

The Pursuit Of Meaning – Ecclesiastes – (8 Feb 15)

Now, if you are here with us for the 1st time, you've chosen a great week to join us as well, because we are starting a brand-new series through the Bible in an Old Testament book. You know, the Bible is divided into 2 portions---the Old Testament and the New Testament---and we have just finished a New Testament book, 1st John. Today we start a new series through the book of Ecclesiastes, and this is a book that I think is very relevant for our modern day and age today. It's very relevant---though it is written a long time ago---for all of us in modern society. Let me ask you a simple question, on a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your satisfaction with regards to your job? How satisfied are you from 1 to 10, 10, being the most satisfied? How satisfied are you with regards to your income from 1 to 10? How satisfied are you with regards to your children, 1 to 10? How satisfied are you with regards to your spouse? Now, don't even blink (Laughter in the congregation) huh, huh, huh, don't reveal anything.

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How satisfied are you with regards to your church, 1 to 10? How satisfied are you with your looks, 1 to 10? How satisfied are you with your pastor? Now don't blink as well. (Laughter in the congregation). How satisfied are you in life, in your overall circumstance today? We all look for satisfaction, we all look for meaning, we all look for joy and we look for them in all these places that I might have already stated. We look for happiness in a certain figure in our bank account. We look for joy, maybe in the position of the job we are in. We look for satisfaction from our children, from our wives, from our looks, we really work hard at these things.

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And many of you have worked very hard in your life so that you may ascend to the pinnacle of these objectives. You have studied very hard from primary school, to secondary school, to JC, to Uni... You have worked really hard in your job, you have slogged, and you now have a certain income and now you've a certain position in your office... But you know something? Even though you have worked very hard for it, you still want some more. Because what it brings you right now may not be as satisfying as you wish it could be. So it's very difficult to work for it. And even after you get it, you say, "maybe that's not quite enough, I want more." What's worse is that when you originally had it, it gave you so much satisfaction. "Wah, I finally earned \$4000 in a month, wow!" But after a few months, you realize, "it's not quite enough, I want more." What happens if there is a catastrophe, a disease that strikes you and it seems like all that you have acquired, all that you have work hard for, seems to mean so little. They are so fragile, these things that we look for---for happiness, for meaning and for satisfaction.

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Blaise Pascal, he talks about the disinherited Prince syndrome. Now this man is an intelligent philosopher, mathematician---long time ago---writer, and he says that humanity suffers from this Disinherited Prince Syndrome because we all disinherited Princes. We are all princes, we are made for something bigger, something far more glorious---we have enjoyed it, humanity has known it, but we are now disinherited, we have lost it. So humanity has known something great, but humanity has lost that something great, and now we are searching frantically to recover that thing that we have lost. That's why the whole of humanity is on a search for meaning: We climb the mountain of success, we climb the mountain of wealth, we climb the mountain of beauty, we climb these mountains, hoping to rediscover what we have lost! But it's never easy, isn't it? We try this, we unfold that, and we realize, hey, I achieved a certain measure of success here, but it leaves me actually more disillusioned and disappointed than before.

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The American poet Carl Sandburg says that

Life is like an onion;
you peel it off one layer at a time,
and sometimes you weep.
- Carl Sandburg

Life is like an onion, aah, Forrest Gump says, life is like a box of chocolates, but he says, life is like an onion; you peel it off one layer at a time and sometimes you weep. You peel this part of life and it's---you hope you discover something, but no it doesn't, you weep. You peel again and you hope to discover the secret to life and again, it leaves you empty. You peel again and you peel and you peel, you weep at every stage because you realize, though you have tried so hard to get it---and once you get it---it never really fully satisfies.

Today, we are on a journey to pursue meaning. We are going to follow the book of Ecclesiastes---that "Life under the sun"---and how we can really find meaning. So, what we're going to do is really to hear the heart of a man. This journey is a journey, it's like watching a movie. It's almost like hearing someone in this movie speak to us. The book of Ecclesiastes is really a chronicle of a man's pursuit for meaning. This man lived a long time ago, he's probably an old man. I'm sure you know from this picture, he is a king. And he is no ordinary king, he is a very special king, because the book of Ecclesiastes opens with these words:

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.
(Ecclesiastes 1:1 ESV)

Who is this man? Well, he is a son of David. There has been some controversy that has been stirred in recent times, but historically and by all accounts and in all probability this man---this author of Ecclesiastes---is none other than Solomon the son of David. He is the king in Jerusalem at this stage. And Solomon here writes to us his story, his journey, his pursuit. He calls himself the preacher. The Hebrew there is a word "qoheleth" , which means, really, to gather. The word qoheleth is from this root, to gather, to assemble. So Solomon here, as it were, is assembling all of us, and he wants to share with us about his journey. He wants to tell us about his life. Jewish tradition has it that Solomon wrote 3 books, in this particular sequence: When he was young, when he was energetic, when he was vibrant, he wrote the book of Song of Solomon. I mean, that's the book of romance and excitement and adventure, of love between him and the Shunammite woman. And then, when he got to the middle age, he wrote the book of Proverbs---amazing pearls of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs. And then, near the end of his life when he is an old man, maybe looking somewhat like this, (picture shown of an old wizen looking king), he began to chronicle his life in the book of Ecclesiastes.

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So we are listening to an old man telling us about his journey, and it's a wonderful insight that God has given to us, because Solomon is uniquely suited for this role of sharing with us the pursuit of meaning. He is a very special man: you say, what's so special about Solomon? Let me tell you some unique things about him. Elsewhere in the Bible it is said that Solomon was a very powerful king.

Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea. They ate and drank and were happy. Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life..... For he had dominion over all the region west of the Euphrates from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings west of the Euphrates. And he had peace on all sides around him. And Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon.

(1 Kings 4:20,21,24,25 ESV)

I mean, he had great dominion, he had great influence. You can glance through the words and you will see the words "ruled" and people paid tribute and served him, he had dominion over large territories. And what is amazing is that for 40 years of his reign, he had no wars---he had absolute safety and peace. It's very rare in the nation of Israel. They regularly have skirmishes, they have fights, but Solomon ruled and reigned in a day where there was peace

and safety, and everyone was eating and drinking and happy. It's a great time! I mean, when you are at war, you probably don't have much time to talk about "what's the meaning of life." You are trying to stay alive! But he is a man who is at peace. He is a man who had no real challenges, and he could spend his time really asking the deeper questions of life.

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So he was a man who had world power. But not only did he have world power, He had real wealth, I mean looking at these verses again.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, besides that which the explorers and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the land brought gold and silver to Solomon. King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold; 600 shekels of beaten gold went into each shield. And he made 300 shields of beaten gold; 300 shekels of gold went into each shield; and the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.....

All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. Silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon.

(2 Chronicles 9:13-16,20 ESV)

I gave a whole long list of verses, not so much that you'd memorize all of them, but I'm sure you'll be struck with the number of times the word "gold," gold, gold, gold, gold, gold, gold, gold, gold, appears. Ladies love this verse. I mean, the gold is so abundant, in his day, that silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. Wow... I mean, today if you walk along the streets and you go by the park and scooped a handful of soil, what you do to it? Do you say, "wow, it's gold"? No, you'd say, "it is just soil," and you throw it aside---it is not precious because there's an abundance of it.

In his day... Silver? Nah, it's not worth much; we have gold, lots of gold. Solomon was extremely rich. Carlos Slim, Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, they are dwarves standing beside Solomon in terms of wealth. His net worth is far greater than any of them, he is an extremely rich man. Now, in this world the people are powerful and rich but they are actually quite stupid lah, because they got all their wealth and power by inheritance. Someone worked really hard, was really capable and passed it to him, and he is a silly king who doesn't really know how to rule and okay he is rich and powerful, but he is stupid, it is pointless.

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But not Solomon. The Bible tells us he's an extremely wise, if I may say, intelligent man, because the Bible says

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

(1 Kings 4:29-34 ESV)

God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and the breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East, all the wisdom of Egypt. And Egypt is super advanced, but he excels and exceeds them. I do not know what's his Mensa IQ test score, maybe 355 or something like that, I do not know. He sets all the questions for people, but he is extremely wise, wiser than this, wiser than that... And you know, sometimes when people are smart, they are not very balanced. They are nerds, you know, whole day algebra, trigonometry... When you talk to him, they are nerdy: just weird, not very in tune. But he is not a weirdo, he is not. He is not a nerd because he wrote songs! He wrote 3000 proverbs and his songs were 1500. The most famous song is the song of Solomon, the Song of Songs---it's a love song. He is no nerd, he is a romantic guy, he is balanced. Now, look at the breadth of his knowledge, he---just to give us a glimpse of it he spoke of trees, he spoke of cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall.

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I mean, you point to any plant, he can tell you what species it is. He might even tell you there is xylem and phloem---eh no no no, I don't think he knows it in those days. But he probably knows a lot about plants and nobody really knows, and he spoke about bees and birds and reptiles and fish---my son would love Solomon. My son would love to talk with Solomon and people of all nations came to hear Solomon and from the kings of the earth who have heard of his wisdom.

So not only do people come, kings come. It's like a yearly seminar, the yearly conference, the "King Solomon's conference." Wah, everybody comes sign up, because it's so extraordinary. So what does the Bible say about him?

Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and of gold, garments,

myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

(2 Chronicles 9:22-24 ESV)

Solomon excelled all the kings. I mean he is at the apex of everything man looks for isn't it? Right there at the top, the pinnacle. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom. So picture this: Solomon, an aged man, now writes about his past life, his journey. He says, "I have everything. I have power, I have money, I have wealth, I have wisdom. What else does man, what else can man want that I don't have?" You say, "I know what you don't have, you don't have women." Are you sure? The Bible says

He had 700 wives, who were princesses, and 300 concubines.

(1 Kings 11:3 ESV)

He had 700 wives who were princesses, and 300 concubines. He had 1000 women in his backyard. I mean, this guy has absolutely everything. And here he says, "I'm going to tell you something about satisfaction. I'm going to tell you something about meaning." So we are going to ask, "Solomon, you have ascended to these pinnacles, you have climbed these mountains, now tell us which one is the most worthwhile. Tell us which one gives you the greatest satisfaction. Tell us which one really makes you happy, Solomon. We really want to hear, we really want to know, so Solomon, tell us... If we were to spend our lives pursuing one of them, which would it be?"

Time stamp in audio 0:14:54.7.

The very first thing Solomon says besides introducing himself, is this statement in verse 2 where he says,

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

(Ecclesiastes 1:2 ESV)

Vanity of vanities, says the qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. "No, no, come on, Solomon, you must kidding. There must be something of worth in the pursuits you have had: Look at the gold, look at the wisdom, look at the power, look at how people are subjugated under you! There must be something worthwhile!" And he says no. It's not just vanity, it's the vanity of vanities, it's the empty of the empties. "No, there must be one!" No, all is vanity--just empty cycles of life.

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You know, every Sunday I go back to my dad's place for dinner. And every Sunday, I hear this tune, (pastor makes a theme song). I know lah, it's not very nice and I know I didn't sing it well, but I'm sure you hear of this right, (pastor sings in Taiwanese) no? Well, if you're not

familiar, every Saturday and Sunday at 7 PM you'll watch this show. (Displays and quotes Chinese title of show, "Night Market Life") (Laughter in the congregation) Wah lau (colloquial expression of sighing) this music kills me. It's the same always... Now, this is a Taiwanese soap opera by the way, soapbox, drama serial, and it's been running for a long time. My dad likes it, after dinner he sits in front of the TV, he watches it and he gets frustrated at times because he says that "aiyah, they have been talking about this problem for 30 minutes, still the same, they never move on one." And it is true, you know, this show never moves on, this is like an endless cycle. There is a lot of drama, there is a lot of crying and slapping and pulling of hair and celebrating---it's just a lot of it. But you know if you watch episode 10 and you watch, episode 100, it still the same thing. (Laughter in the congregation) Nothing very much changes in that family, nothing very much changes in the story... And by the way, the series is now at episode 800+ here in Singapore. I mean, I was asking, when will this torture, okay, when will this torture ever end? I googled it and if they tell me it's 1008 episodes. It never ends! I mean, after a while, it's the same story over and over and over again---lots of drama, lots of things happening, lots of events, but ultimately meaningless. (Laughter in the congregation). Really, ultimately meaningless! Maybe one or two persons die and they fight and reconcile, they fight and reconcile, you know. That's what it is.

Time stamp in audio 0:17:51.1.

Now, by the way, this is not just a Chinese phenomenon, I think, the western world is also like this, if not worse. When I was younger, I would have sometimes had a glimpse of this show, (shows a picture of Days of our Lives) (Laughter in the congregation) Watched this, heard of this? Now, they far exceed or excel the Taiwanese---this is series is currently, you know which number, how many number of episodes it has been so far? Anybody knows? Whoa, you watch it, Charmaine? (Laughter in the congregation). You absolutely---you actually keep track? She is absolutely right! I think it is now 12,563 or something like that. 12,000 episodes cycling round, and I think the family still about the same. (Laughter in the congregation)

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I think about life like (pastor quotes the name of "Night Market Life"). That's how the producers think about life, it's---that's life. I mean, just round and round, there are some exciting things that happen, but ultimately it never gets anywhere. It's like a hamster running on his wheel, hoarr, (makes a circling motion) wait, where's the hamster now? Same place, what. (Laughter in the congregation), nothing's changed. "Days of our lives," yah, the sands of time will pass, but still the same.

Solomon is saying, " I see life played out the same way, it still the same. It's vanity of vanities." Why? Because he says," what does man gained by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?"

What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?
(Ecclesiastes 1:3 (ESV))

That's the phrase whereby we get our theme, "Life under the sun." "What's the point," he says, "of doing all the things that we do under the sun?" What's the point of studying hard? What's the point of working hard? What's the point of earning lots of---by the way, if you have kids here today, I am not telling your kids not to study, neither am I saying to you as adults not to work. But have you ever asked yourself, "what's the point? Is this really the route to true meaning and purpose in life?" Can we really say, in and of itself, life is about studying, working, accumulating? Solomon says, I find that this is vanity under the sun. He extrapolates from his own personal experience to the world. He looks at the world, he looks at everything, he looks at the cycles of---the water cycle, how it cycles. He looks at how someone would accumulate lots of money, but it's so pointless because he is going to pass it to a man who doesn't appreciate it and will waste it anyway. He talks about how we are born, but soon we will die. He talks about how things are built up and then it will soon be destroyed, and he says, "it's pointless!". It never lasts, it's vanity. The word "vanity" means breath, vapor. It's temporary, it's transient, it's like grasping the wind---you never quite get hold of it---it's gone.

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And so what Solomon is going to do for the rest of the book of Ecclesiastes, is to systematically bring us through: Now, do you really think these things are going to give you meaning? Let me construct for you the idol of possessions. Let me show you what it looks like when you have possessions. And then, he is going to tell you how it doesn't satisfy. So the qoheleth is going to come before you, he sets up this idol, we all say "yah, that's the one we live for! That's what we want to worship!" Then, he smashes it right in front of you and say, "now that doesn't satisfy you---it didn't satisfy me." Then he sets up another idol of pleasure. He says, "this is what you want?" And we say, "yes, this is what we want, this is what our heart cries out for---pleasure!" And then he says, "it didn't satisfy me." He topples it, smashes it right in front of us. And systematically, philosophy after philosophy, item after item, he sets it up, he tears it down: he is doing a systematic idol smashing ministry in front of us. He says, they are all vain, it's pointless.

Time stamp in audio 0:22:14.8.

Someone says

He spent forty years on the roof of history,
having ascended all the Everests of life –
wealth, fame, love, respect, wisdom.
And yet at every apex–
and in the breath-taking descents that followed each–Solomon realized: Not only is it
desolate at the top,
but at the bottom and everywhere in-between.

Solomon spent 40 years on the roof of history, having ascended all the Everest's of life.
Property, cars, bank accounts, shares, popularity, fame and worship of people, respect,
wisdom---he's got it all, isn't it? And yet at every apex and in the breath-taking descents---
such a strange phenomenon. It is such a difficult climb up there, but after you climb up
there, the drop and the plunge is precipitous. It's sudden and scary.
Solomon realized that not only is it desolate and lonely at the top, but at the bottom and
everywhere in between, it's the same: empty.

Now, if I were the one who tells you, "aah, having lots of money is---it doesn't give joy," you'd
say, "who are you? You never had that much money." "Oh, the pursuit of knowledge is not
such an interesting journey anyway, is not worthwhile," you'd say, "who are you, you never
tried all these things." But here is a man who has actually been there, done that. He says,
"please don't go that route anymore. I have tried it." Don't go to that restaurant, I have tasted
the prata. It's terrible, don't eat there. And he says, "don't go there. These things will not
satisfy."

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My friends, this is the haunting question of life: Where? Where can I find meaning? Some of
you go through midlife crisis... You know what midlife crisis is all about? Finding meaning.
Do you know why sometimes you sit down in life, and you just have this churning and
tossing and turning within your soul, "what am I here for?" It's about the pursuit for
meaning. Do you know why disasters and trials shake us into the core? Because we are
suddenly challenged as to, "what is meaning? Why is my life so fragile, so vulnerable, so
much lacking in rootedness?" It's a challenge to this question for the pursuit of meaning.

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To Solomon this is a quest to lead us there. This is so desperate that someone actually says,

“I would rather die a meaningful death
than to live a meaningless life”

Have you ever thought about that? It is terrible to live a life without meaning---nothing to live for. I think having bread and no meaning is worse than having meaning but no bread. You need both, but it's terrible to live a life without meaning. This is a reminder to what Blaise Pascal has said, isn't it---we are all disinherited princes. There is a big, humongous appetite for something grand and glorious and lasting and satisfying. But you know what? We as men have lost it. And so this disinherited prince---all the princes and princesses here-- -you're in a desperate hunt, peeling life, looking under the stones, climbing up the mountains... What is meaning?

I am not a good storyteller and I'm going to violate a very important principle of storytelling. You don't tell the end---you don't tell the conclusion, you don't tell the summary---if you want to be a good storyteller, isn't it? You leave it to the very end and maybe I should have, but I'm not here to tell you a story. I'm here to point you to what you need and I'm going to provide the spoiler.

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For 11 chapters, Solomon is going to tell you all these idols set up are worth nothing. They don't satisfy, they don't fill the void---the deep void, gaping hole in your heart. It doesn't, because these things are what you pursue under the sun. In chapter 12, he tells you, "now get above the sun. Look up, look beyond this world, look up to the God of the heavens, and when you have a glimpse of who God is---when you have a right relationship with God---that's where everything disentangles and makes sense!" Because Solomon understands life is not found in wealth, or world power, or women, or wisdom. It's found in knowing God, who made us. You see, we are all disinherited princes because we are cut off from our God.

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The Bible tells us

You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
(Psalms 16:11 ESV)

You make known to me the path of life---God is the one who leads us to the path of life, man is chasing life in all kinds of pathways, but there is only one path of life---in your presence there is fullness of joy. I'll tell you something about you. Whether you are Christian or not a Christian, it doesn't matter, this is true of you. You know God in your heart. You say, "no, I don't know God, I am an atheist." No. You know God in your heart. How do you know that? Because God tells me in Romans chapter 1, he declares we know God. Problem? We suppress

it, we don't want to admit it. That's what happened to me---I, for many years of my life, I professed I'm an atheist: I don't know God, I don't think there is God, I believe I am the center of the world. But somewhere deep in my heart, if I were to really face up to it, I know there's God.

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You know God today. But what has happened to humanity is that sin has come in. Sin has now ruined us. Sin has now blinded us, so that now, though there is the instinct to know God, there is a desire, we may not say we want to know God, we want to know something more to life---sin has misdirected us. So that when we should look for God for real meaning, sin has sabotaged us, sidetracked us to look for joy and meaning in all the wrong things. It should be God, but sin says, "no, look here, women. Look here, money. Look here, power. Look here, recognition. Look at all these things!" It misdirects us, it doesn't want us to come back to God.

Keller says is very, very simply,

“All human problems are ultimately symptoms,
and our separation from God is the cause.”

- Timothy Keller

It's just a very simple statement, but I think it encapsulates what the Bible has to say. All your emptiness, all your futility, all these struggles of your life, you say, "why? It's not what life is meant to be, isn't it?" Yes, you're absolutely right. Life is not meant to be like this. So why is it like this? Because we are separated from God, because sin has cut us off from our Creator. If you're here today, the reason why you struggle through life is because of sin. Don't blame it on influenza virus, don't blame it on the economy, don't blame it on your wife. I tell you what, it's sin. You don't really have joy because you are cut off by sin.

I like what C.S. Lewis says,

"If I find myself a desire
which no experience in this world can satisfy,
the only explanation is that
I was made for another world."

- C.S. Lewis

He is right, you are made for another world. You are made to know God, you are made to have a relationship with Him.

So Solomon eventually says: I've shown you how this world deceives us. Now get above the sun, fear God and keep His commandments, that's the whole of man---that's what meaning is all about. That's what joy is all about. That's what satisfaction is all about. It's in God. Get above the sun!

You say, how can I get above the sun? I can't jump there, I can't reach there---sure, you can't. You see, sin has so corrupted us that we don't even see our need---and even when we do see our need---there is no ability of men to reach God. None, none of us would be right enough for God, none of us will be clean enough for God, none of us would be acceptable to God by our own selves. But this is the beauty of Scripture. This is the beauty of the Christian message, this is what we call the Good News.

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This is what we call the Gospel that when man is so ruined in his sin, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us of God's Son coming to die, so that we---who have lost it all as disinherited princes---may recover, discover, and have life again. Not just physical life, but life with God. That's why Jesus, when He came, He didn't come saying, "I am the ticket to heaven, I am the 'get out of jail' card for hell." Now, that's true in a sense, but that's not the essence. Yes, He does save us from judgment and wrath in the fires of hell. But supremely, He came to give you life---He came to bring you back to God.

In His soul, He says

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me shall not hunger,
and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.
(John 6:35)

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst. Now, He is not talking about physical hunger, He's not talking about physical thirst. He's talking about the hunger and thirst of your soul, of your heart. And He says, "I'm here to satisfy, I'm here to bring you back to God, I'm here to bring you above the sun." "Would you believe in me," He says, "whoever believes in Me shall never thirst." He said to the woman at the well,

Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
(John 4:13-14 ESV)

everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. Wow... Jesus is going to quench the thirst of my soul. How can He do that? He did that, because He paid for your sins on the cross. He did that, because He loved you so much. He saw all of us disinherited princes, and the Prince of glory will come and lay aside His glory---lay aside His life, allow the Father's face to turn from Him, and bear the wrath that we deserve for all eternity. He took it in, He drank that cup of suffering, so that we may have life.

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Jesus paid it all.

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

(John 14:6 ESV)

Would you today come to Jesus Christ? Would you believe on the Bread of life?

Let's bow for a word of prayer together. Life is a mystery, isn't it? It's such a puzzle. Over and over and over again, we hear people just searching for meaning, and it often ends up frustrating and empty. It's not surprising because we searched in the dark. But today, God's Word gives light. The light found in the Scriptures point us to where we really should search: not under the sun, but above the sun. To realize today that not only is the answer above the sun, but the answer from above has already come down in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Before you knew Him, He knew you, He saw you. He knows your pains, He knows your sufferings, and He knows that you are a disinherited prince. And He says, "I'm willing to give it all up for him and for her. I'm willing to lay down My life so that they may have life." Hallelujah, what a Saviour... What a God, what a Saviour!

The world has no idea of the grace, the love that the Bible tells us of: no other religion tells us of a God who knows how desperate His people are, and yet still pays it all. He demands nothing for your salvation---He wants you to repent and freely come. And then, He will start to change your life. And then, He will start to cleanse you from practical sins in life---He starts to make you more like His Son. So, not just cleansing you in a sense of giving you heaven, but really changing your life, because He really wants to save you from sin, you see. Sin is the enemy, sin is that poison of our soul that cuts us off from God, and God wants to do that for you this morning.

He says, whosoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but have everlasting life. This morning, would you come to Jesus Christ? Would you turn from sin? Would you recognize the broken cisterns you been drinking from? The terrible, dirty water you've been drinking---it's killing you. He says, come to me, I'm, I have real life, here. Would you turn? Would you believe?

My friends, it's so easy as well for us to think Ecclesiastes is only for the unbeliever---for my friend who came to church this morning, and for someone who do not yet know Jesus---but to you realize this is absolutely for you as a child of God?

Solomon is a child of God, but I think he went on a wild goose chase for many years of his life, looking for satisfaction apart from God---and it can so happen to you today. You have really known Jesus, but your heart is chasing after wealth, your heart is chasing after reputation, your heart is chasing after success, your heart is chasing women, your heart is chasing after something under the sun. You say, "oh, I have Jesus, so I could add on to Jesus something else." No, you can't add on to Jesus. Remember, there's only room for one. You can't add something to Jesus---but if you add something, Jesus is out.

So Solomon today calls to you---God, by His Spirit, calls to you. Would you repent and return to Jesus Christ? Would you come back to your God? Would you believe that there is a path of life, there are pleasures forevermore in Him alone? Is God calling you, is God pointing out the idols, is God really speaking to you this morning? Right where you are, pray to Him. Make a decision, speak to someone about that decision, speak to someone so that he may pray for you and help you be accountable for the decision you have made. Let this be a beautiful, life-changing day for you.

Father, we thank you this morning for Your Word. Would you bless now the resolutions, the desires of our hearts: that they will be brought out and concretize into practical actions and plans, and may we be kept from the lies and deception this world wants to introduce to us. I'd rather have Jesus than riches untold. Lord, satisfy our souls today with yourself alone. We thank you, we pray all these in Jesus' Name, Amen.