



Reading Ecclesiastes

Vanity of Vanities?

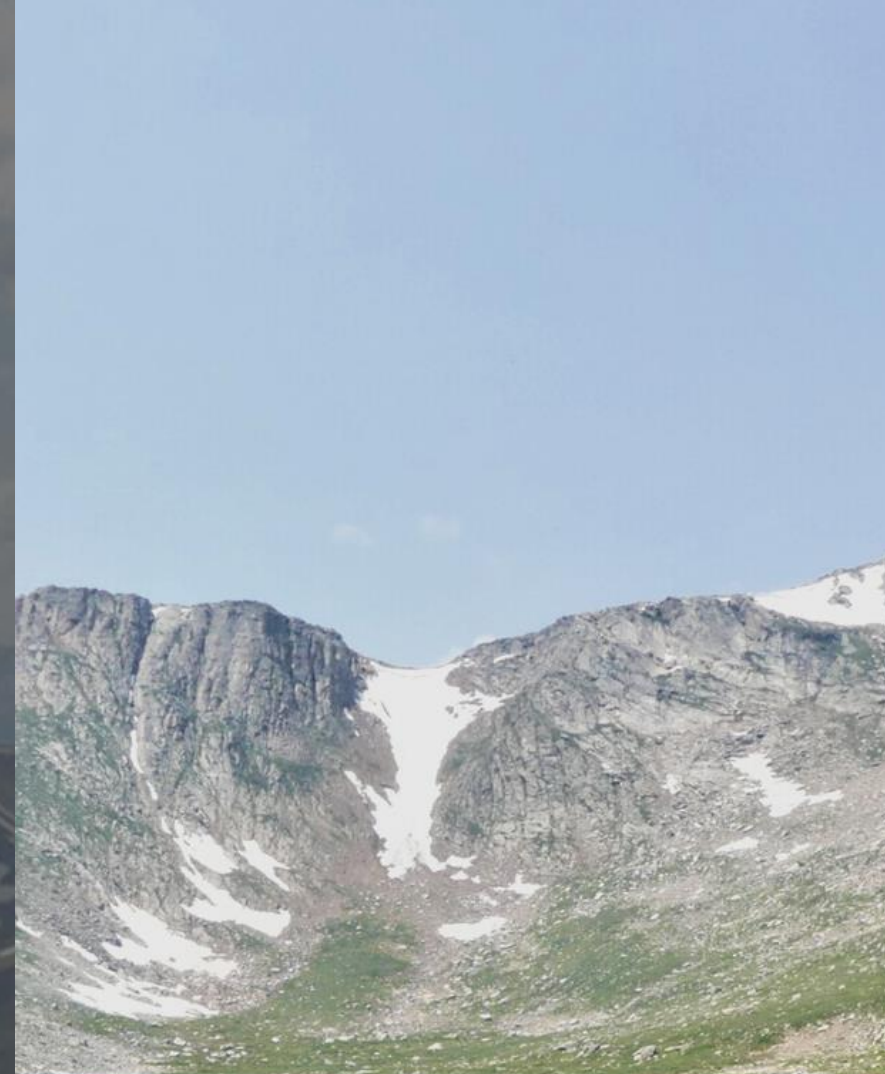
Smoky Hill church of Christ

**FALL
2023**

2. SEARCHING FOR MEANING (1.12-2.26)

INTRODUCTION TO WISDOM

Comparing Wisdom to the rest of the Bible's inspired texts.



Vanity of Wisdom *Eccl 1.12–13*

“I, THE PREACHER...”

A personal voice, a personal journey

“...ACCORDING TO **WISDOM**”

Consider Exd 31.3; Dtr 4.5–6; Isa 11.2?

“BAD BUSINESS...”

Consider Gen 2.15; 1.31



Bad Business *(Eccl 1.14–18)*

“I’VE SEEN EVERYTHING...”

Eccl 1.14 vs. Gen 1.31

“I SAID TO MYSELF...”

A preview for chapter 2!

Four Approaches to Life

ECCLESIASTES 2.1-26

PLEASURE

Ecc1 2.1-11

WISDOM

Ecc1 2.12-17

LEGACY / WORK

Ecc1 2.18-23

SIMPLE PLEASURES

Ecc1 2.24-26



SUMMARY OF THE PREACHER'S QUEST (2.1–3)

Purpose, Method, Result?

SEARCHING FOR THE ANSWER IN STUFF (2.4–10A)

The background of the temple (1 Kgs 7–9; 2 Chr 8–16) and creation (Gen 1–2)

CONCLUSION OF THE PREACHER'S QUEST (2.10B–11)

What good is stuff?

Testing Pleasure (2.1–11)

Phrase	Genesis	Ecclesiastes
"Plant"	"the Lord planted a Garden..." (2.8)	"...I planted vineyards" (2.4)
"Garden"	"the Lord planted a Garden..." (2.8)	"...I made gardens" (2.5)
"All kinds of fruit trees"	"...all kinds of trees" (2.9) "...fruit trees" (1.11-12)	"...all kinds of fruit trees" (2.5)
"Irrigate"	"...flowed out of Eden to irrigate the garden" (2.10)	"...to irrigate a grove" (2.6)
"Sprout"	"...no plant had yet sprouted" (2.5)	"...a grove of sprouting trees" (2.6)
"To make/do"	"...God made" (1.7, 16, 25, etc)	"...I made gardens" (2.5)

A SHIFT IN FOCUS (2.12; CF. 1.17)

What can we change, and for how long?

A LIMITED ANSWER (2.13–14)

“Better” is comparative, not absolute. What is the problem?

CONCLUSION TO THE QUEST FOR WISDOM (2.15–17)

What good is wisdom in the Grave (Job 7.9–10; 10.20–22; Psa 16.9–10)?

Maybe Wisdom (2.12–17)

FAILURES OF LEGACY (2.18–19)

How do we think about legacy/inheritance?

TURNING TO DESPAIR (2.20–23)

What do we think the purpose of stuff is? How could that drive us to despair?

WHAT IS THE ANSWER, THEN?

Maybe Legacy (2.18–23)

ECCLESIASTES 2.24-26

There's nothing better...

2

VANITY OF VANITIES?





Eating with the fullest pleasure, pleasure, that is, that does not depend on ignorance, is perhaps the profoundest enactment of our connection with the world. In this pleasure we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude, for we are living from mystery, from creatures we did not make and powers we cannot comprehend. When I think of the meaning of food, I always remember these lines by the poet William Carlos Williams, which seem to me merely honest: There is nothing to eat, seek it where you will, but the body of the Lord. The blessed plants and the sea yield it to the imagination, intact.

WENDELL BERRY, "PLEASURES OF
EATING" IN *WHAT ARE PEOPLE
FOR?*



READ

Ecclesiastes 3.1–15



QUESTIONS

Do you think the “times” are descriptive or prescriptive?

What does “Eternity in our hearts” mean?

Why has God has done this?

What do we think about that?

What’s the difference between Ecclesiastes’ “I have seen” and “I know” statements in the book?

Next Class

3. A TIME FOR ALL THINGS