

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 Discussion Questions

Outline of Pastor Mike's Sermon

Intro

- Review of series opener
 - The question of pursuing what will endure
 - Building a theology capable of handling the reality in which we live
- Table of Contents
 - Who is the Preacher? (v.12-18)
 - Autonomous Epistemology (v.1-11)
 - Striving after Wind (v.12-26)

Who is the Preacher (v.12-18)

- Narrator vs the Preacher comparison
 - Personal pronouns as an indication in the change of voice
 - Ancient writing style of royal propaganda
 - Autonomous exploration- an extreme voice for emphasis

Autonomous Epistemology (v.1-11)

- Extreme self-focus
- The pursuit of pleasure in
 - Wine
 - Accomplishments
 - Entertainment
 - Sexual exploits
- Creating a world in which he is center vs Eden

Striving after Wind (v.12-23)

- Wisdom vs Folly
 - Death seems to nullify the advantages of the wisdom
- Work and legacy
 - Death seems to nullify the effects of work

Implications

- A world created for your pleasure will always have destructive, demeaning results
 - Luke 12.13-21
- He who has the Son has it all

- Luke 12.22-34
- Ecclesiastes 2.24-26

Discussion Questions

Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:26

1. In vv. 12-16, the Preacher lays out his mission. What is it?
 - a. What, in his eyes, makes him qualified for this task?
 - b. What does his self-assessment reveal about his view of himself?
 - c. How does his wisdom compare with that espoused in Proverbs, which begins with a “fear of the Lord?” In other words, is his starting point here fear of the Lord or something else? If something else, then what?
2. And so the Preacher is an example of a person who believes that they are very qualified to figure our life for themselves and tries to do so.
 - a. Can you relate to that? How have you tried to do the same thing?
 - b. What is wrong with trying to figure things out for yourself? Why is this something we should avoid?
3. In the rest of our passage we see how the Preacher tries to figure it out for himself. First, he starts with exploring pleasure. He tries both indulgence and achievement. The verbs in 2:4-6 are especially interesting because they parallel the Hebrew verbs in Gen 1 and 2: meaning that the Preacher tried to create his own Eden.
 - a. How did that work out for him?
 - b. In the past, how have you tried to do the same thing? How did that work out?
 - c. What is the “more” that you are currently tempted to pursue? It could be pleasure or achievement?

d. Why isn't what you have or have done good enough?

4. How does Luke 12:12-34 challenge our perspective on acquiring chasing the pleasures or achievements of this life?

a. Does the parable in Luke 12 about the rich man comfort you or frustrate you? Why?

b. What is the point of this passage? How does it address what the Preacher is struggling with?

c. How do vv. 24-26 complement what Jesus is teaching?

5. After concluding that the meaning to life is not to be found in pleasure, the Preacher moves onto wisdom.

a. On one hand, he recognizes its value but in the end it still leaves him frustrated. What is the source of his frustration?

b. How does the Gospel address these objections?

- All experience physical death, but those who live by God's wisdom enjoy spiritual and resurrection life.
- God remembers you and that is all that matters. Also, the results of your work for the sake of the Kingdom will go on into eternity.
- Ultimately, it's not about your legacy per se, but about God's legacy and how you contributed to it. What you do for the Kingdom will last into eternity and no one can mess that up.

6. Where are you currently tempted to feel like its not worth it to live God's way? Why is that?

a. What can we do to help ourselves readjust our perspective when we struggle with despair or apathy?

