

IS LIFE WORTH IT? 11/12/23

Good morning church! Pastor Sandy has given me the opportunity to come open the Word with you all today. Pastor Sandy will be back with us next Sunday. My name is Andrew and I am the high school youth pastor here at the church. If you need a BIBLE this morning... USHERS... Once you have your Bible turn with me to Ecclesiastes 1. Let's pray before we get started...

Life can be a puzzling thing. It's been said, "Life is like a knot that refuses to come untangled." No matter how hard you keep trying to untangle, you seem to get nowhere. Poet, Matthew Arnold penned a dark description of life - "most men go about, here and there, eat and drink, chatter and love and hate, gather and squander, are raised up, and hurled down into the dust, striving blindly, achieving nothing, and then they die."

Ever since life began, man has struggled to make sense of life on their own. Greek mythology likens the human condition to being condemned to push a huge boulder up a hill only for it to roll back down every time it nears the top, repeating this action for eternity. And I believe every person can relate to this. You exert, and work hard and almost reach the top of your goals, only to fall back down and start again.

Do you ever feel as if you're just a slave to the repeating calendar? Like the rat in a spinning wheel or an inescapable maze, we expend lots of energy and effort yet we just spin in place. Life feels like a mean joke, and life is winning and you are losing. Have you ever felt this way? That no matter your efforts and purposes and goals, you just seem to be running in circles. Running and running and running, trying and trying and trying. Lots of movement, but no progress. I am sure if we were all honest this morning, life has felt this way.

And then take the problems in the world at large: the wars, the injustice, the disease, the evil at work, the breakdown of our society, and lay that burden on man's shoulders too! The world seems to be out of control and so is my life! This causes each one of us at some point to ask the age-old question: **is life worth it?** Is this life really worth living? What's the meaning to life? If life is just hard and then I die, is it worth it?

Philosophers have been taking their best shot at this question for all of history. And today you and I are going on a quest to examine this and find the answer to the question, **is life worth it...** The author of the book of Ecclesiastes will lead us as he summarizes his personal journey of understanding the meaning of life.

In fact, the entire book of Ecclesiastes is a search for meaning and purpose written from ONE perspective, **Life apart from God. Life without eternity. If this life is all there is, is it worth it? There is a phrase that is used 29 times - under the sun - describes this perspective. The author is trying to make sense of life without God in earthly things.**

And our author is the most equipped human for this task, he introduces himself to the assembly of people in verse 1, [The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.](#)

Though he doesn't give us his name, our preacher can be none other than King Solomon. If anyone could find the meaning and the purpose for life on earth apart from God, it was Solomon!. He was uniquely qualified! When Solomon was young, we're told in 1 chronicles that he was tender before the Lord. He knew God. And God comes to Solomon and says, Ask me for anything, I will give it to you. You can have anything Solomon!

What would you ask for if God said, "you have one wish, ask.." Obviously ask for infinite more wishes duh doy... infinite wealth. Power. Fame. But Solomon asks God for wisdom, to rule and serve God's people as King. God responds and tells "Solomon because you didn't ask for gold, treasures, head of your enemies, power, fame, I give you wisdom but also I'm going to give you everything else too!"

And Solomon became the wisest, wealthiest, most famous, powerful man to have ever lived. There has been no one that can compare to Solomon. He is really the only one that can fully search the world for meaning apart from God, because King Solomon's resources were unlimited! Everything the world had was as it his disposal...

He didn't have to deal with the infection the rest of mankind had to deal with... I'm sure you've heard of it... this infection, this disease has been sweeping through the hearts of men and women ever since the Garden of Eden. You and I have both experienced it, and it's a hard virus to shake...

This world has a bad case of the "If I only had's". So many people live in this world and believe "if only I had this thing!" under the sun, then I would be satisfied and fulfilled. I'd have meaning and purpose in my life. Have you ever said those words, "If I only had, ____, I'd be happy"? I have. We're unhappy in life and we think well maybe the problem is I don't make enough money... If I only had twice the amount of money I'm making now, then I'd be satisfied, If I only had that new job, then I'd be happy, If I only had a different spouse, then I'd be satisfied, If I only had a nice house, a boat, that project complete, more sex, vacation...

If I only had this I would be happy! But what happens... we get that thing we thought would fulfill us only to find that it wasn't enough, still not satisfying... **There's still something missing...** So now we think well obviously I didn't get enough, so if I only had a BIGGER boat, a BIGGER sum of money like a million dollars, an even better job, then I'd be happy, and the cycle of misery continues... is this kind of life worth it?

Solomon wants to save us from the trouble, he tells us upfront the answer to this question... verse 2,

"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher;
"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Is life worth it? If this life is all there is it worth living? **NO! Life is NOT worth living. From the human point of view, from the life without God, Solomon says it is all meaningless, and empty!**

Solomon uses this word vanity 38 times in this book, so we need to be familiar with what it means. It is the Hebrew word, "hevel" meaning, emptiness, futility, vapor. useless, meaningless. "A wisp of vapour, a puff of wind, a mere breath." the nearest thing to zero.

He says life is vanity, **Like your puff of breath seen on a cold winter day that quickly disappears. Its another way saying WHY BOTHER? WHO CARES? WHATEVER... NOTHING MATTERS!**

Whatever disappears quickly, leaves nothing behind and does not satisfy, is vanity. Like the rat trying to find its way through an inescapable maze, we chase after fulfillment, purpose, satisfaction, thinking it's just up ahead, just around the corner, only to find that there's nothing there and we're let down by the world again! We catch what we thought we needed only to realize it was nothing but a vapor.

Solomon's message throughout the book of Ecclesiastes is "Look I tried it all bro so you don't have too, and I found out that ALL of life on earth is meaningless and dull! So don't waste your time..." This morning we're going to take a brief look into some of his findings, but throughout the entire book he searches every place that people search for meaning and purpose...

He uses his position, power, and deep pockets to experiment with everything imaginable in pursuit of fulfillment. **He looks at Science/nature, wealth, Pleasures, Achievement, Religion, Materialism, Fame, Power, Hard work, Long life, Large family, having a Good Name... And he does everything to the extreme!**

Yet, **There's still something missing...**

And remember, he is searching under the sun, life apart from God, what the world/man has to offer.
Let's jump in, verse 3,

3 What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he [b]toils under the sun?

4

One generation passes away, and another generation comes;
But the earth abides forever.

5

The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
And [c]hastens to the place where it arose.

6

The wind goes toward the south,
And turns around to the north;
The wind whirls about continually,
And comes again on its circuit.

7

All the rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea is not full;
To the place from which the rivers come,
There they return again.

You can feel the burden of his words! Sun rises goes down, wind goes this way and that way, and back again, rivers run into the sea, water returns back to river and then returns again... Nothing is new... Apart from God creation is monotonous and dull...

Solomon says what is the point of working hard and achieving things in labor, if all of life is a cycle and I make no real impact, and then I die, then the next generation comes! In chapter 2 we are told of some of his great works and achievements! He knew how to get things done, and work hard. He says, 2:4 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. 5 I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6 I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove.

He also builds the temple him over 7 years. It Was unlike anything else ever built, the amount of design, gold, marble, architecture! IT was incredible! It took Solomon 13 years to build his own house though! Twice as much time/effort to build! MTV CRIBS would have stopped airing after showing his house, because nothing else could ever compare... If building, improving, and amassing great riches and accomplishments could give true meaning to life, Solomon would have found it.

And he's left feeling like what's the point anyways of planting forests and trees and gardens if I die and I'm gone and all the things here on the earth remain! I was reminded of this last time we visited Alli's grandfather in Connecticut. **Every time we go, one of the nostalgic things for Alli to do is go and see the blue spruce tree her grandfather planted at the same time she was born. Over the years the tree has grown more mature, yet it is still small. But it struck me, This tree is going to outlive Alli!**

Alli and I will come and go on earth, but the little tree sapling grandpa bought at Home Depot for \$13 dollars will out live us! life is short and insignificant. IS this life worth it? **There's still something missing...**

Generations of people come and go! People are born and people die, and then the next generation comes, but nothing really changes! All you can do is accumulate things and leave it to the next hopeless generation!

Remember when you were a teenager? However long ago that was for each of us... someone older than us would always say “enjoy life kid, because it goes by so fast, before you know it its half over” and the teen is like yeah whatever old man that’s what they all say. Then you grow up and you’re not a teen, 30, 40, 50, and pretty soon you’re telling the next teenage generation, hey kid enjoy life cause its going to fly by fast! And then you die, and the next teen gets old and keeps it going. Its the cycle!

Life is a parade of coffins and cradles! People are born, People die! IS this life worth it? Is this really worth living if this is all there is?

Calvary Chapel are you feeling encouraged yet?! Man you just had a hard week, you come to church and wanna be encouraged and the youth pastor is here just depressing us everything is hopeless and you’re gonna die! Hang with me, Solomon will get there. God put this book in the Bible for a reason, He makes no mistakes!

The man with no limitations, Solomon, searches cycles of nature, hard work, achievements, and finds them to be frustrating and empty, especially considering the brevity of life and approach of death. So if I can’t be satisfied by achieving and working hard, maybe then the answer is to ignore all that and focus on playing hard! I’ll work hard so I can play hard! Satisfy my senses! Maybe there I can find purpose!

His conclusion again though in verse 8, is

All things are full of labor;
Man cannot express it.
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.

Solomon worked hard but he definitely knew how to play hard! He had unlimited resources! He wasn’t infected with the “if I only had’s”... HE HAD IT ALL! But he says here in verse 8 that no matter how much he sought to satisfy his eyes, ears, fleshly desires it never was enough! Listen to him describe his life of pleasure in chapter 2...

7 I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

9 So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.

I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,

You know, it’s one thing for me, to get up here and say look I’ve tried it, this life has nothing pleasurable worth while! Don’t waste your time it won’t satisfy you...” Wouldn’t take long for someone to say, “hey bud uhh look you just haven’t lived enough yet! You haven’t tried enough yet, you don’t even have two pennies to rub together...” Its one thing if one of us just said, “I bought everything that I Wanted!” Great, you bought everything you wanted from Dollar Tree with all of your \$23 dollars you have! You bought 23 \$1 ribeye steaks and got sick and will probably die from them! The words one dollar and ribeye steak should not be in the same sentence! BUT, Solomon had unlimited resources though, when He says he had everything his **EYES** desired, he really did have it all!

Solomon's annual income was 666 talents of gold, that's \$1.9 billion dollars today a year. Money like no one had ever seen before! Luxury like no other before! Silver was counted as nothing during his reign. Virtually Everything he built was covered in gold. People traveled from across the whole civilized world to come and see the marvel of King Solomon! There was no social media platform he went viral on, he gained recognition by word of mouth alone! Had so many servants in house, that his servants were having kids and the kids became servants too! I imagine He had people at every door in his house, so he never had to open a door himself...

Servants for everything, he lived luxury, leisure! I just want leisure and so many servants where I actually don't have to do anything! Maybe that's the key to purpose and happiness, leisure! IMAGINE! Like how awesome would that be... You wake up. And you're like "turn off my alarm clock" someone turns it off for you... "grab my slippers and robe" "now put them on me"

Now be honest, do you ever wake up and really just don't feel like brushing your teeth? He had a servant for that! you brush them for me... food is made clothes are laid out... Solomon had the latest and greatest tech to make his life easier! He tried partying, drunkenness, to satisfy his flesh with wine he says, and possibly other mind altering substances/drugs. Nothing was off the table. He loved music. Didn't have a Spotify account to listen to his favorites like the Beatles and Taylor Swift, so he just hired them.

"Hey guys you're going to live here now with me and when I want to be entertained, entertain me." "Lennon play the guitar and Taylor you sing and stop once I fall asleep. Tuck me into bed and leave." Solomon's saying whatever stimulated me, whatever pleased me, I did not restrain at all!

Sex? He had it! 700 wives, and 300 girlfriends! That's a different sexual partner every night for 3 years! They just hung out, were always there to just do whatever he asked them to do! NO LIMITS! He's doing all of this to an extreme none of us can even imagine!

His pursuit of pleasure, fame, wealth, leisure, luxury, the good life, was ultimate! Surely this is enough! I mean all of us living with the "if I only had's" infection are thinking surely that did the trick, that had to of given him satisfying happiness!"

We think, "I'm sure I'd be satisfied if I were in Solomons shoes. God you don't have to give me 2 billion, I'm sure I'd be happy with 2 million dollars! Trust me God, i'll be a better steward!" I'm sure if I had a better sex partner then I'd be happy! He has everything our hedonistic world today is striving for.

Yet in verse 8 he still says [The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing](#). All of the money, beautiful women, comfort, alcohol, music, entertainment, it wasn't enough to satisfy my eyes and ears which are the gates leading to my heart. It didn't fill the emptiness inside...

There's still something missing...

Verse 9,

9

That which has been is what will be,
That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun.

10

Is there anything of which it may be said,
"See, this is new"?

It has already been in ancient times before us.

11

There is no remembrance of former things,
Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come
By those who will come after.

There are three words that are uttered on the daily by children and adults, young and old... "I AM BORED!" There's nothing new under the sun, Life is boring! Even with all of the illusions of newness in technology, and things we can distract ourselves with, life just falls flat! I'm bored... What possible reason could we be bored? Here's why, because there's still something missing in our hearts. A void that can't be filled with tech, achievements, satisfactions in labor, things...

Despite all of mans work and progress, nothing is truly new. History just continues to repeat itself. Life starts to feel monotonously the same... But what about New tech! new weapons! Sure the device is new but wars aren't new, hatred, communication, tyranny, isn't new... greed isn't new. We think something is new but often its just because we forgot that it has already happened in the past!

New sounds promising. Many live on this idea that they are just one new relationship, one new hobby, one new possession, one new job, one new degree away from the silencing of my heart regarding the purpose and meaning of life. And they spend their whole life spinning in this cycle...

If this life is all there is life worth living?

Can I just depress you a little further... Solomon says in verse 11, that when you are gone from this earth, you will be forgotten. Question: how many of you know the name of your great great grandmother? What's wrong with you that's your great great grandmother! We are quickly forgotten are we not? Think about the billions of people that have lived throughout human history, and theres probably only a few hundred significant people that will be remembered through all of history.

UGH! Solomon give us some relief! This is sickening! Life apart from God is futile! Life under the sun is meaningless, what's the point of even going on? Solomon you're the wisest man to have ever lived, what does wisdom say regarding life's purpose... Chapter 1:16, He writes,

16 I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has [f]understood great wisdom and knowledge." 17 And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind. 18 For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

Instead of looking outwardly for an answer to his problem, Solomon communes with his own heart and find no answer to his problem. Realize this has been the problem all along with mankind! **Man's wisdom can't fix man's problems. Man cannot fix himself.** In fact Solomon says the more I understood my problem, the more miserable and grieved I was! He hasn't found an answer within the problem, **so the answer to man's problem must be outside of man! We're approaching the light folks... there's a glimmer of hope.**

In fact most of us get too much of man's wisdom on man's problems... Sit down at the end of the day.. turn on the computer, and read all the news that's going on in the world. Isn't that just a great/uplifting idea... "I want to get a good nights sleep so I'm just going to check the daily headlines before I lay down..."

All of its just so good and uplifting right? Crime, war, disease... and you get up from the computer and you're wiser than you've ever been, more knowledgeable than you've ever been about the worlds condition, but what's the result? GRIEF and SORROW. Why do we do this! Man's wisdom not only creates problems on its own BUT it also cannot provide any answers to mans problems. All man's wisdom can do is educate us further **about** the problem, but without God in the picture there are no real solutions to the problem.

And this makes the highly intellectual/ atheist philosophers some of the most miserable people! They know there is no solution offered within man for the problem. Famed existentialist Jean Paul Satre summed up his life, in this quote, “I exist, that is all, and I find it nauseating.”

Man’s wisdom only leaves people feeling hopeless and sick... We have a problem don’t we? IS life worth it? Is life under the sun, life apart from God, worth living? Solomon tried everything man/world could offer and he says it is all vanity! Empty futile, unfulfilling.

IS life worth it? **NO.** Life apart from God leaves man and woman with an unshakeable feeling that **There’s still something missing...**

What is missing?! What’s the problem... We have to stop looking for the answer to man’s problems within man. You were created for more than just life under the sun! There’s more to you than just body and consciousness! You were created for eternity! You were built different, man was made in the image of God and God breathed His life into man. We were created spiritual beings, and this is where that nagging, empty, something-is-missing feeling is coming from inside of you! It’s a spiritual need!

There is within man a desire to have fellowship with God. And if you deny the spiritual nature of man, then man can never be satisfied because this deep-down spiritual thirst will always be haunting him, **There’s still something missing...There’s still something missing...There’s still something missing...** I’m just spinning in circles, stuck in the rat wheel. I know there’s got to be more than to life than this.

Here it is: **what’s the meaning of life? What’s the purpose of my life and your life?** (BUILDS) **To have fellowship with God!** This is the specific purpose we were made for! No amount of money, personal relationships, fame, power, success, achievement, pleasure will satisfy, because a **spiritual need cannot be met with a physical solution.** It’s not even that relationships, success, wealth, achievement are bad, they just can’t satisfy your inner thirst.

Think about it, if you make anything, and it’s made for a specific purpose, until that thing is involved in it’s purpose, it will feel empty and frustrating... **Like the bird. Birds were made to fly. Birds weren’t made to sit in a cage on a wooden dowel. What an empty vain life of a bird in a cage.**

The person who has yet to come into a relationship with God is like a trapped bird in a cage! There’s nowhere to go, and you’re forever stuck with the despairs of this life under the sun. Until you come to find purpose in relationship with God, through Jesus Christ! And when you do, then suddenly everything in life has meaning and value! Life can be enjoyed, you can be free! Solomon comes to this conclusion at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes... **Ecclesiastes 12:13: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. — Fulfillment in life can only be found in a relationship with God, an obedient relationship. We only find fulfillment when we engage in what we’ve been created for...**

The skeptic may say “well I don’t have to live with purpose! I’m just going to enjoy life and then die. Who cares...” Friend that will never be enough ... There will always be something missing in your life, no matter how much you try to ignore it. Always empty, always reaching for the top but never making it... No human can live without purpose successfully. There will always be something missing. You were created for more!

And every purpose for life outside of relationship with God is futile and meaningless, just ask my main man Solomon.

So, friend is there still something missing in your life? Are you crying today on the inside.. outside, you have a mask... inside the peace and joy and happiness is missing... Jesus is speaking to you today the same words He cried in John 7:37-38 — Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

The emptiness can be gone today, you can be filled today. Jesus is saying look you have a thirst in you that can only be satisfied in me, so Come, come to Me and drink. Accept Me into your heart. You can start truly living today! And notice even He wants to fill you to the point of overflowing! You are no longer a dried up, thirsty sponge, but an overflowing cup pouring out the goodness of God's grace. Life lived with true eternal satisfaction today.

Thank you Jesus for the Blood! The song we sang today puts it beautifully!

I was a wretch
I remember who I was
I was lost, I was blind
I was running out of time

Sin separated
The breach was far too wide
But from the far side of the chasm
You held me in your sight

So You made a way
Across the great divide
Left behind Heaven's throne
To build it here inside

And there at the cross
You paid the debt I owed
Broke my chains, freed my soul
For the first time I had hope.

Friend you can have hope for the first time, life for the first time today! He's made a way for us to fulfill our purpose despite our sin! SO come.

And for those of us here who are Christians, I believe some of us maybe feeling a little dried out. Or a lot. You've been listening, and examining the futility of life under the sun today, and you feel it... Life has felt like an inescapable maze. You have been a slave to the calendar. Nothing is new in life, life feels dull, life has just become this thing that I complain about now! Life is too busy, life is too hard... I understand that feeling. Brother, sister, you may be losing sight of the meaning of your life...

Yes you know your need for Jesus, and your eternal security is in Him, but here's the question all of us Christians, must ask ourselves, How much of my daily life is being spent in fellowship with God? That is my ultimate purpose and meaning for living, so how much of my daily time is being spent in fulfilling my purpose?

We aren't as Christians immune to life's sufferings. We start to lose sight of our priorities, and our perspective on life becomes jaded, and we start to see life as being vain and empty. Life is hard and I can't catch a break, I don't have joy in my life like these other Christians! Why don't they complain about life as much as I do, why don't I have that joy... we haven't been truly fellowshiping with God.

Don't get pulled into the futility of the human condition! Satan is still tempting you to wonder "if I only had" maybe that's what I need to be happy. Yes there are problems in life and we have to deal with them and face them, but you can face the problems/suffering with the joy of the Lord. You

can face the suffering of man without losing your own fellowship with the Lord! What you need is to Stay near to Him, remember the Truth of His Word!

If we start to focus all our attention on the problem, and fall in line with the rest of the world looking for an answer within the problem and we're never gonna find it. Christian you have the truth! Point people to the answer to their problem who is outside of the problem. The worlds problems are spiritual, they need a spiritual solution, they need Jesus!

The way we impact the world is not by fighting social causes to make the world a better place by our own ability. People don't need us, people need Jesus! Solving the world's societal problems will not satisfy a single persons spiritual thirst. Even if we could solve that problem in the world, people will be disappointed again because there is just going to be another problem!

Nothing is going to fit that hole in their heart. There's something missing, There's still something more, and you have the answer Christian, don't get distracted... go and show people there's more to life than what's under the sun... bring them to Jesus.

Friends, **Life is worth living with the joy of the Lord! Life is worth living only in His presence.** Psalms 16:11 says, [In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.](#) He is the provider of fullness of joy and lasting pleasures forevermore, what we simply need to do is abide in His presence and we will find that life is worth living!

Let's pray...