



Ecclesiastes 1-2

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Tape #7234
By Chuck Smith

Tonight we begin the book of Ecclesiastes. I want to begin the book of Ecclesiastes in I Kings chapter eleven because this gives us a little bit of a background of the writing of Ecclesiastes. Solomon is now an old man; he is looking at life with the advantage of hindsight. He's looking back over all of his accomplishments, all of his pursuits. He sees the emptiness of his life. I Kings chapter eleven gives us sort of a background and the reason for the observations that Solomon makes in Ecclesiastes because it tells of the later years of Solomon when he became old.

“But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD has said unto the children of Israel, You shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,” (I Kings 11:1-5).

She was the female fertility goddess or the sex goddess.

“and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. The did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned for the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, (I Kings 11:5-9).

At the beginning of his reign, the Lord appeared unto Solomon to give him is choice; “What would you desire of me?” We remember that David had told Solomon to see after wisdom. So Solomon said, “I want wisdom to judge your great people”. The Lord said, “Because you asked for wisdom and not for riches or fame, I will give unto you wisdom but I will also give riches and fame”. Then later, when Solomon dedicated the temple unto God, God appeared to Solomon again and in response to his prayer he said, “If my people call by name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, then will I hear from heaven and I will heal their nation”. But Solomon turned from the Lord tragically. Nehemiah makes a note of this in the thirteenth chapter of Nehemiah as he is bringing Solomon into the record, verse twenty-six, he said,

“Did not Solomon the king of Israel sin by these things, yet among many nations there was no king like him who was beloved of his God and

God make him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, even he did outlandish women to sin.”

Now under the law, God commanded that when you have kings over you, that the kings were not to multiply wives unto themselves, neither were they to go back to Egypt to trade for horses and so forth. Yet that is exactly what Solomon did; he multiplied wives and he went back to Egypt and the Lord said, “Because they will turn your heart away from me”. God knows, we so often times argue with God, we argue with the commandments of God, we think that we know better and we think that it won’t happen to me. Surely Solomon, with all of his wisdom, thought, “Well, I’m too wise to get caught up with that. That will never happen to me because I’m so wise”. You’re not so wise when you go against the word of God, that’s not wise at all.

Turning from God in order to please the many wives that he had taken from the various lands round about Solomon became jaded; he became cynical and in the later years of his life was empty and unfulfilling. As he looked back over his life, he saw the emptiness of that life that was spent in the pursuit of pleasure and the pursuit of riches.

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

This identifies the author of the book as Solomon because he is the only son of David who reigned in Jerusalem. He gets right off with the theme of the book.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity (1:2).

This vanity of vanities is for emphasis a repetition like you have the holy of holies or the most holy place. The repetition of vanity and the vanity isn’t as we use it in our modern sense as someone who is always looking at themselves in the mirror and primping and as being a very vain person, it’s not the meaning of the Hebrew word. The meaning is really emptiness. It is a word that is similar to the word breath, trying to grab hold of a breath, there is nothing there, there is an emptiness. So he is talking about the emptiness of life, as he discovered it in his later years and discovered the emptiness of all of the things that he had accomplished and done.

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? (1:3).

This phrase, “under the sun,” is again a phrase that we will find repeated through the book, “vanity” and “under the sun” are two repeated phrases. That is, life in this world; life apart from the purpose and the consciousness of God. Life and the pursuit of your own selfish ambitions, empty. Solomon speaks of the emptiness that he was experiencing there in his later years and all of the accomplishments he had done through life.

He speaks of how life goes on. There seems to be a monotonous cycle to life and after a while you get tired of the monotony; one day follows another that follows another.

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: (1:4).

It goes on, change of face and change of scene but life goes on pretty much as it always has.

but the earth Abideth for ever (1:4).

It’s still here. We are still on the planet earth but generation follows generation. “the earth Abideth forever” (1:4), it doesn’t mean that literally. It’s just speaking that the earth remains here but the Hebrew text does not allow for an eternal earth. Some people try to use this for that the earth is going to abide here forever. The Bible tells us that the earth is going to dissolve with a fervent heat, it’s going to pass away. The earth is not eternal and we know that the sun is in the process of decaying. The sun gives off one million two hundred thousand tons of mass every second that’s put out into space as energy. Thus the sun is slowly being

reduced, in fact in ten billion years; the sun will not give off sufficient energy to support life on the earth. So if you don't have anything else to worry about, worry about that. It would mean that in ten billion years the earth could not be inhabited. I don't think it could be inhabited in another twenty-five years in the way we are going.

The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, (1:5).

This again is speaking again figuratively. We know that the earth turns upon its axis but we talk about sunrise and sunset. Does that mean we are not scientific? That we are a bunch of dopes that we think that the sun rises and the sun sets rather than realizing that the earth is turning on its axis and thus it appears that the sun rises and it appears that the sun sets. He uses the same figurative kind of speech.

and hasteth to his place where he arose (1:5).

In the morning it is back over in the east again and night it rushes around the other side and comes back around.

The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirlleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits (1:5-6).

The jet streams moving and the changing of the jet streams and the changing of the barometric pressures and the changing of the heats and so you have your highs and lows and the cold air rushing in to fill the void where the hot air has risen. The changing of the winds, sometimes we have the east wind blowing, sometimes we have the west wind blowing and so here's this constant activity upon the earth that just seems to continue. There's monotony to the things is what he is saying.

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; (1:7).

It doesn't overflow.

unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again (1:7).

We know the hydraulic cycle of how that the rivers run into the sea and the sea is never full because the sun upon the oceans causes the water to vaporize into its component gasses of hydrogen and oxygen which go up and form clouds which are carried by the winds over the land masses. As they begin to cool, the water begins to condense and the snow falls on the mountains and the streams come from the snows and they flow into the sea and so you have your hydraulic cycle. Again, there is sort of a monotony he sees in all of this.

All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: (1:8).

There never seems to be a place of full satisfaction. There is always this movement but never a place of satisfaction.

the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing (1:8).

Always looking for something new, something else.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; (1:9).

Here is the monotony; there is nothing really new.

and that which is done is that which shall be done: (1:9).

Things have a way of cycling, fashions have a way of cycling and morals have a way of cycling. There really is nothing new. We talk about surrogate motherhood; well Abraham practiced that with Hagar. So what's new? You can find these things that we think are so modern today and you can go back. Like people living together, just move in, "we really are hip, we just live together. We are not married". Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Well you've had five husbands and the guy you are living with now you are not married to". Well what's new?

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: (1:9).

We just repeat, we repeat patterns. There are definite patterns that we can see repeated. The moral patterns get so low that we are in danger then of extermination and so there comes this awakening that, "hey we can't go on". There comes sort of a moral awakening and people enact laws and all to protect the society. We have sort of a revival and then things start decaying again and they get lower, lower and lower until they get so down that it takes again a new movement. It's just a cycle again and so we move in these cycles.

and there is no new thing under the sun (1:9).

Life goes on one generation after another.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us (1:10).

It has already been, plumbing, we think that's so modern. Indoor plumbing, Abraham had it. What's so new? Its just life seems to cycle.

There is no remembrance of former things; (1:11).

People are so quickly forgotten. If you live to be ninety-five years old, don't expect many people to come to your funeral. You've outlived everybody that knows you. I had a funeral years ago when I was pastoring in Tucson Arizona and they gave me all of the background of this woman, she was in her ninety's and she died. They gave me her little bio. This gal had done everything, she was the president of this and she was in charge of that, she was a real socialite in her day. Her bio was tremendous. The only ones to hear it were her grandkids, even her own children died just her grandkids were still alive and they were at the funeral. I thought, "my this is tragic, five grandkids at this funeral for this woman who lived such a rich and lustrous life but she lived too long". So there's not a lot of people here to extol all the wonderful things she had done seventy years before and fifty years earlier.

The remembrance of those people passed. If we would start naming off people who had done famous and great things back in the eighteen hundreds, you'd say "Who? Who are they?" You just don't remember and they're going to forget you, don't think your something because you're going to be forgotten too. Life goes on.

neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after (1:11).

Even as the past has been forgotten so the present is going to be forgotten.

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: (1:12-13).

I decided to sit down and analyze life. These things that are done under the sun, see if by wisdom I could come to an understanding.

this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith (1:13).

Life, a sore travail that we have to endure.

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity [empty] and vexation [frustrating] of spirit (1:14).

Everything is empty; everything brings me to frustration which is a sense of emptiness which is born out of the consciousness that life must be more than I have yet experienced. There has got to be more to life than this. I haven't yet achieved or attained and I feel this frustration because I feel there's got to be more to life than what I yet known or experienced.

That which is crooked cannot be made straight: (1:15).

This is a position that was also taken by the Greek philosophers many years later. The Greek philosophers had concluded that the redemption of a fallen man was impossible. Once a man has gone down the path into drugs or into sin or whatever, there is no redeeming that man, he's hopeless. The Greek philosophers that concluded that redemption of a lost man was impossible. Solomon said, "that which is crooked cannot be made straight" (1:15). This is true apart from Jesus Christ.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked what he had to do to have eternal life and Jesus said, "keep the commandments" and he said, "which one?" Jesus gave him the commandments that dealt with his relationship with fellow men, he said, "I've done that from my youth but what do I lack yet?" Jesus said, "If you would be perfect than take everything you have and sell it and give the money to the poor and come and follow me and you will have great treasures in heaven". He went away sorrowful because he was a very rich man. Jesus then turned to his disciples and said, "How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. In fact it's easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven". Peter said, "Well Lord, who then can be saved?" and Jesus said, "With man it is impossible". The crooked cannot be made straight, that which is lost cannot be redeemed apart from Jesus Christ; "With man it is impossible" Jesus affirms "but with God all things are possible". That's what the gospel is all about. That's what we are proclaiming to a crooked world, it can be straight. That's the good news. The good news for fallen man is you can be redeemed. That's the message of the church. The crooked can be straightened; the lost can be redeemed through the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We've seen it over and over and over again.

He is talking from purely the human standpoint, his observation of life. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight" (1:15). The philosophers observed the same thing, "that which is lost cannot be redeemed". Apart from the gospel, the saying is true.

and that which is wanting cannot be numbered (1:15).

In other words, there are so many things that are lacking in a persons life that you cannot number them. That which is wanting is beyond number.

I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, (1:16).

Looked around and saw what I had and said, "Wow, I am a wealthy man".

and have gotten wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge (1:16).

Solomon was indeed a very wise man. His wisdom was legendary. He wrote books on the subjects of zoology and biology and botany. He also wrote three thousand proverbs, a thousand and five psalms; "I was extremely wise and extremely wealthy". He was meditating, looking in his own heart and looking around at what he's got and he had attained knowledge and wisdom beyond any of his predecessors in Jerusalem.

And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation [frustrating] of spirit. For [he discovered] in much wisdom is much grief: (1:12-18).

The more you know about the world in which we live, the more grief you realize is experienced by people in this world.

and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow (1:18).

Our press and our media, keeps us in touch with the world with which we live; the age of information. We are able to communicate by satellite instantly with other parts of the world. We know immediately what's happened in Iraq. We have these spy satellite that are up there. We know the movements of nations; we know when they are massing troops at various borders. The technology of the spy satellites has become

so sophisticated that we can follow the movement of the Russian army, we can read the cereal numbers on their jeeps so we know when they moved them and parked them a block away. It's amazing the technology in this day of information. The more we know, the more sorrow we realize is in the world. We know of all the killings, we know of all the terrorist activities, we know of all the kidnappings, we know of all of the abuses, of the wars, of the bloodshed, of the tornadoes, of the fires, of the earthquakes and we know of the hurricanes, we know a lot. With much knowledge we realize there is just a lot of sorrow,

I said in my heart, Go to now, [live it up] I will prove thee with mirth, [through partying] therefore enjoy pleasure: (2:1).

Reality brings you to a feeling of hopelessness and despair. So forget it, turn yourself over and indulge in pleasure, escape into pleasure, get on the party routine.

and, behold, this also is vanity [empty] (2:1).

It is interesting that the philosophy of extentionalism, which is the current thought among the educators today, is a philosophy of despair and it brings one to despair. The goal of philosophy, for years, was to find what is good and to find the universal base of truth and good. The extentional philosophy has declared the reason why they have not been able to find the universal base for truth and good is it doesn't exist, everything is relative. It's relative to your situation, it's relative to the morays of this society and thus there are no universal truths or good or evil, these are all relative terms. So they despaired of finding truth. It is a philosophy of despair and it leads a person to loneliness and despair.

They discovered, in the University, so many young people who were taking the philosophy courses were committing suicide because the philosophy had brought them to despair. They realized the person could not live in despair, you've got to have hope, you can't live in despair. So they said, "let us encourage the young people to take a leap of faith. This lower story of reality is hopeless, it is so despairing, let us take a leap of faith into the second story," as they called it, the upper story, "that hopefully they will find something to hold on to. Some kind of a non-reasoned religious experience that can bring them hope". So they began to teach of the ultimate experience, you can take that leap of faith.

That is why you see these non-reasoned religions proliferating in the United States, all the occultic religions, the satanic religions and all there proliferating because the students have been encouraged to take this leap of faith and perhaps you can grab something that you can believe in and hold on to because if you try to live in reality, it's hopeless. We see non-reasoned religious experiences being testified to by Hollywood stars who discovered they are god as they are standing on Malibu Beach. They talk about the sense of the light or the peace or the overwhelming...it is all experience, they can't give you any reasons for it.

It is interesting; the Bible says, "come now, let us reason together" saith the Lord. Peter said, "we should be able to give to every man a reason for the hope that lies in us". Paul said that, "we should present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable service". There is a reason why we have a hope and we can give to people the reason why we have that hope in Christ Jesus. But all of these kids today are seeking these non-reasoned religious experiences and it filled the world. Some of their experiences have been bad; it's led many into Satanism and into Satan worship.

It's alarming the detrimental effects that is having on our society as they get further and further into these occultic experiences until they get into the sacrifices of babies in Satanic worship services here in the United States, well documented. Women who get pregnant and raise children just for the purpose for sacrificing them in satanic rituals. How can a person do that? It's a non-reasoned religious experience. That's the problem, you can't give a reason for it, it's shocking to us, it's repulsive to us. How could they do that? There is no reason for it. That's exactly right. That's exactly what they are encouraged to discover is some non-reasoned religious experience by this leap of faith hoping you'll find something, land somewhere.

So Solomon turned to partying then he said, "this also was empty" (2:1).

I said of laughter, It is mad: [crazy] and of mirth, [party] What doeth it? (2:2).

So many parties and they get empty.

I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; (2:3).

Tried to stay wise and yet started boozing it. A person really has to escape from the reality of this corrupt world. Now we have escaped into Jesus Christ, “the name Jehovah is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and are saved”. I admit, Jesus is my crutch. I’m not embarrassed about that. I lean on him everyday, I lean on him all the time and I will frankly confess to you, if he wasn’t there for me to lean on, I’d fall but I’ll also tell you he has never let me down, not once. Everytime I’ve leaned on him he has held me up. Can you say that about your crutch? Everybody has a crutch. To some it’s booze, it’s their crutch, it’s their escape. With some it’s sports cars, extramarital sex, fornication, everybody escapes into something because reality is too tough to take. If you look carefully at your life, you’ll find out that you have a crutch that you’re leaning on. The problem is, will the crutch hold you in a real crises? That’s the big question.

Solomon turned to wine while trying to continue maintaining wisdom. Lemuel’s mother said to him, “Wine is not for kings”. Lemuel is thought to have been Solomon, it’s in the last chapter of Proverbs.

and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life (2:3).

I tried to find out the good path, the good way, searching.

I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: (2:4-6).

He planted cedars. We are told that he had cedars all over Jerusalem. They were in abundance like the Sycamore trees that are in the valleys. He planted cedars all over the country so that you would have good wood for building and all. He planted vineyards, orchards, he made these great reservoirs to hold the water. Some of these reservoirs have been discovered up in the area of Mount Carmel and then around the area of Bethlehem. He built these tremendous pools for the water to irrigate these gardens and vineyards and all.

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me: (2:7).

He had to have them to feed all of his household, the many servants and of course a thousand wives and their kids. It took ten prime beef every day plus twenty commercial beef everyday, so he had to have some pretty big herds. All you have to do is multiply that out by three hundred and sixty-five days and you’ve got thirty per day that are going to the slaughter house to provide. Man, he needed huge herds of cattle.

I gathered me also silver (2:8).

We are told in the book of Chronicles that the silver was as common as rocks in Jerusalem.

I gathered me also silver and gold and the peculiar [precious] treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts (2:8).

Great for party’s, choirs and orchestras.

So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me (2:9).

I was still wise. Well, that’s debatable. It’s not wise to disobey the word of God. It is not wise to go against the word of God. There are people of the world who consider themselves wise but you set yourself against God’s word and that’s never real wisdom, that’s folly. Listen to this boast.

And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, (2:10).

Didn't hold back anything.

I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour and this was my portion [reward] of all my labour (2:10).

Self satisfaction, but that didn't last, it turned into a feeling of emptiness.

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity [empty] and vexation [frustrating] of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun (2:11).

"What should it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" There is really no profit in worldly things. The real profit is in things of the spirit, that's where your treasure needs to be. Spiritual treasures are far more valuable than material treasures because at best, if you're able to hold onto the material treasures, if your bank doesn't go belly up and the government doesn't go belly up and you're able to hold onto to your treasures, at best, you're going to leave them when you die. You can't take it with you. Do you ever see a U-Haul truck going behind the Hurst on the way to the cemetery? You don't take it with you. A wealthy farmer died back in the Midwest and some prying soul said to his son, "Just how much did your old man leave?" and he said, "everything". That's what you're going to leave. "Naked I came into the world, naked I'm going out." You can send some ahead, laying up treasures in heaven. The spiritual treasure, that's the real wealth.

"I saw that there was no profit under the sun." That is, on the worldly plain, on the material plane, there was no profit.

And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king: even that which hath been already done (2:12).

You can't do more than I've done because I've done it all. I've already done it. Anything you might dream or try or aspire to do, I've already done it; I've tasted it.

Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness (2:13).

That I saw. It doesn't pay to be a fool. Remember as we went through the Proverbs all the things he had to say about the fool. He contrasted always the wise with the fool and through the Proverbs there was a continual contrasting of the wise and of the fool. It is better to be a wise man than a fool.

The wise man's eyes are in his head; (2:14).

That is that he thinks and he uses good judgement.

but the fool walketh in darkness: (2:14).

He stumbles through life and bumps into everything.

and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me: and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity (2:14-15).

He was thinking I'm wise and that's wonderful but then look at that fool over there, he's going to die, but with all my wisdom I'm going to die too. So why am I so much better off than he? Because one thing is going to happen to all of us, that is death, the great equalizer.

For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; (2:16).

Take now those people who died a hundred years ago, were they fools or were they wise, well who remembers, who knows? You don't remember one more than the other. They are just dead, they are gone and you've forgotten them.

seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. (2:16).

What's happening now is going to be forgotten.

And how dieth the wise man? As the fool. Therefore I hated life; (2:16-17).

I said, "It's not fair" because all of this work that is done, all of the labour, all of the time, all of energies that I have expended to gain all of this wealth and knowledge. What's it going to do for me? I'm going to die. He's getting close to death; he's in his later years. He doesn't have the energies anymore and he's facing death realizing with all his wisdom, here he is getting decrepted and can't get around much anymore.

Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: (2:17-18)

All of these great projects, I looked around and I was disgusted because I would have to leave it to the man who is going to be after me. I can't hold on to it. I'm going to die and I'm going to leave it to those who are after me.

And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool: yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity (2:19).

Everything I've gained, everything I've worked for, everything I've gathered together and spent the sleepless nights scheming, devising and all. I'm going to leave it all to this guy and who knows if he's going to be wise or a fool and yet he's going to be in charge of all my stuff. This really made him angry. It's not fair that I should work so hard and leave it to a guy who may be a fool and as it turned out he was.

Rehoboam, his son, was a fool. Wasted all of the great things that his father had gathered. How frustrating that must be to put your whole life in your fortune, to put your whole life into the massing of your fortune and then to leave it to some fool who goes out and wastes it.

I think of Heddy Green. During her day, she was the wealthiest woman in the world. She massed a tremendous fortune manipulating stocks and all on Wall Street. She was probably the tightest woman in the world too. She had a big mansion but had it all boarded up except for two rooms so she could save on her coal bill. Then she found a flop house in New York that she could rent room and board for twelve dollars a week so she closed her mansion and moved into this room and boarding house near Central Park in New York for twelve dollars a week. She would buy the New York times, after she read the financial section she had fold it up and give it to her son and send him out into the park to sell again so she could get her nickel back, wealthiest woman in the world. She couldn't spend her money, it got such a hold on her, and she couldn't spend it.

When her son was out selling the paper he slipped on some ice and cut his leg, gangrene began to set in so she took him to the free clinic in New York. The doctor recognized her and would not treat her son for free. She got so mad she took her son out and gangrene took over and he had to have his leg amputated ultimately. Her daughter committed suicide so her son was her only heir and she left her fortune to him. He was so bitter over the way she lived that in one year, he blew the whole fortune and he ended up a pauper. You work so hard, you get your nickel back for your paper and then you get a son that blows it in one year.

Solomon faces this problem. Here I've done all this labour, all this work and I'm going to leave it to a fool. It's not fair, I hate life. How have I shown myself wise under the sun? It's sort of dumb to work so hard to leave it to someone who is just going to blow it. So where's the wisdom? This also is empty.

Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun (2:20).

He ended up with despair and you if you live your life totally after the flesh, will end up ultimately with despair and hopelessness.

For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and is equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. (2:21).

Here I use wisdom, I use knowledge, I laboured, I was just and so forth but I'm going to leave it to someone who has not laboured for it. He's just going to enter it. He's going to be an heir and he's just going to take over and he didn't lift a finger to get any of it.

This also is vanity and a great evil (2:21).

One generation passes and another comes. The new generation is going to inherit the wealth of the old but they aren't going to work for it and thus they aren't going to appreciate it and thus they are going to waste it.

For what hath man all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? (2:22).

What is your reward? What do you get from it?

For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea his heart taketh not rest in the night (2:23).

You've worked so hard, you can't sleep at night, and you're laboring.

This is also vanity (2:23).

Thus he concludes,

There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour (2:24).

Spend it yourself.

This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God (2:24).

God has given it to us, enjoy it. Why be so tight and deny yourself just to give it to someone who is just going to waste it anyhow.

For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I? (2:25).

I've tasted of everything. Who can taste more of life than I have tasted?

For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, (2:26).

Now Solomon knows this, though he had turned from the Lord and built these altars in high places to the other gods. He realizes that God is the one who gives wisdom, knowledge and joy but to the man who labours and lives apart from God, there's travail.

to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. (2:26).

You gather and you heap it up and it goes to someone else.

This also is vanity and vexation of spirit (2:26).

Well we didn't get to chapter three tonight but it will be there for us next week, the Lord willing.

The conclusion of the matter is that ultimately you will be brought to the realization that life apart from Christ is empty and unfulfilling. Sooner or later, you'll arrive at that conclusion. Better sooner than later. The sooner, the better. You will also discover, if you choose, that life in Christ is rich, fulfilling, satisfying. This is the record, God has given to us eternal life and this life is in his son. He who has the son has life.

Solomon spoke a lot about life under the sun. The New Testament speaks a lot about life in the Son. That life that we have in Christ Jesus and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear. For me to live is Christ, Christ in you, the hope of glory. In that day you should know that I am in the Father and you are in Me and I am in you. Life in the Son. How rich. It doesn't leave the bitter aftertaste as you move down the road.

You see old people today who are very bitter and are very cynical, as did Solomon with a great amount of cynicism, I hated life he said. So I despaired all of the things that I have done. He is reflecting what older people so often reflect the cynicism as they look back over life, having come to the end of the road and they see the emptiness of the past. Even though there may be glories and accomplishments, it's very empty now that death is knocking at your door. But not so for that person who lives in Christ.

When you get down towards the end of the road, you look back with joy in what the Lord has done in and through your life but then you are also looking ahead. Death is just the transition, it's just the metamorphosis, and it is a necessary transition that I might enter in to the glorious eternal abode of my Lord. O, what anticipation, what joy, what fulfillment to be able to see what God has done and to enter into the glories of his eternal kingdom.

Tonight, many of you are living life under the sun. You're trying to make your mark in life. You have your ambitions and your goals all set out, what you want to do and what you plan to do with your life under the sun, what you hope to accomplish. But I declare unto you, even though as Solomon, you taste it all and you accomplish it all, in the end it will be empty.

You who have given your lives to follow Jesus Christ and to serve Jesus Christ, you've already begun to experience some of the riches, the satisfaction, the contentment and the peace of letting the Lord be Lord. When you come to the end of the road, there is that certainty looking forward to the glorious rewards that God has promised for His faithful servants. To stand before the Lord in heaven say, "Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in the little things, now I will make you ruler over the bigger things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." Throughout the endless ages to come He shall be revealing unto you what is the exceeding richness of His love and kindness toward you in Christ Jesus. Life in the Son.

May the Lord bless you and may you live your life in Christ for His sake.