

Grow Group Resources

- Sermon Summary

- **Wisdom for Life: Wisdom When You Wonder**

- **Text:** Ecclesiastes

- This sermon explores the book of Ecclesiastes, one of the Bible's wisdom books, which wrestles honestly with life's frustrations, disappointments, and unanswered questions. While Proverbs often presents general principles for living wisely, Ecclesiastes examines what happens when life does not seem to follow those principles. It speaks to those moments when we do everything "right" and yet still experience suffering, loss, or confusion.

- The preacher of Ecclesiastes repeatedly declares, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." The word "vanity" refers to something like a mist or vapor—temporary, elusive, and difficult to grasp. The book acknowledges that many of the things people pursue for meaning and security ultimately prove fleeting. Wealth can disappear, power can fade, pleasure cannot fully satisfy, and even human accomplishments are temporary. Life often feels unpredictable and beyond our control.

- **1. God Truly Satisfies**

- One of the central lessons of Ecclesiastes is that nothing in this world can provide lasting satisfaction apart from God. People often place their hope in money, success, possessions, relationships, or status, only to discover that these things cannot bear the weight of their deepest longings.

- In contrast, God is unchanging. While everything else is temporary, God remains faithful and constant. Scripture reminds us that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." Because God does not change, He alone can provide the security, identity, and satisfaction that human hearts seek.

- The sermon challenges listeners to consider: What are you trusting in more than God? What do you believe will finally satisfy you?

- **2. Eternity Produces Hope**

- A major theme in Ecclesiastes is the contrast between life "under the sun" (a purely earthly perspective) and God's eternal perspective. When people focus only on what they can see, life often appears unfair and meaningless. Evil seems to prosper, injustice goes unchecked, and suffering can feel pointless.

- However, Ecclesiastes points beyond the present moment to a future reality. God will ultimately judge all things and make what is wrong right. This future hope changes how believers view their present circumstances. While trials, disappointments, and injustice remain real, they are not the final word.

- By lifting our eyes above the temporary realities of this world and remembering God's eternal purposes, we gain hope and perseverance.

- **3. Savour the Good**

- Ecclesiastes repeatedly encourages people to enjoy the simple gifts God has given. Because life is brief and uncertain, wisdom includes learning to appreciate everyday blessings.

- These gifts include:

- Sharing meals with others
- Enjoying meaningful work
- Spending time with family
- Loving one's spouse
- Cherishing ordinary moments
- The sermon emphasizes that many people become so focused on pursuing the “good life” that they forget to enjoy the good things already present in their lives. Wisdom invites us to slow down, be grateful, and savour God's gifts today.

- **4. Wisdom Is Worth It**

- Although Ecclesiastes acknowledges life's uncertainties, it does not reject wisdom. Instead, it teaches that wisdom remains valuable even when it does not guarantee specific outcomes.
- Wisdom provides protection, guidance, and perspective. It helps people navigate a broken world more faithfully and thoughtfully. While wisdom cannot eliminate suffering or fully explain every mystery, it remains a gift from God that benefits those who seek it.

- **The Comfort of Christ**

- The sermon concludes by pointing to Jesus. When life feels confusing and painful, believers can find comfort knowing that Jesus understands human suffering. On the cross, He cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus experienced grief, pain, and unanswered questions, yet remained faithful.
- Because He understands our struggles, He walks with us through our own seasons of doubt and disappointment.

- **Final Application**

- Ecclesiastes teaches that life in a fallen world is often mysterious and difficult. Yet wisdom is found in:
 - Trusting the unchanging God rather than temporary things.
 - Living with an eternal perspective.
 - Enjoying God's daily gifts.
 - Continuing to pursue wisdom despite life's uncertainties.

- **Discussion Questions**

1. Start your time with a word of prayer.
2. Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 and 12:9-14.
 - A. What stands out? What questions arise? What other verses do you recall from Ecclesiastes?
3. Have you ever experienced a situation where you did everything “right,” but things still didn't work out as expected? The sermon highlighted how Ecclesiastes wrestles with the reality that life is often unpredictable and does not always follow the formulas we expect.
 - A. What emotions or questions did that experience create for you?
 - B. How did it affect your trust in God?

4. What are some things people commonly look to for satisfaction besides God? Ecclesiastes describes many pursuits—wealth, pleasure, achievement, and power—as “vanity” or “vapour.”
 - A. What are some modern examples of things people believe will satisfy them?
 - B. Have you ever discovered that something you hoped would bring fulfillment ultimately fell short?
5. How does an eternal perspective change the way we view present struggles? The sermon emphasized that God will ultimately judge evil, make all things right, and restore creation.
 - A. How does the promise of eternity give you hope in difficult circumstances?
 - B. What challenges make it difficult to maintain an eternal perspective?
6. What are some simple gifts from God that you may be overlooking? Ecclesiastes encourages us to enjoy ordinary blessings such as food, work, relationships, and daily moments.
 - A. What are some small gifts from God that bring joy to your life?
 - B. How can you become more intentional about savouring those gifts this week?
7. Why is wisdom still worth pursuing even when life doesn’t always make sense? The preacher acknowledges that wisdom does not guarantee perfect outcomes, yet still encourages its pursuit.
 - A. How have you seen wisdom benefit your life or the lives of others?
 - B. What practical steps can help you grow in wisdom right now?
8. How does knowing that Jesus understands suffering and unanswered questions encourage you? The sermon concluded by pointing to Jesus’ cry from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
 - A. Why is it significant that Jesus experienced suffering, grief, and feelings of abandonment
 - B. How does His example help you when you face confusion, disappointment, or unanswered prayers?
9. Close this time of considering God’s word with prayer for the various needs present in the group.