



Anchored in Christ

PITHY THOUGHTS

In today's money, Solomon would have a net worth of 2.1 trillion dollars. That is approximately 23 times more wealth than Bill Gates.

Early in his life, Solomon was blessed with true wisdom. However, as we can see in Ecclesiastes, Solomon gradually turned away from this wisdom to various vices.

The book of Ecclesiastes can be thought of as Solomon's restoring of the heavenly King to the rightful throne—an acknowledgement of Solomon's foolishness and failures in trying to live life under the sun by his own agenda.

ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes 1:1-7

Pastor's Notes

V. 1 *The words of the 'Preacher!'* What does this mean? Luther sees this phrase as referring to Ecclesiastes originally being a sermon of Solomon—maybe a lecture that he gave over a dinner or after dinner. And then possibly it was written down by guests.

V. 2 The opening statement of Ecclesiastes says that all is Vanity! Yes, life under the sun is vanity—life is going nowhere. Some people work really hard to climb the ladder of success, while others binge drink and smoke pot, but both end up in the grave. Pointless! The end is the grave.

V. 3 Pagans work and work and work with the illusion that their work will give them 'great' gain; however, in the end, nothing is really gained except the grave.

V. 4 Life under the sun is also locked in a cycle. A generation comes and goes. And then another generation comes and goes. Around and around and around. Sure a person will stand on his own two feet, but the person will not endure from one generation to the next. He will be knocked down and forgotten by the next generation. And if a person gains wisdom, that wisdom typically comes at the end of their life—at the time of their departure.

V. 5 There is indeed a tiresome cycle of life. The sun rises and falls day after day. This is often called the 'daily grind.' Solomon acknowledges that this is how life is under the sun. For

the unbeliever, this cycle can become very discouraging— *Is this all that there is to life!*

V. 6 Life under the sun leads to the end of the grave, while trapping everyone in a cycle. And to make things worse, this life under the sun lacks purpose. Think of the wind. It blows here and there with no purpose. Just when the weatherman makes a prediction, the weather changes! Wind is unpredictable and lacks purpose, just like sin.

V. 7 And the rivers—they empty into the ocean, but is the ocean ever full? Does a river ever complete its objective of completely filling the ocean?

The point: Solomon is painting a picture of life under the sun as being pointless (ending in death), cyclical (trapped in repetition), without purpose (wild unpredictable sin). This is much like the teenager in a small town cruising up and down the street—over and over. They never get anywhere (vanity), they repeat the driving pattern over and over (cyclical), and for what, because they are bored? (no purpose)

Reflections:

- Is Solomon's assessment of Life Under the Sun accurate?
- What are the byproducts of living life under the sun—exclusively?
- How does baptism and the doctrine of vocation allow a person to live life under the sun?