

Ecclesiastes

Living in Light of the End

Breath?

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / June 11, 2023

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. ²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ³ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? ⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. ⁵ The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. ⁶ The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. ⁷ All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. ⁸ All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us. ¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: ***Thanks Be To God!***

I. Your life is more like a breath than anything else!

Ecclesiastes 1:2 “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

The Hebrew word **הֶבֶל** *hebel* is translated as “breath” or “breeze.” Solomon is saying your life is like a breath or a bit of smoke.

Psalms 39:5-6, 11 “Behold, You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing before You. Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! *Selah* ⁶ Surely a man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nothing they are in turmoil; man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather... ¹¹ When You discipline a man with rebukes for sin, you consume like a moth what is dear to him; surely all mankind is a mere breath! *Selah*”

Psalms 144:3-4 “O Lord, what is man that You regard him, or the son of man that You think of him? ⁴ Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.”

5 Ways Your Life Is Like A Breath

1. Your life is **slippery**.

Ecclesiastes 1:3 “What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”

Psalms 103:15-16 “As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; ¹⁶ for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.”

2. Your life is **short**.

Ecclesiastes 1:4 “A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.”

Job 7:6 “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle and come to their end without hope.”

Psalms 102:3 “For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace.”

3. Your life is **stuck on repeat**.

Ecclesiastes 1:5-7 “The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. ⁶ The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. ⁷ All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.”

4. Your life is **never satisfied**.

Ecclesiastes 1:8 “All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”

5. Your life is **short-term**.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, ‘See, this is new?’ It has been already in the ages before us. ¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.”

II. Since you’re going to die, you better learn how to live!

Ephesians 5:15-17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

If you see your life as nothing more than fruitless repetition, you’ll miss out on the rhythm God has for you to walk with Him and others in fruitfulness.

If you see your life as part of a God-designed rhythm for His glory and our good, you won’t be brought down by repetition. Instead, you’ll embrace the opportunity to dedicate your life to learning how to walk in accordance with God and His Word, making the best of the time God has given you.

Galatians 5:25 “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. Generally speaking, do you find the book of Ecclesiastes to be depressing/discouraging or promising/encouraging? Why?
2. Name a time in your life where you felt as if you had “gained” something, only to be dissatisfied again before long.
3. What are 3 things in your life you’d like to change? What are 3 things in your life you’d like to stay the same?
4. When you consider the repetitive rhythm of your life, do you find yourself frustrated or encouraged? Why?
5. Pastor Peter said it can be unbelievably liberating to embrace the repetitive rhythm of life. What did he mean?