



# MEANINGLESS

## AUDIO DEVOTIONS

### ON ECCLESIASTES

#### Remember Your Creator

(Ecclesiastes 12:1-8)

- <sup>1</sup> *Remember your Creator in the days of your youth,*  
*before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, “I find no pleasure in them”—*
- <sup>2</sup> *before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars grow dark,*  
*and the clouds return after the rain;*
- <sup>3</sup> *when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop,*  
*when the grinders cease because they are few, and those looking through the windows grow dim;*
- <sup>4</sup> *when the doors to the street are closed and the sound of grinding fades;*  
*when men rise up at the sound of birds, but all their songs grow faint;*
- <sup>5</sup> *when men are afraid of heights and of dangers in the streets;*  
*when the almond tree blossoms and the grasshopper drags himself along and desire no longer is stirred.*  
*Then man goes to his eternal home and mourners go about the streets.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken;*  
*before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well,*
- <sup>7</sup> *and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*
- <sup>8</sup> *“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Everything is meaningless!”*

So far this summer Solomon has made it quite clear that running after anything in this life as an end in itself is futile and useless. The Teacher has shot down one empty pursuit after the next: wealth, wisdom, work, family, youth, pleasure, laughter. It matters not how good or beneficial or how great a blessing it may be, we cannot find eternal transcendent meaning in anything this world has to offer. All are empty because one day all will cease. The day will come when everything in this life is taken from you and me and all is left behind: our family, our money, our fame, our property, our accomplishments, and our bodies.

With poignant metaphors Solomon describes the deterioration that accompanies old age. The loss of strength. The slump of stature. Sights and sounds growing dim and food becoming hard to chew because the teeth are so few. White hair sprouting from the skin like the flowers of the almond tree. Waking up early with the birds but being afraid to go outside, and the desire and pleasure and zest for life disappear. As we age our bodies are preparing to return to the dust from which our first father, Adam, was made.

At last the moment will come when the cord of our life will be snapped and the body and soul will be separated. The whole, beautiful, useful golden bowl that we were, rendered cracked and useless at the water-well, and our spirit will return to the God who fashioned our bodies and imparted our souls in our mother's wombs. In that instant we will either forcefully be made to let go of or willingly release our hold on everything we had and are and were here on earth, and then we will either have nothing left or one thing left. If you have your Creator and cling to him by faith you will have the one and only thing that matters, the one and only who transcends this created world—the only God who reveals himself in the Scriptures as the maker of heaven and earth and the Savior of sinful humanity.

So as we approach the conclusion of Ecclesiastes Solomon urges us at the beginning and end of the section to keep ourselves focused on the only thing that matters, to “Remember your Creator!” when you are young and remember him when you are old and about to die. With him all will be well. With him we need have no fear of

death. The same one who made you will once again receive you into his eternal rest in our heavenly home. Everything else is meaningless!

For your self-reflection:

- 1.) What practical steps can you take to remember your Creator every day until he takes you home?
- 2.) What do you fear most about getting old and dying? How do the Lord's promises to be with you in death and his description of the life to come vanquish those fears?

*Prayer: O merciful, gracious, and wonderful Creator of my body and my soul, forgive me for all the times I have run after the meaningless fluff of life and left you my true life behind. By your Spirit and your Word and Sacraments keep my heart and mind and life intent on you and your forgiving grace until I enter eternal life through Christ Jesus, my Lord. Amen.*