

## How to Live East of Eden, Part 3: The Quest and the Problem Continued

What does it mean to be truly human and genuinely happy? The Preacher takes us through an exploration of identity, pleasure and achievement. He will help us to escape the tyrannies of cosmic success and self-esteem and the cheats of technique and 'how to' formulas. The alternative is godly and life changing.

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### 1. Introduction: Humanness and Happiness in a broken world

Ch3 <sup>1</sup> There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

<sup>2</sup> a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
<sup>3</sup> a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
<sup>4</sup> a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
<sup>5</sup> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
<sup>6</sup> a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
<sup>7</sup> a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
<sup>8</sup> a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

<sup>9</sup> What do workers gain from their toil? <sup>10</sup> I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. <sup>12</sup> I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. <sup>13</sup> That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. <sup>14</sup> I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

<sup>15</sup> Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account. <sup>16</sup> And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,  
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

## 2. What it means to be human.

"But (said the savage) I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

"In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."  
(Aldous Huxley, Brave New World)

### A. Identity

Who are you? From identity flows a life perspective or world view.

1. Lord Jim and the quest for self- An atheist's conclusion:

"We act in the belief that we are all of one piece, but we are able to cope with things only because we are a succession of fragments. We cannot shake off the sense that we are enduring selves, and yet we know we are not."... "Lord Jim can never know why he jumped. That is his fate. As a result he can never start his life afresh with a clean slate."  
(John Gray; Straw Dogs)

2. Where do Europeans locate their identity- Blood and Soil or ideology?

3. Is self a social construction?

4. Thinking in therapeutic categories

The Preacher shows us a way to find our true humanness and yet be happy. The quest may involve toil and despair, but he is convinced that true wisdom and true happiness is possible under the sun.

## 3. What it means to be happy

'No matter how paradisiacal the circumstance, , man's nature is still one that looks for goals to be achieved, ladders to be climbed and prizes to be won'

(David Attenborough- A lecture on happiness)

A. Not chasing pleasure or achievement.

B. A realistic view of the world

C. A right view of God (Ch 5:1-7)

D. A right view of self

<sup>13</sup> Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked?

<sup>14</sup> When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future. <sup>15</sup> In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: the righteous perishing in their righteousness, and the wicked living long in their wickedness.

<sup>16</sup> Do not be over righteous, neither be overwise- why destroy yourself?

<sup>17</sup> Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool— why die before your time?

<sup>18</sup> It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes.

#### **4. To be properly human is to be truly happy**

A. Escape from self-esteem- Stop feeling good about your self.

B. Guests of a bigger reality

C. Discovering the bigger purpose- Living for the audience of one

D. New Testament postscript

-Be whom you were made to be;

-Be who you are in Christ

-Be who you will one day become.

<sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. .... you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. (Colossians 3)

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