

**“No Satisfaction”**  
**Ecclesiastes 1:1-11, 3:16-22**  
**Sermon Series: “Unsatisfied”**

**Background of the book and how I read it (1:1-2, 12:13-14) along with Solomon’s background (1 Kings 11:1-10 coupled with 2:17); include Jesus as Creator and Savior and Solomon is writing from the perspective of life apart from God (Jesus)**

Danny and Jonathan Akin write, “Solomon’s message in Ecclesiastes is just as relevant today. People think to themselves all the time, If I could just have more money, more pleasure, or more success, then I would really be happy. Solomon had everything and tried everything, and in Ecclesiastes, perhaps at the end of his life, he tells us, ‘No! All of that is meaningless.’”

Ecclesiastes 1:2 gives the main point of the book when it states that everything in human existence is ‘hevel of hevels.’ To say that life is as meaningless as it could possibly be, it uses the Hebrew superlative form. For example, the “holy of holies” is the most holy place on the planet. The “Song of Songs” is the greatest song Solomon ever wrote. Thus, hevel of hevels means ‘as meaningless as possible.’ The word is used more than 30 times in the book, and it literally means “breath” or ‘vapor.’ The vapor connotation carries the idea of fleeting. When you breathe on a cold day, you can see your breath for a moment, and then it vanishes. James gets at a similar idea when he says life is mist that vanishes tomorrow (Jas. 4:14). Metaphorically the word ‘hevel’ is used over and over again in Ecclesiastes to express the idea that life is vain or meaningless or futile or absurd. So basically the word carries the concept that life is meaningless, pointless, worthless, or frustrating because it is frail and fleeting.

Often in the Bible, the word is used in connection with idols (Jer. 16:19; Zech 10:2), and that is something of the meaning here in Ecclesiastes. People try to find satisfaction in created things rather than the Creator, and seeking satisfaction in anything or anyone other than God is idolatry. The search does not work because created things cannot bring ultimate satisfaction. It’s not that pleasure, money, stuff, sex, or success are bad things in and of themselves, but when they become ultimate things to us, they let us down. You see, a good thing turned into a God thing becomes a bad thing. It becomes an idol. We will see throughout this book that success, possessions, pleasure, and even religion are ultimately meaningless. They look like they can bring us true happiness, but it is a mirage. The problem is that none of these things is ever enough, and they do not last. Again, ‘hevel’ carries the idea of fleeting and meaningless. Whatever you try to build your life on other than Jesus is ultimately utterly meaningless.

**Main Idea: Apart from Jesus, there is no lasting satisfaction because life is meaningless and death is hopeless.**

## **1. Apart from Jesus, life is meaningless (1:1-11).**

Daniel and Jonathan Akin write, “Tim Keller points out that the author drives his readers to see that there are only two possible conclusions in life. Either there is a God above with a standard who will judge us at the end based on that standard, or life is totally meaningless. These are the only two options. Either there is a God and our actions have meaning, or there is no God, and as Hemingway said, ‘Life is a dirty trick, a short journey from nothingness to nothingness.’ **Keller states, ‘People think Christians are naive, but if your origin is insignificant, and if your destiny is insignificant, then have the guts to admit that your life is insignificant.’** Why work for human rights, or for the common good, or for justice for all, if it is all going to be burned up in the end anyway? If we are just accidents heading for annihilation, then nothing we do matters.”

- A. Because apart from Jesus, life is empty (1:2).**
- B. Because apart from Jesus, life is confusing (1:3).**
- C. Because apart from Jesus, life is pointless (1:4-11).**

## **2. Apart from Jesus, death is hopeless (3:16-22). Why?**

**A. Because apart from Jesus, there is ultimately no justice (3:16-17, see also 4:1-3 and Acts 17:30-31).**

William Lane Craig writes, “...If God does not exist and there is no immortality, then all the evil acts of men go unpunished and all the sacrifices of good men go unrewarded. But who can live with such a view? Richard Wurmbrand, who has been tortured for his faith in communist prisons, says, ‘The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe when man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil. There is no reason to be human. There is no restraint from the depths of evil which is in man. The communist torturers often said, ‘There is no God, no Hereafter, no punishment for evil. We can do what we wish.’ I have heard one torturer even say, ‘I thank God, in whom I don’t believe, that I have lived to this hour when I can express all the evil in my heart.’ He expressed it in unbelievable brutality and torture inflicted on prisoners’.”

**B. Because apart from Jesus, we are no better than the animals because we all just return to the dust (3:18-20).**

**C. Because apart from Jesus, this life is all there is so there is no hope in facing death (3:20-22).**

**Conclusion: Our lack of satisfaction prompted by the meaningless of life and hopelessness of death is designed to drive us to Jesus (John 6:26-29, 35, 66-69).**

**Jesus is Life so he gives us purpose in living life and hope in facing death.**

John 10:10; Mark 8:36; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-22, 29-32, 57-58