



SONGS: "Open Up The Heavens", "All That I'm After", "Yes I will"

TITLE: "Chasing after the Mirage"

ICE BREAKER: What things in life make you feel the most comfortable?
(Health, Money, Control, Job, Family, etc.)

BIG IDEA: The Grass is not Greener on the other side. It's a Mirage that keeps you from watering your own lawn. Your Relationship with Jesus!

MAIN SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
Everything Is Meaningless

1 The words of the Teacher,^[a] son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!"
says the Teacher.

"Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless."

3 What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?

4 Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.

5 The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.

7 All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

8 All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.
The eye never has enough of seeing,

nor the ear its fill of hearing.

⁹ What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there anything of which one can say,
“Look! This is something new”?

It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.

¹¹ No one remembers the former generations,
and even those yet to come
will not be remembered
by those who follow them.

OPENING THOUGHTS:

In this opening section of this scripture, the disturbing pessimism the teacher is not offered as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. The author is bringing us to a point of accepting the finality of death, how it breaks all our quests to attain what our flesh desires most out of this life. Having smashed these idols, the author seeks to lead us toward seeing life as “GIFT FROM GOD.” As Gibson concludes: “[the Preacher] is not just saying there’s no gain after we’ve chased the wind; he will insist there’s no need for the chase in the first place.”

MAIN POINTS:

1. The Mirage of Contentment is unattainable outside of Jesus
2. The Devil knows what you WANT, as much as God knows what you NEED
3. Your Purpose in Life is to water your own lawn

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (questions taken from “Living Life Backwards”)

1. What are your impressions of the book Ecclesiastes?
2. Explain the meaning of “vanity” in Ecclesiastes in your own words.
3. List three things you would like to change about your life and three things you would like to stay the same.
4. Can you think of instances when you felt you had “gained” only to find in time you were dissatisfied again?
5. How can it be liberating, rather than frustrating, to know that life is repetitive?
6. Do you find the message of this first chapter depressing or promising?

FURTHER STUDY (IF APPLICABLE)

CHALLENGE: As Solomon discovered, the MIRAGE of CONTENTMENT our world tempts us with will fade and pass away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. We cannot buy into Satan's lie that the grass is greener on the other side. It isn't! And if we believe that it is, we will succumb to our desires, be enslaved by our flesh, held in bondage by the evil one, and lost until we come to our senses and declare like the prodigal son, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21). Let's not be foolish like Solomon or the Prodigal son and test the limits of self-consumption by throwing away what God has graciously given us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord may we only chase after the goodness of your presence. We don't want to fall into the Mirage of Contentment and lie that what we want in this life could ever truly satisfy. Only through the Gospel can we really find what we are looking for. May we stop chasing after the wind, and cling tightly to you the only thing we really need in this life and eternity. We are Prodigal Sons and Daughter that want to come home and receive the Joy of the Living Water found as our inheritance in you.