

WHAT'S THE POINT?

the gospel according to Ecclesiastes

**“Money: god or gift?”
Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:9**

A couple of weeks ago while I was studying for this sermon, I was made aware of a painting by the Renaissance artist Quentin Massys. Its name is *The Moneylender and His Wife*. In that painting, there is a husband and a wife sitting side-by-side at a table. He's sitting there counting and inspecting his money while his wife is sitting next to him with a Bible in front of her. But while her finger is turning the page, her eyes are on the money.

In this painting, Massys is recognizing how money captivates us and takes us away from what is truly valuable. He was actually making a point to the city of Antwerp which was a center for business and trade. He was telling them that money can quickly draw us away from God.

Have you ever felt like that recently? I would imagine most would say “yes,” but there could be some here who would say “no.” And maybe you say “no” because you’re thinking, “I don’t have money to stare at. As soon as I get it, it goes to bills or food or taxes.” But you don’t have to have much money to love it or to desire it. I still remember earlier on in marriage when Tracy and I didn’t have much at all, and I was constantly concerned that we were going to go in debt. I had my spreadsheet to evaluate what we were spending. I had our monthly budget created. And yet I was so worried we were going to over-spend. I was so concerned that I didn’t even trust my wife when she was grocery shopping. Now, I wouldn’t have said I didn’t trust her, but my actions spoke louder than words. I’d go shopping with her and calculate every single item in my head to make sure she stayed in the budget. But it wasn’t just that, I was constantly thinking about money. When I was in my college classes, I’d try to re-align our line items to see if somehow we could end up with more money or a better scenario. Also, having a budget on my computer wasn’t enough. Back then we had PDA’s. Do you remember those? I’m not talking about “Personal Displays of Affection.” I’m talking about “Personal Digital Assistants.” I had a Casiopeia and it ran Microsoft. I downloaded Excel and voila, I had our finances there. Then I could enter every single receipt right away. I knew where our money was going. I kept up on my wife. I was in control. Or, wait. . . maybe it was in control of me.

You see, whether you have a lot or you have a little, money and stuff can control our thoughts. We can think we’re ok and content, and then we go to the store and see the latest *whatever*, and then these ugly desires come out longing for that thing and then we can feel discouraged that we can’t get it. But even if we do get that thing we want, the problem is that the nature of our desire is to continue to desire. So, we get, but we want more. In the end, we ought to realize that stuff will *never satisfy* the soul.

As we come to that realization, we could do one of two things. We could either say, “Throw all caution to the wind, and let’s continue in this rat race of feeding my desires – whether or not I’m completely satisfied, at least I can have some fun.” Or, we could say, “It’s all bad. I’m not going to have anything.” But is this how we ought to think about money and stuff? This is where Solomon goes in the next section we’ll be studying this morning. Be aware that we’re going to cover a lot of ground this morning in terms

of the text, and I'm not going to be parsing and dividing each word that's mentioned here, but this section is a *whole*, and so I think I need to cover the main idea on one sermon. So, with that in mind, if you haven't already done so, turn in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes 5:8, and we're going to read to 6:9.

*⁸ If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. ⁹ But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields. ¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. ¹¹ When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? ¹² Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep. ¹³ There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, ¹⁴ and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? ¹⁷ Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger. ¹⁸ Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. ¹⁹ Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰ For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart. **6** There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: ² a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. ³ If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. ⁴ For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. ⁵ Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. ⁶ Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place? ⁷ All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. ⁸ For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? ⁹ Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind. ¹*

As we read through this, you can probably tell that all of this relates to each other, but there's something that we may not see as clearly. While Solomon is poetic and purposeful in his writing, this section actually has the beauty of a certain type of literary structure called a chiasm. Within a chiastic structure, you have multiple themes addressed, but you find them on both sides of the central argument. And you know what the central argument is because it is the only thing in the structure that

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:8–6:9.

has no parallel. If that didn't make sense, let me say it this way: verses 8-12 of chapter 5 and verses 7-9 of six state similar truths. Chapter 5:13-17 and chapter 6:1-6 are similar. And then verses 18-20 of chapter 5 have no parallel. That means that Solomon is really trying to bring his point home. He's making it obvious for us. So, what is that point? Answer: **Wealth cannot give eternal joy.** Now, this is only part of the main point, and I'll get to the fuller point as we move on in this sermon. But because Solomon has this in a particular structure, I want to take the parallel verses together as main points this morning – seeking to bring across the main ideas.

So, we see that wealth cannot give eternal joy. But why?

1. People cannot be satisfied with wealth (5:8-12, 6:7-9)

Now when I say satisfied, I'm not saying that people cannot find enjoyment or even seasons of satisfaction with wealth. When I say satisfied, think of it as a person who has sat down for a Thanksgiving feast, and they've eaten their plate with meat and all the trimmings, and they've come to that point where if they took another bite, it'd just be too much. So, when Grandma comes by and says, "Do you want more, honey," you say, "No thank you. I'm satisfied right now!" You're perfectly contented.

This is the point of Solomon. Look at 5:10 – ¹⁰He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.² Now look at 6:7 – ⁷All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.³ Look at the food illustration Solomon gives in chapter 6. Continue on to verses 8-9: ⁸For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? ⁹Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.⁴

In chapter 5, Solomon uses three terms related to prosperity: money, wealth and income. They each have a little bit of a different nuance. If you like to make notes in your Bible, you'll appreciate this. **"Money" referred to silver used as a medium of exchange.** This is comparable to our money of today in that we have things that we use in exchange for goods and services. **"Wealth" referred to the actual goods and possessions you had. "Gain" referred to a harvest. It's the "hope of further income, a 'harvest' in store"** (Eaton, p. 117). With these terms, Solomon is covering the gamut of everything we have, possess or desire to gain. Then in chapter 6, Solomon says that within us there is this continuous, vacuous desire for more. Our eyes might look around and see things – and that's not the problem. Eyesight is fine. But there's this disastrous appetite inside of us that rears its ugly head when our eyes look at that person's house or this person's new TV or our friend's car or the family member's really fun-looking vacation. But this appetite isn't even latent until we see other people's stuff. This appetite continually wanders. We could simply be in our own homes all by ourselves, and this appetite says, "What if I had" or, "It'd sure be nice if." The reality is that this appetite never could be and never will be satisfied by giving it more stuff. It has an insatiable craving for more. That's why Solomon then says that this reality is vanity and striving after the wind.

Now, I want you to think about that idea. What does it mean for this to be vanity and striving after the wind? It means that this insatiable craving is always going to be a part of this fallen world. There's a poet

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:10.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 6:7.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 6:8–9.

named George Herbert who once wrote about the power of enjoyment in his poem called *The Pulley*. He talked about God making man and then pouring out all the blessings he could from his glass: “riches, beauty, wisdom, honor, and pleasure.” “But,” as one comments on this poem, “when the glass was almost empty, he decided to stop pouring.” Herbert wrote, “When almost all was out God . . . God made a stay, / Perceiving that alone of all his treasure / Rest in the bottom lay.” In other words, God gave all gifts, but didn’t want to give rest in those gifts. Herbert continues, **“For if I should (said he) / Bestow this jewel also on my creature, / He would adore my gifts instead of me”** (as quot. in Ryken, p. 137).

This is a beautiful reality. The vanity of this craving should point us to one who can satisfy us. However, that’s not where we usually go. We think that if we’re hungry, we’ll be able to satisfy ourselves with whatever we want. Solomon gives examples of the injustices that take place when this hunger is followed. In 5:8-9, he says, ⁸“If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. ⁹But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.”⁵ These verses actually have a lot of confusion around them in how to precisely translate them. I’m not going to comment much on this except to say that Solomon is probably talking about the corruption that can take place in government when officials are just looking out for themselves. Then you have the poor seeking for justice, but they never receive it (or it takes a long time). Why? Because those in government love their positions. They love their money, and they all will do what it takes to cover for each other – without thought of the well-being of the poor. Oh, but if someone had money, then they’d listen. We are in need of a greater government that will never be swayed by the control of money and stuff. And, by the way, if you’re a follower of Christ, you have the guarantee of such a government! Isaiah 9:6-7 prophecies of the government that’s to come under the ruler ship of Jesus. It says ⁶**“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. . .”**⁶

We need rescue, but not only from the control of government. The craving we need to be set free from is with all of us – not just government officials. Solomon goes on in 5:11, ¹¹“When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?”⁷ You may have a rags to riches story, and here’s something that’s sad. The more money you have, the more people in your life who are dependent on you and the more you have to pay. You make more money, you pay more taxes, you have more employers. And sometimes you have more “friends” who want you for your stuff. As Sean O’Donnell says, “. . . **wealth attracts a circle of dependents – or, put more graphically, ‘human leeches.’”** (O’Donnell, p. 125).

Whether you’re wealthy or poor or somewhere in between, we need to heed these words. Wealth will not satisfy the soul. And, actually, Solomon gives a little bit of a comfort for those who don’t have a lot of money. He says in 5:12, ¹²“Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.”⁸ Interesting argument. Solomon says that the wealthy can’t sleep as well, but it’s not because of the worries. It’s because of the food they now eat, too. The food won’t let them sleep. This argument is fascinating to me because as I look at wealthier countries, we do discover that the types of sicknesses they experience are of a different kind than poorer countries.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:8–9.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Is 9:6–7.

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:11.

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:12.

Where we ought to be taking better care of ourselves, we eat those foods that comfort us most and it leads to other kinds of ailments. Whereas the poor can rejoice that they can work hard and thus sleep well.

By the way, I think this is a wonderful argument for God designing humans for labor. We were made to work in such a way that we would end up being tired. But in our culture today, it seems like many people feel like being exhausted is a bad thing. Since when? Jesus calls us to serve, sacrifice, give of ourselves. Solomon calls our work *toil*, and then here he says that the laborer actually has it better off than the wealthy who eats a lot and works less because at least the laborer sleeps well – whether he eats a lot of a little.

Blessing and satisfaction *cannot* be found in money, gain and wealth! Therefore, Solomon says in 6:8 – “⁸For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living?”⁹ In other words, who cares if you learn how to live in such a way to make more money! Who cares if you’re poor and you’ve learned how to climb the ladder of success. If that’s all you’re living for, you will never be satisfied!

Now in case you want to argue that point more, this wealthy Solomon has more to say. Wealth cannot give eternal joy because:

2. Wealth (no matter how much) is vaporous (5:13-17, 6:1-6).

Let’s look at the parallel verses all at once. Let’s start with 5:13-17 – “¹³There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, ¹⁴and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. ¹⁵As he came from his mother’s womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? ¹⁷Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.”¹⁰ Let’s look at 6:1-3 to start, “⁶There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: ²a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. ³If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life’s good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he.”¹¹

Solomon gives a couple of scenarios where someone was wealthy and this wealth turned out to their hurt. First scenario is someone who, for whatever reason, lost all his riches in some bad venture. Like today, someone could lose it all on the stock market. Or, the value of a dollar can plummet like in other times in other countries in history. Someone could steal. In various ways, people can lose everything. And then Solomon says that this man had a child. Where the man should have been leaving an inheritance, he can’t even do that. He can’t pass on his legacy. Solomon calls this a grievous evil. In other words, it makes his stomach churn. Yes, if someone worked hard for something and they lose it all, it’s natural to feel sorry for them and their children. Having money is not a sin in and of itself. To lose it in the way Solomon describes seems to indicate a sad situation that brought this about. And so it’s a

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 6:8.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:13–17.

¹¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 6.

grievous evil. And yet, money couldn't protect itself from this evil. And if it couldn't protect itself from the evil, what makes you think money can protect you? Do you really want to trust something with your life when it can't even endure through life's difficulties?

But let's say that person doesn't lose his money in this life. Solomon says he's going to lose it sooner or later. Like Job, Solomon says, "Naked I came from my mother's womb. Naked I shall return" (see Job 1:21). You know, we hear the phrase "He who dies with the most toys wins." Many people live that way. How much have I accumulated? How much of a name have I made for myself? How popular am I? But to what end? When you're dead, you're dead. Your popularity wanes. Your wealth dispersed. He who dies with the most toys still dies.

Now Solomon gives another example in chapter 6. A man has wealth, power and honor; but for whatever reason, he cannot enjoy it. A stranger enjoys it instead. Now, we don't know precisely what the scenario is. Did this person lose their stuff or is Solomon saying this person maintained his stuff, but because of all of his affluence, it was the numerous other people benefitting from his wealth that were able to have more enjoyment than he? I tend to think it's the second. After all, now that he has money, he's worried that he might lose it. He needs to maintain it. So, he's so focused on keeping it that he forgot why he wanted money in the first place. He wanted money for protection. He wanted money for power. He wanted money to make a name for himself. But now money takes hold of him and steals his joy.

Let me ask you. What good is a joyless life. Oh I've seen how money (or the lack thereof) can take control of me. And I even have seen it in wealthier individuals. I remember a very elderly person who had over a million dollars, coming closer to death and yet this individual worried about losing it all. This person struggled because there was probably some semblance of security in the bank statement.

What a grievous evil. But notice this as well. Solomon says that God keeps the person from enjoyment. My speculation on what this means is that God keeps the people from trusting in riches yet the evil is that they keep trying to fulfill their appetite in the stuff.

But what's the point of wealth and riches if you have no joy. Solomon says that if you have no joy, the stillborn child is better off than you. This is morbid and jarring speech. You could have one-hundred children, live 2,000 years, but without a proper burial, what was the point? Now, we have to understand the mindset of Solomon's day. Today people would say, "100 children?! No, please, no!" But in Solomon's day, to have many children was to represent power and also legacy of a name. In addition, to live long is what all people still want. We still want the fountain of youth. What's the deal with the burial? The burial spoke to people's respect and homage of you. If no one cared to bury you, you are a shame. So Solomon says, if you have all the money and no joy, you're in the same boat. You've missed the point completely. Who cares if you have all the children and you have discovered how to live twice as long as Methuselah; if you have no joy in what God has given you, the stillborn is better off.

How so? Look at 6:4-5 – ⁴"For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. ⁵Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he."¹² The idea of darkness refers to a detriment of sorts. In chapter 2, Solomon talks about more gain in light than in darkness – referring to the difference between living morally or immorally. The moral generally benefits better than the immoral. So here, the stillborn's life was vanity in that it was like a vapor. And in

¹² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 6:4–5.

the misery of that death, the child's name is lost. That doesn't mean the child had no literal name given it, but instead that the character and reputation and glory of that child is lost. You'll never know what they were going to be like. But what about the man (wealthy or poor) who was enslaved to wealth and gain? You know their character, and that type of living is like living in darkness. It's a misery. There's no joy. At least the stillborn didn't have to ever carry that weight. So a man named Michael Eaton says, **"Better to miscarry at birth than to miscarry throughout life"** (Eaton, p. 121).

So Solomon says in 5:16-17, ¹⁶"This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind?" ¹⁷Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger."¹³ You spend your days in turmoil over the stuff you thought would bring joy. And then you die.

Money, wealth and gain can't keep you from death. Money is temporal and transient. Death will separate you from all of it. So, listen carefully, please. If you live for wealth as though that's the answer, you must know that this "god" of yours will not save you. And in eternity future, you will be judged for your love of money, your service to it. And money will not come to your defense. You should never look to it to satisfy your soul because it was never intended to satisfy you. It's vaporous.

But we have all these yearnings? Where do we go with this appetite for more? Well, Solomon seeks to close every potential opportunity to seek happiness in things and at the center of this chiasm, Solomon shows us that:

3. Only God can satisfy the soul forever (5:18-20)

Let's read 5:18-20 together – ¹⁸"Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. ¹⁹Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart."¹⁴

Here's the center point. Focus here. Mediate on these three verses. Let's get this in our minds and pray that the Lord causes the truth to abide in our souls. Solomon again calls us to recognize that the things around us are not meant to be "gods," they're intended to be gifts which point us to God himself.

I know I've used this illustration in the past, but I personally find it helpful, and I hope you will, too. When I give my children gifts for their birthdays, I don't do it so that they'll forget about me and seek all their relationship in the toy. No. I do want them to enjoy the gift. I want them to really be happy about it. But I also hope that the toy shows them how much I love them. Sadly, in this world, we humans – God's creation – have taken God's gift of work, wealth, money and gain – and we have said, "Even though you've given this to us, we don't want you. Just keep giving us the stuff." Instead of seeing the gifts as gifts, we've turned them into God and sought to make God our slave. When we live like that, we end up becoming the slaves to the "gods" of our own making.

¹³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:16–17.

¹⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 5:18–20.

How much better, Solomon says to simply accept whatever lot God has given to you. If you're wealthy, praise God (not the wealth). If you're poor, praise God and be content. If you're somewhere in between, recognize the gifts you have and praise God!

Here's the beauty of all of this – when you see gifts as gifts and when you see God as God, then you can know joy. Solomon goes so far as to say, “²⁰For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.” In this vain, grievous world where we could lose our money, where others can enjoy our stuff, where government could be corrupt, Solomon says that if you trust God, that is a far greater investment than anything else. God, in his goodness, God keeps those who trust him occupied with joy. Therefore, instead of focusing on what you don't have or what you do want, you realize what you do have – God. The appetite's yearning for eternity is therefore FOUND – not in vaporous, unfulfilling money. It's found in the eternal God.

Do you believe him? Do you truly trust him to care for you? You know, Jesus taught in Matthew 6:24, “²⁴**No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.**”¹⁵ He continues to talk about how we aren't to be anxious about life because God cares for those who trust him. So, instead of worrying we are set free to focus on eternal gain. Jesus commands us to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”¹⁶ In somewhat Solomonic fashion, Jesus then says, “**Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**”¹⁷ In other words, there's no point in worrying about tomorrow when there are worries today, and if God takes care of you today, then you don't need to worry about today or tomorrow!

Logically this all might make sense, but how are we impelled to trust God like this? At the beginning of the sermon, I spoke of a painting by Massys. Well, Massys sought to make an even more important point than saying money can keep you from what's most important. Towards the front-and-center of the table in the painting, there's a small round mirror, and in that mirror there is a reflection of a window with window panes in the shape of the cross. Then, in that reflection, you can see a person (it is Massys) reaching out for that cross.

As you hear this sermon, you might be tempted to think, “I'm going to trust what my eyes can see,” but the Bible gives us reasons why wealth is untrustworthy and eternally damaging. Do you really want riches that moth and rust can destroy? Think instead about Massys point. He calls us to yearn for eternal riches. But Massy isn't the only one calling us to this. God calls us to this. And we can only find these eternal glories through Christ himself. In the book of Ephesians, Paul continuously talks to us about the riches that are in Christ Jesus and that we have all things in heavenly places in Christ. The Bible, in Revelation 21, talks about a government to come where Kings will come to present the wealth of the nations.

Do you realize that there is greater wealth than this world can give or what you can gain? There is God in all the effulgence of his glory for all eternity future and Jesus is the way to be reconciled with him. Jesus

¹⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Mt 6:24.

¹⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Mt 6:33.

¹⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Mt 6:34.

said in John 6:27, “²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.”¹⁸

In Jesus, the God-Man, we find joy and heavenly riches. He took our punishment for taking God’s good gifts and making them our gods. Enslaved to our own wicked appetites, Jesus came to set us free and to entrust ourselves to the true God. If you trust Christ, you have forgiveness and a changed heart to know God’s love and to seek his kingdom. Whether rich or poor, you have him!

This is the gospel according to Ecclesiastes.

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