

**Shepherding the Wind
Ecclesiastes 2:18-26
Shepherding Work**

- **Work will not be able to satisfy our deepest human longings and needs. (v. 18-19a)**
- **We must consider not only what we do (because work is good) but also how we do it and why we do it.**
 - **While work is good, it must not be our identity.**
- **Work's returns will not be able to satisfy our deepest human longings and needs. (v. 19b-23)**
- **Mammon is a dangerous god.**
 - **Jewish Proverb: "There are no pockets in shrouds."**
 - **"Money is a medium of exchange. Unless it is spent, it can do little or nothing for you. You can't eat money, but you can use it to buy food. It will not keep you warm, but it will purchase fuel."**
 - **Money is "an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider of everything except happiness."
(WSJ)**
- **God created you to experience and enjoy the gift of life and so glorify Him. (v. 24-26)**
- **This is the first of five "carpe diem" passages in Ecclesiastes.**
 - **The "carpe diem" passages provide an alternate vision of life rather than an answer to the frustrations of life.**
 - **Instead of seeing life as *hebel*, we can see life as a gift from God.**
 - **If we choose to live a life with a focus on what happens "under the sun" we will be frustrated no matter what we do.**
 - **However, when we see life as a gift from a good Creator meant to be enjoyed, the frustrations of life are redeemed, and the goods of life can be received with gratitude.**
 - **"Eating and drinking and enjoying one's work are an expression of the shalom that God intended for creation and humankind in particular."**
 - **Wendell Berry (my favorite poet): "Our responsibility, then, as stewards, the responsibility that inescapably goes with our dominion over the other creatures, according to Revelation 4:11, is to safeguard God's pleasure in His work. And we can do that, I think...by safeguarding our pleasure in His work, and our pleasure in our own work."**
 - **Nicholas Wolterstorff: "At its (shalom's) highest it is enjoyment in one's relationships...To dwell in shalom is to enjoy living before God, to enjoy living in one's physical surroundings, to enjoy living with one's fellows, to enjoy life with one's self."**
 - **The only path to shalom (God's peace) is through Jesus, as Paul says in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**
 - **Barth: "We must also remember that the man who hears and takes to heart the biblical message is not only permitted but plainly forbidden to be anything but merry and cheerful."**