

## **Ecclesiastes 1:1-11**

### **“The Hamster Wheel and an Open Door”**

## **Sermon Outline:**

### **Thesis and goal:**

For the believer: That we would loosen our futile grip on things under the sun, and cling to the One who sits above and rules over the sun.

- we will realize that we can have a grip on things under the sun anyway
- we also realize we can cling to Him, because He's taken a hold of us

For the unbeliever: To see the inability of anything outside of Christ to supply lasting purpose, satisfaction, and understanding.

### **1. The Proclamation (2)**

- “All”
- “Hevel” = frustration/ enigmatic
- “Vanities of vanities” = superlative form to show the highest degree
- All is frustrating/enigmatic as possible
  - Context determines how it's being used
  - Often used in association with idols
    - Something that takes the place of God is meaningless and leads to frustration

### **2. The Proposal (3)**

- gain= net profit
  - After all expenses are paid, is there anything to say, “it's worth it”
- “Under the sun” = Limited view of the providential hand of God
- Trigger to reflect

## **The Hamster Wheel**

### **3. The Proof (4-11) (Romans 8:20 exemplified)**

- Humanity and the earth
  - “If these trees/mountains/etc. could talk”
  - Socrates quote— “The children now love luxury. They have bad manners contempt for authority, they show disrespect to their elders” (470 - 399 BC)
  - Peter the Hermit— “ they young people of today think of nothing but themselves. They have no reverence for parents or old age. They are impatient of all restraint. They talk as if they alone know everything” (1050-1115)
  - A generation is always coming while another is going
  - The younger becomes the older and a new one begins
  - **Yet the earth stays the same**
  - This is for us to see our little speck of time here on this earth
  - “What is more vain than this vanity: that the earth, which was made for humans, stays— but humans themselves, the lords of the earth, suddenly dissolve into the dust”
  - Our vapor
- The example of creation (5-7)
  - The sun is on it's course (E/W)
    - Hastens = pants
  - the wind blows its normal circuits (N/S)

- Water
  - Endless cycle
  - The sea is never filled, it makes it to the seas, becomes clouds, goes on to land falls as rain and starts the journey over and over again
- the of the human experience (8-11)
- all things are weary yet can't find the words to articulate it (can't say enough)
- Nothing we see truly satisfies and noting we hear does either (can't see or hear enough)
- Nothing new under the sun
- And no one is remembered

There is no advancement and no remembrance "under the sun"

If the only perspective we have is life under the sun, and we only live to find "gain" in it then there is no lasting

He will now begin his search for the gain, or a search to escape the frustration he feels in his prologue

We can look at humanity, the earth, the sun, the waters, and the wind. We can look at history and can resolve to say "all is hevel"

Or we can look at life through the lens of providence.

## **The Open Door**

### **Gospel Lens:**

**Psalm 19:1-5— "1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 5. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy."**

**Psalm 104:3— "He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind;"**

**Psalm 146:18- "He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow"**

**Job 36:27-28— "For he draws up the drops of water they distill his mist in rain which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly**

**New covenant — in the blood of Christ (Luke 22:20)**

**New Life — through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Romans 6)**

**New heart — through the new covenant for those who believe in Jesus (Ezekiel 36:26)**

**New self— by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:24)**

**New creation — all thing have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

**New heavens and new earth — (2 Peter 3:13)**

**Yes generations may come and go... sun may keep on and seas never be filled. And we may all return to the dust... but here is the great promise to end on**

**What about our toil here and now?**

**1 Corinthians 15:54-58— “Then shall come to pass the saying “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work for the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.**

**Our Lord proposal**

**Mark 8:36— “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”**

### **Small Group Discussion:**

- 1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Scripture and sermon Sunday? What stood out to you? What questions do you have?**
- 2. What are some things in your life that feel like a “hamster wheel”—repetitive, exhausting, and ultimately unsatisfying? How might this be connected to the idea of “hevel” (vanity, frustration) mentioned in Ecclesiastes?**
- 3. Ecclesiastes 1 challenges us to think about what truly lasts. What are some things people pursue “under the sun” to find meaning, and why do they fall short? How have you experienced this in your own journey?**
- 4. The passage paints a bleak picture of life “under the sun,” but the gospel gives us an “open door.” How does seeing life through the lens of God’s providence and Christ’s resurrection change your view of daily toil and struggle? (Shifts focus from despair to hope, tying in the New Testament promises and how they redeem our work and purpose.)**
- 5. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says our labor in the Lord is “not in vain.” What does it look like to “abound in the work of the Lord” in your current season of life?**