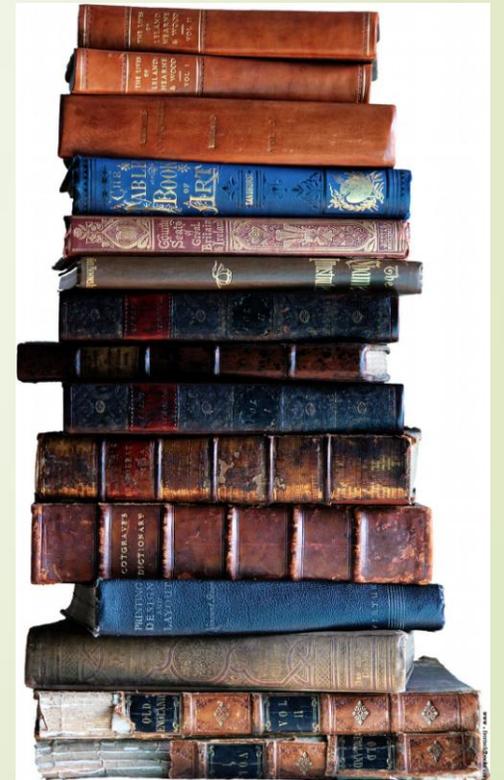


Wisdom and Pleasure

Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:11

Key Word: “I”

July 10, 2016





Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:12

I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And **I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.** It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.



I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." And **I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly.** I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.



I said in my heart, "**Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.**" But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem.



I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the children of man.

So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 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. 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.**



Last week:

- “Under the sun” – meaningless, empty
- 1:2-11 - the repetitive cycles of nature
- A bleak picture of life without God
- **“The purpose of the book is for the reader to feel the futility of life lived by purely earthly values and to lead the reader to seek satisfaction in God and spiritual values.” Philip Graham Ryken**
- **Life apart from God and spiritual values is meaningless. Life with God at the center opens the door to enjoying earthly life and eternal life to come.**



Outline

1. Solomon Pursues Wisdom (1:12-18)
2. Solomon Pursues Pleasure (2:1-11)



1. Solomon Pursues Wisdom 1:12-18

- ▶ Solomon has a warning
 - ▶ The outcome of life without God (1:13b-15)
 - ▶ His journey (1:16-2:22)
 - ▶ His conclusion (2:22-26)



Solomon's questions:

1. How did other wise men and women deal with the brevity of life and the certainty of death?
2. Has anyone succeeded in answering the question of what would happen to all of your wealth when you die?
3. Why does asking more questions just raise more question?

- **The only One who can answer life's questions is the Creator Himself.**
- v. 13 - And **I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.** It is an unhappy business that **God has given** to the children of man to be busy with.
- **God is supreme in His authority over mankind.**



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- **The perspective of eternity.**
 - Ecclesiastes 3:10-11 - I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. 11 Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. **He has planted eternity in the human heart**, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. NLT
 - **God implants the urge to seek truth.**
 - **Without God the quest for truth and for eternity is fruitless.**

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- In your pursuit of truth in this world, you and I must train our hearts and minds to observe the presence of God and his work. God has to be central in our quest.

“What is crooked cannot be made straight,
And what is lacking cannot be counted.”

- No one but God can alter the realities of mankind’s existence.
- The labors of mankind living under the sun ultimately prove unprofitable (v.3), unsatisfying (v.8), unremarkable (vv.9-10) and unremembered (v.11).
- His wisdom became his idol, which became his downfall.
- We need knowledge outside of us.
- Conclusion v.18 – “the greater my wisdom the greater my grief.” NLT



2. Solomon Pursues Pleasure (2:1-11)

- Play (1-3)
 - Property and parks (4-6)
 - Possessions (7-8)
- **A person who knows the true and living God can never be satisfied merely with what this world offers.**
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- 2:1- 8 I said in my heart, "**Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.**" But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the children of man.

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- **Pleasure is short lived**
 - **Solomon examines his activities and finds them unprofitable.**
 - **After all of Solomon's searching, testing, and considering, "under the sun" there is no lasting happiness or pure pleasure.**
 - **True joy cannot originate within man himself.**
 - **The gospel of Jesus Christ comes to us, not from inside of **US**.**

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in his wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of his glory and grace.

