

## SERMON TEXT - ECCLESIASTES 4:4-16

4 Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from a man's envy of his neighbor. This also is vanity and a striving after wind. 5 The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh. 6 Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind.

7 Again, I saw vanity under the sun: 8 one person who has no other, either son or brother, yet there is no end to all his toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. 10 For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! 11 Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? 12 And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better was a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who no longer knew how to take advice. 14 For he went from prison to the throne, though in his own kingdom he had been born poor. 15 I saw all the living who move about under the sun, along with that youth who was to stand in the king's place. 16 There was no end of all the people, all of whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

## TOILING UNDER THE SUN

ECCLESIASTES 4:4-16

*My old man worked twenty years on the line and they let him go  
Now everywhere he goes out looking for work, they just tell him that he's too old  
I was nine years old and he was working at the Metuchen Ford plant assembly line  
Now he just sits on a stool down at the Legion Hall, but I can tell what's on his mind  
Glory days, yeah, goin' back! Glory days, aw, he ain't never had...  
-Bruce Springsteen - **Glory Days** (Unreleased)*

**Theme:** God redeems the vanity of our work!

### #1 Our Toil Gives Us a False Identity

- A. Reminders of Glory: To Work and Keep the Garden (Gen. 2:15)
- B. Life Under the Sun: Envy of Our Neighbor (v. 4)
- C. Gospel Glimpse: One is **Better** Than Two (v. 6)

### #2 Our Toil Isolates Us

- A. Reminders of Glory: It is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18)
- B. Life Under the Sun: For Whom Am I Toiling? (v. 8)
- C. Gospel Glimpse: Two Are **Better** than One (v. 9)

### #3 Our Toil Is Tainted

- A. Reminders of Glory: You will surely die... (Genesis 2:17)
- B. Life Under the Sun: They will not rejoice in him... (v. 16)
- C. Gospel Glimpse: **Better** Was a Wise and Poor Youth (v. 13)

### Other Passages

**Genesis 2:15** *The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

**Genesis 2:18** *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;*

**Genesis 2:17** *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

**Matthew 5:3** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*