



SERVICE TIMES:

Sunday : 9:30 AM
10:30 AM
5:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

ELDER

Todd Cox Jimmy Griffith
Travis Everett Paul White

DEACONS:

Derek Anderson Bret Cox
James Dow Patrick Gaughan
Ryan Griffith Dan Harbin
Craig Hecht Danny Meek
Skyler Meek Phil Parker
Jay Silvers Jason Stannard
Travis Starling Bryan Tacker
Steve Turquette Eric Wise

EVANGELIST

Paul White

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February 14, 2021

Finding Purpose

These days, many people are experiencing varying degrees of depression. There are many reasons for this ... post-holiday blues, cold weather, COVID restrictions, etc. But I believe that one of the most common reasons for depression, regardless of the day or season, is that people lack purpose in their lives. A lot of people lack purpose because of their worldly mindset, in which they think that this world is all there is, and that they must satisfy themselves with what is here and now before they die, even though the here and now is full of false happiness.

Ecclesiastes 1:2-4 reads:

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever.”

These verses illustrate the vanity of life, because of its fleeting nature. However, despite the fleeting nature of life, many still seek fulfillment in it. There are many things that people seek to find fulfillment in, and they all fail in their own ways. The writer of Ecclesiastes discusses this extensively in the first few chapters of the book.

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The book begins by noting that the writer is the son of King David, implying that his heritage allows him anything his heart desires. With this in mind, he discusses his numerous pursuits of fulfillment throughout his life. In Ecclesiastes 1:16-18, he states that he sought fulfillment in worldly wisdom, however that simply brought him grief, and he felt as though this was just as futile as trying to grab the wind. Clearly not one to be set back by this, the writer goes on try to find fulfillment in the pleasurable things of this earth instead. He states in Ecclesiastes 2:1-11:

“I said in my heart, ‘Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure’; but surely, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, ‘Madness!’; and of mirth, ‘What does it accomplish?’ I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives. I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. 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. 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. So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done and on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.”

This concept is illustrated in Luke 12, where the Rich Man is seeking to find pleasure for himself by acquiring more material things. In verse 19, it says:

“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’” He believed that he could be happy for the rest of his life if he stored up his goods that he had worked to obtain, without regard to the real Giver of all we have in this life. God had a different plan for this man’s life. In verse 20, it reads: “But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’” Once again, it is futile to seek after wealth or possessions to find pleasure.

Things of this earth are all temporary, but the soul is eternal. As such, the only way to find true pleasure in this life is to find purpose in God! At the end of the book, after the writer of Ecclesiastes outlines everything in which he attempted to find purpose, he finds it in God. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says:

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

Finally, we must always keep in mind what our end will be. Mark 8:34-38 reads:

“Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

This illustrates that the only thing that really matters is our eternal salvation. Have you secured yours? Life is short like a vapor (James 4:14), and the end is unpredictable (1 Thes 5:2), so today is the day to find pleasure in godly pursuits rather than worldly pursuits.

- Ben Smith