

WHAT'S THE POINT?

the gospel according to Ecclesiastes

*“The Futility of Life”
Ecclesiastes 1:3-11*

Influence. Impact. Change. Making a difference. These are all words we hear incessantly in our culture. This past week, I typed into the google search engine “change the world,” and these are some quotes I found: “People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do; “Let your smile change the world.” I typed in “make an impact,” and I found these: “You were born to make an impact;” “if your presence doesn’t make an impact, then your absence won’t make a difference.” I even found this quote for Christians: “We will never change the world by going to church. We will only change the world by being the church.”

These messages are all around us in the lives of people in our day and throughout the centuries. A more recent example comes from pop culture. Many of you probably at least have heard the name Madonna. In an interview she had, she once stated the source of her inspiration. She said this:

My drive in life comes from a fear of being mediocre. That is always pushing me. I push past one spell of it and discover myself as a special human being but then I feel I am still mediocre and uninteresting unless I do something else. Because even though I have become somebody, I still have to prove that I am somebody. My struggle has never ended and I guess it never will.

Even though she’s accomplished much, Madonna admitted that she still feels as though she’s not done enough. Her works and popularity are not enough to give her satisfaction in life. Yet, she continues to chase after it. And you know what? We all tend to do that. It’s not just people in pop culture. It’s the CEO who thinks his value comes in the new deal, and yet when he cuts that deal – he needs another one. It’s the mom who thinks her identity comes from being a *good* mom. Yet, her children disobey daily and she constantly feels as though she’s a failure of a person. It’s the teenager who thinks that success in life is going to college, getting married and having a good paying job. But then they grow up and realize none of those things give the peace they’re longing for.

Have you ever wondered “What’s the point?” I know I’ve had several times in my life where I’ve even simply thought of the monotony of life: getting up in the morning, getting ready, preparing for a sermon, going home, getting kids ready for bed, being exhausted at the end of the day, waking up to do it all over again. Then getting to Sunday and the sermon is done. Only to go into a new week of the same. Then I’ve thought, “And I’m preparing my children to the same monotony! I hope that this is making a difference.” Have you thought that about your job or your parenting? Why do you do the same ol’ same ol’?

I think that if we truly evaluate life around us, and we only evaluate on the basis of what we see, we’d have to come to these despairing questions head-on. Actually, I think one of the most honest people in

the world was the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. He once asked what he called “a question without an answer to which one cannot live. . . . It was: **‘What will come of what I am doing today or tomorrow? What will come of my whole life? Why should I live, why wish for anything, or do anything?’ It can also be expressed thus: Is there any meaning in my life that the inevitable death awaiting me does not destroy?’** (as quot. in O’Donnell, p. 25). He’s not the only one who has expressed these thoughts. Jean-Paul Sartre was a nihilist – meaning that he believed life has no meaning other than what you might give to it. In his novel called *La Nausee* (i.e. – Nausea), he wrote: **“I was thinking . . . that here we are eating and drinking, to preserve our precious existence, and that there’s nothing, nothing, absolutely no reason for existing** (as quot. in O’Donnell, p. 25).

How encouraging do you find these statements? Yet, no matter how depressing they may be, they’re actually right in one sense. Because they only are seeing life through the lens of what they can see, they are coming to the inevitable conclusion that life is pointless. If you only evaluate life from the perspective of creation, you will realize nothing you do matters. In reality, you cannot change the world, make a difference or revolutionize anything. You will die and more than likely be forgotten. Why?

Well, if you haven’t opened your Bibles yet to Ecclesiastes, turn to chapter 1, and I’ll begin reading in verse 2. Before I read, let’s pray again together. . . . Why won’t life give us meaning? Let’s start in verse 2:

*² Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. ³ What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? ⁴ A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. ⁵ The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. ⁶ The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. ⁷ All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. ⁸ All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us. ¹¹ There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.*¹

Vanity, vanity, vanity, vanity, *all* is vanity. Remember that word refers to everything being like a breath. You can’t grasp a hold of it. You can’t bottle it up and keep it. Everything is transient. Everything fades away. Therefore, Solomon asks, “What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?” Solomon is saying, “If everything is vanity, then what profit is doing anything?” The word profit indicates something like a paycheck. What do we receive for all the work? It’s a very understandable question, right? If you’re out in the workforce, you expect a paycheck. In fact, the government requires a minimum wage. When applying for a job, you might be excited about the opportunity, but if they said, “You’re getting nothing,” you might be more prone to not take that job – especially if you knew you’d get no pay *ever for the rest of your life*.

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:2–11.

This is the question Solomon is asking here. If everything is vanity, if I can *toil* all the days of my life and it's all vanity, then what's the point? Is there any paycheck? What Solomon is doing here is he's asking the nihilist's question. And here in verse 3, Solomon reveals why the question comes to mind. He refers to the toils *under the sun*. The phrase "under the sun," I believe, refers to viewing all of life from what we can see. The spiritual realm, God himself, isn't thought of or considered. There's no outside, beyond us, objective meaning.

If that's the perspective we're coming at the world, then Solomon says, "What's the point of what we do?" Yet even though we feel that tension, we still live and *do*. And not only that, we *toil*. We work hard even though there's seemingly *no point*. So, we hear people say, "Create your own meaning for life." Or, "As long as you're happy that's all that matters." These answers simply propound the problem because we simply dig our heads deeper within to find happiness. And Solomon is trying to get our heads out of the sand to keep us from the conclusion that it's worthwhile to toil and work for meaning in what we can see. So, Solomon faces this reality head-on with us, and in what follows he reiterates that **The gain you seek after cannot be found in creation.**²

Now, in case you want to look within creation for meaning, Solomon gives a litany of examples which show us that there is no gain in living for what we can see. This morning, I want us to go through each example Solomon gives, and then we will again see how even these verses launch us forward to the gospel message. So, Solomon's first reason why the gain we seek cannot be found in creation is:

Reason #1: Humans are swallowed up by the earth (v. 4).

Look at verse 4 again with me: "A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever."³ You can't argue with this statement whatsoever. One generation comes after another, correct? But Solomon is emphasizing the toil, the monotony and also the complete lack of gain in this. It's like generations are going through a revolving door. It just doesn't stop. And what's the point when the earth remains forever?

Now, that logic might not make sense. Maybe it's the poetic nature of these words that we don't get what Solomon is saying. But if we look a little closer at the context and even the Hebrew words, we can more greatly understand Solomon's point.

If you were here last week, you might remember me saying that the Hebrew word for "Vanity" here is spelled the same way that Adam and Eve's son "Abel" is spelled in Genesis. Now, we get into verse 3, and Solomon uses the word "man," which is the Hebrew for Adam. I think this matters because as one commentator notes, ". . . the fall of *Adam* is never far from Pastor Solomon's mind" (O'Donnell, p. 17). With all of Solomon's talk of looking at the futility of this world and figuring out the *point*, this all relates to the fact that this world is fallen. A fallen world can't give you meaning. But more than that, while every generation dies, this fallen world remains.

So, what's his point in this? I think this relates back to the commission God gave to Adam and Eve in the garden to subdue the earth. We're to tend, care for and see its flourishing. Yet, as a result of the fall, God said that the ground would be cursed and we're also told in the Scriptures that we were made of dust and to dust we shall return.

² Thank you to Eswine for this insight. This is a slight modification to Eswine's wording of a proposition for these verses.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:4.

So, every generation toils and presses on and we think we're getting meaning and significance because we've wielded the resources of this world for our benefit, but in actuality, the earth makes us serve it – not the other way around. This earth that we're supposed to subdue actually subdues us in the end, and we become fertilizer to this ground. The ancient church father, Jerome, said this: **“What is more a vanity of vanities than the fact that the earth endures, although it was made for the benefit of man, while man himself, the master of the earth, suddenly crumbles into dust”** (as quot. in O'Donnell, p. 20-21).

Are we to find significance in *that*? What gain or profit is there in becoming dust? Clearly the gain we seek cannot be found in creation because the creation swallows us up. Even though generations continue over and over and over again, the earth still wins. We toil, but we have no profit. But in case you don't think that's a great reason, Solomon gives another reason why we shouldn't look to this creation for profit.

Reason #2: Creation gains nothing new from creation's work.

In case you want to be angry with creation for making you its servant, Solomon then says that creation doesn't even benefit from itself. And he gives three examples of this. Let's take each one in order.

First, Solomon gives the example of the sun in verse 5: “The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.”⁴ Notice the monotony and persistence that's expressed in these words. Remember Solomon wants us to see how hard we work and how we receive nothing in return – no paycheck. But it's not just that we don't receive anything. It's all creation is subjected to futility. It works hard and to what end? Just look at the sun. From our perspective, the sun rises and sets only to rise and set again.

The point he's making is not that the sun doesn't affect things, but that the sun doesn't produce anything new and doesn't seem to reach a destination. There's no rest for the sun. The Hebrew word that Solomon uses here for “hastens,” also potentially has the idea of “pant” behind it, like in Isaiah 42:14, where we read, “now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant.”⁵ So here, the preacher says that the sun goes round and round and does the same thing with no gain.

Solomon's second example in creation is with the wind. Verse 6 says, “⁶The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.”⁶ Here again we have monotony and an idea of tiredness. And what's the paycheck? What's the conclusion? It comes back just to go out again.

By the way, the example Solomon gives here with the air isn't talking about the jet stream, but he's talking about how the wind blew in Israel. There were strong winds that would blow from the north or from the south. With Solomon giving this north/south illustration, we should connect it with the previous illustration of the sun traveling from east to west.

To put a modern phrase to what Solomon is saying: “Everything seems to be running in circles.” Have you ever seen a dog chasing his tail? Hilarious, but if he keeps doing it, you probably get him to stop at some point. Have you ever found yourself driving in circles before? You want to get out of that because

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:5.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Is 42:14.

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

there's a destination. There's something more to life than just driving in circles, right? This is Solomon's conundrum. The sun and the wind pant and blow, going round and round. Generation comes and generation goes and are sent back to the earth. To what end?

Then Solomon gives his third example within creation: water. Verse 7 probably describes what one would see with the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. The preacher writes, "7 All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again."⁷ The Jordan River dumps into the Dead Sea and yet the Dead Sea doesn't increase in size, and somehow the river can keep feeding the Sea. Solomon isn't here asking *how* that happens, but instead "Why does this happen?" There doesn't seem to be a point to this hard labor of the stream. It doesn't seem to benefit the Sea, and the Sea doesn't seem to thank it for all of its labors.

With these three examples, Solomon is giving us our second reason why we shouldn't look to the created order for our paycheck, our worth, our meaning. This world can't even seem to give anything new to itself; so, it can't give us anything.

Let's now move into the third example Solomon gives to press his point further. The gain you seek after cannot be found in creation because:

Reason #3: We weary ourselves "under the sun" and are still not satisfied (v. 8).

When I say "under the sun," I'm trying to use it as Solomon is using it. We weary ourselves with all the various types of things that we can see – the things under the sun. Solomon turns from the world's weary nature to our weary nature. Just like the sun, wind and water keep doing, but don't get anything new; so it is with human beings! So, we ought not to trust in creation, and we certain shouldn't trust in ourselves to give us what we long for! We can't satisfy our longings.

Look at verse 8: ⁸ All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁸ All things are full of weariness. Sin is weariness to the bones, but we also know that we can grow weary in doing well. Every type of thing involves weariness – whether it's good or evil. There's one popular band that I don't believe I've ever listened to and I don't believe I'd recommend, but I came across some lyrics to a song of theirs that say, "So you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking Racing around to come up behind you again The sun is the same in a relative way but you're older, Shorter of breath and one day closer to death." Interesting how close that sounds to Ecclesiastes. Solomon said that if people only look at life from their perspective, they'll only see vanity. And Solomon also says that you could spend so much time talking about this vanity that honestly we don't have enough time in our lives to talk about the futility of life.

The preacher goes on to say that our eyes and ears are never satisfied. Interesting illustration, but again helpful. Our senses are always sensing and yet they're never satisfied. Think about how practical this statement is. We live in the digital age, and that perfectly illustrates the point here. Go to any family gathering and people are either watching a game together or more practically, many people are on their smartphones, looking down, communicating with people who aren't in the room. Walk around town and you see headphones in people's ears. If your radio is broke in your car, you want to fix it! A New album comes out, you want to listen, but in a few years from now that song isn't any good anymore.

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

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

Solomon isn't saying that it's bad that we want to listen to music, but again he's saying, "What's the point? If we're never satisfied, why have the sense for it?" When we look and hear we're simply reminded that nothing gives us what we long for.

At this point, you might want to say, "Ok, ok, Solomon. Stop! I don't want to hear this." To that, I think Solomon would say, "Too bad. You need to really understand!" He then gives a fourth reason as to why we don't look to creation for what we long for.

Reason #4: We can only put a façade on the monotony of life (vv. 9-10).

Read verses 9-10 with me again: ⁹What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.⁹ Solomon comes right out and says that whatever happens has happened. Again, we're chasing after our tails, running in circles. We're accomplishing nothing new.

But to that you could say, "Wait a second. We accomplish new things all the time." I mean, I look back ten years ago and the iPhone wasn't even released yet. That was a new thing that has shaped many things in our culture and world, right? What's Solomon talking about that there's nothing new? Let me give an illustration. Have you ever watched someone get a makeover and then when you see them, you hear someone say something like, "It's a *new you!*" Do they mean that the person actually completely changed in their personhood? No. The person has different clothes and maybe hairstyle, but they're still the same person. That's what Solomon is saying here.

The things that are *new* really aren't new to their core. In other words, people have always been working on communication and how to communicate better with others. People have always been at work trying to figure out how we can travel better. And to what end? We're still working on being better? We're still trying harder to do more. And it's like we're never going to reach a destination. We work, work, work and yet we still have wars, we still have death. We still have toil, tiredness and we wonder, "Will we ever reach a finish line?" So, sure! The travel might be nicer, but the ideas have always been there. The communication might be easier or quicker, but the ideas have always been there. And there seems to be no end in sight. All we can do is put a façade on the monotony. We're playing dress-up, but there seems to be no reality.

So, the gain you seek cannot be found in creation because creation swallows you up, creation can't even give itself anything new, we weary ourselves and we only put a façade on the monotony. Finally, Solomon gives us the fifth reason:

Reason #5: Our efforts "under the sun" will be forgotten.

Not only do we tire ourselves out in all our work, but no matter how great our works, they'll be forgotten. We talk about revolutionizing the world and making an impact, but how long does that impact last? Verse 11 says, "¹¹There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after."¹⁰ The impact isn't lasting. It doesn't release people from the rat race we're in. Give it enough time and you'll be forgotten.

This verse reminds me of a conversation I had a couple weeks ago with someone. After I had preached, someone came up to me and said that Mary Queen of Scots was not Bloody Mary – even though I had

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:9–10.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 1:11.

equated the two. He said it might be a common error, but clearly it's an error nonetheless. Here I am hundreds of years later, and I can't even differentiate between BLOODY Mary and Mary Queen of Scots. Yet, I'm sure people back then would know the difference. Or, let me use a different illustration. I'm reading the biography of John Adams right now. In there I was taught about the Treaty of Paris. Do you know when that was signed? And better yet, do you even know what it is? It's the definitive peace treaty between Britain and the United States. And, by the way, it wasn't signed in 1776 with the Declaration of Independence. It was signed in 1783! Talk about influential! Talk about earth-shattering, and yet many people have no idea of these things. Or what about the Anasazi people who came a thousand years ago? They built a large city in New Mexico's Chaco Canyon with five story buildings containing hundreds of rooms. I bet they were impressed with their feats, but more than likely most (if not all) of you have never even heard of them.

Solomon says that the same will happen with us. Generations come and go forgetting about the previous generations. In seeming endless monotony, we move on accomplishing nothing to get to the goal. This has been the case since Adam and Eve's sin, so all creation (including humans) are subject to the futility of life.

Now here's my question. Is there any hope that can be seen in all of this? Or does Solomon want us to sulk here with no answers? I believe Solomon wants us to look upward. Instead of looking "under the sun," he wants us to look above it. As I quoted last week, Jesus taught in Luke 24:44-45, "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 When we see Jesus as the fulfillment of all Scriptures, we understand Scripture. So, let's move forward to see how Ecclesiastes points us to Jesus as the fulfillment. As we do, we discover that **The gain we seek is found in Jesus.**

When you hear the question of Ecclesiastes 3, "What does a man gain by the toil," are you reminded of anyone else saying something similar? In Mark 8:36, Jesus says, "**For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?**"¹² Jesus is using very similar phrasing. He's talking about work and whether our work is eternally profitable. He comes to the same conclusion as Solomon. You can gain *everything* and yet lose everything. You can be viewed as one of great impact, influence – revolutionizing the world – but your life is futility if you live for those things.

You see, Jesus came to this earth and said, "apart from me you can do nothing."¹³ That means that with Jesus, there's a possibility to get out of the futility. And that's precisely what we discover in the Scriptures. You know Solomon said that "under the sun," nothing is new. But if we look above the sun, to the council of Heaven, we read in Isaiah 43:19, "**Behold, I am doing a new thing.**"¹⁴ In Jeremiah 31:31, we read, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant."¹⁵ Later in Ezekiel 36:26, we read of something else new:¹⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.¹⁶

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), Mk 8:36.

¹³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Jn 15:5.

¹⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Is 43:19.

¹⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Je 31:31.

¹⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Eze 36:26.

Under the sun, there's nothing new. This creation is subjected to futility, and none of us can work our way out of it. But if we look above the sun, God is in heaven declaring a new plan, a new work. This work will lead us to having new hearts. But how is that going to take place?

It's because there was a man who wasn't merely a man, but he was the incarnate, Son of God in the flesh, who actually accomplished the work of God to free us from futility. In John 4:34, Jesus said, **"My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work."**¹⁷ Before Jesus was baptized, he told John that he had to fulfill all righteousness (see Matt. 3:15). And in John 19:30, on the cross, Jesus declared, "It is finished!" Listen, no other human being has done anything truly *new*. No one else has revolutionized or transformed the world. They've only dressed it up. As Jesus said, we can do *nothing* apart from him. Sure, we can dress things up and build facades, but our works are futile.

But Jesus, his work was completed. He fulfilled all righteousness. He did the Father's will. He accomplished the work of God to bring about the new covenant so that people could have new hearts. And what is this new covenant? Jesus talks about it in the last supper with disciples – the new covenant, the eternal promise of God that those who turn from themselves and trust in Jesus find eternal forgiveness and eternal life. Freedom from futility! In addition, the Bible tells us that as a result of this covenant, we also experience a *new* birth. And Ephesians 4:24 says that we have a "new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."¹⁸

Truly, it is God, through Jesus, who is making all things new! This is his work. And now for all of us who trust in Jesus and have turned from seeking identity and life from this world, we now have God at work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. As a result, whatever we do, in word or deed, we can do it to the glory of God. That means all of our works now can reach beyond the futility and matter for eternity! Why? Because he's at work, and because he promised to do a new work.

These are phenomenal truths, amen? We humans could never get out of the futility. And instead of God leaving us to ourselves, he had a plan to rescue us and set us free. We who embrace futility and sin. We who turned from God and wanted to live our own way, God had mercy on us and planned to forgive people of their treason against the Creator. And if you'd call on Jesus (or if you have turned to Jesus), that means all you do matters forever! After the apostle Paul talks about the wonders of the gospel and then the reality of Jesus' resurrection, he tells the Corinthian church, "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."¹⁹ Because of Jesus and his work, we can be assured that what we do by his strength and grace, is never in vain. Now, please hear me. That doesn't mean that we no longer experience futility in this life. We still experience the effects of the fall all around us. There is still pain, difficulty, trials, sin and death. But Paul's point is that Jesus has conquered all! Therefore, as Paul said in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."²⁰

This should all give us incredible excitement, but there's more, believers. In Revelation, we read about a New Heaven and a New Earth. There will be a day when we will see our God face to face and all the futility of sin will be done away with and even the futility found in the gifts of God will be done away with. No futility whatsoever because this creation will no longer groan. The creation will be perfect.

¹⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Jn 4:34.

¹⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Eph 4:24.

¹⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Co 15:58.

²⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Php 1:21.

Oh, when we think of Ecclesiastes 1:3-11, we are led to despair. But then when you hear God’s words in Revelation 21:5, **“Behold, I am making all things new,”**²¹ we should shout for joy! So, Ventura, let’s boast in our God and Savior! Let’s praise him. If anyone revolutionized, if anyone changed the world, it’s not us. It’s him. Even when Luke writes about the early church, he starts Acts off by saying that he’s recording all that Jesus continued to do! So, even when we talk about our work and what we do, let’s follow the pattern of the apostles. Like Paul we can say, **“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”**²²

Far from diminishing what we’re doing, we’re actually confessing that our freedom, our identity, our hope, our meaning does not rest in us and what we do. No, instead our God made a promise to set us free from futility, and we confess that he is at work in us and through us – making all things new! We are a part of the family of God with glories awaiting us – the greatest of which is seeing and savoring our God, who is Life!

The gain you seek after cannot be found in this futile creation. The gain you seek is found in Jesus who, through his life, death and resurrection, brought about the new covenant, new heart, new self, new creation, New Heaven and New Earth. This is the gospel according to Ecclesiastes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Provan, Iain. *The NIV Application Commentary: Ecclesiastes/Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
2. O’Donnell, Douglas Sean. *Reformed Expository Commentary: Ecclesiastes*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014.
3. Ryken, Philip Graham. *Preaching the Word: Ecclesiastes*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.
4. Eaton, Michael A. *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.
5. Eswine, Zack. *The Gospel According to Ecclesiastes*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014.
6. Kidner, Derek. *Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Ecclesiastes*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1976.

²¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Re 21:5.

²² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ga 2:20–21.