

LIFE UNDER THE SUN

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” —ECCLESIASTES 1:2

What does man gain from all his labour at which he toils under the sun? It's a profound question King Solomon asks to which he responds that everything in life under the sun is meaningless.... utterly meaningless!

When Solomon took the throne, God had blessed him with the spiritual gift of wisdom. He was given riches, power and fame, but during his forty years of reign, he fell away from God. As an old man, he writes about the meaning of life from the perspective of a life lived purely under the sun.

Life lived under the sun is looking at it as it appears at the end of your nose; that is what we can physically see, hear, taste, touch and smell. Solomon's evaluation is that trying to find meaning by looking at life purely in a physical and material way is like trying to grasp the wind in your hand, put it in a bottle and take it home, only to discover you have lost it. This is the default position of life if we are living it with a humanistic perspective that is taken up with material things. Solomon says, “I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind” (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

Solomon's downfall was the age old trap of sex and greed. Old age can be a dangerous time. We think our best years are behind us, and we begin to take off the restraints and disciplines that have kept us in wholesome living. Solomon's horizons had shrunk to no more than the end of his nose, but there is a nagging issue that never leaves him. After

going down all the cul-de-sacs of a life void of God, he tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that God has set eternity into the hearts of men.

What gives life purpose and meaning is the fact that we are designed with eternity in our hearts, which is an inherent sense that there has to be more to life, something bigger outside of ourselves we need to connect with. Eternal life is not about a place, but about a person. It is to know God and to know Christ.

In the end, Solomon comes back to God, and concludes, “Remember your Creator.” As St. Augustine famously wrote in the 5th century, “You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”

PRAYER: Dear Lord, knowing You are my Creator gives sense to this world and true meaning and purpose to my life. Thank You, God.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living my life from a human perspective or relating everything to God?