

WHAT'S THE POINT?

the *gospel* according to *Ecclesiastes*

“The Words of the Preacher” Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

I grew up in a great home with a lot of enjoyment, love, relationships and interaction. I had neighborhood friends, church friends and even older people in my church who engaged into my life. My relationship with family is close, and so in my younger years, I think I could say as a child that life was great. As I got a little bit older, there were some family struggles and I saw them as significant, but I still had a mindset that everything will self-correct. Problems will go away and all things will even out.

I grew up with this kind of mindset, and then when I got into my college years, I started to struggle immensely with this question, “What’s the Point?” Externally, my life was still great. Close family, great friends, a fiancée. But I started seeing that nothing in this life satisfies like I wanted it to. In some ways, I yearned for childhood where I didn’t think so much, and I could just appreciate a toy or a car ride somewhere. But now I was asking deep questions. I was thinking, “If I feel guilty being moral, why not simply give up on morality?” Or, “I could do all the *right* things and still suffer in this life; so who cares how I live?”

I wrestled with these kinds of thoughts. My childhood where I thought life was nice and tidy (like the book of Proverbs) entered into a new period of life: Ecclesiastes. Can you relate to that at all? Maybe for you, you’ve gone through suffering and you’ve questioned God by saying, “Why God? What is the point of this?” Or maybe you’ve thought, “I did everything like you said, and this is what happens?” This can happen in a myriad of different arenas of life. In parenting, you can think that if you do “X” then you’ll be guaranteed “Y” as the outcome (except kids are willing, voluntary sinners, and that changes things). Or, you could think that if you save money, you’ll definitely have a retirement (but what if the stock market crashes or the value of the dollar plummets). Maybe you think that if you work hard, you’ll get rewarded (but for some reason no one notices you). Could you have had a situation with relationships where you have sacrificed, shown love and humility, and yet you receive hostility in return? Or finally, maybe you’ve looked around at people who aren’t followers of Jesus and then you’ve looked at your life and you’ve thought to yourself, “No fair! I love God and I get *this*, yet they’re over there basking in the sun!”

In any of these situations (and more), you could be thinking, “What’s the point?!” And then you come to church and you hear me on a given Sunday quote one of my favorite Bible verses, “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”¹ How can having a job, saving money, being moral, being a good parent, maintaining relationships be done with joy and for God’s glory when it seems like these things can fall apart so quickly? Why should we even care about these things when literally *anything* could happen and we really aren’t in control?

While some of you may think that these kinds of questions ought not to be asked, these kinds of questions are precisely the questions that are addressed in the book we’re going to be trekking through over the next few months: Ecclesiastes. In the midst of my very deep pain of working

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Co 10:31.

through the hopelessness this world offers, Ecclesiastes became a balm to me because it asked the questions I was asking.

And I think that we should all find this encouraging. To those who ask these questions, I want you to see that God doesn't shy away from these questions. He doesn't say, "How dare you?" But instead he says, "I'm going to these questions before you can even get there." And you know what? He can handle these questions. He wants you to see that these questions have answers and that these answers are found ultimately in him. But even if you don't ask these kinds of questions, I think this book should encourage you, too. I still remember having a conversation with a very godly person once and when I told them that my favorite book of the Bible was Ecclesiastes, they were shocked and they went on to talk about how depressing the book was. If you're one of those individuals who thinks this way, let me say that this book ultimately is not depressing. While it does express hopelessness, it also explains where the hopelessness lies. While this book is cynical, it's cynical of the right things. Maybe for you, you need this book because you're actually placing too much hope and trust in things you shouldn't. You need to get the message of this book. So for everyone here, I hope and pray that we embrace the message of this book.

But before we go too far into this book, I want to take this Sunday as more of an introduction and overview of the book of Ecclesiastes. My goal is to show you that **The book of Ecclesiastes is essential in shaping a God-centered worldview**. We'll see how this is the case by working through three basic questions. Questions we were taught to ask in elementary school. Remember the "Who, what, when, where, why and how?" Well, I'm not going to answer each of those, but I will answer three of them: "Who? What? And Why?" We will see who the author is and who the audience is. We'll see what the message is and then we'll see how this message points us to the greatest message of all: the gospel. Before I get into these points this morning, let's open up our Bibles to Ecclesiastes 1, and I will be reading verses 1-2 this morning. Before I read these verses, let's pray together.

¹ The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

*² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ²*

Right here we are pointed to the three questions: "Who? What? Why?" So, let's start with the first.

The book of Ecclesiastes is essential in shaping a God-centered worldview:

1. Because the author is the wisest of all.

I think this is a very important point for us to consider. While we might tend to think that the author of a book doesn't matter as long as the book is good, when it comes to something being vital, we don't just want a good book, we want a trustworthy author. I know that's the case for me especially when people ask me about book recommendations on Christian topics. I don't want to just give out any old book by someone who calls themselves a Christian. I want to give out books that are doctrinally sound, and I have some names of Christians in our current day

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:1-2.

and in ages past that I think I can trust quite a bit. Their names matter. So it is with authorship in the Bible. The apostle Paul even writes to people declaring his role and position in the church as a means of calling for the people's trust and obedience to the Lord. And so I think we should take some time to think through the author of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes starts off saying, "The words of the Preacher, the Son of David, king in Jerusalem." I think most of us here will then automatically deduce that this is talking about King Solomon. Verse 12 even goes on to say, "I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem."³ Clearly we see this as King Solomon, right? Well, you may be surprised to know that there are conservative scholars who doubt that this is Solomon. There are many reasons, and I'll share with you a few. First, in Proverbs and Song of Songs, Solomon comes right out and says that he wrote them. His name is given. In Ecclesiastes, he doesn't put his name here. In addition, the phrase "son of David" does not have to refer to a direct descendent. Jesus, in Matthew 1:1, is referred to as the son of David. So, clearly "son of David" doesn't have to mean the literal son, but simply someone of the lineage of David. In addition, there were only two kings before Solomon and yet in verse 16 he says that he has acquired more wisdom than all who were over Jerusalem before him. But weren't there only two? Finally, another piece against Solomon being the author is that the grammar here doesn't seem to fall in line with Solomon's time period. It seems to have been written in a completely different century.

Now, you could be thinking, "If Solomon wasn't the one who wrote this, how do people take the statements of being wisest?" That's a great question. People who take this view believe that the author of this book at least for a part of the book is basically writing in such a way so as to take on the persona of Solomon. In other words, he's writing from what he thinks would be Solomon's perspective. In this sense, Ecclesiastes isn't autobiographical. It's biographical.

Now, having said this and laying out some of the questions on the author, I still personally hold to Solomon being the author. I don't see significant problems in the so-called "problems." There are new arguments coming out about the grammar issue. In addition, in verse 16, Solomon may not be referring to all the kings who ruled before him, but simply all the different types of people who had ruling positions – kings, judges and prophets. Personally, the letter seems to read as though Solomon himself wrote this. In addition, and I'm laying my cards out on the table here, I also tend to prefer to hold to traditional, historical Christian viewpoints. While at times we must diverge from stances Christians have held to throughout history, I think it is best to be careful to not diverge too quickly. If the Holy Spirit was in them, then there's wisdom there, too. I don't want to hastily jump ship.

So, you'll hear me throughout this series refer to the author as Solomon. I could be wrong. I believe I'm right. And even the writer indicates to the reader that knowing who's talking here can be helpful for us. Again, to refer to verse 16, he writes, "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.'"⁴ It's encouraging to know the wisest person is speaking here. I can be at least humble enough to know I'm not the *wisest* person. To have someone wiser than me encourages me to listen.

But let me say this. Even if this is someone writing from a fictional perspective, using Solomon's voice, so-to-speak, ultimately, this book is very clear that the author of this book isn't merely Solomon (or some other human). In chapter 12, we read, "¹¹ **The words of the wise are like**

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:12.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:16.

goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.”⁵ We know all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. And chapter 12 clearly states that the wise words of Ecclesiastes are given by one Shepherd. Who is the Shepherd? Another King, David, wrote of this Shepherd in Psalm 23. He said, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” The Lord shepherds his people in all arenas of life – including and especially with regards to being wise. Without knowledge and wisdom, we die.

So, while it’s encouraging to read a book that emphasizes the great wisdom of a human being, let’s finally recognize the vital nature of this book because God himself had *this* book written under his sovereign, providential, miraculous plan. Heed the words of Ecclesiastes. Listen to God as he condescends to our struggles and graciously holds us as we wrestle with the point of our life and our circumstances.

Solomon knew these words came from God. That’s what impelled him to write these words. Interestingly enough, this king refers to himself as the “Preacher” twice in these two verses. He takes on another role. Do you realize that whenever truth grips your heart, you can’t help but share it? David said in psalms that if he was forgiven, he’d teach sinners. Moses, in being confronted by God with the plan of Israel’s rescue, was given the role to lead and teach the Law. Here Solomon, though a king, must share this wisdom. It can’t be left to himself. And so it is to this day. If you’ve embraced the truth, you have to share it with others. I’ll say it this way, “If you don’t share the truth, you’ve not been gripped by it yet.” To be a follower of God means you want to edify (i.e. – build up) other followers of God. And that’s precisely what Solomon does here.

So, the book of Ecclesiastes is vital for shaping a God-centered worldview because the author is wisest of all – from a human perspective, yes – but from the perspective of eternity as well. The author is the only God – immortal and eternal, from whom all wisdom flows. But we also see the book’s vital nature by seeing who it’s written to.

2. Because the book is written to the church.

We’ve already seen that verses 1-2 refer to Solomon being the “preacher,” but this word also assumes an audience. Think of it this way. Let’s say I take my son to the orthodontist for a check-up on his braces, and someone says, “What do you do for a living?” And then I say, “I’m a pastor.” They say, “Oh yeah. Where?” Then I say, “Nowhere.” I then go on to explain that I speak to imaginary people. First, that person’s going to think I’m cuckoo for Coco Puffs, and second they are also going to at least say in their mind that I am not a pastor. Why? Because a pastor must have a people. A shepherd must have sheep. An overseer must have something to oversee. The same with the word preacher.

What I’m about to say might automatically excite people who loves words and language, but I hope that even for those of you who may not be as excited about language, that you’ll be able to engage in what I’m saying here. Think about what I’m about to say like putting something together. Letters come together to create something beautiful and to communicate something wondrous. And I think we see letters forming together to communicate so much in just one single word “preacher.” The word “preacher” here in the Hebrew is *qoheleth*. The root of this word “literally means ‘to gather, collect, or assemble’” (Ryken, p. 16). The idea of this word is communicated in 1 Kings 8:1 where Solomon is calling for the Ark of the Covenant to come back to Jerusalem. In this verse we read, “Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 12:11.

the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel. . . ."⁶ The idea of *qoheleth* and its root, as far as I know, refers only to assembling people. That's why translators put the phrase "the Preacher" here. And so as one man writes, ". . .the verb *qoheleth* refers to the gathering or assembly of a community of people, especially for the worship of God."

So, who's Solomon talking to? Obviously his primary audience was the people of Israel. But is that the only audience? Don't think for a moment that this book was only intended for the Old Testament people of God and not for the New Testament church. If you recall, the New Testament was written in Greek, and the Greek rendering of *qoheleth* is *ecclesiastes*. And, the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. The church is not a building. It's the assembly of the people of God.

Ventura, please hear the words of Pastor Solomon. He's preaching to the people of God. If you are a follower of Jesus. If you know the amazing grace of God, this book is intended for you. This book is vital for shaping a God-centered worldview because the author is wisest and the author is writing to us. Now, let's look at the third reason why this book is so important.

3. Because this sermon keeps us from depending on *everything* we see.

The preacher's sermon starts off with, "²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity."⁷ This is not necessarily how some schools might teach pastors to start sermons. But Solomon cuts straight to the point. And he doesn't just say "vanity" once. He states it five times in one verse. In Hebrew, the repetition of a word was used to emphasize a point. Solomon doesn't want us to get around this point. This word is a main word in this book. Solomon uses it 38 times in 12 chapters. And so he starts off with it five times in two lines of poetry. Then, in case we want to wiggle around this phrase and say that Solomon is just being extreme, he says, "All is vanity." In other words, *everything, all, anything* is vanity.

For those of you who think this book is despairing, I do admit that I see *why* you think that. And in one sense, I agree. The word "despair" means to be without hope. I think Solomon is despairing of certain things, but he does so in order to point our hope in the right direction. In verse 3, Solomon uses the phrase "under the sun." "Under the sun" parallels with the "all" that is vanity. That means that when Solomon is saying "All is vanity," he's not saying that God is vanity or that godliness is vanity. What he's saying is that everything we see is vanity.

But what does that even mean? The word for "vanity" doesn't mean that there's no value ever in the things we do or enjoy. The NIV translates this word "vanity" as "meaningless," and I don't think that's a helpful translation. It seems to communicate that enjoying food, friendships or work is of no value ever in any circumstance, but that would contradict counsel that is given in this book. For example, in 3:12-13, we read, "¹²**I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;** ¹³**also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.**"⁸ So, what does "vanity" mean? The word means "breath" or "breeze." Adam and Eve's son "Abel" is spelled the same way. We get the idea that he was one who "died before his time." This word also shows up in

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Ki 8:1.

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:2.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:12–13.

Psalm 144:4: “Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.”⁹ Psalm 39:5 says, “. . . Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!”¹⁰

The idea behind “Vanity” is that everything is elusive and transient. In other words, there is no secured joy in *anything* we see. You cannot capture or control life. It is a lie that you are the Master of your Fate. You can’t simply do “A” and guarantee “B” as the outcome. Life doesn’t work that way. We are subject to a fallen world and we need to recognize that *everything* around us is therefore fallen and cannot give us lasting security.

Now, how is that helpful for us to know? Well, I think that far too often, we are a people who love to place our hope in things around us. For example, you may remember the story of the disappearance of Natalee Holloway. She was an 18 year-old girl on a trip to Aruba, and she mysteriously disappeared. Searches went on for years to try to find her body. Years after her disappearance I remember watching a television special and there was an interview with the mom, Beth. She was basically asked how she could move on, and her response was essentially that she had to transfer her life to other good things.

Now please know that I think it’s great that she’s not suicidal and that she’s wanting to press forward. But here’s my concern and what I believe is the concern of Solomon: if you simply transfer your meaning for life from one thing you see to another thing you see, you will despair again because everything you see is like a vapor. Its happiness won’t last. Its value won’t endure. What if the “next thing” falls apart or gets destroyed? In actuality, for all of us, everything will go away at some point – that’s why Solomon even presses the issue of death so much in this book. If our identity and life is in the things we see here, we will be stripped of all our happiness.

Do you recognize the view that Solomon is addressing in this book? It is the lie of secularism. This was embraced in Solomon’s day and it’s rampant in ours as well. We cling to what we see. You feel bad and so you gotta get a new car. You want to be happy, so you fantasize in your mind. Even “religiously,” you can be a secularist. You want to manipulate God. You think that if you just work in your life in certain ways, you’ll get a certain result, but what you’re doing is trusting what you can see instead of the One you cannot see. When we live as practical secularists, we ignore God, trust ourselves and make ourselves the center of the universe.

Don’t you see this in our culture today? No longer is it “believe in God,” it’s “believe in yourself.” Many Christians today don’t even recoil at a phrase like “self-esteem” because it’s used so often, but that phrase comes out of a secularistic viewpoint. The Bible says that we don’t esteem ourselves as more significant. Instead, we see ourselves as desperate, weak and needy. What I believe about myself is that I am a child of God by the mercy of God and now I’m a saint – but that’s not me esteeming me. That’s God’s grace lifting me up because by his grace, I was humbled under his mighty hand. This view is antithetical to the secular mindset. But this is precisely what Solomon is against because he knows that if you just believe in yourself, pull up your bootstraps, look inside, believe in the good inside – you’re going to come up short and you’ll never have lasting satisfaction. You’ll never have the joy of the Lord. You will not live out what you were created to be. You will live an existence of temporary satisfaction after temporary satisfaction with bouts of despair coming up telling you this is not worth it.

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ps 144:4.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ps 39:5.

This *is* Solomon's message. And he does get specific in this book. He address work, pleasure, youthfulness, success, wealth, our desires, popularity, injustice, knowledge, death, authority, relationships with others, speech, sorrow, laughter, power, poverty, wisdom, foolishness, morality, immorality. All of these things are mere "breaths," moments of time that give nothing sustainable. Therefore, they're futile. But that doesn't mean work, relationships and the like don't matter. Instead, as one man writes, we are to "finally stop expecting earthly things to give us lasting satisfaction and learn to live for God rather than for ourselves" (Ryken, p. 21).

In bringing up all sorts of scenarios, Solomon wants us to ask questions and discover that only God can satisfy. He wants us to realize that no one can control vapor or catch the wind. And he wants us to press deeper with our questions, too. He wants us to ask, "How can I get out of this futile system and still find greater joy?" If everything is like a breath, how can I still glorify God and do things of eternal significance? This is what Solomon wants us to see. Through digging into deep questions, and mining through painful inquiries, we finally find the most glorious of treasures. It's Solomon's conclusion. While life is subjected to futility, there is hope in only one place: God. In chapter 12, Solomon highlights this point for us. Fear God, keep his commandments – know purpose. Or, as a man by the name of Jeffrey Meyers puts it, **the "true wisdom' that Ecclesiastes offers us 'is to fear God and keep his commandments, to receive and use the gifts of God with joy and gratitude'"** (as quot. in O'Donnel, p. 10). While it takes Solomon a long time to express this concisely, the theme of wisdom is throughout the book, and again, Solomon takes pains to call us to despair of hoping in transience. He calls us to rock-solid hope found only in God.

So, we see that the message of this book is absolutely vital. We know the wisdom of the author. We know that we're part of the intended audience. We understand the tone and message of this book. But finally we see this book is essential for a God-centered worldview:

4. Because this book points us to the gospel message.

Of course Solomon did not know who the Messiah was going to be nor does he detail every aspect of the gospel message; however, when Jesus came to the earth, he said that all of the Old Testament testified to him. In Luke 24:44-45, Jesus says, **"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."** ⁴⁵ **Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. . . .**¹¹ Do you hear that? You understand the whole of Scripture when you see Jesus as the fulfiller of them. The phrase "Law of Moses, Prophets and Psalms" included the entire Old Testament, which included Ecclesiastes. Therefore, Jesus is pointed to in Ecclesiastes.

Now you may wonder *how* he's pointed to. Well, in many ways, but the word that's mentioned five times in verse two catapults us into the New Testament. Turn in your Bibles to Romans 8. In verses 16-17 we read, ¹⁶ "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."¹² Then Paul goes on to talk about the difficulty of living life in this world. I mean, he already said "if indeed we suffer." In other words, every Christian will go through different types of suffering. Then Paul goes on to express why we go through suffering. Look at verses 18-23 with me:

¹¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Lk 24:44–45.

¹² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ro 8:16–17.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves,¹³

Paul, who was shipwrecked, beaten, rejected by friends and so much more says, “the sufferings aren’t worth comparing to what’s to come.” He expresses his longing for what’s to come and reveals his hope isn’t in this life, in what he can see. But he goes on and says that all of creation longs for what’s to come.

Why? Because creation was subjected to futility. Get that phrase! The word “futility” is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew “vanity.” Here’s the link with Ecclesiastes. What Paul says here resonates with Pastor Solomon. Notice something here. Paul says creation was subjected to futility. In other words, this was part of God’s punishment for Adam and Eve’s sin. I believe this is what Solomon gets to in Ecclesiastes as well. It’s not merely that everything is vanity, but it’s that God has ordained it that way. Solomon writes that God placed eternity in our hearts, but we don’t know how to discern. He’s done this. We’re confused. Now what?

Paul goes on though and instead of being despondent by the futility, he actually says the futility is a cause for hope and anticipation in him. He says that he groans for what’s to come! And for all of us who are Christians, the futility should cause you to long for that future as well. Not in a morbid way, but in a truly joyous way! Don’t just long for vacation days or time off or some new technological advancement. All of these things are futile! Hope in the day when futility is driven away and we are in the presence of God as his dear children!

But how can we have this hope that there is going to be a day when futility and vanity ceases? Read down from verses 31-39:

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor

¹³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ro 8:18–23.

*anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*¹⁴

Those who trust in Jesus are rescued from eternal futility. Not even death separates us from God. And the reason that's the case is because of Jesus! Jesus went through all his days in obedience – the Righteous One and yet on his final day, God poured out his wrath on the Son – wrath that we deserved. But Jesus did this so we could live. This doesn't mean that this life has no problems, though. Oh, we're still experiencing temporal futility. But that's a good thing. We're reminded in a myriad of ways that this life isn't worth living for – God is the only One worth living for. So we don't set our hope in ourselves, how well we can do things, our savings accounts, our parenting, our professions or anything else. We don't expect earthly things to give us the satisfaction that only God can give. As we live this way, by God's grace, he will see to it that as we're depending on him in *everything*, whether eating or drinking, he will receive glory and those works will matter for eternity. And we can live with anticipation and expectant hope. We can then rejoice in this life and accept his gifts as gifts – not gods – because we have the Giver of all hope, joy, life and satisfaction. All because of Jesus!

Truly, Ecclesiastes paints the canvas black for us so that we can see the stunning beauty of the light of the glory of God in Jesus Christ! Let the transience of this life point all of us to the absolute security found through Jesus that he gives us in God himself. This is the gospel according to Ecclesiastes.

¹⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ro 8:31–39.