

# Pleasure Is But a Breath

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 18 August 2024

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[ 0 : 00 ] But we are in a sermon series in the book of Ecclesiastes. So please open up in your Bibles to Ecclesiastes, which is right after Psalms and Proverbs in the Old Testament.

We just started this sermon series last Sunday. If you did miss that Sunday, you might need a little bit of orientation for the book. So I do encourage you to go back and listen to that recording on our website, TrinityCambridge.com.

Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us. And for the way your love manifests itself to us, you know, is speaking the truth. Your Word is truth. And even though your Word for us this morning contains some very hard truths, may that sober us. May that turn our gaze toward Jesus.

[ 1 : 22 ] May that give us humility and wisdom to be able to live in this broken and sinful world still with an abiding hope and transcendent joy that is found in Jesus Christ alone.

Grant that privilege and blessing to every single person here. in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. If you are willing and able, please stand for the reading of God's Word from Ecclesiastes 1, verse 12, to chapter 2, verse 11.

Amen. I, the preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem, and I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. I said in my heart, I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who are over Jerusalem before me.

[ 2 : 54 ] And my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. I said in my heart, Come now, I will test you with pleasure.

Enjoy yourself. But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad, and of pleasure, What use is it?

I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine, my heart still guiding me with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life.

I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. I made myself gardens and parks and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees.

[ 4 : 00 ] I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had slaves who were born in my house. I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem.

I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of men.

So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired, I did not keep from them.

I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. 17th century French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal said this in his book, Ponce, All men seek happiness.

[ 5 : 26 ] This is without exception. Whatever different means they use, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war and of others avoiding it is the same desire in both, to be happy.

This is the motive of every action, of every man, even of those who hang themselves. Isn't this true? Even those who hang themselves, who end their own lives, do so to escape their profound unhappiness because they think they'll be happier if they ended their own life.

But as our passage this morning tells us, happiness in this fallen world is elusive. As we learned last week, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

In short, we human beings are never quite satisfied with anything we experience in this life. Our pursuit of happiness in this life under the sun is ultimately hevel, the Hebrew word which means breath.

[ 6 : 35 ] It is ultimately futile like chasing after wind. All the pleasures that this world has to offer are like a puff of breath, a passing wind, a wisp of smoke, a vanishing mist.

And for that reason, this passage tells us, knowing that the pleasures under the sun are but a breath, we should seek pleasures forevermore in Jesus Christ.

And that's the main point of my sermon this morning. And we're going to talk about it in two parts. First, we'll talk about the futility of wisdom. And secondly, we'll talk about the fleetingness of pleasure.

In the introduction and the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes, the author of the book repeats his thesis, which is vanity of vanities, all is vanity. And...

Sorry about that, guys. And in the body of the book, which is between the introduction and the conclusion from 1.12 to 12.7, the author uses the voice of the preacher, the character preacher, to go through a catalog of human beings, the things that human beings that frequently seek meaning in and seek fulfillment in.

[ 7 : 52 ] And then he tells us one by one that none of those things can ultimately fulfill us because all of those things are but a breath. And today, we're looking at how pleasure is but a breath.

But before he explores that, the preacher first establishes his credentials and he tells us the futility of wisdom in verses 12 to 18 of chapter 1. He says in verse 12, I, the preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

But if you have read 1 Kings, you know that the nation of Israel is split in two right after Solomon's reign, divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

And so, after that point, no king of Israel reigns in Jerusalem. It's only the kings of Judah that reign in Jerusalem. So, there's only two kings that actually reigned in Jerusalem over Israel and that's King David and King Solomon which also makes it very likely that the preacher here, the character here is Solomon who originally, initially wrote these wisdom, words of wisdom in Proverbs that have been compiled by the author of Ecclesiastes in this way.

And this is confirmed by 1 Kings 4, 29, 30. It says that God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure and breath of mind like the sand on the seashore so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

[ 9 : 17 ] That's exactly what the preacher in Ecclesiastes says. He says in verse 16, I said in my heart, I have acquired great wisdom surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me.

Not only King David but also all the other pagan kings that reigned in Jerusalem before him. But he says in verses 13 to 14 that even when he applied this unsurpassed wisdom to search out the meaning of our earthly existence, of all our human endeavors, he could not find it.

It was but a breath. He says, and I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

I've seen everything that is done under the sun and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

And then the preacher gives the reason why all of it is a striving after wind which is futile.

In verse 15, what is crooked cannot be made straight and what is lacking cannot be counted.

Despite all the knowledge and wisdom we have gained through the advancement of medicine and technology, people still get sick.

[ 10 : 28 ] Hospitals are still full. And the average lifespan of human beings is still exactly what Psalm 90.10 said 3,000 years ago. The years of our life are 70 or even by reason of strength, 80.

Despite all the experience and wisdom we have gained in diplomacy and peacemaking, the world is still ravaged by war. Despite all the knowledge and wisdom we have gained about the human mind

and about mental health, people are still depressed and as anxious as ever.

What is crooked cannot be made straight. This world, this whole world is bent out of shape and despite our best efforts we cannot straighten it out.

Likewise, what is lacking cannot be counted. There's always something missing in the world. You count and then there's something missing and despite our best efforts we cannot supply that missing thing.

Despite all the technological advancements, despite all our inventions, the world is still not the way it's supposed to be. What is lacking cannot be counted.

[ 11 : 43 ] Then verses 16 to 18, parallel verses 12 to 15, again, the preacher tells us that he applied his wisdom, his heart to know the wisdom and to know madness and folly only to realize that this also is a striving after wind.

It makes sense that madness and folly of course are striving after wind but it's remarkable that he says wisdom is also striving after wind. He again gives a reason, a second reason why wisdom is futile in verse 18.

For in much wisdom is much vexation and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. The amount of wisdom we have is proportionate to the vexation we experience in our lives.

The amount of knowledge we have is proportionate to the amount of sorrow we experience. How is that the case? The wiser we get, the more clearly we see how tragic life is and how broken this world is.

18th century English poet Thomas Gray's poem Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College has two distinct halves. The first half begins this way about the untroubled life of school children.

[ 12 : 58 ] Ah, happy hills! Ah, pleasing shade! Ah, feels beloved in vain! Where once my careless childhood strayed, a stranger yet to pain.

It's a child that is yet a stranger to pain. And then the second half of the poem takes a dark turn and it depicts the pains of growing up and being an adult. It says, to each his sufferings all are men condemned alike to groan.

The tender for another's pain, the unfeeling for his own. Yet, ah, why should they know their fate since sorrow never comes too late and happiness too swiftly flies.

Thought would destroy their paradise no more. Where ignorance is bliss, tis folly to be wise. This is where we get that famous phrase, ignorance is bliss.

Far less eloquently but far more humorously, comedian Stephen Colbert writes in his book, I am America and so can you.

[ 14 : 04 ] Why were you happier when you were a kid? Because you didn't know anything. The more you know, the sadder you get. Don't believe me? By the time you finish reading this chapter, over a hundred dogs and cats in animal shelters around the nation will have been euthanized.

Bet you wish you could erase that knowledge but it's too late. You learned a new idea and it made you sad. College is just more of the same. Nowadays, we have more information and knowledge at our fingertips than we ever have had before.

But has that made us happier? every time you have some kind of ache or pain in any part of your body now, now everybody goes straight to Google. And then it tells you a dozen things that it could possibly be and some of them are quite severe and scary.

Our news feeds are full of reports about woe and suffering throughout the world. Don't panic, but this past week the World Health Organization declared that the MPOC's outbreak in Africa is a global emergency.

And then earlier this year they were sounding alarmed that the next pandemic could be 20 times worse than the COVID pandemic. Well, great. More information. Does that knowledge make us happier?

[ 15 : 29 ] Some people rejoice when government hands out free money, but people who understand economics worry that now it's going to cause inflation. nutrition. People, some people enjoy hot dogs and bacon, but then some people who care about nutrition say, oh no, that's going to give you cancer.

Some people live a carefree life, and then there are these depressing philosophers who are always asking deep questions for which they only have depressing answers. The more we know, the more we wish we didn't know.

And the more we know, the more we know what we don't know. In this way, much wisdom is much vexation, and he increases knowledge, increases sorrow.

That's why an unnamed character in Ernest Hemingway's book, *The Garden of Eden*, says, happiness in intelligent people is the rarest thing I know. In another one of his novels, Hemingway's novels, *A Farewell to Arms*, two characters, Lieutenant Frederick Henry and Nurse Catherine Barkley fall in love during World War I, and then they flee to Switzerland in order to live a carefree life together, a quaint life in the mountains, away from the horrors of war.

But there, away from all the horrors of war, Catherine gives birth to a stillborn child and dies from hemorrhaging after giving birth. And her last words to Frederick is this, life is just a dirty trick.

[16:59] No wonder Hemingway himself shot himself to death with a 12-gauge shotgun. He understood the futility of life and wisdom.

This bold statement of the futility of wisdom should be shocking to us because the Hebrew word for wisdom here is the exact same word that is used in the book of Proverbs over and over again.

And the book of Proverbs tells us again and again to get wisdom at all costs because it's the most precious thing. It says get wisdom and whatever you get, get insight.

It says how much better to get wisdom than gold. But Ecclesiastes teaches us that even acquiring wisdom is futile in this fallen world.

That's obviously contradictory on the surface. So how can these two truths be reconciled? There is this tension in the Bible's wisdom literature as we can see in Proverbs also.

[18:03] Proverbs is not, he's not unaware of this. For example, Proverbs 13.25 says the righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite but the belly of the wicked suffers want.

That's pretty straightforward, right? The righteous people, the diligent people, people who live honestly, they're going to eat, have plenty to eat. But the wicked will go hungry.

However, just two verses earlier, Proverbs 13.23 says the fallow ground of the poor would yield much food but it is swept away through injustice. This proverb suggests that though the hardworking, righteous poor could have, theoretically should have, plenty to eat, injustice robs them of the fruit of their labor.

We see a similar tension in other places in Proverbs as well. Proverbs 15.6 says in the house of the righteous there is much treasure but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.

Once again, it's straightforward. If you're righteous and hardworking, you're going to get richer.

However, just a few verses later it says in Proverbs 15.16-17 better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it.

[19:14] Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. This latter proverb suggests that sometimes crooks acquire great revenues with injustice and that the righteous who fear the Lord are sometimes poor and reduced to a dinner of herbs.

But nevertheless, it says, it is better to fear the Lord. It is better to have wisdom. The interplay between these tension, these two kinds of proverbs reveals something profound for us.

It is generally true that honest, diligent work produces prosperity. That's the way God designed the world to work. That's how God has ordered the world to work.

However, this world is marred by sin. It's a fallen world. It's a broken world. And so that even though we are commended to seek righteousness, sometimes when we do, we still end up in poverty.

Things don't always pan out for us. Proverbs is a book that is weighted toward the general rules of wisdom according to which we should all seek to live.

[20:28] Ecclesiastes is weighted toward the exception to these general rules which the person must also be aware of lest they despair when things don't pan out the way they expect it to.

It's kind of like learning the rules of writing. When you're first learning to write, you learn that fragments are bad. You want to write in complete sentences and you learn how to not write in fragments.

And then as you get more advanced in your writing, they teach you that fragments can actually help to increase the pace of your writing and intentionally convey disjointedness.

And in fact, a lot of the best writers routinely break the rule and write in fragments. And that's just what happens in life. In a similar way, the wisdom literature in scripture teaches us to know both the general rules and the exceptions to those rules, both of which are integral parts of holistic wisdom.

Overall, Ecclesiastes still has a positive view of wisdom. It will say later in chapter 2, verse 13, that I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness.

[ 21 : 39 ] It says in Ecclesiastes 7, 11 to 12, But wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.

But like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes also recognizes that time and chance happen to the wise and to the fool. And the wise dies and is forgotten just like the fool.

Herein lies the vexation and sorrow of wisdom. Even if you live with wisdom, life does not necessarily go according to plan because we live in a fallen and broken world.

And this is all the more vexing if you try so hard to live the right way. I did all the right things. I said all the right things. And yet, these tragedies still hit me.

And that's why wisdom, biblical wisdom is not ultimately about controlling our life, controlling our future. It's about submitting to God who alone has control over life.

[ 22 : 51 ] That's why Proverbs 21, 30 says, no wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

This is why the preachers who preach the gospel of health, wealth, and prosperity are so wrong. Generally speaking, wise living and obedience to God does lead to greater health and prosperity. Yes, that's true. But as Ecclesiastes teaches us, it is also often not the case. The world is unjust and life is unfair. That's why our only hope must be placed in Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1, 18-25 says this, we read this in the call to worship, God destroys the wisdom of the wise in Jesus. He makes foolish the wisdom of the world in Jesus.

For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

[ 23 : 59 ] But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, for the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

It's because of God that we are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God. God from God righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In His infinite wisdom God has chosen to save us not through the wisdom of man but through the folly of Christ crucified.

It's not those who make all the wise choices in life and do all the right things in life who are saved. It's not people who, it's a people who acknowledge their desperate sinfulness and folly and their utter inability to save themselves and people who because of that trust in Jesus alone to save them and His wisdom alone to save them they are the ones for whom Jesus becomes wisdom from God. Even the best of wisdom from the greatest philosophers throughout the ages cannot make what is crooked straight. You cannot supply what is lacking but in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy Luke 3 5 says about the coming of Jesus the crooked shall become straight and the rough places shall become level ways and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

In the life and ministry of Jesus the lame walk the deaf hear the blind see the dead are raised the lepers are cleansed and most importantly He makes sinners atoned and forgiven by dying on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

[ 25 : 43 ] It's so in Jesus alone that the crooked is made straight and what is lacking is counted what is broken is made whole. The whole of Ecclesiastes finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus and so to teach us that Solomon the author of Ecclesiastes put this together reminds us it is futile to seek happiness in anything other than Christ.

the preacher reminds us I became as wiser than all the wise men before me but even still my wisdom could not make me happy unless it's capital W wisdom Jesus Christ.

Then the preacher applies himself to the pursuit of pleasure he says in chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 I said in my heart come now I will test you with pleasure enjoy yourself but behold this also was vanity I said of laughter it is mad and of pleasure what use is it I search with my heart to cheer my body with wine my heart still guiding me with wisdom and how to lay hold on folly till I might see what was good for the children of men to do under heaven during the few days of their life skipping ahead a bit to verses 8 to 10 he says I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces I got singers both men and women and many concubines the delight of the sons of men so I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem also my wisdom remained with me and whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them I kept my heart from no pleasure for my heart found pleasure in all my toil and this was my reward for all my toil I'm

sure some of you have been tempted in the past to think that if

I could just enjoy all the pleasures of life without restriction without any inhibition then I would be happy then I can be truly happy well Solomon says been there and done that he said whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them whenever he saw any artifact or treasure or clothes or gadgets that delighted his senses he said buy it get it bring it to my home why not he has all the wealth in the world he whenever he saw any delicacy rich foods choice wines he never said no he took all of it upon himself enjoy them all he drank the most expensive wines whatever substances promised pleasure escaped from the pains of life he indulged himself

I'm sure he didn't have those then he probably had ancient equivalents of marijuana nicotine alcohol he's tried it all perhaps you have thought to yourself that if you had other people if you can get other people to do all your work for you if you could just save a lot of money really fast and then retire and live in retirement and constant vacation for the rest of your life then I can truly be happy been there done that not me Solomon he said I bought male and female slaves and as slaves were born in my house I also had great possessions of herds and flocks more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem he said everybody else to do all of his work perhaps your idea of a good life is good music going to concerts and dancing your life away Solomon had a personal entourage of singers both men and women he says to regale him with merry music whenever he wanted whenever he saw a beautiful or alluring woman he took her as his wife or as his concubine 1 Kings 11 2-3 tells us

[ 29 : 50 ] Solomon had 700 wives who were princesses not just any normal woman 700 princesses as wives and he had 300 concubines that's a harem of a thousand women he can sleep with a different woman every day of his life for two years and still have women he has not slept with in fact because Solomon multiplied wives for himself and married foreign idolatrous woman which was forbidden scripture he says in 1 Kings 11 4 that when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God so this is a cautionary tale about the corrosive effect of sin sinful pleasures over time but at the time he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes it seems Solomon still had his wits about him because he reminds us multiple times in verse 3 he says

I search with my heart how to cheer my body with wine my heart still guiding me with wisdom and again in verse 9 so I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem also my wisdom remained with me so at the time he wrote this he still had his wits about him although he'll lose that eventually because that's what sin does but he still had his wits about him to be able to write this and to realize that it's all vanity so in a way he's experimenting with the risky pleasures of life for the sake of science you guys have heard that right yeah it's like it's not unlike the experiment conducted by Michael L.

Smith at Cornell University in 2014 we have a lot of Cornell grads in our church for the sake of science he subjected himself to bee stings 200 times in 25 different parts of his body all so that he can determine which human part of the body experiences the most pain when stung by a bee and now he created that pain index with these things and published it you know that's a vanity of vanities similarly to determine experientially and to demonstrate concretely and not merely abstractly that these pleasures are indeed fleeting and ultimately futile Solomon tried them all and this is his conclusion behold all was vanity and a striving after wind and there was nothing to be gained under the sun so don't believe the lie when the devil tempts you and says oh if you get this you can be happy there's someone who's done it all and it's vanity

I think Anthony Bourdain would agree the beloved celebrity chef professional eater of international cuisine and travel documentarian who hanged himself so that he could be happy because all the pleasures that he enjoyed much more than any average person could not make him happy there's a joke that is dated at least to the early 1800s I don't find it very funny but they call it a joke for some reason which has recently become an internet meme it goes like this a man who was severely depressed went to see a therapist I think some of you guys know he says I'm depressed life is harsh unforgiving and cruel at the end of the session the therapist doesn't quite know what to do with him and so he gives him a simple counsel I heard that the great clown Pagliacci is in town tonight go and see him that should cheer you up at that moment the man bursts into tears and then says that will not work why not the therapist asks the man says

I am Pagliacci the comics who can make anyone double over in laughter surely they must be happy but look at Robin Williams widely regarded as the greatest comedian of all time who hanged himself

so that he can be happy it's madness what use is laughter behold this also was vanity but why the preacher will tell us repeatedly throughout the book because it's all so fleeting because it all ends in death now Ecclesiastes doesn't teach us to never enjoy any pleasures in life we're going to get to the passage next week where it will teach us how to properly enjoy the pleasures of life but for now we need to understand the futility of pleasure in an ultimate sense I've not seen the Barbie movie which came out last year but I know some of you have seen it multiple times but I did see a [ 34 : 54 ] YouTube clip of a famous scene called Dance the Night Away you guys know which scene I'm talking about and in the scene it's so remarkably shallow and so remarkably profound at the same time it's it's a scene where a whole bunch of Barbies and Kens are just dancing the night away to a song called Dancing the Night and and this is the conversation I wish I could talk like them but I can't gosh this night is just perfect it's perfectly perfect and you look so beautiful Barbie thanks Barbie I feel so beautiful so do I this is the best day ever it is the best day ever and so was yesterday and so is tomorrow and so is the day after tomorrow and even Wednesdays and every day from now until forever and then right after that the main character of the movie

Barbie the main Barbie asks this question do you guys ever think about dying which brings all the dancing and the music to a screeching halt and then everybody turns around and stares aghast at the Barbie as if she has just committed the unpardonable sin and so the Barbie is easily manipulated by peer pressure quickly repents and then says I don't know why I just said that I'm just dying to dance and then the party resumes like nothing ever happened it's a perfect illustration of a life of constant pleasure and the hollowness of all of it in the face of inevitable eventual death in verses 40 11 the Hebrew verb that means to do or to make is repeated seven times I made great works I made myself gardens and parks

I made myself pools and that echoes the creation account of Genesis 1 to 2 where the exact same word is used repeatedly to talk about God's creative work God made the expanse and separated the waters God made the two great lights God made the beasts of the earth God made man in his image God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good and so on this is not the only echo of the creation account the word plant in verse 4 I planted vineyards also occurs in Genesis 2 8 and the Lord God planted a garden in Eden and the word garden is the same gardens and parks Solomon said that he planted in them all kinds of fruit trees and that phrase occurs over and over again in Genesis 1-2 speak of the fruit trees bearing fruit that God planted in the garden of Eden in verse 6 the preacher says that he made himself pools from which to water his garden and that's the exact same word used in Genesis 2-10 to speak of how

God created a river to that's used in Genesis 2-5 and 2-9 to speak of how God made the plants and trees spring up to grow up in the garden of Eden all of these verbal parallels are intended to show us that Solomon applied all of his resources all of his power and authority all of his wisdom and all of his wealth to recreate Eden and he couldn't do it I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it and behold all was vanity and a striving after wind there was nothing to be gained under the sun what a striking contrast from the words of God after his creative work that he saw what he had made and it was very good the difference is this why the difference it all hinges on who does the making in

Genesis it's God made in Ecclesiastes 2 it's I made no matter what pleasures of this world we give ourselves over to we human beings can never recreate the garden of Eden we can never recreate paradise we can never reach utopia and that's the message the wise and sobering message of Ecclesiastes even if we harness all the wisdom of mankind to renovate this world and recreate this world we can never make this fallen world unfallen again we can never make this broken world whole again do you feel how devastating that is and all the pleasures of this world will leave us only hollowed out from the inside out because God did not intend for us to be satisfied by the pleasures of this world because he wants to give us something better in

[ 40 : 13 ] Ecclesiastes 2 1 preacher concluded that the pleasure of this world is vanity but the psalmist says to God in Psalm 6 and 11 you God make known to me the path of life in your presence there is fullness of joy that's the same word at your right hand are pleasures forever more where are everlasting pleasures found not the pleading pleasures of pleasures of this where are everlasting pleasures found not in this life under the sun in the presence of God at the right hand of God the father and what is at the right hand of God the father or better who is at the right hand of God the father the Bible tells the the father the right hand of the father in acts 2 33 so then in whom is the fullness of joy to be found in whom are pleasures forevermore to be found the answer my

friends it's

Jesus Christ in Jesus sinful people are made holy in Jesus people who are enslaved to sin and death are made free in Jesus people who are sick with sin and sorrows are healed in Jesus broken people are made whole in Jesus the lost people are found do you know this Jesus what pleasures are you seeking to satisfy yourself C.S.

Lewis writes in his essay I'm sure I've quoted this to you before from the weight of glory it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak we are half hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea we are far too easily pleased if you feel the allure of the temptations of the pleasures of this life it's not because your desires are too strong for those things it's because your desire for pleasure is too weak let us not be a people who are too easily satisfied let us not be a people who are so easily pleased let's heed the words of the preacher of ecclesiastes who has been there and done that and has found it all wanting let's hold on to the pleasures forever more hold out for that that's found in

Jesus Christ alone let's pray heavenly father we ask that you would engulf us with a consuming desire passion for the pleasures that are found in you alone so that we would live with a sober mind knowing that all these pleasures of the world cannot satisfy enlarge our vision of you God enlarge our vision of Jesus his beauty his holiness his glory the the unsurpassed joy everlasting pleasure Lord help us to grasp hold of that more and more grant everyone here to know the folly of Christ crucified that they might find true wisdom in Christ and be found by him forever more thank you God for the wisdom of your word in Jesus name we pray amen