

I. The Voice of Christ, the Preacher (v 1).**A. Introduction to the Book of Ecclesiastes**

- 1) Canonical Genre: Wisdom Literature; Literary Genre: Poetry
- 2) Addressing Difficulties in Studying the Book of Ecclesiastes
 - a) Difficulty 1: There seems to be no Gospel in Ecclesiastes!
 - b) Difficulty 2: Sometimes it seems like there are two voices.
 - c) Difficulty 3: This book is depressing!
- 3) Thesis of the Book of Ecclesiastes (Eccl 12:13-14)

B. The Author of Ecclesiastes: Solomon (1 Kgs 8:1)**C. The Voice of Christ, the Preacher**

- 1) One greater than Solomon (Lk 11:31)
- 2) As *'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God'* (1 Cor 1:24)
- 3) As *Qohelet* — The one who gathers and speaks to His people through His Word.
- 4) As the *Son of David*
- 5) As the *King in Jerusalem*
- 6) As the one who came into and felt the futility of this world (Heb 4:15)
- 7) As the one making all things new (Rev 21:5)

D. Uses from the Point

- 1) We are to read our Bibles as Christians.
- 2) Let us apply our study of Ecclesiastes with prayer, faith, and contentment, with the desire to grow in wisdom (from the youngest to the oldest of us).

II. Vanity in Light of the Resurrection (v 2).**A. What does the word Vanity mean? — *puff of wind* or *breath* or *vapor* (Psa 39:11; Jms 4:14)****B. The *Vanity* of Ecclesiastes shows us the reality of the curse of Sin**

- 1) This is further emphasized to us in the theme of one's *toil* (1:3; Gen 3:17-19)
- 2) This doctrine is seen and explained further in Romans 8:20

C. The Purpose of this Vanity:

- 1) To look forward to the resurrection of the body (Rom 8:21)
- 2) To look to salvation in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:22)

D. The Encouragement of the Resurrection (1 Cor 15:58)

- 1) Solomon and Paul are not contradictions but complements.
- 2) Because of the Resurrection, we can truly enjoy even the most common and fleeting things (Jn 21:12).

E. Uses from the Text

- 1) Let us avoid the easy abuses of this text.
 - a) The sin of despair
 - b) The folly of denial
 - c) The temptation of discouragement (Eccl 11:6)
 - d) The temptation of displeasure (Eccl 2:24)
- 2) You are to be faithful in fleeting things.
- 3) Take courage in the resurrection (1 Cor 16:13-14)

III. Understanding Our Labour Under the Sun (v 3).**A. *What profit has a man from all his labour*****B. *In which he toils under the sun?* —**

- 1) What under the sun does not mean
- 2) Summary: Rather, under the sun is a metaphor for the experience of our life under the cosmic curse, just as our world exists under the sun.
- 3) Understanding the refrain in light of its parallels:
 - a) *Under the heavens* (Gen 6:17)
 - b) *On the earth* (Eccl 5:2, 12:7; Gen 3:19).
 - c) *Under the sun* brings together these two realities.
- 4) The hope and encouragement of life *under the sun* — the one who is *in the heavens* came down to be *under the sun* and live *on the earth* (Rev 22:3, 5).

C. Uses from the Text

- 1) There is great blessing in knowing what life is like under the sun (2 Tim 3:16)
 - a) We should not have unrealistic expectations of life and human experience.
 - b) Ecclesiastes shows to us the smallness of our struggles.
 - c) Ecclesiastes shows to us the shortness of our earthly lives.
- 2) There is great blessing in persevering through toils and troubles (Psa 107:12-13, 33, 35).