

Ecclesiastes 2:1-26
For the week of 4/23, 2023

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

The *Preacher* then describes a different type of pleasure, pleasure that only great wealth can provide. Many people think they would enjoy life if only they had a lot more money than they do right now. However, the *Preacher*, by reminding us of the Solomonic experience of having everything but ending up as an apostate who lost the kingdom, debunks this illusion. The *Preacher* describes his attempt at finding happiness and satisfaction by building a huge home surrounded by luxurious gardens. Furthermore, he hired a staff to support it, and he indulged his desires by having entertainment (singers) and many beautiful women at his beck and call (2:4–8). In his evaluation of this experience recorded in 2:9–11, he asserts that no one had more than he had, and he had everything that he could possibly want. He tried and had the means to fulfill his every desire—money and law were not obstacles. Furthermore, he did not indulge mindlessly in this way. He still worked hard (2:10)—that is, he carried out his experiment wisely, in other words self-reflectively (2:9). Nonetheless, the conclusion that he anticipated in 2:2 rings out loud and clear once again. No matter how hard he tried, everything remained meaningless. Pleasure was a dead end! It could not grant life the significance for which the Teacher searched with such eagerness.¹

Observation (vs. 1-11)

3. Summarize these verses.

Interpretation

4. Is self-indulgence wrong? Why or why not?

¹ August H. Konkel and Tremper Longman III, [*Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Vol 6: Job, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs*](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2006), 269.

5. How do you interpret verse 11?

Application

6. Would having more money bring you satisfaction? Why or why not?

7. What gives you lasting satisfaction? Why?

Observation (vs. 12-17)

8. Put these verses in your own words.

Interpretation

9. How do you define wisdom?

10. Spanish philosopher George Santayana is credited with the adage, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Do these verses make that saying true? Why or why not?

11. Can wisdom and understanding curtail sin? Why or why not? How does Romans 7:15 fit into this?

Application

12. Does attempting to gain wisdom and/or understanding help you in your faith walk with Christ? Why or why not?

Observation (vs. 18-26)

13. What is the Preacher saying in these verses?

Interpretation

Note the Hebrew word for toil is **עמל (a-mal)**, a complex word meaning trouble; acquisition; care; anxiety; need; harm.

14. Take time to note how these multiple meanings are woven through these verses.

Application

15. Can work or the task at hand become a "vexation" for you (vs. 23)?

16. How do you overcome this?