



# Ecclesiastes: From Vanity to Victory - Ecclesiastes 1-2:11

BILLDUMPHY | Week of Sunday July 5th, 2020

## SERMON TEXT // Ecclesiastes 1-2:11 English Standard Version

<sup>1</sup>The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, <sup>2</sup>vanity of vanities! All is vanity. <sup>3</sup>What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? <sup>4</sup>A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. <sup>5</sup>The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. <sup>6</sup>The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. <sup>7</sup>All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. <sup>8</sup>All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. <sup>9</sup>What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. <sup>10</sup>Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us. <sup>11</sup>There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.

<sup>12</sup>I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. <sup>14</sup>I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. <sup>15</sup>What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. <sup>16</sup>I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." <sup>17</sup>And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. <sup>18</sup>For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

<sup>2:1</sup>I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. <sup>2</sup>I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" <sup>3</sup>I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. <sup>4</sup>I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. <sup>5</sup>I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. <sup>6</sup>I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. <sup>7</sup>I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. <sup>8</sup>I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man.

<sup>9</sup>So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. <sup>10</sup>And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. <sup>11</sup>Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

**SERMON SUMMARY //** Solomon spent the better part of twelve chapters in Ecclesiastes talking about the vanity or emptiness of life that he experienced firsthand. Although he had great wisdom and provision, he squandered much of what God had given him in his pursuit pleasure, material things, and everything else "under the sun". His goal was not to discourage us, but rather to encourage us that the only way for us to have true meaning and purpose in life is to passionately pursue God above all else. It is only when the created becomes subservient to the Creator that we can thrive in our life and our faith.

**SERMON GUIDE //**

1. The Vanity of Life (vv.1:1-11)
2. The Vanity of Wisdom (vv.1:12-18)
3. The Vanity of Self Indulgence (vv.2:1-11)
4. The Vanity of ??

REFLECT. || POINT. || MAKE.



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COMMUNITY GROUPS

Week of Sunday July 5th, 2020

**Question 1 //** Read **Ecclesiastes 1-2:11**. What is something from the text that resonated with you, a truth that encouraged you, or even a question you may have surrounding the text theme?

**Question 2 //** Solomon is thought to be the wisest man ever to live (1 Kings 3:9-14), yet he struggled to be a man after God's own heart like his father David. **What can we learn from Solomon's failures and his writings to help us to avoid the same pitfalls?**

**Question 3 //** In this book, we see the vanity of life, effort, achievement, rivalry, selfish sacrifice, power, greed, accumulation, religion. **Which of these things have are pursuing and coming up empty?** (Think about the example of Tom Brady)

**Question 4 //** In **Matthew 6:19-20** Jesus said, "**Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**" How are you spending your time, talent, and treasure to build treasure in heaven? Are you pursuing the eternal or the temporal?

## Reflection & Prayer

Take some time to reflect upon where you have found true meaning and purpose. Pray that God would reveal things other than him that you've made ultimate in your life and thank him for the gifts he's given to you.

Pray that he would ignite in you a passion to pursue him and him alone for meaning.