**BCM Bible Study: March 17/18, 2021, Ecclesiastes 1:1-11**

Everything is Meaningless? Vanity?

The key to understanding the message of Ecclesiastes is looking at most-used word in Ecclesiastes. **Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-2**.

* What do your different versions say for the repeated word in verse 2?
* What does it seem like the Teacher is communicating in this verse?

The Hebrew word here is *hevel*. This is a tough word to translate, but the sense of the word can be understood by its use elsewhere in the Bible. **Read Ps. 39:5,** **Ps. 144:4, Proverbs 31:30.**

* What is the sense of *hevel* in these verses?

The Teacher is using *hevel* in to communicate at least two things about human life:

1. Life is **fleeting and transient**. Some translate Ecc. 1:2 “The merest of breaths!” The message here is that life and the things in it are far from permanent.
2. Life is **elusive**. Our attempts to capture, control, manipulate, and understand life are futile, like trying to grasp the wind.
	* When have you personally experienced these realities of life?

**Read Ecclesiastes 1:3**. Considering what we have just learned, what does this verse challenge us to consider?

* Do you find yourself falling into thinking of life in terms of achievement and gain? How does your desire for possessions and influence impact your life now and plans for the future?
* **Read Matthew 6:19-21, 25-34**. What would change about your life if you were to live it according to Matthew 6?

Your Life in View of the World: **Read Ecclesiastes 1:4-11**

* Verses 4-11 answer the rhetorical question posed in verse 3. What is the overall answer? How do these verses highlight the *hevel* of life?
* Verse 8 stands out as unique in this section. Most translations say “weary,” but the sense is more like “steady toil.” A summary could be: “Natural phenomena toil steadily without variation. Creation is a vast and intricate reality, which escapes the grasp of humans in speech, sight, and hearing; we are unable to find words for it, and all our looking at it and listening to it cannot comprehend it.” (Iain Provan)
	+ Do you relate to this idea? In what way does the majesty and constancy of the natural world fill you with awe?
	+ Have you seen people abuse creation for their own gain? What is a healthy human relationship with the earth?
	+ In light of all the new technology and developments of our time, what do you think of verse 10 and the idea that there are no new things? What is he talking about?

Conclusion and Challenge: Our lives, in the grand scheme of things, are a blip on the radar. Our job is simple: Accept reality as it is instead of seeking to manipulate the world to produce the outcome we want. We are called to live a life that accepts this reality of human limitation and morality, living faithfully to God in the present moment. This week, schedule at least 30 minutes to rest and be with God. No phone, work, agenda, or people. Go on a walk or simply be alone, putting aside your activity to be with God. I encourage you to be in nature and think about what we have read in Ecclesiastes.