

Ecclesiastes 1 Chasing the Wind True North, Part 1

Tonight we are beginning a new Study in the Book of Ecclesiastes – Title of series – True North

The Only hope for a sailor seeking to survive a storm and to navigate his vessel in the ocean is to have a **fixed reference point.**

That fixed reference point enables him to discover where he is and where he is heading.

A) The first navigators sailed **keeping sight of land** – using familiar land marks to direct them.

B) When mariners dared to push beyond the sight of land they still needed **a fixed point to direct them.**

1) So they looked to the heavens to direct them.

C) As Knowledge grew and **celestial navigation** developed – the primary reference point for Navigators in the North Hemisphere – became the **NORTH STAR – POLARIS.**

D) That became known as **TRUE NORTH!**

A) In the Book of Ecclesiastes – the writer of this book reveals to us – the Key to navigating life is found above the Heavens – above the Sun

B) The North Star for navigating life is Jesus.

THE SON! -

True North provides a biblical compass to help you navigate, understand, and overcome the ever-changing currents of our society.

Author is Solomon: Who was Solomon:

A) Solomon was the Son from David's union with Bathsheba. {Explain: Adultery murder – baby died

B) God in his grace – another son – then picked that Son to be the next King.

C) Solomon was about 20 yrs old – assumed the throne – Overwhelmed -

1) God said – Ask – one thing

D) What would you ask for! -

1) Wealth, fame, popularity, your own lane 78

E) Solomon asked for wisdom – God was touched

1) Give you everything else.

Great Start – God blessed – Power – wealth – Popularity – Israel – all time powerhouse.

A) Expanded their borders.

B) 1/2 way point of his life – Solomon – marry pagan wives – worship pagan gods

C) Lost his **true North** – began to seek meaning in life in everything under the Sun.

Amassed Wealth – Power – Pleasure – possessions – popularity at all time highs – even by today’s standards

- A) Who do you admire? - Technology – Bill Gates
- B) Sex Playboy mentality – Hugh Hephner –
- C) Movie Star – George Clooney –
 - 1) IQ – Albert Einstein

Solomon was Bill Gates, Clooney, Hephner and Einstein rolled into one.

- A) Richest – most powerful – writer – builder – Sex 700 wives –
- B) Hard to fathom – How many of you guys find it hard enough to **emotionally connect with 1 woman**
 - 1) **“You never pay attention – you don’t listen to me – you don’t understand me – X 700**
- C) Add 300 Concubines – Girls for sex!
- D) Crazy!

That was Solomon – 3 books

- A) Song of Solomon – First love
- B) Proverbs early in life.

C) Ecclesiastes – later in life – Solomon reflects back on his life – after He finds his true North again.

Solomon was in essence the first Philosopher – he writes this book of Philosophy –

- A) Long before the Greeks and Socrates and Plato – began to Philosophy
- B) He writes ECCL – 900 yrs before the birth of Christ – this book is 3,000 yrs old –
 - 1) Incredibly relevant for today –
- C) The Byrds – U2 the Preacher

Begins with an abrupt start v.1-2

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

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

Right from the start Solomon confronts us with the bleak reality that life apart from God is meaningless

- A) No subtlety here: No beating around the bush- Solomon hits us like a Line backer from the Beginning.
- B) Basketball Practice – Guard 6’6 Giant – T. Neal Dunk – You are not guarding me.
- C) Written at the end of his life – looking back – he writes with **a sense of urgency – PREACHER**

1) He wants us to see the contrast between what matters to what doesn't – matter!

C) Solomon hits us with a harsh dose of reality – that life apart from God is meaningless. – Vanity
Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Repeated for emphasis – Dunked on over and over.

MEANINGLESS: Empty – futile- out of breath.

A) Pursuing meaning in life apart from God leaves you out of breath – panting – gasping for air.

B) Long run – or big hit – leaves you out of breath

C) People run into life – thinking – this is going to make me happy – {Fill me – Empty
1) Out of breath.

D) Ever feel that way – get up going to work – routine – end of the week – What am I doing here!
1) My life is meaningless –

E) Ever pursue something – thought – missing link – only to find out – Didn't really satisfy

I call that the Cotton Candy Syndrome – Big Fluffy Sweat – I want that – Giant sugar cloud

A) Evaporates – like is that way!

Bb) Life is frustrating! – Biblically

B) Solomon's abrupt introduction is designed to arrest the apathy and spiritual lethargy of his listeners.

C) Anyone here tonight who is not in a relationship with God – pursuing meaning in life apart from your creator.

D) As well as any of us who know God – who have been duped into thinking that something apart from God Relationship, Material possession, Career
Is going to bring lasting fulfillment into our lives.

Doctor – terminal diagnosis treated

Now Solomon explains why life leaves us breathless and is so frustrating.

**V. 3 What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he toils under the sun?**

A) Life is full of Labor and Toil – two good words – always working it!

B) Life is busy – Work, School, Bills, Taxi kids to sports and Dance, etc

1) At the end of the day – what do you have to show for all your LABOR.

C) Sleep 6 hrs – life busy – could use – 2 more days

Here is the Pt. We work our whole lives and what do we have to show for it?

A) What is left over – all the labor a man does under the sun – used 29 times = life on this earth.

B) Same every Generation V. 4 **“One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever.”** {10K born {6K die

Bb) Every Generation is the same - - Every Generation comes along saying – we are going to get it right.

C) We will fix things – we will make this world a better place.

D) Coke Generation {I’d like to teach the world a song Harmony
1) Create this Utopia

One Generation comes another goes – Same issues and problems - - NO UTOPIA

A) Solomon is saying that the earth is like **an Exercise Bike** – One Generation is born – hops on the Bike

B) **Peddles like Crazy** – until it falls over and dies the next Generation hops on the Bike determined to peddle even harder.

C) We mistake movement for Progress – not really any progress – Ephesus / Sardis

D) More advanced in Technology – but same problems with Man – Lust greed – selfishness
1) Man is declining – not progressing – more evil
More perverse

We live in Denial – thinking we are great – because there is movement – Better technology etc

A) Solomon tells us to take our cues from the earth wind and the fire – 70’s disco band V.5-7

**5 The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
And 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.**

Life is not moving linear – in a line.

A) No life is going around in circles – Disney Circle of life – not evolution

B) But in the sense – Born of the earth – live – Die – back in the ground

C) Sun rises – sun sets – another day another dollar another set of Problems

1) That is the nature of life when my focus is under the sun. – here on earth – grind !

D) Jeremiah gives another perspective - -
Lamentations 3:23 – **The Sun rising every morning reminds us of the faithfulness of God.**

E) Answer to life is found above the sun!
When my focus is under the sun – here on earth – life is a Rut.

A) Washing dishes – more dishes – pay bills – more bills - vicious cycle – day by day!

B) Each Generation thinks they are going to be different – New Plan new angle

1) Take old ideas and recycle – nothing new under the sun.

**8 All things are full of labor;
Man cannot express it.**

**The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.**

**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.**

1972 Super bowl – cowboys Won – Dwayne Thomas was asked – How does it feel to win the Ultimate game?

A) How can it be the Ultimate game if they play it again next year? Forget who won? -

B) We don't know History?

Bb) Nothing new – Recycle – music styles – clothing

1) Remake movies – A Team back – Mission Impossible

C) We don't know History – repeat the same old things.

D) We want to argue – but look the progress we have made – man on the Moon –

1) Computer Technology – HD / BLU Ray –

E) The Problem is man is still the same – still greedy, selfish, and prideful

1) Same issues and problems – just a little more sophisticated – Porn on Internet – instead of mag.

Emotional affairs via – computer

Nothing new under the Sun!

Some of you might be thinking – this is a depressing Bible study Pastor Rob – thx for the invite – nice hand out! –

Depressing? Or just Honest

Solomon does us a great service here because he picks the six most popular things that pp pursue to try and find meaning, value and purpose in life

A) He pursued those six things with unparalleled vigor

B) Runner – each race – different pursuit – he ran in all six events and Won!

C) Money – Every year ships bringing fleets of gold – payments from other Kings

1) Richest man on earth. – Maybe History. – But that didn't do it!

Some people live in this myth – Just make more money I will be happy. –

A) Some of you are making more than you ever have dreamed – still NEED MORE. – STILL IN DEBT

B) Power – For the 40yrs he reigned as King - - The most powerful King on the earth

1) Israel reached it's zenith under his rule – territory and power. {Stretched her borders

C) Religion and Spirituality – he dabbled into everything – each foreign wife a different god or goddess.

Career achievements – Builder extraordinary

A) Queen of Sheba – 1500miles just to see his kingdom

B) Built Palaces – Temple – Ships – Greenhouses Gardens –

He also excelled in Education and wisdom

A) He wrote 3,000 proverbs /1,005 songs

B) He pursued wisdom and Education – with an unabated gusto

12 I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind.

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

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 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.

V.13 Again two interesting words – seek and to search or explore. They describe his mission

A) The Hebrew word seeks means to investigate the roots of the matter.

B) It is what you would do as a doctoral candidate writing your dissertation.

C) It involves all the hrs & hrs of research and hard work for such an endeavor.

D) Solomon wasn't lazy – he did his research.

1) He got to the root of things – studied back ground etc

The word search or explore is a different Hebrew word it = to examine all sides

A) It is a word of practical experimentation

B) Solomon is saying – Not only did I do the research and the study – the gardens lakes rivers etc

1) I did the experiments in them – I got wet

C) I sought to know by experience everything I could – every type of food – every pleasure – every experience

V.17 Both extremes – High Brow –

A) Suits champagne –caviar – Opera – pretending it is enjoyable to have large Italian women yell at you

B) Went that rout – and the other extreme – madness Folly –

C) Opposite of sophisticated – Redneck – God bless them.

D) Seeking fulfillment in stupidity – how dumb can we be?

Twice the Phrase of Chasing the wind – Futile can't catch it –

Foolish – can't see it!

V.15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, We can't fix our world – because we are broken – we need fixed.

And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

We don't have the means to fix ourselves

Answer has to lie outside of us! – That is the point he wants us to get.

What did He get for all his wisdom and Knowledge?

18 For in much wisdom is much grief, And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

A) Have you found that to be true?

B) Human nature – People – grieving

C) Nothing surprises me anymore

Two final deductions:

- 1. If there is nothing but nothing under the sun, our only hope must be above it.**
- 2. If the man who had everything and investigated everything visible says it is all vanity. Then the one thing needed must be invisible.**