

Our Wise Friends Devotion 4: Ecclesiastes

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. - [Ecclesiastes 1:1-2](#)

What a way to open a book of the Bible! Ecclesiastes starts with how foolish and fleeting everything is. The things of this world are passing away. The “treasures” you so desire to have now are the things of future garage sales and dump heaps. Pursuit of fame or pleasure won’t bring true satisfaction. Your “fame” won’t last. The world will forget you.

These are not pleasant thoughts, but they’re all true.

Ecclesiastes points these things out, not to depress us, but to refocus us.

The main theme of Ecclesiastes can be summed up by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle, where he writes,

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.” (1 Peter 1:22-25)

All flesh is like grass. Grass is here today and gone tomorrow. Yet, we sometimes fall into the trap that thinks things or achievements are of paramount importance. We are deceived into thinking they matter most.

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

The word translated as “vanity” comes from the Hebrew word “hebel” [הבל] which one lexicon defines as “vapor” or “breath.” A breath is here and then gone. A vapor dissipates quickly.

Ecclesiastes confronts us with the reality that the things of this world are passing away. They don’t last. Solomon wants us to realize that the treasures of this world are passing away so that we remember and treasure that which is eternal.

As Jesus said, *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.* (Luke 21:33)

When our hearts aren’t set on these things that are passing way, we can use them and enjoy them without idolizing them. When our hearts are set on Jesus, we can enjoy the life He has given us while we have it and enjoy the things of this life while they last. We have a God who forgives and reminds that He is eternal.

And we can lose things without losing our minds, because we have a treasure that awaits us that cannot be taken away.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to see the blessings of this world for what they are and not to set our hearts on them. Keep us focused on You that we would fear God and keep His commandments and look forward to the treasures of heaven that await us because of You. Amen.

Journal Questions:

- Have you been overly focused on something that is passing away? If so, what?
- How can remembering that the things of this world are passing away be helpful to you?

