**Wisdom From Solomon**

**Sermon #2 From Ecclesiastes**

Ecclesiastes is wisdom literature.

It is humans speaking to humans, mostly about human things.

In our first lesson, Solomon asked the big questions:

Why am I here?

What is my purpose in life? What is the meaning of life?

Solomon, the wisest person to live before Jesus Christ, thought carefully about these things.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 Life under the sun. (v. 9)

If this life is all there is…. Looking at life from a human perspective…

In view of the vastness of time

Meaningless!!! Chasing after the wind.

There is nothing new under the sun.

You represent 0.00000014% of all people living today.

Who will remember you 200 years from now?

In the big picture, if you really think about it: Meaningless!

Ecclesiasts 1:12-18

What about gaining knowledge and wisdom?

What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.

In the big picture, the big human problems will never be solved.

v. 14, v. 17 It is like chasing after the wind….

v. 18 Besides the more wisdom, the more grief.

“Wisdom is better than folly”, but it they give ultimate meaning or purpose?

Solomon’s answer: the gaining of knowledge and college degrees: meaningless!

Ecclesiastes 2:1-10

Well, at least we can have fun. At least we can pursue pleasure. That will give life meaning.

Solomon: No! Pleasure, too, is meaningless.

Solomon: If pleasure could create meaning and value, I would know. I had more riches than anyone before me. (300 wives, 700 concubines, fantastic wealth)

Been there, done that.

Besides Ecclesiastes 5:10 Whoever loves money never has enough. Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This, too, is meaningless.

OK. In view of time, life is meaningless.

Wisdom and knowledge are meaningless.

The gathering of wealth, pleasure and fun are meaningless.

But, fortunately, great life achievements can give purpose and meaning to life!

Ecclesiastes 2:12-23

Work and accomplishments are meaningless.

And Solomon would know. He built the temple!!!!!! He built entire cities.

You spend 40 years saving for retirement, and then you die a week after you retire, and your irresponsible children, who do not deserve it, get it all.

What about religious accomplishments? Phil 3:4-9 Meaningless outside of Christ.

v. 8 garbage v. 8 a loss. Meaningless.

Well, we are all now very depressed, Solomon. So, is there any meaning in life at all?

Hold on. We will get back to Ecclesiastes 12.

Now, let’s look at some more wisdom from Solomon.

This sermon is snippets of wisdom—no clear outline. It will go for the brain, not so much the heart.

Ecc 3:1-8 A time for everything…

The principle of balance.

A time to work and a time to rest. As humans we need both. Which are you better at?

A time to weep and mourn and a time to laugh and dance. This is how God made us. We need to accept and even embrace mourning as well as fun.

Which are you better at?

A time to embrace (show affection) and (believe it or not) a time withhold our affection.

A time to be careful and a time to throw caution to the wind.

Which are you better at?

v. 6 A time to search for your car keys, and a time to give up and let them come to you. Remember, Ecc is humans talking to humans.

A time to try to control things, and a time to let go of things…

Which are you better at?

v. 6 A time to keep and a time to throw away. Q: Which are you better at?

v. 7 Wisdom says there is a time to say something and a time to hold your peace.

Others…

v. 8 Might be controversial, but for humans…

A time to love and a time to hate.

A time to be angry and a time to forgive.

Ex: Elizabeth Hlavata and Marcella. At their funeral….

“Under the sun” (for humans), emotions must run their course.

Ecc 3:10-11 Because we are in the image of God, “He has also set eternity in the human heart.” We know that this life is not all there is. We know that there is a greater purpose.

“yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.” God’s ways are and always will be a mystery to us. We are infinite beings in a finite body.

We soar to the highest heights when we hear Handel’s Messiah, but then we have dirt in our ears and bad breath.

This is life under the sun.

Ecc 3:16-17

3:16 There will be good and evil. We can never escape that there is evil in this world. We will not solve the world’s problems.

Life is not fair.

3:17 And God will judge all such things.

Ecc 3:18-22

God puts eternity in our hearts (Ecc 3:10), but

3:18 He made us mortal. In at least one sense, we are like animals. We are born, we live and we die.

v. 20 Dust to dust….

v. 21 (Speaking as a human only….) Who really knows if our fate is different from that of the animals.

v. 22 So, speaking humanly, enjoy your life while you can.

More wisdom from Solomon:

Ecc 4:9-12 Two are better than one.

Even in human terms, we need companionship.

Applied to marriage? Sure, but..

Seek close, intimate friendships.

v. 12 Two can defend themselves. Look for people who will watch your back, and do the same for them.

We need deep, lasting friendships.

Are you that kind of person?

v. 12 And remember that a cord of three strands is not easily broken.

In human terms, close relationships give life some meaning, but if God is in there, that will be a fruitful relationship.

Ecc 5:4-7 Making vows to God.

Let us make fewer vows, and let us keep those vows.

He does not say not to make them, but to be careful doing so.

v. 4 God is not a fool. God cannot be mocked. You make a promise to a person and hope they will forget it. Do not treat God that way.

Let us make few resolutions, but fulfill those vows!!!

Ecc 7:2 Mourning is better than feasting. Why?

We learn from mourning, not from feasting.

Go to funerals. Do not pretend you will live forever. Death causes us to evaluate our lives.

And besides, always remember this: Ecc 5:15-16 You cannot take it with you.

v. 16 and if this life is all there is, then that is a grievous evil.

So, Solomon, what is the final analysis?

We already looked at Ecclesiastes 12:8-14

But let us go back to Ecc 12:1-7.

It is time for the young to pay attention.

Remember the Creator while you are young.

This weekend at the West Coast School of Missions was so encouraging!

You say “I am busy now.” “I do not have time.”

“I have to study.” “I have to take care of my career.”

No!!!!!! Invest the time now. It will pay dividends.

What better investment is there than in God, and all financial advisers will tell you, the earlier you start, the better!!!!!

You know what they say: Better late than never.

True! But

1. Way better early than late!

2. Ecc 12:2-5 It does not get easier.

3. Ecc 12:6-7 And who knows when he or she will die.

Young people take note!

So, let’s look at Solomon’s conclusion once again

Ecc 12:8-14

(I am including v. 8 in his final conclusion.

If this life “under the sun” is all there is.

If, when you die, your are “dead like Rover, dead all over,” then

v. 8 Meaningless, Meaningless!!!

Q: What, then, gives life meaning?

v. 13 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for the is the entire duty of mankind.

Folks, Life under the sun is NOT all there is.

There is a purpose and meaning in life.

God gives meaning to everything.

In God, even the smallest thing has meaning

Put God into the equation and the math is completely different.

Anything with eternal consequences has great meaning. Fearing and serving God gives meaning. Helping people to be saved has meaning.

Conclusion: The things that are “meaningless” according to Solomon are given meaning if they are used toward eternal ends.

Conclusion:

Solomon tells us to find balance in the way we live our lives.

He tells us life is not fair, but God will bring all into judgment.

He tells us “Two are better than one” Seek deep, intimate, meaningful relationships, and be sure to bring God into those relationships.

He tells us to make decisions and resolutions and vows to God, but to do so judiciously, and ALWAYS keep the vows we make to God.

He tells us to not avoid thinking about our mortality

But then he tells us the final thing.

It is God who gives meaning to the “Meaningless” life under the Sun.

In God, and in God alone, work, pleasure, wisdom, accomplishments and even relationships find ultimate meaning.

So, remember your Creator in the days of your youth!