried to warn his son against making the same mistake.

God has a “scheme” – a divine plan, or, economy – that He intends us to search out and know as fully as we may (v. 25). But when men prefer their own schemes and economies to the worldview God makes known in His Word, only misery and disappointment can result. Uprightness is forsaken, and a cruel and crippling stoop becomes the way of life “under the sun”.

In Psalm 45.5, 6 the Lord Jesus is envisioned on His throne. He holds in His hand the “scepter of uprightiness” (*yashar*), which symbolizes the purpose of His rule. Jesus has, by His work, Word, and Spirit, brought near the Kingdom of God to men. That Kingdom is progressing on earth as it is in heaven, bringing righteousness, peace, and joy to the world, and thus, restoring a measure of the uprightiness God intends.

As sin has pervaded and corrupted every aspect of life in the world, so righteousness, through Jesus Christ, is making all things new. The Christian worldview – life “under heaven” – teaches us to bring the truth and power of God to bear on every aspect of life, so that in all things, even down to the most ordinary daily realities, God is glorified (1 Cor. 10.31) and the world achieves a measure of being turned rightside-up (Acts 17.1-9).

*Reflect.*

1. How would you explain the concept of “uprightiness”? Why is this important?
2. Why can human schemes and projects *never* achieve the uprightiness of God? Why does the world



need the Gospel?

3. Jesus is ruling the world for uprightness. What is your role as a citizen and ambassador in His Kingdom?

*For [the soul] is made to see God and to be enlightened by him; but of its own accord in God's stead it has sought corruptible things and darkness, as the Spirit says somewhere in writing, "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Thus it has been then that people from the first discovered and contrived and imagined evil for themselves. Athanasius (295-373), *Against the Heathen* 7.5-6*

*Thank You, Lord, for saving me. Help me to grow in uprightness today, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 30.1-12.*

Rejoice in the Lord's salvation, and cry out to Him to use you in bringing uprightness to your world.

*Sing Psalm 30.1-12.*

**Psalm 30.1-12** (*Madrid: Come Christians, Join to Sing*)

We will extol Your Name!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Our foes retreat in shame –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

You healed us when we cried; safe shall our souls abide;

Hell's claim have You denied –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, we extol Your Name!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Thanks we with joy proclaim –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Anger shall not prevail; grace will for us avail;

Day frees us from travail –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Firmly in You we stand –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Kept by Your gracious hand –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, when You hide Your face, I cry to You for grace;

Living, I'll sing Your praise –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

Lord, hear our earnest plea –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

and our strong Helper be –

You have lifted us, O Lord!

You turn our tears to song; praises to You belong.

Thanks is our endless song!

You have lifted us, O Lord!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Fearing God is central to this part of Ecclesiastes 7. Why?
2. Solomon emphasizes the value of wisdom over worldly attainments. Why is wisdom so valuable?
3. Why is wisdom so hard to attain? What are the best ways of making progress in wisdom?
4. What can we do to keep from becoming part of what's wrong with our world?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Ecclesiastes 7.14-19? How are you trying to implement that lesson in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

Thank you.