Seize The Day!
Ecclesiastes 11:1-8 (NKJV)

As we continue with our series of messages from the Book of Ecclesiastes, please open your Bibles to Ecclesiastes chapter 11. And let’s read verses 1-8.

ECCLESIASTES 11:1-8 (NKJV)

1 Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days.

2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain, They empty themselves upon the earth; And if a tree falls to the south or the north, In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.

4 He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know what is the way of the wind, Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed, And in the evening do not withhold your hand; For you do not know which will prosper, Either this or that, Or whether both alike will be good.

7 Truly the light is sweet, And it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;

8 But if a man lives many years And rejoices in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. All that is coming is vanity.
INTRODUCTION

Opportunities Missed
There once was a very cautious man
Who never laughed or played;
He never risked, he never tried,
He never sang or prayed.
And when he one day passed away
His insurance was denied;
For since he never really lived,
They claimed he never died!

-----Source Unknown.

Are you one of those people who always plays it safe and never takes any risks? Are you afraid to try something you have never tried before because you might fail? Are you afraid to try something new because you might not like it? Do you sit back and wait on life to come to you or do you go out and meet life head on?

ILLUSTRATION: John Henry Jowett, the nineteenth century British preacher once wrote about how our temptation to self-preservation leads to faithless living. Jowett said.......
In our scripture study today Solomon challenges us to move from a boring, hum drum existence to living life to the fullest, or to coin a familiar phrase, “SEIZE THE DAY!”

First of all, Solomon challenges us to…….

I. Live GENEROUSLY (vs. 1,2)

1. Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days.

2. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

1. One of our biggest temptations in life is to give up or quit too soon when we don't see quick results. But Solomon is telling us there is power in persistence.

-Perhaps some of you fellas have gone fishing and not caught anything all day, and just when you are about to pack up your gear and head home your fishing rod doubles over and on the other end of the line is a huge catfish or large mouth bass. And the next thing you know you're catching fish as soon as you throw your line in the water. THERE IS POWER IN PERSISTENCE! “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.”

-Or perhaps some of you have gone out job hunting, and after a dozen rejections or so, you are discouraged and ready to give up. Then out of the blue you get a phone call from an employer who wants to hire you and wants you to start first thing Monday morning. THERE IS POWER IN PERSISTENCE! “Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.”
2. But Solomon is talking about much more than fishing or job hunting here.

3. Let me share with you the meaning of "Cast your bread upon the waters" and make some practical application to our lives.

4. In verse 1 Solomon is describing the great risks taken by the merchants of his day.

   The merchants would put their merchandise on boats to be shipped to foreign ports, hoping for a profitable return after many days.

   In 1 Kings 10:11 we learn that some of the chief exports of Israel in Solomon's day were gold, precious stones, and rare exotic woods. But the chief export of Israel was "bread" referring to grain.

   When these ships were sent out they would face many dangers.

   - If the ship ran into a storm and wrecked, the merchants would suffer a total loss.
-If enemies attacked the ship the merchandise would be stolen.

-If the ship captain was crooked, and many of them were, he would sell the merchandise and keep the profit for himself.

-And there were no insurance policies in those days to cover losses.

5. So when Solomon says, "Cast your bread upon the waters" (notice plural) what he is saying is, "Don't put all of your grain on one ship. Instead, "cast your bread" or "spread the grain out" to several ships, that way if one ship goes down in a storm or gets attacked by enemies, you won't suffer a total loss."

6. In fact, Solomon goes on to say in verse 2, "spread the grain or bread out seven or eight different ways."

And sure enough, "after many days" the cargo ships would return and according to I Kings 10:15,22 they would be loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes and monkeys from other countries.
7. So what does this mean to you and me in a practical sense? It means “spread your generosity” “spread your blessings around,” “diversify,” or as grandma used to say, “Don't put all of your eggs in one basket.”

8. Let's think of “bread” as any good thing the LORD has blessed us with that we can generously share with others.

(A) Keep casting “the bread” of GOOD DEEDS upon the waters.

Galatians 6:10 (NKJV) Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Keep doing good deeds for others. Keep spreading random acts of kindness and don’t worry about what you will get in return; and don’t concern yourself with who gets the credit, and honor, and glory for the deeds you do, so long as GOD receives the glory.

Keep casting “the bread of good deeds” upon the waters and it will come back to you after many days!
(B) Keep casting “the bread” of your PRAYERS upon the waters.

Luke 18:1 (NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

ILLUSTRATION: For many years a gold prospector in California dug day after day hoping to find gold and strike it rich. Finally after many years of futility, the man gave up, and died a poor man.

Just a few years later, the largest nugget of gold that has ever been unearthed was found just three feet away from where the old prospector stopped digging. If only he had persisted a little while longer.

That's the way many of us are when it comes to our prayers. We pray and pray and pray for a loved one, and seemingly our prayers never get answered. And so we think, “What's the use?” And we stop praying. How many times have we stopped one prayer too short or one day too short of receiving an answer to our prayers?

Let me encourage you to “Keep casting your bread upon the waters”........KEEP PRAYING and don't give up because in His time and in His way God the answer to your prayers will come back to you!
(C) Keep casting “the bread” of your GODLY INFLUENCE.

I Peter 3:1,2 (NKJV) Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

ILLUSTRATION When I was ministering at the Wilkinson Church of Christ, we had five women in the Church who always came to Church alone while their husbands stayed home. The husbands would sometimes show up for Christmas programs or special fellowship dinners, but other than that they never darkened the doors.

While all five of those women invited their husbands to Church, none of them ever nagged them about it. And do you know what? Over the course of time all five of those husbands joined their wives in Church every Sunday. Keep casting “the bread” of your godly influence and after many days it will come back to you!

9. Yes, one way you and I can “SEIZE THE DAY” is by living generously and spreading the blessings God has showered upon us into as many lives as possible!
Secondly, Solomon challenges us to......

II. Live **BOLDLY** (vs. 3-6)

3 If the clouds are full of rain, They empty themselves upon the earth; And if a tree falls to the south or the north, In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.

4 He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know what is the way of the wind, Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed, And in the evening do not withhold your hand. For you do not know which will prosper, Either this or that, Or whether both alike will be good.

1. Solomon now shifts from the example of merchants in verses 1,2 to example of farmers in verses 3-6.

2. If ever there was an occupation that requires taking bold risks of faith, it would be a farmer. Notice again in verse 4 Solomon says, “He who observes the wind will not sow, And he who regards the clouds will not reap.”

3. What Solomon is saying is, “If a farmer waits until the conditions are absolutely perfect he will never get anything done.”

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3. What Solomon is saying is, “If a farmer waits until the conditions are absolutely perfect he will never get anything done.”
4. If the farmer waits to sow his see until there is absolutely no wind blowing, he will never get his crops planted. And if he stays out of the fields every time he sees a dark cloud fearing it might rain, he will never get his crops harvested.

5. You see, a farmer has to take some **BOLD RISKS!** A farmer knows he cannot wait until the conditions are absolutely perfect before he takes action.

6. This same principle applies to all of us as well. If you wait until the conditions are absolutely perfect before you ever do anything, you will never do anything. You will spend your whole life in your little “comfort zone” and before you know it your life will be over and you will have little or nothing to show for your time here on earth.

7. How many opportunities have we let slip right through our fingers because we were too afraid to make a decision or take action?

8. Have you been waiting on the “perfect time” to talk to that lost loved one or friend about Christ, well guess what? The perfect time will never come! **Live boldly! Seize the day!**
9. Have you been waiting on “the perfect time” to start reading your Bible and praying? Well guess what, the perfect time will never come. 
**Live boldly! Seize the day!**

10. Have you been waiting on “the perfect time” to mend that broken friendship? Well guess what, the perfect time will never come! **Live boldly! Seize the day!**

11. Perhaps you have never accepted Christ as your LORD and SAVIOR, and you have been waiting for “the perfect time” to do it. The scriptures plainly teach us that none of us are promised tomorrow. Today is the day of salvation! **Live boldly! Seize the day!**

12. Life doesn't offer any of us any guarantees. As Solomon reminds us in [verse 5](#), only the good LORD HIMSELF knows everything that will happen.

So we have a choice: We can either go through life living in fear, making excuses, scared to make decisions, and afraid to take action.........or we can go through life **LIVING BOLDLY BY FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.......and “SEIZE EACH AND EVERY DAY!”**
Thirdly, Solomon challenges us to.....

III. Live **GRATEFULLY** (vs. 7,8)

7 Truly the light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;

8 But if a man lives many years and rejoices in them all, 
   Yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. 
   All that is coming is vanity.

1. Solomon is reminding us in these verses that none of us knows how long we have to live, so we should be grateful for each and every day the LORD gives us.

2. I don't know about you, but the older I get, I have become more and more grateful to open my eyes each morning to see the first light of day. I often begin my morning prayer with these words: "**Good morning FATHER.** 
   **This is the day that You have made, I will rejoice and be glad in it.**"

3. Solomon reminds us in **verse 8** that over the course of our lifetime all of us will experience **many days of darkness**, so don't ruin the good days whining and complaining, and wallowing in regret over what you could have done or should have done with your life.

4. **LIVE GRATEFULLY.......”SEIZE THE DAY.”**
HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED? I'm not asking you how many birthdays have you had or how long have you existed as a living, breathing human being.

I'm asking you "How long have you lived?" When was the last time you felt passionate about something? When was the last time you felt vibrant and alive? When was the last time you felt a sense of purpose? Jesus said, "I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

The truth is there is so much more to life than many of us have experienced. Many of us have settled for a mundane, hum drum, day-to-day existence when we should **SEIZE EACH AND EVERY DAY** as a precious gift from GOD and live life to the fullest!

Let us **LIVE GENEROUSLY!**
Let us **LIVE BOLDLY!**
Let us **LIVE GRATEFULLY!**

"Seize The Day!"