

# **Ecclesiastes 2:1–11**

## **“Living the Dream?”**

### **Sermon Outline**

#### **1. The Pursuit of Pleasure (1–8)**

- The pleasure to parry (2–3)
  - Comedy – a momentary distraction
  - Wine – gladdens the heart or can darken it
  - The theological debate of alcohol is not in this text
  - Whether drunkenness or moderation—it failed the test
- The pleasure of productivity (4–6)
  - Temple, houses, gardens (1 Kings 3:6–10)
- The pleasure of possessions (7–8a)
- The pleasure of passion (8b) (1 Kings 9:11)

#### **2. The Prognosis of Pleasure (9–11)**

- Unbridled and unwithheld pleasure (v.10)
- Not lasting nor ultimately satisfying
- “Striving after the wind”
- Monday morning still came
- “Under the sun” → a limited view

#### **3. The Perversion of Pleasure**

- Hedonism vs. asceticism
- Sin has thwarted God’s good creation and pleasures
- Westminster Confession: “The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”
- The world’s version: the chief end of man is to glorify himself and enjoy himself
- We try to become our own god (Genesis—recreating Eden)
- We worship the gift, not the Giver
- When good things become “god” things, they become enslaving things
- It becomes the answer to all my problems
- It becomes my obsession
- Temporary, deceptive sweetness that brings bitterness, addiction, and separation
- Seeking pleasure for its own sake leads to inordinate desires, abuse of things, and a focus on self rather than God
- Results in a distortion of natural inclinations
  - Proverbs 2:14 — “delight in the perverseness of evil”
  - Romans 1:21–26
  - Ephesians 4:19
- Or asceticism, which limits the power of grace and makes it law

#### **4. The Purpose of Pleasure**

- Pleasures are just a foretaste of what is to come
- God created a world full of pleasures
- We can't be fully satisfied here
- They are meant to point us to Jesus
- Psalm 16:11 — "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."
- In Christ, they become more pleasurable
- We can experience them in the right way
- We have a correct relationship with the "pleasures" God has given us

*Cross-reference: Ephesians 4:17–5:21*

**Big Idea:** Pleasure is the whistleblower of the heart—it exposes what we really love.

- If something sinful is what gives you pleasure, it's not a pleasure problem but a treasure problem.
- The question: *Is it lasting?*

#### **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. In what ways do we seek pleasure to escape the "hevel" of life? Why is this destructive?
3. Have you ever had a moment where you "had it all" and still felt empty? What did it reveal about your heart or your view of God?
4. How can we tell when a good thing has become a "god" thing in our lives? What does it look like to worship the gift instead of the Giver?
5. What would it look like to enjoy God-given pleasures rightly—as signposts to Jesus rather than as ends in themselves?