

## *Ecclesiastes – Absurdity Outside of Eden*

### **Opening**

- Reflect on a moment(s) when life suddenly felt fragile, maybe through loss, sickness, or change. How did that moment affect your perspective?
- Slowly read 3x **Ecclesiastes chapter 1. Pay attention to what catches your eye (phrases, words, ideas). Write them down.**

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### **Point 1 – What is *Hevel*? (Ecclesiastes 1:1–2, 14)**

**Summary:** *Hevel* means “vapor”—life is fleeting, frustrating, and perplexing. Ecclesiastes names the ache we all feel.

#### **Head (Understanding):**

- What does the metaphor of vapor/breath reveal about life “under the sun”?
- How do the examples in Ecclesiastes (work, youth, injustice, etc.) capture the human experience?

#### **Heart (Affections):**

- Where do you most feel life’s fleetingness, frustration, or perplexity right now?
- How does it affect your trust in God when life doesn’t “add up”?

#### **Hands (Actions):**

- This week, how can you practice honest lament before God instead of pretending life always makes sense?
- Consider journaling or praying through a specific area of life that feels like *hevel*.

**Summary:** *Life is fleeting, frustrating, and perplexing, and God in Christ enters that absurdity with us.*

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### **Point 2 – Chasing Meaning in a Broken World (Ecclesiastes 1:3–11; 2:1–11, 17)**

**Summary:** Every pursuit—wisdom, pleasure, work, possessions—ultimately fails to provide lasting meaning.

**Head (Understanding):**

- What “roads to meaning” does Qohelet try, and why do they all fall short?
- How do David Foster Wallace’s words echo the truth of Ecclesiastes?

**Heart (Affections):**

- Where do you find yourself most tempted to seek ultimate meaning—in success, reputation, family, pleasure, or something else?
- How do you feel when those pursuits leave you empty?

**Hands (Actions):**

- Identify one way you might shift your worship this week—from creation to the Creator.
- Share with someone you trust in our community a practical step you want to take to resist chasing meaning in a lesser thing (e.g., fasting from social media, practicing gratitude for God’s provision).

**Summary:** *All our striving fails, yet God in Christ enters the absurdity and meets us there.*

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**Point 3 – The Ache for Eden (Ecclesiastes 2:24–26)**

**Summary:** Our longings for permanence, joy, and fullness point us beyond the sun—toward the life we were made for, fulfilled in Christ.

**Head (Understanding):**

- How does Qohelet show that joy, wisdom, and satisfaction come as gifts from God?
- What does C.S. Lewis mean when he says unmet desires point us to another world?

**Heart (Affections):**

- What longings in your own life feel unfulfilled—and how might those desires actually be pointers to God’s kingdom?
- How does it change your perspective to see Jesus embracing the absurdity of the cross and redeeming it in the resurrection?

**Hands (Actions):**

- What is one practice you can adopt this week to cultivate joy in God's daily gifts (e.g., gratitude at meals, Sabbath rest, slowing down to notice beauty)?
- How can you anchor your hope more deeply in Christ instead of in temporary things?

**Summary:** *Our ache points us beyond the sun—and in Christ, God restores the life we were made for.*

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### **Closing Reflection**

- Which part of Ecclesiastes do you resonate with most right now: the fleetingness, the striving, or the ache for Eden?
- How does Jesus bring meaning and hope into that area?
- Close by reading **John 10:10** and praying that God would help you stop chasing vapor and instead anchor your life in Christ.