



1

**The worse the vacation,...
the longer you can enjoy telling the story!**

**Sometimes the value of our days
isn't what it seemed at the time**

2

“Show me, Lord, my life’s end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.
You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
the span of my years is as nothing before you.
Everyone is but a breath,
even those who seem secure.”

Psalm 39:5

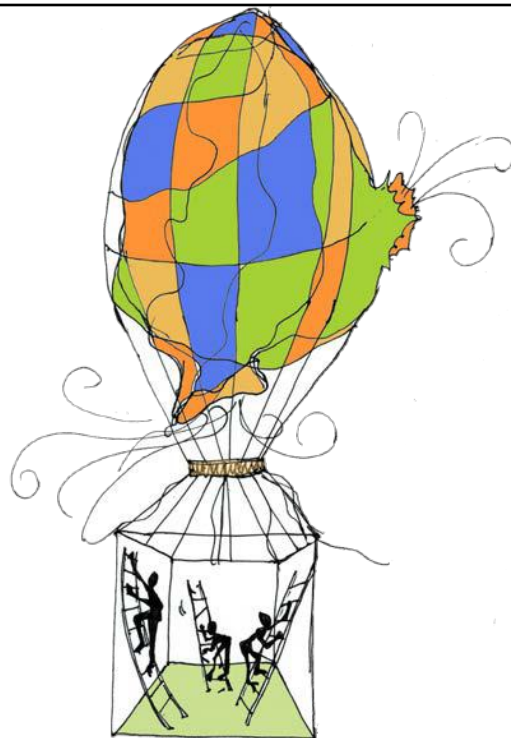
Give us wisdom

Help us find **true meaning in our lives**

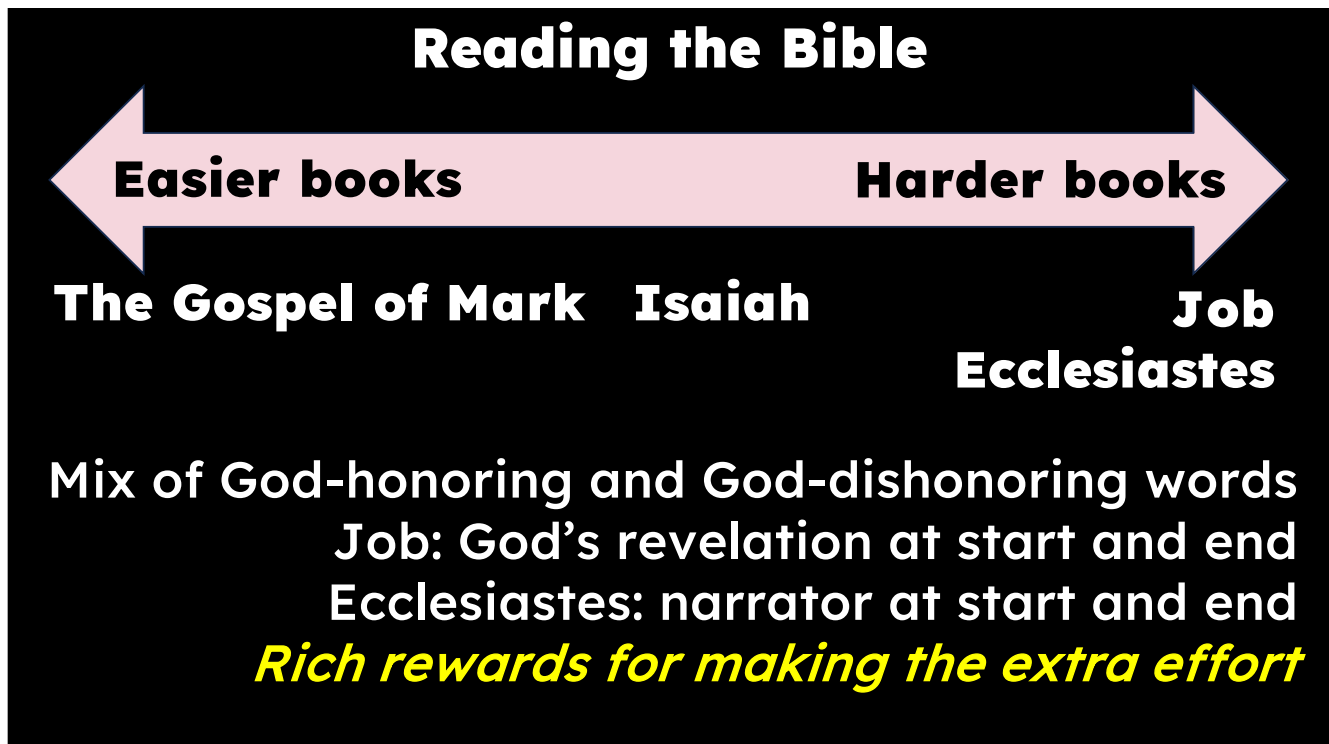
3

Finding Meaning Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

ref.ly/Ec1;NIV



4



5

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

The words of the Teacher, son of David,
 king in Jerusalem:

² “Meaningless! Meaningless!”
 says the Teacher.
 “Utterly meaningless!
 Everything is meaningless.”

A shocking beginning!

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Ecclesiastes 1:3-4

- ³ What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?
⁴ Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.

**Every generation deals with the same things
And we're surprised by it!**

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Ecclesiastes 1:5-7

- ⁵ The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.
⁶ The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.
⁷ All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

**In Nature:
Lots of activity
But no progress**

8



9

Ecclesiastes 1:8

**⁸ All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.
The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.**

**In all the words, and visions, and sounds...
We still want more
But nothing really changes**

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Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

⁹ What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰ Is there anything of which one can say,
“Look! This is something new”?

It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.

**“Nothing changes the fundamental facts
of the human condition”**

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Ecclesiastes 1:11

¹¹ No one remembers the former generations,
and even those yet to come
will not be remembered
by those who follow them.

**We struggle to remember our own ancestors
And their hopes and dreams and struggles
and accomplishments**

12

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

The words of the Teacher, son of David,
king in Jerusalem:

² “**Meaningless! Meaningless!**”
says the Teacher.
“**Utterly meaningless!**
Everything is **meaningless.**”

13

Romans 8:20-21

For the creation was subjected to **frustration**, not
by its own choice, but by the will of the one who
subjected it

14

A story to explain the human condition

The first brothers

- Abel: Pleasing to God
- Cain: Just implied dissatisfaction
 - Angry at Abel (envy)
 - Killed Abel and lied to God
- Cain: Lived a full life; 7 generations listed
- Abel: died without offspring → like a mist
 - **Abel** = vapor or breath = vanity

15

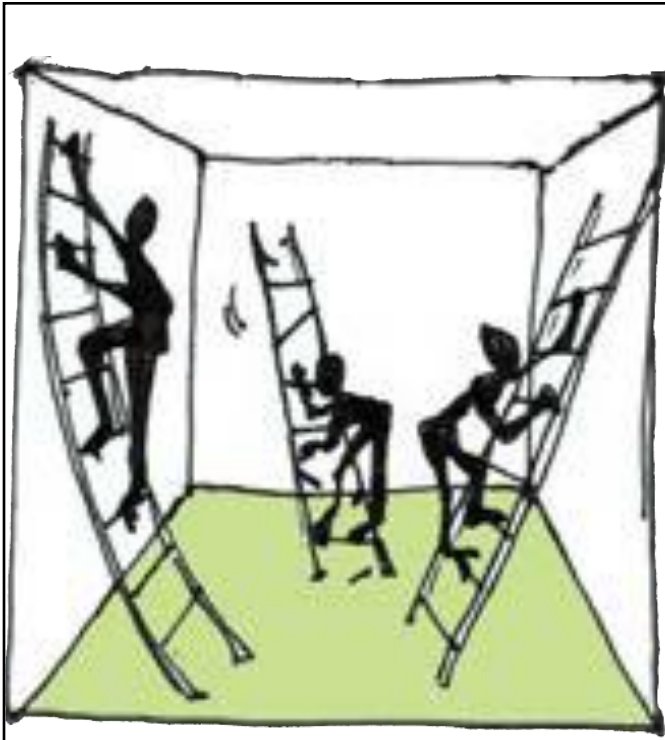
The Big Idea

**All our efforts for good
eventually get washed away and forgotten**

Good and bad die at the same rate

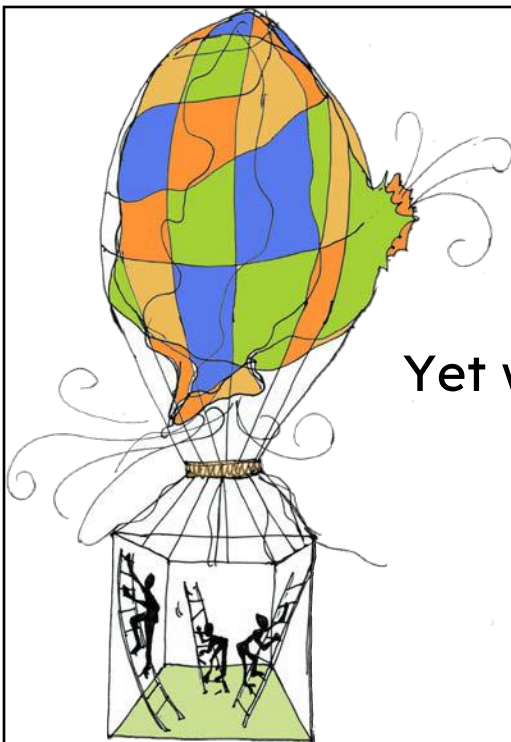
Good and bad are both forgotten at the same rate

16



We work so hard
to matter
Each in our own way

17



Yet we are tied to a sinking balloon
The “whole show”
and all its parts

18

The Big Idea

All our efforts for good
eventually get washed away and forgotten

19

Romans 8:20-21

For the creation was subjected to **frustration**, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be **liberated from its bondage to decay** and brought into the **freedom and glory** of the **children of God.**

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The Big Idea

All our efforts for good
eventually get washed away and forgotten
except when we are known by God

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

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Application #1

Admit the futility of life not tied to God

- All that we accomplish will someday be lost
 - No one will care or even know that we existed
 - Even humanity will end
- Yet we keep working to...
 - satisfy our desires → they never are
 - please people → they always want more
 - please ourselves → we always need more
 - improve humanity → it always needs more
 - help people → they always need more

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be famous
be successful
please others
please ourselves

“Do not wear yourself out to **get rich;**

do not trust your own cleverness.

Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone,

for **they will surely sprout wings**

and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”

Proverbs 23:4-5

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Application #1

Admit the futility of life not tied to God

- “The more things change,
the more they stay the same.”
- This is the first step in being
“liberated from a bondage to decay”
- The second and final step...

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Application #2

Find our meaning in God

- “Apart from you I have no good thing” Psalm 16:2
- Only what is blessed by God will matter
- The tiniest amount of **money** plus God’s blessing is more than the greatest human riches
- “Liberated from the bondage to decay... and brought into the **freedom and glory of the children of God.**” Romans 8

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Application #2

Find our meaning in God

- “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”
John 17:3
- This is the invitation for our lives
- This is the invitation for every moment

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