

Ecclesiastes: 1-2 | 9/15/19

- Introduction
 - The book of Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon.
 - We are going to look at the scripture from Solomon that tells us how futile the activities of our lives are without God.
 - At first his words of wisdom seem almost depressing since he says that everything under the sun is meaningless, however we find that it is a life without God that is meaningless. A life with God is quite the opposite.
 - We will look to remove the esteem and expectations we put into the things of this world, that the stuff that we have are blessings from God but not the reason to which we live. We can do without them.
 - That whatever we do in life must be in accordance to the will and desires of God, that is what gives them purpose.
- **Read Eccl. 1:1-11**
- King Solomon the preacher (Eccl. 1:1)
 - We know that King Solomon was a very wise and wealthy king that God has blessed abundantly.
 - We know that he made a request to God for wisdom and God made him the wisest man that ever was and ever would be and also the wealthiest man of his lifetime.
 - 1 Kings 3:5,9-13
 - In the book of Ecclesiastes he identifies himself as a preacher or a teacher.
 - This book is not full of his royal decrees but from his role as a teacher and wise counselor.
- **Life without God is futile or meaningless (vain) and does not satisfy. (Eccl. 1:2-11)**
 - The theme of the book is identified in this second verse.
 - Eccl. 1:2
 - “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”
 - Vanity (Vain):
 - A vapor or breath; worthless; futile, inconsequential; having no real value.
 - From a biblical perspective it indicates the fruitlessness of human endeavors.
 - **Solomon the teacher is giving us inspired truth and wisdom from God about the world.**
 - **He gives us the fundamental principle that all works or activities that we perform in this world (without God) have no purpose, the reason to live cannot be found in them.**
 - Pleasure, labor, possessions etc.,
 - This may sound depressing at first, but we must understand this is true when these things are by themselves, when they are done without God.
 - **That without God life has no purpose** (this is expanded through the rest of Ecclesiastes)
 - **That the things of the world fail to satisfy us.**
 - Sure they may provide temporary pleasure or comfort but nothing permanent that we all truly seek.
 - People try to find happiness in all sorts of things like pleasure, fantasy; it could be status or wealth. I'll be happy and have purpose once I'm living the American dream.
 - **Solomon's view is opposite to that of the world.**
 - King Solomon using the wisdom and inspiration given to him from God tells us truths that are completely opposite of the world.

- **The world says that the purpose of life and the reasons for living are the things of the world, the fruit you obtain like wealth and possessions, while Solomon says they are futile (without God)**
- And it's not like King Solomon didn't have wealth and pleasure to be stating this because of envy.
 - He was the wealthiest man of his time.
 - He had literally everything and yet as we see from reading the rest of this book, that God made it clear to him that it was all futile by itself. Without God life has no purpose.
- Jesus stated the same thing:
 - Luke 12:15
 - "He then told them, "Watch out and be on guard against all greed because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions"
- Psalms 39:5-6
 - "You, indeed, have made my days short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor. Certainly, man walks about like a mere shadow. Indeed, they frantically rush around in vain, gathering possessions without knowing who will get them.
- **Reflecting on Solomon's wisdom, that everything in life is meaningless without God. How does this put your life and what you do in perspective?**
- **The fruit of our labor for the world will perish, but the fruit of our labor in heavenly things will endure.**
 - Ecclesiastes 1:3-4
 - "What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remain forever."
 - **The fruit that we gain from our labors in the world are necessary for our survival. We need to work to have income to provide housing, food and clothing for our families.**
 - **But Solomon questions the benefits**, because when you examine all the work that a man puts into his life he works hours and hours and he gains possessions, but for what purpose?
 - Because as the generations come and go your stuff your possessions are given to someone else, just like we may have inherited something from our grandparents or parents we likewise pass along our stuff to our kids.
 - **Then we are never satisfied, no matter what we have.**
 - Ecclesiastes 1:8
 - "All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."
 - **The world continues and moves on day by day, year by year and century by century.**
 - Ecclesiastes 1:5-7
 - **The overall point is that the things of the world are temporary our life is but a vapor. That by relying on them alone for our purpose it is meaningless.**
 - We need to be sure we are not dedicating all of our time and efforts into the temporary but into things that will last an eternity.
 - **Instead we must live life being obedient to God's commands and striving to follow His will for our lives.**
 - Ecclesiastes 12:13
 - "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

- **We need to be consciously aware of how we spend our short time on the earth.**
 - Our labors to share the Gospel to others so that they might hear the voice of God is more important than the fact that we worked 80 hours a week for 40 years.
 - It's more important that we put time and effort into our families and our children than our hobbies.
 - **But these things of this world ARE a blessing to us from God when we are obedient and live our lives to glory Him.**
 - Ecclesiastes 2:24-26a
 - “There is nothing better for a person that that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy,…”
 - In everything we do, we must do it for the glory of God.
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
 - **Jesus and Solomon have made it very clear that putting our hope and reason for living in the “things” of the world is futile.**
 - **These “things” like possessions are not bad and can certainly be blessings from God, however they are not the REASON for life.**
 - **Why do you think Solomon came to his conclusion that in the end “to fear God and keep His commandments” was our primary purpose in life?**
 - **Have you experienced the difference between life being about the things of the world, compared to seeing them as a blessing from God?**
- Human wisdom has its limitations. (Eccl. 1:12-18)
 - **Read Eccl. 1:12-18**
 - With Solomon’s vast wisdom he discovered that there are limitations to humanly wisdom.
 - And who better of a person than to tell us than King Solomon.
 - He had access to a seemingly endless amount of earthly knowledge, he had the wisdom of course that God gave him but because of his status he had vast libraries full of knowledge.
 - Solomon strove to learn as much as he good.
 - Ecclesiastes 1:13 (HCSB)
 - “I applied my mind to seek and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven.”
 - **However Solomon discovered that this to (in of itself) was fruitless and was futile.**
 - No matter how much earthly knowledge he obtained he would never be filled. He would never be fulfilled on knowledge alone.
 - **He even considered the search for wisdom to be a miserable task because it is hard work.**
 - Spending your time learning, studying to obtain knowledge is not easy work, it is hard on the mind and body.
 - It is certainly easier and perhaps more desirable to sit down to play a game on your phone or to watch a movie.
 - **Earthly knowledge is an endless labyrinth that you could spend every waking moment in and never know everything.**
 - **This certainly isn’t to say that spending time learning is wrong in fact it’s quite the opposite as it gives us a better life assuming we are first rooted in God.**

- But knowledge alone without God no matter how much you have accumulated is but a vapor and it will not fulfill you.
- **Solomon found that wisdom could not fix everything**
 - Ecclesiastes 1:15
 - “What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.”
 - **Solomon saw that no vast amount of knowledge, no amount of philosophy and politics could restore the corrupt nature of man.**
 - There is something which through sin, is crooked, in the hearts of men and even in nature that cannot be fixed with earthly knowledge.
 - Because of Adam's sin we now toil in the earth, our flesh naturally desires to sin.
 - No earthly knowledge can fix this only by the grace of God can this be done.
 - **The secular world that does not believe in God, whom believe that knowledge is the key to everything will find that are quite wrong.**
- **Solomon chose to apply to not only wisdom and knowledge but also madness and folly (Eccl. 1:17)**
 - Solomon even went as far as to see where it took him when he applied his mind to madness and folly to get a comparison and of course he realized this too was fruitless.
- **The more we know the more we realize how much we don't know (Eccl. 1:18)**
 - As a person grows in knowledge they will also realize how vast the knowledge of the world is and we can see that there is no end.
 - **Or having more knowledge of the world can produce sorrow because you see what kind of a condition it is in.**
 - But this should not discourage us from the pursuit of knowledge but it should show us that we need to focus on “useful” knowledge.
 - There is not true happiness from knowledge alone but there is true happiness and fulfillment that come from the true knowledge of God.
 - If we increase our heavenly wisdom there will be no sorrow no disappointment no feeling of I wasted 4 years of my life on a degree that I'll never use!
- Earthly knowledge is good but heavenly wisdom is better.
- **Do you see the world putting their hope in knowledge of the world as opposed to God?**
- **Have you put earthly knowledge as a focus instead of heavenly knowledge and wisdom?**
- **Solomon found that pleasure ultimately provided emptiness | Ecclesiastes 2:1-3**
 - Solomon just spoke about earthly wisdom as not being the source of happiness or the reason to live.
 - **Now he has examined pleasure and he determined that this also without God is empty and futile.**
 - Solomon determined that a life of pleasure alone was unfulfilling.
 - **People have always turned to pleasure or a life of fun without seriousness as a reason for living.**
 - That by not having any cares and just having “fun” that this is the way to live life.
 - But I think history has proven Solomon's view that it is futile, that there is not true happiness in pleasure.
 - Pleasure lasts but for a moment and leaves you wanting more.
 - How many celebrities have you seen that live a fulltime party life is miserable?
 - **Pleasure with God is wonderful**
 - Pleasure is certainly not bad; in fact God has provided it to us intentionally.
 - **But if we try to live our lives ONLY for pleasure we will be empty.**
 - If we have God in our lives we can live our lives enjoying the pleasure that he gives us and even when that pleasure goes away the child of God has something that will never leave (unlike the

lost). We have a Hope within us that by being a child of God we will spend an eternity with Christ in Heaven.

- **Have you experienced that trying to live a life of pleasure without God leaves you empty on the inside?**
- **Solomon found that possessions and accomplishments led to emptiness. | Ecclesiastes 2:4-11**
 - ***Read Eccl. 2:4-11***
 - Eccl. 2:11 (HCSB)
 - “When I considered all that I had accomplished and what I had labored to achieve, I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind. There was nothing to be gained under the sun.”
 - Solomon discovered that happiness was not found amongst all his possessions or what he had accomplished in life.
 - He was very wealthy the wealthiest man during his life, yet he found that happiness and the reason to live was not found in them.
 - He had accomplished more than most with his title as a king and having great wisdom and knowledge.
 - Unfortunately that is not the view of society today. Society says that pleasure is found in your status and possessions.
 - But this is futile your title and your possessions do not go with you.
 - **Is it common for people to make their life all about their status in life, or what position they obtained in society? How does this compare to the fleeting joy of pleasure and possessions, does it endure?**
- **Solomon discovered that wisdom is more desirable than madness and folly | Ecclesiastes 2:12-16**
 - Solomon was aware that wisdom has its advantages it still by itself without God will not give someone fulfillment in life.
- **Solomon discovered that work led to emptiness | Ecclesiastes 2:18-23**
 - Like pleasure and earthly Wisdom work by itself is also empty.
 - Your work that you have worked so hard on will just be given to someone else when you are gone.
 - Work by itself without God is futile.
- **The meaning of life is not found in life’s blessings, but with God. | Ecclesiastes 2:24-26**
 - ***Read Eccl. 2:24-26***
 - Scripture has made it clear that trying to find the meaning of life in all of the things of the world is futile, because you will not find it.
 - You cannot find it in possessions or pleasure.
 - **Solomon states who can enjoy life without God? Because without having God in your life your life is meaningless there is no purpose.**
 - When you have God in your life, as in our case once you have received your Salvation and have accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior.
 - **You are no longer looking for the purpose of life you have found it.**
 - **Our primary purpose is to hear the call of God, believe and have faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, and live our lives in obedience and in humble submission.**
 - You see once we have done this and we have understood this gift of eternal life that God has given us.
 - The things of this world are no longer our primary focus or a requirement for our happiness.
 - If you take God out and attempt to live your life only for the things of the world you will be empty, but being full on the inside with Christ we realize that the things of the world like possessions, pleasure are gifts from God.

- Eccl. 2:24
 - “There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and enjoy his work. I have seen that even this is from God’s hand.
- These things are now gifts and blessings and are not a requirement for us to fulfill our lives.
- Someone without God or someone who refuses to listen to God, they have only these things to live for so without them their lives are empty.
- **But by being a child of God we knowing the truth can live our lives without these things because we can see past our temporary life on earth and we know that we have a wonderful eternity ahead of us to spend with God the father and God the son Jesus.**