



LIVING LIFE BACKWARD

How Ecclesiastes Teaches Us to Live Life in Light of the End

BASED ON A BOOK BY THAT NAME

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LIVING LIFE
BACKWARD

HOW ECCLESIASTES TEACHES US

TO LIVE IN LIGHT OF THE END ◀◀

THE PLAN

- We are planning on working through the book of Ecclesiastes
- Emphasis is on relevance to our lives, not a verse-by-verse commentary
- There will be a variety of teachers
- Teachers will be using the book as a reference, but we're not expecting people to read the book

ECCLESIASTES

- A few questions:
 - What was your first thought when you heard we'd be going through the book of Ecclesiastes (honestly)?
 - What are some themes that you think of when you think of this book?
 - What things seem confusing to you about this book?
- Ecclesiastes is a book about perspective
 - Some of what it says is challenging (intentionally)
 - It is God's word, just as much as any other book in the Bible
 - As we work through the book, allow the Holy Spirit to work on you!

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

- The book begins with "shock tactics" (v. 2)
- What is meant by the word translated "vanity"?
 - Not really meaningless
 - Hebrew word: hebel
 - Translated vanity, but also has connotation of "breath" or "breeze" or "vapor" or "fleeting"
 - Examples of other places where that word is used
 - Ps 39:5-6,11
 - Ps 144:3-4

VANITY, VANITY (LIKE A BREATH OR VAPOR)

- Life is short (like a breath)
 - Ps 103:15-16
- Life is elusive (like a vapor)
 - We can't seem to gain control over life like we want
- When we consider the brevity of life against the millenia of history, we know that life is short and elusive
 - Except, in everyday life, we pretend it isn't. How?
- The Preacher demolishes our pretense by confronting us with reality: Ecc 1:3
 - What is the surplus or the gain that is left over when we're all done—nothing, really.
 - The stark picture continues in v. 4

WHAT ELSE?

- Life is repetitive (vv. 4-10)
 - The preacher's perspective is that we are searching for something truly new and significant, but there isn't really anything like that
- Question: How many of you can name one of your great, great grandparents?
 - If you can name them, do you know anything about them?
- Summary of vv. 1-11: This side of eternity, life is but a breath. We do the same things over and over again in a world that is repeating itself over and over again, and then we die, only to be followed by our children who will do the same things in the same way and meet the same end.
 - Is this a good summary of vv. 1-11?
- Note: Being a Christian doesn't stop this from being true
- Writer is laying the foundation: Only by preparing to die will we know how to live

PREPARE TO DIE...LEARN TO LIVE

- Question: If we won't live forever, or even long enough to leave a lasting impression on this world, how should we live?
 - That's the pressing question for the whole book of Ecclesiastes (and it takes most of Ecclesiastes to answer that question)
- Wise people simply accept that they are going to die
 - However, we often pretend that this is not the case
- The Preacher is going to be showing us what we should, and what we should not expect out of life
- While this is a painful lesson, the reality is that we need to live according to reality in order to find true joy and contentment
 - Living with the "make believe" that things under the sun are more significant than they really are only leads to futility