

Ecclesiastes 2:12–26

“Take This Job and Love It”

Sermon Outline

The Test: Can It Provide?

- **Purpose** — Why am I here?
- **Understanding** — Is there any meaning?
- **Satisfaction** — How do I enjoy life?

Thoughts of death bring a new perspective on what is truly important (vv. 12–17).

Work without God fails the test (vv. 18–19).

- Toil = daily responsibility
- He’s not saying he wasn’t successful, nor that it wasn’t enjoyable.
- But it failed the purpose, meaning, and satisfaction test.
- Everything we do will be left to someone else.
- Who knows if he/she/they will be wise?
- He/she/they will be the master of it.

Work without God leads to despair (vv. 20–23).

- “Gave my heart to despair.”
- Great evil.
- Toil and striving.
- Full of sorrow, vexation, and sleepless nights.
- “They’ll replace you the next day.”
- The work will continue without you.

The Gift

- Introduces the counter to “under the sun.”
- A new perspective.
- Can we embrace the hevel and find deep joy in the present?

In Christ, there is meaning and satisfaction even in work (vv. 24–26).

- “Nothing better.”
- Find enjoyment because toil is a gift from God.
- Work provides, but also produces longing.
- Toil is part of the curse as well.
- Verse 26 makes a distinction:
 - - The one who pleases God.
 - - The sinner.
- Who is it that pleases God?
 - - Ecclesiastes 12:13–14
 - - Matthew 3:17
- God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy only to the one who pleases Him.
- In Christ, we receive the pleasure of God.

- He has saved us to a greater “work” or “toil”—the work of Christ building His church.
- If you want to leave your kids and grandkids a legacy or inheritance, leave them one of faith.
- Colossians 3:23–24 — “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Small Group Discussion

- How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the Scripture and sermon from Sunday morning? What stood out to you? What questions do you have?
- How does thinking about death change the way you view life, success, and work? When you reflect on the fact that you won’t take your accomplishments with you, how does that impact the way you approach your job, goals, or even your legacy?
- Have you experienced the “despair” of work without God? Can you share a time when your work felt meaningless or exhausting? What made it feel that way, and how did God meet you in that season?
- What does it mean to see your work as a gift from God? How does this perspective shift your attitude? How can you practically live out Colossians 3:23–24?
- How can we resist finding satisfaction in created things and instead find it in God alone?