

Sermon Follow-up | January 26, 2020

5 Books of Wisdom and Poetry — The Search for Meaning

Focus Passage: Ecclesiastes 1:1–15

Additional Context: Ecclesiastes 1:1–12:14

Corollary Scripture: John 6:35

Other Passages Referenced:

Sermon Recap: Assuming King Solomon as the author, Solomon set about searching for the meaning of life *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. He asks the question, “What can you expect from a life lived ‘under the sun’?” In giving clues to answer the question, the author states that all of life lived “under the sun”—that is on the purely human level apart from God in a broken world—all of life is vanity ... nothingness ... meaningless ... a vapor. Because God created humans in his own image and placed “eternity in their hearts” (Ecc 3:11), humans innately try to find or create meaning for their lives through their work, their possessions, their wisdom, their pleasures, etc. Solomon pretty much experimented with each of the above—working and building ... seeking wisdom and knowledge ... acquiring possessions ... experiencing all kinds of pleasures. Yet, apart from a relationship with God, none of his pursuits satisfied or gave meaning to life. The book concludes with an admonition to “fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecc 12:13). The truth is that only one person has managed to perfectly fear God and keep his commandments and that was Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus can restore a relationship with God that allows humans to live lives that are not limited to “under the sun.” Jesus brings the satisfaction and meaning in life that human were created to enjoy in relationship with the Creator. In John 6:35, Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

Group Gathering

Connect: Making Honest Connections with One Another (Pick one)

1. How did God speak to you through the sermon or your Bible reading this week?
2. In relation to Ecc 1:11, “What do you remember or know about your great-grandparents?”

Grow: Listening to and Learning from God’s Word

1. Ecclesiastes uses the word “vanity/meaningless” 38 times. (It could also be translated, “vapor, breath, or utterly absurd”). Where have or are you struggling to find meaning in your life?
2. When you consider your life “under the sun” apart from God, which of these areas addressed by Solomon are you most prone to search for meaning in your life: work ... knowledge/wisdom ... acquiring wealth/things ... seeking pleasure?
3. Ecclesiastes 1:8 says, “the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.” Does that ring true for you? How or how not?
4. How do you respond to the question of Ecclesiastes 1:10?

Serve: Serving King Jesus and Others, By Living Out and Letting Others Know God's Word

1. As you think about people who do not have a personal relationship with God through Jesus in light of Ecclesiastes, it should not surprise us that our culture has so many catch phrases like “live for the moment” ... “No fear” ... “No regrets” ... “carpe diem”. Christians experience the same trials, frustrations, “meaninglessness” as everyone else in a fallen world. The deciding difference is Jesus and the gospel. How can we help others see meaning in the apparent meaninglessness?
2. Will you pause to reflect and note ways you see God's purpose and meaning in your life to share with the group at the next meeting?
3. Do you know someone struggling to find meaning in life with whom you might share something you're learning through Ecclesiastes? Will you pray about an opportunity to share with them in the coming days?

Further Resources

- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org