

MEANINGFULL, PART III

ECCLESIASTES 2:1-11



INTRODUCTION

- Work together to recall some recent advertisement campaigns. What role did the pursuit of pleasure play in those advertisements? What does that say about society?

SERMON REVIEW

- Humans strive to fill their lives with more stuff, only to be left with a greater void.
- Pleasure might feel good for a moment, but it leaves us wanting more!
- Ecclesiastes 2:1-11
- *Wine and folly*. Solomon hosted the biggest parties. His daily provisions (1 Kings 4:22-23) were enough to feed 20,000 people a day! But at the end of it all, the parties didn't give him any meaning.
- *Possessions*. He built beautiful houses and planted vineyards, made gardens and parks. Ironically, it took him 7 years to build the Temple, but his own house took 14 years; and then he built a house for each of his 700 wives. There was no store that could sell something he lacked. But the things he owned held no meaning; no purchase he made could fill the void he felt inside.
- *Luxury*. He had servants to meet every need, and lived completely in ease. But he admitted that such a life was missing the point!
- *Wealth*. He amassed money for himself, to use for his own gain. However, he discovered that money is just a means, and has no meaning in and of itself. Money is a tool, which should be used to bring God more glory!
- *Sex*. He had a massive harem, bringing the total number of women in his life to 1000! All that sex did not bring him lasting satisfaction though. He warns us that the pleasure of sex will not give your life the meaning for which you've been longing.
- He's not saying that life has no pleasure or enjoyment! Solomon is urging us not to be blinded by the pursuit of meaning in pleasure.
- Pleasure is unquenchable. It is momentary, and its effects fade quickly.
- God has set eternity in the human heart (3:11). That is why we think 'there has to be more' when we pursue those things.
- Paul learned to find contentment in all things (Philippians 4:11-13). He had found the "living water" that quenches all thirst (John 4:1-13).
- Jesus said, "Come to me, and I will satisfy your every need." He gives us an abundant, meaningful life.

DISCUSSION

- Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 together. How would you summarize this passage in one sentence?
- Why did the things listed fail to give meaning to Solomon's life?
- Which thing were you most surprised to find on that list? Why were you surprised? And why do you think, after all, Solomon decided to mention it?
- Look at verses 10-11 again. With what instruction is Solomon trying to leave us?
- Solomon says, "God has also set eternity in the human heart" (3:11). Paul later teaches that God designed humans to "seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him" (Acts 17:27). How does this concept reveal the grace and goodness of God?
- Read John 4:1-13. What does Jesus mean by "living water"?
- What deep, fundamental longing is Jesus claiming to satisfy?
- How do we make abundant life in Jesus our primary pursuit, rather than things like pleasure, possessions, and parties?

CHALLENGE

- Determine where you are wasting time in pursuits that will ultimately prove to be meaningless, and make a plan to pursue a life that is full of meaning in Jesus. Be ready to share that plan with someone else, so that they can hold you accountable to it!

CLOSING PRAYER