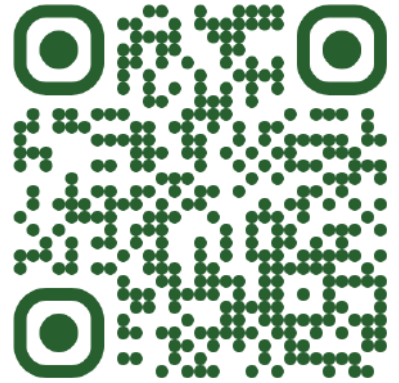


Greatness Falls

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16



Greatness

Name some great people and what makes them great
How would God answer that question?

Ecclesiastes: a search for...

A life that is not pointless or empty
A life that has meaning and value

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

Hard of hearing → Hard of listening

Wisdom has great value!

Wisdom can overcome extreme disadvantages

It seems that this is the storyline...

Old king: yet foolish, so he lost the throne
Poor youth: yet wise, so he became king
Another youth: became the next king. Everyone abandoned the earlier kings
And more will come and displace all these
There is an unending succession of people who rise, and rule, then fall into nothingness

→ Wisdom is better than folly, but not enough

"All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return." Ecclesiastes 2:20

"The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more." Psalm 103:15-16

"Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust." Isaiah 40:15

The Big (negative) Idea

There is no meaning or value that isn't washed away by time

"Who is like the Lord our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?" Psalm 103:5-6

"When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?" Psalm 8:3-4

In our natural state no single life actually matters

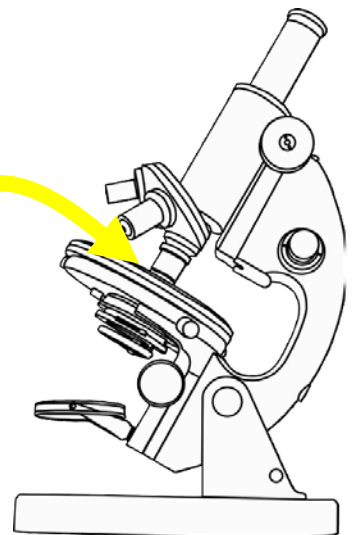
The Big (positive) Idea

Every life in Christ (and only in Christ) has profound value and meaning

"I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke 7:28

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
2 Corinthians 4:7

This treasure = God "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ" 2 Corinthians 4:6



Action Items

Find our meaning in Christ, and Christ in us

“...the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**” Colossians 1:24-27

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have **eternal life.**” John 3:16

Run from ideas of human-importance

Whether raising up ourselves or others

“For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” **1 Corinthians 4:7**

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.” **2 Corinthians 3:5**

“**God opposes the proud** but shows favor to the humble.” **1 Peter 5:5b**

“It is absurd to quarrel about the superiority of anyone in the church, because only God matters.”

“So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” **1 Corinthians 3:7**

Run from human-belittling

Belittling ourselves or others

The poor widow’s offering

“Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others.” **Luke 21:3**

Those who are in Christ will reign with Him

“Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him, we will also live with him;

if we endure, we will also reign with him.” **2 Timothy 2:11-12**

A Life of unending meaning

God LIVING IN us through Jesus Christ

To be free from the struggles of human greatness

To be entrusted with good work by God

Now

Forever

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. What does it mean to find our meaning in Christ and Christ in us? Is that real in your heart and life?
2. Do you struggle more with having too high a view of yourself or too low a view of yourself? Why might that be?
3. Do you struggle more in elevating other people (whether praising them or fearing them), or belittling other people?
4. How does the image of God’s people having priceless treasure in clay jars (see 2 Corinthians 4:7) humble you? How should it bring courage and boldness?

Conversation Starter

How do you hope to be remembered?