



February 20, 2022 Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

“What’s the Point?” (Ecc 1:2-3)

2 Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher,
vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!
3 What profit have we from all the toil
which we toil at under the sun?

Ecclesiastes is a strange book to find in the Bible due to its contradictory nature and worldly philosophy as opposed to religious teaching. It is certainly a shock to read Ecclesiastes after spending time with the Wisdom contained in Proverbs and a few of the Psalms. Yet, though strange, it asks some very important questions based on the Teacher’s life informed by the Wisdom of Judaism AND challenged by personal experiences.

The Teacher’s Philosophy and the principal idea of the book is found in the words with which it begins and ends – “Vanity of vanities...all things are vanity.” That is echoed in the constantly throughout the book. We might paraphrase the book’s point by quoting Shakespeare’s Macbeth: “It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing.” Our existence on earth with life’s joys and struggles, goals and aspirations, in the end turn out to be nothing, smoke, vapor, vanity. “What profit have we from all the toil which we toil at under the sun?” The Teacher’s answer is . . . nothing!

We may be troubled about the frequent judgments throughout this book that this thing or that thing is worthless or pointless. So as we read Ecclesiastes chapters 1 and 2, it is best we keep an open mind and a range of questions we ask ourselves:

- The Teacher thinks about different ways to find satisfaction in life and finds them lacking. In today’s world, what do you think would be on his mind? What is on your mind?
- Do you think the Teacher is just going through “a phase” or is he thinking about the big picture of life? Have you ever questioned what you are doing in life?
- What do you think about the final comments in chapter 2 about treating food, drink, work, and whatever Wisdom we can achieve as gifts from God to be enjoyed as they come without worrying about how you will be remembered? Have you worried about your legacy?



Sometimes the Teacher’s questions remain answerless, as we read through Ecclesiastes. An overall question for us is: what can we learn from someone who apparently thinks life is pointless?

Special prayers this week: for Bill’s battle with disease; healing for Victoria and support for her family; friends of our virtual community who are fighting cancer; a calming of tensions in the Ukraine; safety for all first responders; those suffering in the pandemic. Hear our prayers O Lord!