

What's the Point?

ECCLESIASTES 2:12-26

KEY WORD: WORK

JULY 24, 2016

Ecclesiastes 2:12-26

12 So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. 13 Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. 14 The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. 15 Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. 16 For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! 17 So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

18 I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, 19 and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. 20 So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, 21 because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? 26 For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Review

First – The Pursuit of Wisdom (1:12-15)

- Information didn't bring transformation

Second – Morality (1:16-18)

- Knowing the difference between right and wrong still didn't bring purpose

Third – Pleasure (2:1-11)

- Earthly pleasure doesn't satisfy the soul

Today

- 1. Solomon looks at his life (2:12-17)**
- 2. Solomon looks at his labor (2:18-23)**
- 3. Solomon draws his conclusion (2:24-26)**

1. Solomon Looks at his Life (2:12-17)

12 So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what has already been done. 13 Then I saw that **there is more gain in wisdom than in folly**, as there is more gain in light than in darkness. 14 The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. 15 Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. 16 For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! 17 So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

It is better for a person to prepare for eternity than to spend all of their time and effort for this life alone.

Ecclesiastes 2:16- 6 For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!

- True wisdom involves the fear of the Lord
 - Psalms 111:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.
 - Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 - Those who possess “fear of the Lord” wisdom will experience eternal life.
- He concludes in verse 17 – “So I hated life!”
- **Solomon knows that there is something more than this life and he is fully aware of how he has lost his joy.**

For every true believer fellowship with God involves a fullness of joy, peace and love.

- Psalms 16:11 - You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
- Ephesians 3:19 - and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
- Philippians 4:7 - And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Peter 1:8-9 - Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

2. Solomon Looks at his Labor (2:18-23)

18 I **hated all my toil** in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, 19 and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. 20 So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, 21 because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

1 Kings 11:9-13

9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. 11 Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, **I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.** 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

**He stresses over his own reputation and self-image.
Pride consumes his thinking!**

Psalms 127:1-2

Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman keeps awake in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early,
To retire late,
To eat the bread of painful labors;
For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep. NASB

Pride and self-centeredness is consuming Solomon!

3. Solomon's Conclusion (2:24-26)

24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? 26 For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

1. Man is not good
2. God is the giver
3. There is no enjoyment in life apart from God

1 John 2:16-17 - For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Life in this world, under the sun, only has significance when man remembers his creator (12:1)

- How is life for you?
- Are you preparing for eternity?
- Has your joy in Christ slipped away?

