

ECCLESIASTES

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Ecclesiastes chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God. This evening we will be finishing up the book of Ecclesiastes and I think this book is a good reminder of the vanity, the emptiness that the world has for us apart from Christ. Solomon had it all, more than any person today and yet there was no real satisfaction in his life.

Remember how this book began, “**‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher; ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’**” Notice that Solomon did not say, “**‘Most things are vain!’**” He did not say, “**‘Just a few things are vain!’**” He said, “**‘All is vanity!’**” And of all people Solomon knew this very well because he sought after all you could imagine in life and in the end it was still empty, he was still not satisfied.

This evening we have a couple more chapters to get through of trying to find life “**under the sun**” before Solomon gets refocused back on the One that can bring satisfaction to his life and to our life, the Lord. With that said, let’s begin reading in Ecclesiastes chapter 10, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ECCLESIASTES 10**VERSE 1**

1. I know this is kind of a strange statement by Solomon but I think this is born out of what Solomon said in the last part of Ecclesiastes 9:18, “**... But one sinner destroys much good.**” In other words, just as some beautiful smelling perfume can become foul smelling because of a little fly dying in it, so too can a person’s life when just a little sin is added to it.

You see, one bad decision can cause many problems. Kidner put it like this, “There are endless instances of prizes forfeited and good beginning marred in a single reckless moment – not only by the irresponsible, such as Esau, but by the sorely tried, such as Moses and Aaron.”

We need to be wise because we can spend years building up our reputation and yet one mistake can destroy it. All the years of doing good are forgotten because of one bad decision. Be wise in what you do for it will keep you healthy and strong. Ecclesiastes 10:1 reminds us that ***even small things have consequences.***

2. J. Vernon McGee gives to us this true story and how one bad decision can cause many problems. He wrote,

Life is full of illustrations of this truth. One night on the town can mean a lifetime in the darkness of disease or even death. An officer in a church I served years ago told me, "I was brought up in a Christian home, and I really never did run around, but when I went away from home and got a job, I went out with the fellows one night. That is the only night in my life that I went out, and that is the night I got a venereal disease. I had to postpone marriage for several years, and I had to break off an engagement with a sweet, lovely girl." Just one dead fly will ruin the ointment of the apothecary. How tragic!

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Volume III, p. 132

VERSES 2-3

1. The right hand was the place of power and honor. The left hand was the place of shame and dishonor. Thus, Solomon is saying that a wise person will do what is right and a fool what is wrong.

2. Solomon goes on to say that a fool does not need to wear a sign saying that he is a fool because his actions, the things that he says lets everyone know. Now our wisdom comes from above and it is good. The problem comes when we know what God wants and we decide to do our own thing because we think we know better, and that is just plain foolishness!

VERSE 4

1. We were just talking about the fool and now Solomon is speaking of someone rising up against you, like your boss. And he is reaming you out. What do you do? For many today they would just walk off the job, storm out of the office. But before you go you let your boss have it! Solomon is saying that even in a difficult situation we need to remain at our post in a sense, stay on the job. Maybe through this the Lord is trying to show us something. Be wise! Remember what Solomon said in Proverbs 15:1-2, “**A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.**”

VERSES 5-7

1. Isn't it interesting the people that drive a society today! We have sin that is promoted by movie stars, by people in government, by the television industry and movie industry and yet when it comes to people that really influence a society, they are ignored. I guess I should say those that influence a society in a positive way, they are ignored, they are put down.

And Solomon is just speaking of the fools that are put into positions of leadership where people look up to them. This is not fair in Solomon's eyes and it is not right. All we can do is live out our lives in such a way that we touch them for Jesus. But as Solomon said in Proverbs 19:10, “**Luxury is not fitting for a fool, Much less for a servant to rule over princes.**” That truly is life “**under the sun**” and that is where many people are living today, apart from God!

VERSES 8-9

1. One of the things that people do that get them in all kinds of trouble is that they don't use wisdom. They do something without even thinking of the consequences of what the outcome might be. So I see here Solomon speaking of exercising wisdom in the things we do in life. If you dig a pit, be careful you don't fall into it. If you are knocking down walls, remember in that part of the world snakes like to hide in the walls. That means you need to be careful so you do not get bit by one. When you are quarrying stone, pay attention, you may be hurt by these rocks. And if you are cutting wood, watch out so the wood won't break apart and injure you. Pay attention in what you are doing, think before you act!

2. Listen to how Alexander Maclaren makes this spiritual application in regards to the breaking down of a wall and being bitten by a serpent. He wrote, "Whoso pulls down the wall of temperance [restraint], a serpent will bite him. Trembling hands, broken constitutions, ruined reputations, vanished ambitions, wasted lives, poverty, shame, and enfeebled will, death – these are the serpents that bite, in many cases, the transgressor." Be wise!

VERSE 10

1. We love shortcuts don't we! Thus, why take the time to sharpen a tool, just do the work. And in the end it is going to be harder and take you longer to do the work with a dull tool. You need to put in the time to sharpen the tool before you use it. In other words, if you exercise some wisdom in a given situation the work will get done faster and it will be easier. As Leupold said, "Wisdom prepares the way for success."

2. J. Vernon McGee puts this into perspective for us as he wrote,

A young man told me the other day that God had called him to preach, and he wanted to take a short course to prepare himself. I said, “Young man, don’t do that. Sharpen your hoe. Sharpen your sword. Don’t go out untrained. Take the time for sharpening.” It is foolish to take out a dull hoe and expect to cut down many weeds. Sharpen the hoe and then move in on the weed patch. The Book of Ecclesiastes has some great lessons for us to learn. . . .

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Volume III, p. 133

VERSE 11

1. Think of those snake charmers, as they play the flute the cobra or whatever snake they use is happy. But once the music stops, watch out. How does that apply to this “**babbler**”? Solomon is saying that we need to be wise with those that are story tellers because if they are not looked up to, if attention is drawn away from them, if the music stops in a sense, they will bite you with their words that they say of you. Again, be wise!

VERSES 12-15

1. Here Solomon pictures a fool who can't shut up. He keeps talking and talking about absolutely nothing. He looks and sounds like a madman. This person is so smart in his own eyes, an expert in everything, and yet he can't find his way around the city. If he doesn't know where he is going then how in the world can he tell anyone else? Interesting point and yet how often this is done. They are foolish and they don't know when to stop talking and I think that is the point with that phrase, "**For they do not even know how to go to the city!**" The idea with that phrase may become clearer if we update it to our day. We would say, "He doesn't know when to come out of the rain!" No common sense, just plain foolishness!

2. Solomon, as he continues to look at life "**under the sun**" sees the future as unattainable, who can know it. He says, "**No man knows what is to be; Who can tell him what will be after him?**" God knows it and He directs our life but apart from Him, it is fatalistic as you look at the future. And yes, man may try to boast of what he is going to do but that is all it is, boasting. Remember the story in Luke 12:18-20 of the rich man and all he was going to do. We are told, "**So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'**" But God said to him, "**Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?**"

None of us know what is going to happen next, all we can do is wait upon the Lord, be directed by Him. It is as James 4:13-16 tells us, **“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.”**

James is rebuking them for boasting about what they were going to do, the plans they had made apart from God’s will, apart from God’s plans for their life. It negates the sovereignty of God and replaces it with their will and that is just plain arrogance on their part, it is not humility!

Paul, as he was in Ephesus said this in Acts 18:19-21, **“So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, ‘I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.’ And he sailed from Ephesus.”**

And again in I Corinthians 4:19 Paul said, **“But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.”** That is the correct perspective to have, our lives are in the hands of God and it is His will that will be accomplished, not ours!

VERSES 16-17

1. I don't believe the issue here is a young king because there were young kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah that were good. Then what is he talking about? I think he is speaking about someone who is immature, someone who is impressionable like a child. And because of his immaturity it is party time in the kingdom. Which sounds great but if the people are partying who is working? You see the trouble that this immature king can bring to a kingdom or nation. And Solomon wants us to understand the importance of having the right people in leadership positions or the nation will be in trouble. And this also applies to the church; you do not want someone who is immature, impressionable, someone who is all over the place never knowing what he is doing to be in a leadership position within the church. That is not wise!

VERSES 18-19

1. Here we see Solomon speak of the slothful man, and back in Proverbs he had a lot to say about him and not in a good way. And the picture here is that a fool is not interested in taking care of his family, repairing the house, only in having a good time, satisfying the flesh. And so everything is falling apart around him, his life is a mess, but he tries to satisfy himself by buying things.

And look at our nation today, “Grab for all the gusto you can!” “Take it easy!” “Have a good day!” “It doesn’t get any better than this!” Life “**under the sun**” is seen as a big party. Do as little as you have to and have as much fun as you can and you will enjoy your life. If that is true then why are so many people depressed today? The reason is simple, this is not the solution but it is the problem. If you are focused on the things of this world then listen to what Jesus said in Luke 12:15, “**... ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’**” And yet we say, “He who dies with the most toys, wins!” *NOT!* But if that is the way you want to live, then you are a fool.

Now please understand that Solomon is not saying that we can’t enjoy ourselves, have fun, we can. And the reason we can is because we are not living “**under the sun**” but “*in the Son of God*” and that makes all the difference in the world!

VERSE 20

1. First of all we are not to curse the king or leader but we are to honor him. And Solomon goes as far as to say “**Do not curse the king, even in your thought.**” And it is a New Testament idea as Peter tells us in I Peter 2:13-17, “**Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men - as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**”

We tend to think that it is much worse today than it was in Peter's day and thus, we have the right to rebel, to protest, to have sit-ins, to cause chaos so we can get this country back on track! I disagree.

The Roman Empire was not a democracy and it was no friend to Christians. Immorality ran from the top of the government officials down to the common people. And yet, Peter tells us we are to honor the king and obey the laws of the land. Jesus tells us we are to pay taxes, (Matthew 22:17-21). Paul in Titus 3:1-2 tells us, **“Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.”**

And in Romans 13:1-7 we are told, **“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”** That is what God has told us to do unless what the government or leaders are telling us goes against the Word of God! Then we are not to follow what they are saying in regards to like making you have an abortion and-so-on. Obey God in that, not man.

2. Now back in Ecclesiastes, what is this “**For a bird of the air may carry your voice, and a bird in flight may tell the matter**”? Remember the saying, “A little bird told me.” In other words, be careful what you say and who you say it to. I am sure you have experienced this before. You tell someone something in confidence and before you know it everyone knows it!

And I think this is a good lesson for us to learn. Whatever you say about someone you should count on it getting back to them and then maybe you won't share that with someone! Maybe, if it is a problem you will go to the person in which you have the problem with! Or maybe it is nothing and you need to let it go!

ECCLESIASTES 11

VERSE 1

1. Casting grain in the water seems foolish. But this idea may come from the practice of casting the grain in the overflowing Nile River so that when the water recedes the grain will remain in the rich and fertile soil that the Nile left behind. It seems foolish to do, and yet if you do, you will receive a bountiful harvest.

How can we apply that to our own lives? Think about sharing the Gospel message and how you can't see the fruit of what you have done right away. But in time, as the Word of God takes root in their lives there is fruit that is produced you might say. There will be a harvest.

Also it can be speaking of helping those in need. Yes, they will not be able to repay you back but you didn't give them the money with the hope of getting it back. You wanted to bless them. It is as Proverbs 19:17 says, "**He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.**" And Jesus said in Luke 6:38, "**Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.**"

VERSE 2

1. I think the idea here is that we are to help others out while we have a chance because you don't know what tomorrow may bring. I think that is how this verse is to be taken although some see it as saying, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." In other words, invest in several things so if one goes bad you have others to fall back on.

VERSES 3-4

1. I think the idea here is that of sowing the seed of God's Word. You see, a person who is going to wait to sow the seed until there are ideal weather conditions is never going to sow the seed. Life's circumstances may never be ideal and thus, we should not let that stop us from sowing the seed of God's Word!

Remember the story of Benaiah, one of David's mighty men? Benaiah went out and defeated a lion, the enemy, on a snowy day and in a pit. Not ideal conditions, but he didn't let that stop him. (II Samuel 23:20-22). As one person put it, "The man who waits for certainty will wait forever." How true that is! There is never a good time to share the Word of God with people, there will always be a distraction, there will always be something that will get in the way. Don't let that stop you, just as the Nike ad says, "Just do it!"

Spurgeon sums this up for us like this, "If we keep on observing circumstances, instead of trusting God, we shall be guilty of disobedience. God bids me sow: I do not sow, because the wind would blow some of my seed away. God bids me reap: I do not reap, because there is a black cloud there, and before I can house the harvest, some of it may be spoiled. I may say what I like; but I am guilty of disobedience." Exactly!

VERSES 5-6

1. Let's face it, none of us understand, none of us know all the reasons God does what He does. We don't understand why He does some things. We don't base what we do on what we don't know but what we do know of God, who He is and what He has called us to do. The Word of God instructs us and gives to us what we need.

Thus, we are called to sow the seed of God's Word in the field or this world. Then it is in the hands of God as His Spirit works on the hearts of the people. Never stop sowing, for once you do, the fruit will disappear! Don't give up; keep moving forward and God will bring the increase!

VERSES 7-8

1. Wow, don't you feel better now! If you are feeling down, Solomon was not the person to go to I guess. Notice what he is saying from his "**under the sun**" perspective. I think that Solomon is speaking of a person's youth when he says "**the light is sweet.**" And how true that is, the blessings of youth that we don't recognize until we get old!

Think about it. To be young again, to be healthy, strong, have all kinds of energy, able to get out of bed without hurting your back! And then life is quickly by, you are old, everything hurts, you are not even sure what some of those things are but they hurt. Your energy is gone, your strength is gone and as Solomon said, "**All that is coming is vanity.**" We have to get out of this book quickly, I am sounding like Solomon!

2. Remember that Solomon was just talking about going out and doing the work of God, sowing the seed of God's Word you might say. And thus, when you are young, do all you can for one day you will not be able to do all that you want, you will not be able to accomplish those things. Don't let life pass you by because "**All that is coming is vanity.**" Sorry.

VERSES 9-10

1. There is nothing wrong with enjoying life; the key is enjoying life in the Lord and what He has given to us and not in the sinfulness of this world. I think children should enjoy life, they should remain children and we are trying to make them grow up without them being children. That is wrong.

When I was growing up I never thought I would become an adult. My wife is still wondering when that is going to happen, but that is another story. But it seemed so long in coming. Now, looking back, it seems to go by so fast. I am 54 years old, no longer mid-life because I am not going to live to 108. That is how fast it goes by, it is like a vapor, here one minute and gone the next. And since life goes by so quickly children should enjoy their childhood while they can. Too often we force them to be adults. Let them have fun for childhood passes away so quickly.

And Solomon concludes this chapter by saying, “**For childhood and youth are vanity.**” I think he covered everything, life is vain, it is empty as you live “**under the sun.**”

2. As we move into chapter 12 eventually we will come to the conclusion of this experiment in living your life “**under the sun.**” But it has been a long, difficult and empty journey for Solomon until he gets refocused on the Lord. J. Vernon McGee put it like this,

We have seen the experiments that Solomon made in life. He is probably the only man who ever lived who was able to experiment in all of these different areas, attempting to find a solution and satisfaction apart from God. Throughout Ecclesiastes the key expression has been “under the sun.” He tried nature and natural science as his first experiment.

A great many people today feel that they will solve their problems by getting back to nature. There is a great exodus out of the cities and into the suburbs and beyond the suburbs to a little cabin by a lake or by a river or up in the mountains. “Let’s get away from it all. Let’s get back to nature.” Well, this didn’t solve Solomon’s problems, and it will not solve our problems. So Solomon tried wisdom and philosophy; he tried pleasure and materialism; he experimented with fatalism; he tried living life for self. He turned to religion and found ritual but no reality. Then he tried to find the answer in wealth. Finally Solomon tried the good life, the life of the moralist, which he found to be an insipid [bland] sort of existence. I think that is why the young people today rebel against it.

Solomon now comes to his final conclusion in this chapter.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Volume III, p. 136

So let’s read on and see what Solomon has to say, just a few more verses on vanity and then we will come to the conclusion of this whole matter!

ECCLESIASTES 12**VERSE 1**

1. You hear young people today speaking of having fun and they will deal with God when they get older. You can enjoy your youth and still serve the Creator. There is great joy in serving the King and learning to be content with what God has given each of us. Solomon learned the hard way, and is instructing us to learn from his mistakes and not wait till the end of your life to get right with God. In other words, get right with God now, while there is still time! Today is the day of salvation, don't wait because as you get older we tend to become harder to the things of God.

2. Not only that but I have seen children that have grown up in Christian homes and rebelled against the Lord, turned from Him and their actions did not bless their lives, it hurt them. The things they got involved in did not make them better but often hurt them. Don't forget your Creator!

3. Now Solomon is going to give us a picture of old age by using an allegory. It is a picture of an old man shuffling his way to the grave! And when you look at life outside of God, I guess that is all you have to look forward to, ***THE GRAVE!*** Hang in there, the conclusion is coming!

VERSES 2-5

1. Here is a picture of life as we get older and keep in mind that there are over 72,000

American's that are 100 years of age or older today!

- ***Keepers of the house tremble*** – this speaks of our arms and our hands that begin to tremble.
- ***Strong men bow down*** – This speaks of how our legs and knees begin to sag.
- ***Grinders cease, they are few*** – I think you can get this one. It is speaking of our teeth and how we are losing our teeth which make it difficult to eat.
- ***Windows grow dim*** – Again I think this is pretty easy. It speaks of our eyesight and how it becomes poor, our eyesight becomes dim.
- ***Doors are shut*** – I believe this is speaking of our hearing and how it begins to fail us, it is more difficult to hear things. And for some strange reason it becomes more difficult to hear our wives? Go figure!
- ***Rises up easily*** – The idea here is that you just can't sleep at night.
- ***Daughters of music brought low*** – Because it is more difficult to hear you don't appreciate music as much.
- ***Afraid of heights*** – I can attest to this one, acrophobia, I am afraid of heights more now than ever before!
- ***Terrors in the way*** – As people get older they become frailer and they are afraid to go out, they become fearful of life.
- ***Almond tree blossoms*** – We will just move on from here very quickly as this is just speaking of how older people have gray hair.
- ***Grasshopper is a burden*** – I think Solomon is saying that we once were vibrant, had lots of energy but now we have become very weak.
- ***Desire fails*** – Here we see that their natural appetite diminishes. We see this with food, activity and even sexual desire.
- ***Man goes to his eternal home*** - The end result is DEATH!

Don't you feel better now? Hang in there, the end is getting closer. No, not the end of your life, well I guess it is because you are older than you were when you came in here this evening, but I am speaking about the end of this book and the wonderful, encouraging conclusion that Solomon will come to. But let me help you out just a bit with this little poem from Fanny Crosby that will lead us into the next few verses. It goes like this,

Some day the silver cord will break
 And I no more as now shall sing
 But oh the joy when I shall wake
 Within the palace of the King.

- Fanny J. Crosby, Saved by Grace

VERSES 6-8

1. In the end our light goes out, the cord of life is cut, and through it all Solomon sees life as being totally empty, unfulfilling, unsatisfying, unfair and frustrating. Solomon started this book in this same spot, seeing life as empty, vain, meaningless and he is right back where he started after going through all that life “under the sun” can give you. And like Solomon said, ““Vanity of vanities,’ says the preacher, ‘All is vanity.’” Now don't give up yet, we are coming to the jewel of the book!

VERSES 9-10

1. I find this very interesting? Solomon was struggling with the meaning of life. He was struggling trying to find satisfaction in life. And even though he had these struggles he continued to study. Solomon wrote over 3,000 Proverbs in his life, he was a very educated man. (I Kings 4:32-33). He wrote 1,005 songs, in which we only have 1 of them, the Song of Solomon. He studied the following subjects:

- *THE STUDY OF TREES - DENDROLOGIST*
- *THE STUDY OF ANIMALS - ZOOLOGIST*
- *THE STUDY OF BIRDS - ORNITHOLOGIST*
- *THE STUDY OF INSECTS - ENTOMOLOGIST*
- *THE STUDY OF FISH - ICHTHYOLOGIST*

He was a brilliant man and yet he struggled even though he taught the people the truth. Why did he struggle so much? The reason is simple, Solomon tried to find meaning to life apart from God or “**under the sun**” and he could not find it. He knew the truth; he just did not apply it to his own life. That is a good warning to each of us.

I think it is important for us to study the Scriptures but if you don't apply what you are learning to your life you are a fool. God's Word is not just a bunch of information; they are there to teach us how to live out our lives. May we learn the lesson that Solomon had closed his eyes to for many years!

VERSE 11

1. Solomon makes some important points regarding what we speak. He says that the words we speak are like goads that are used to prod cattle, to get them moving. In other words, when you speak the truth, the Word of God, it will goad people or drive them forward, it will move them in the right direction.

Not only is the Word of God like a goad, but it is also like a well driven nail. In other words, God's Word will nail down the truth and it will be like a nail piercing their heart. It is as Hebrews 4:12 says, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

And please understand that these words do not come from our wisdom, our knowledge but they come from our Shepherd, Jesus Christ! In John 1:14 we are told, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

Also, in Hebrews 1:1-2 we are told, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”**

So the Lord is speaking to us through His Word and it moves us in the right direction, He nails down the truth for us through His Word and He pierces our heart to keep us sensitive to His leading.

VERSE 12

1. This is so true today. We have books and more books on anything and everything you can imagine, and even some you can't imagine! And now with the Internet we are overwhelmed with information. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. In an article called “How Much Information Is There in the World?” from February 11, 2011 we are told,

So how much information is there in the world? How much has it grown?

Prepare for some big numbers:

- Looking at both digital memory and analog devices, the researchers calculate that humankind is able to store at least 295 exabytes of information. (Yes, that's a number with 20 zeroes in it.)
- Put another way, if a single star is a bit of information, that's a galaxy of information for every person in the world. That's 315 times the number of grains of sand in the world. But it's still less than one percent of the information that is stored in all the DNA molecules of a human being.
- 2002 could be considered the beginning of the digital age, the first year worldwide digital storage capacity overtook total analog capacity. As of 2007, almost 94 percent of our memory is in digital form.
- In 2007, humankind successfully sent 1.9 zettabytes of information through broadcast technology such as televisions and GPS. That's equivalent to every person in the world reading 174 newspapers every day.
- On two-way communications technology, such as cell phones, humankind shared 65 exabytes of information through telecommunications in 2007, the equivalent of every person in the world communicating the contents of six newspapers every day.
- In 2007, all the general-purpose computers in the world computed 6.4×10^{18} instructions per second, in the same general order of magnitude as the number of nerve impulses executed by a single human brain. Doing these instructions by hand would take 2,200 times the period since the Big Bang.
- From 1986 to 2007, the period of time examined in the study, worldwide computing capacity grew 58 percent a year, ten times faster than the United States' GDP.
- Telecommunications grew 28 percent annually, and storage capacity grew 23 percent a year.

- <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/02/110210141219.htm>

Make no mistake about it, information will come and go and what was today's truth will be cast aside tomorrow. But God's Word does not change; it does not have to change because what was written back then is still for us today! Books will come and go, many of the things that are spoken as truth today will be cast aside tomorrow. But the Word of God is unchanging. It will last forever.

It is as Psalm 19:7-11 says of God's Word, **"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward."**

2. Now if Solomon ended here, it truly would be depressing, but he doesn't. But why in the world did we have to go through almost 12 complete chapters of dark, gloomy ideas that left us hopeless? Think of it this way. When a diamond is displayed it is placed in a black box or surrounded by black to show off its beauty. That is exactly what we see here. Solomon's pursuits of life **"under the sun"** or outside of God were dark, they were empty, they were without hope. But now here is the diamond that shines forth brightly. You see, everything he has said so far is leading up to this final conclusion.

VERSES 13-14

1. How often it takes us more than it should to come to the conclusion of the matter. And the reason it does so often is that we try to do these things, come to the answer to these things apart from God or as Solomon said, **"under the sun."** And the end result is that we find vanity, emptiness apart from God!

Solomon finally came to the end of himself and got refocused back on the Lord and his conclusion or the whole reason we exist is to fear God and keep His Words. If you do you will find true fulfillment in life. If He is the priority in your life, then you will be satisfied, content with what He has given you. That is our duty and in fulfilling that duty is satisfaction. Jesus put it this way in Matthew 6:33 when He said, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**” It is as Kidner wrote, “*Fear God* is a call that puts us in our place, and all other fears, hopes, and admirations in their place.”

2. Keep in mind that our satisfaction, our contentment comes from the Lord and not the outward circumstances we face in life. It is out of that relationship with the Lord that we can deal with those outward circumstances and learn how to be content, how to be satisfied in all that we go through because of the Lord.

But there is even more than that. We can see that when this life is over we will enter into eternity with the Lord. Remember what Paul said in Romans 8:28-29, “**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**”

God is working all things to conform us into His image! And I do understand it is not always easy and most of the time it is not. That is why we have to see things through the light of God. It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 4:16-5:8 as he puts life into perspective for us. He wrote, **“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”**

Perspective is everything and when we lose that perspective and focus on this world we will see things as empty, vain. Keep your eyes on the Lord! It is as Trapp wrote, “From that to this should be every man’s pilgrimage in this world. We begin at vanity, and never know perfectly that we are vain till we come to fear God and keep his commandments.”

3. Now for those outside of Christ they will be judged and found guilty of their sins and be eternally separated from God. Listen to the Words of Jesus in John 3:14-21. He said, **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”**

4. When you read this book you are brought to the depths of darkness of human experience only to see the light of God shine brightly forth in the end. You see, a diamond set in the blackness of human experience is now shining forth brightly for us to see.

But look at all that Solomon had to go through to get back to this point of fearing God and keeping His Commandments to find that satisfaction, to find that contentment once again. May we learn the lesson and keep our eyes on the One that can make this empty life full again.

It is as Jesus said in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

And John said in I John 5:13, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

As we reach the depths of our hopeless sinful condition, God gives us hope; He gives us life in Him! As we conclude our study this evening, and the book of Ecclesiastes, let me leave you with this,

What’s the point? This question came to mind as I watched my grandsons’ dog fetch a ball for me again and again.

What’s the point? That’s what the writer of Ecclesiastes asked as he thought about the monotonous cycle he observed in nature and in life - the same things happening year after year, generation after generation.

What’s the point? That’s what a retired businessman was asking, in effect, when he told me he would just as soon die as live any longer. He had seen and done everything he had wanted to do. Now he had reached the place where life held more pain for him than pleasure.

What's the point? Here it is. A few years before a friend of mine died, he said, “Life is a wonderful experience. It’s marvelous to see that God keeps nature going in its pattern. It’s wonderful to know that we’re here to love God above everything and to love our neighbor as ourselves. It’s comforting to believe that all our sins are forgiven because of what Christ did on the cross. And it’s exciting to think about the eternity God has for us. It sure is great to be alive.”

Life can be depressing when God is left out. But how exciting it is when He is at the center!

- Herbert Vander Lugt

When we focus on Christ, everything else becomes clear. You see, life has meaning. Not, **“under the sun”** but ***IN THE SON OF GOD!*** Never forget that!