

Ecc03 – A Vapor Of a Life – Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

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This is our third message in our study of Ecclesiastes. If you haven't seen or heard the first two messages, please do. Like the Book of Ecclesiastes, these messages build on one another. So, to grasp the full picture, you really need to hear the previous messages. You can get them on the Word By Mail phone app or on the Calvary Chapel Nuevo phone app.

1st Message – *Is there Meaning in Life?*

2nd Message – *Harsh Reality / Strong Hope*

Today – *A Vapor Of a Life*

We just had our (now famous) Harvest Festival this past week where again, so many, many children of all ages asked Jesus to come into their lives. And it was about ten years ago, a young boy sat down at that same table, at that same event and he gave his life to the Lord.

His name was Cody Boisse and I didn't know him, but I asked him to share what just happened to him with everyone, from the stage. And because of that young boy's commitment, both his parents gave their lives to the Lord and began attending and serving at this church.

Less than two years later in July 2010, my family and I were serving at Spirit West Coast (in Monterey) like we did every year, and I got a call from Carrie Boisse (that young boy's mom) and she said, "My 22-year-old son just stepped off a curb and was hit by a car." Pastor Jeff Bell and Adele Collins met all the ministry needs until I got back, and I was with Carrie when her 22-year-old-son slipped into eternity.

Less than two weeks later, on a Saturday night, my wife got a call, my daughter Breezy took the phone as they both fell to the floor. Our 20-year-old nephew, Douglas, and two of his friends had just been killed in a car accident. The next morning, I delivered a message called **Tragedy**.

A year later, Carrie Boisse gave her testimony about her first year of grief over her son dying so suddenly and possibly without eternal salvation. That message was called, **Don't Wait**.

Carrie and her husband Gerry became a crucial part of this church – Carrie became a dear friend and her husband our administrator. And then, three and a half years later, Carrie developed a lung disease that took her life seemingly overnight.

So, God drew a ten-year-old boy to salvation at the Harvest Festival in order to draw his parents to salvation, in order to prepare them for losing another son, and to prepare Carrie for losing her own life.

Psalm 39:4–7 (NLT)

4 “Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is.

5 You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand. My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but a breath (a vapor).”

6 We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing . . .

7 And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, would you shake us out of this worldly perspective we have? Lord, we’re so deceived by what we see, by what we feel, by what we desire in the flesh. Would you reveal to us, Lord, with power, that this life is a vapor? It’s a breath. It’s a second on the clock. Would you show us, Lord, the eternal difference between this vapor of a life and eternal life with you? I pray you would do that today, in your name Jesus, and for our sake, amen.*

Do we really grasp that our entire life is just a moment . . . at best, each of us is but a breath – a vapor . . .?

Or, do all our thoughts, plans, focus and efforts revolve around this fleeting, vapor of a life?

Turn over to James 4:13-14.

James 4:13–14 (NLT)

13 Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.”

14 How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone.

Verse 14 NKJV = . . . For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Guys, please hear me, our Life here - is a VAPOR.

Listen to this poetic and startling verse in the Book of Job.

Job 7:8 (NLT) - (sounds like a child’s nursery rhyme)

8 You see me now, but not for long. You will look for me, but I will be gone.

Do we realize that someone *may look for us tomorrow* and we *may be gone*?

Or are we so consumed with the things of this life that we're like that rich farmer Jesus talked about in Luke 12? Turn over to Luke 12:16-21.

Luke 12:16–21 (NLT)

16 Then he (Jesus) told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops.

17 He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’

18 Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods.

19 And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”

20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’

21 “Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

A person is a FOOL - to store up earthly wealth but NOT have a rich RELATIONSHIP with God . . .

It's funny, but so often the people who really know this are people who have had wealth or success in this world. And so often it's the people who have *never had wealth or success* who think, man, when I DO have those things, *then* I'm going to be *happy* – *then* everything is going to be *worth it*.

That is *exactly* the *lie of the world* that Solomon is trying to convince us to *avoid* in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He does it with such drama and intensity we tend to shy away from the book. But we shouldn't – we can't. We've got to listen to the wisest man who ever lived. We've got to hear his conclusion after he had gained everything ***“under the sun”*** and experienced everything ***“under the sun.”***

He said ***this life is a vapor!*** In fact, he says it over thirty times in the book. The Hebrew word is *HE-BEL*. It is translated – *vapor, breath, mist, wind, futile or meaningless*. The NLT uses “meaningless” – meaning *meaningless in light of what is eternally meaningful*.

Solomon is not saying this *life*, what we can experience in this life, is all meaningless. We talked about that last message. We ran through all of the good stuff he said about being content, enjoying life, serving the Lord, loving your spouse and being at peace. But he is saying the chasing of the hamster wheel that he's writing about in 1,000 BC (how

much faster is that hamster wheel turning today than it was 3,00 years ago?) all of that running, all of that grabbing, all of that fighting, all of that grasping is meaningless.

This week in Ecclesiastes 2, we want to look at Solomon's pursuit of *pleasure* in this life. Read with me Ecclesiastes 2:1-11.

Ecclesiastes 2:1–11 (NLT)

1 I said to myself, "Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the 'good things' in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless.

2 So I said, "Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek pleasure?"

3 After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.

4 I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting beautiful vineyards.

5 I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees.

6 I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves.

7 I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had lived in Jerusalem before me.

8 I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire!

9 So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me.

10 Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors.

11 But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

Remember last week we talked about Solomon's view was "*under the sun*." He's talking about in this life, under the sun, on this earth.

The wisest man who ever lived realized no matter how *great*, how *wealthy*, or how *pleasurable* you live *this life*, in the end *it is a vapor*.

When compared with what is *truly meaning-FULL*, the pleasures in this world are all *meaning-LESS*.

We live in a Christian culture that does not believe that. We want God to give us a whole bunch of meaningless stuff. “Hey God, all that stuff that’s meaningless, I want it all. That’s your job. Give it to me – all.” God’s like, “Go sit in a corner.”

There are two things that every person alive has in common.

#1) Genesis 1:27 says we were created in the IMAGE of God which means we were created as ETERNAL beings

#2) Hebrews 9:27 says *each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment*

And Solomon clearly realized... no matter how good or how bad it is, this life is a vapor, a mist, a shadow, it’s just a second on the clock – and realizing *that* causes Solomon to *radically change* how he feels about everything “*under the sun.*”

And so, in the end, *after* Solomon’s life of incredible wisdom and unimaginable wealth, after experiencing everything “*under the sun*” remember how he closes his book...we read it last week, his final words.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NLT)

13 That’s the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone’s duty.

14 God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad.

The man who *owned* the most, *experienced* the most, *achieved* the most and had the most *wisdom*... in the end his final conclusion was STOP chasing the pleasures of the world – be content with what God has given you and live in peace and be happy!! **Fear God and Obey his commands Because God WILL judge everything we DO.**

What he’s saying is Listen! Listen! There’s a day where you’re going to stand before GOD, and whatever happened in your life, you’re going to answer for it.

Again, Hebrews 9:27 says *it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,*

There *must* be a judgment because GOD IS first and foremost perfectly *holy* and *just*. And so, God *must judge sin* OR he *cannot be God*.

In his holiness God must judge our sin, but in his love, God has made a way for us to escape that judgment. In fact, God made a way for his *required judgment* to fall on his

own *son*, Jesus Christ – *in our place*. And when that happens our sin is *completely judged* and we *escape that judgment*.

Romans 3:26 says - *God is Both JUST, AND the JUSTIFIER of the one who puts their Faith in Jesus Christ*

We have got to wrap our head around the fact that *that is eternally more important* than chasing the *vapor stuff* of this world. We have got to get our priorities right. This world – *vapor*. Eternity – *forever*.

The reason Solomon said “**Stop chasing the things of THIS World and Put your FOCUS on God**” is because he knew TWO things.

1) This **Life** is a **VAPOR** - - and it could **END Tomorrow**

2) Eternity is **FOREVER** - - and it could **START Tomorrow**

And so, the *wisest man* who ever lived said *focus* on what is *eternal* – *not* on what is a *vapor*.

And Jesus Christ himself – *is eternal*. Jesus said in John 8:58,

John 8:58 (ESV)

58 . . . “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

And John 1:1 says,

John 1:1 says

“In the Beginning - Jesus Christ ALREADY Existed”

Jesus says in Revelation 22:13,

Revelation 22:13 (ESV)

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Jesus Christ is the *eternal God* in the flesh

who CAME to this earth

lived a PERFECT life

DIED on the cross in our place to PAY for our sin

who was BURIED and ROSE again on the third day

CONQUERING sin, death and the grave – FOR US

And then he RETURNED to heaven to PREPARE A PLACE for ALL those who put their full faith in him and choose to live for him *instead of this world*.

But here is the deal, the time that we *choose* our eternity is in *this vapor of a life*. Judgment follows death for each of us and God's judgment for our sin must *either* Fall on US – separating us from God or Fall on JESUS CHRIST in our place – making us RIGHT with God.

God has offered you the greatest exchange of all eternity. By faith, today, you can exchange *your sin* for *his righteousness*.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

But, that great exchange – having Jesus pay for your sins and making you right with God – can *only happen* in *this* fleeting, vapor of a life.

Isaiah 55:6 (NLT)

6 Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NLT)

2 . . . Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.

Today is the day to put your faith in Jesus Christ – to believe fully and receive him as your Savior- to ask him to forgive your sins and give you “right standing” before God – to surrender to him as your Lord. Today is that day – NOW is the acceptable time. DON'T WAIT.

Tomorrow is guaranteed to no one. Today is the day of Salvation. Life is fragile. Tomorrow is guaranteed to no one.

Put your full faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior – today, and start living for what is eternally *meaning-FULL* instead of what is worldly *meaning-LESS*.

Let's pray. *Lord, Jesus, make it real to us. We live in this machine of a culture that tries to force us to seek after everything meaningless. It consumes our time and our effort. It consumes our focus and our desire. And it's a vapor. It's a mist. Lord, emblazon on our hearts a desire for eternity that we would turn our backs on the love of this world and that we would live for what is eternally meaningful.*

Listen, if you're here today, and you've never done that – today is the day of salvation. There must be a day where you surrender your life wholly and completely to the Lord. Where you stop playing games, and stop thinking “attending church” is living for Jesus. And go all in, and say *“Lord, I believe. I believe enough to make you the number one priority in my life. I believe enough to seek to know you, to walk with you, to set my sights on heaven.”*

And if you've never made that decision, make it now. Listen, there is no “magic prayer” in the Bible. There is no such thing biblically as you repeat these certain words and you get your ticket to heaven. God is looking at your heart. And you express your heart with your mouth. Romans 10 says with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. And with the heart you believe. With the mouth you confess Jesus is Lord.

I just want to ask you to do that this morning. With your mouth, right where you are, it's not about me, it's not about this room, it's not about the people around you. It's you and your eternity. Speak the words.

“Jesus, I believe. I give you my whole heart. I turn my back on the things of this world that have their claws in me. I set my heart and my mind on you, the eternal God. I believe that you died for me. Please forgive my sin. Take over my life, Jesus, and make me a disciple. And Lord if I have an hour or a hundred years, may your Spirit fill me and drive me until I see you face-to-face. May I run the race with everything in me until I see you at the finish line.”