

Ecclesiastes
Living in Light of the End
Chasing the Wind or Embracing God
Ecclesiastes 1:1-2; 12:9-14
Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / June 4, 2023

I. You'll See What Sin Has Done to Our World

To make sense of Ecclesiastes, you need to start with Genesis, where you see how a good, loving, and personal God created us in His image and placed us in a glorious paradise where we had perfect fellowship with Him and each other.

All of creation was interconnected to a web of life that was tethered to a gracious, loving God.

When Adam and Eve rebelled and pushed away from God, the tether that connected life to God was severed and all of creation collapsed in on itself. Life became crooked, death became real, and futility or frustration became the “new norm.”

See Genesis 3:16-19, 23-24

Genesis 3 is the decree of what sin has done to this world, but Ecclesiastes is the painful and personal memoir of what it feels like to still be created in the image of God, but trying to live apart from God, as if right-here-right-now is enough.

II. You'll See What Life without God Does to Us

It's one thing to consider what life without God does to our world in general, but Solomon helps us to understand what it does to each one of us personally!

- He uses the word “vanity,” “meaningless,” or “futile” 32 times.
- He talks about “striving” or “chasing” after the wind 9 times.
- He describes the despair of living apart from God as “life under the sun” 29 times.

A. Life without God Leaves You Lonely and Empty

Ecclesiastes warns us that the good things of life cannot satisfy if you try to make them ultimate things or “god” things.

Nothing in this world can fill the place in your life that was designed for a relationship with God! If you try to make good things into god things, you'll end up exhausted, frustrated, and disillusioned, with a trail of collateral damage and broken dreams behind you.

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 “And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. ¹¹ Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.”

B. Life without God Feels Repetitive and Futile

Ecclesiastes 2:17 “So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after the wind.”

You cannot escape the sense of futility that is inherent in this broken world.

If you’ve ever been frustrated, then you’re close to being biblical because you’re bumping up against something God placed here in this world that was meant to push us to look up and long for home.

See Romans 8:19-26

C. Life without God Leaves You Asking the Wrong Questions

Solomon’s memoir is filled with questions—32 of them—but the bulk of his questions are rhetorical, cynical, and focused on why life is so disappointing.

Knowing who is with me in the midst of this mess is far more helpful than explanations as to why it is happening.

“Boldly asking God for help based upon who He is and what He’s promised eclipses the complaints. I say ‘eclipses’ for a reason. It captures the fact that *why* questions are not always answered before we move into requests. Just as one heavenly body moves into the shadow of another during an eclipse, so too the *why* questions and the *who* questions coexist, but not equally. Who God is becomes the more prominent reality while not removing the lingering questions. As we make our bold requests, ‘Why is this happening?’ moves into the shadow of ‘Who is God?’”

~ Mark Vroegop, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, pp. 57-58

In His mercy, God designed the pain and futility of this world to push you outside of the time-bound to reconnect with Him through His Son, so that you can rest in the midst of mess...and so that you can know you’re not home yet.

III. You’ll See Why God Had to Give Us His Son

We cannot fix ourselves and we cannot fix this world no matter how hard we try because it’s more than broken; it’s groaning under the curse of sin.

Ecclesiastes 1:15 “What is crooked cannot be made straight...”

That’s why God has to do to for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Matthew 12:42 (NIV) “...now One who is greater than Solomon is here.” (NIV)

Jesus lived the only perfect life and died on the cross in payment for our sins so that people, as well as this entire creation, could be redeemed and reconciled back to our Creator God.

1 Corinthians 1:30 “...[He] became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”