

# The End of the Matter – Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

“Vanity, Vanity, all is Vanity” – September 8, 2019



## Introduction

What makes life worth living? What's the point? Ecclesiastes is one of three wisdom literature books within Scripture: Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Proverbs looks at the created order that God set in place and shows us how to live wisely, in the fear of God according to His design. But when life throws things that aren't included in the roadmap of God's design, God provided Job and Ecclesiastes to show us how to live.

## Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

## Sermon Outline

- I. What's he preaching? *All is vanity* (v2)
- II. Why is everything vain? *The gain we seek is not found under the sun* (v3-11)
- III. How should we respond? *Embrace your limitation*

## Read & Discuss

- 1) Read [Ecclesiastes 1:1-2](#)

Vanity is the translation of the Hebrew word *hevel*; literally meaning a vapor or breath. We're meant to picture life as a puff of smoke which communicates two things: 1) The fleeting nature of life and 2) How ungraspable life is – both by our minds or our muscle.

How have you seen or experienced the fleeting nature of life? How should knowing the brevity or fleeting nature of life change how we live today?

That life is ungraspable reminds us how little control we have over the circumstances of life. Some things in life refuse to give up their secrets ([Deut. 29:29](#)) and many things cannot be forced to bring about the results we hoped for ([Ecc. 9:11](#)). Do you live recognizing the limits of your knowledge or control?

Additional Reading: Psalm 144:4, Proverbs 3:5-6

- 2) Read [Ecclesiastes 1:3-11](#)

The gain we seek is not found under the sun (our time here on earth, this side of heaven). The preacher is clear about this, but we're reluctant to believe it since we *want* to be able to find meaning and significance in what the world offers. To make his point, the preacher points us first to the cyclical nature of *creation* (vv4-7: the sun, wind, and streams) and of

human existence (v8). The conclusion? As much good there *is* during our life under the sun, it cannot deliver the gain we long for. That is found in God alone.

What are the ways you're tempted to control your destiny even though Scripture is clear it's beyond our grasp? How did Adam and Eve reject their own limitations that come with being a created being? Knowing how that ended up, what does it look like for us to embrace the limits that come with our humanity?

Additional Reading: Romans 8:18-22, Revelation 21:5

### ***Prayer of Response***

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <b>Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:26</b> "Searching for meaning"
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------