

“The Emptiness of Accomplishment”

Ecclesiastes 2

Sermon Series: “Unsatisfied”

Introduction: Some type of opening illustration about accomplishment and emptiness
After the Dallas Cowboys had won the Super Bowl, Tom Landry made this observation. "The overwhelming emotion--in a few days, among the players on the Dallas Cowboys football team--was how empty that goal was. There must be something more." Solomon is essentially saying the same thing in Ecclesiastes about all of his great accomplishments.

-2 Caveats:

- 1. God created us to work so work, in and of itself, is a good thing (Genesis 2:15, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8).**
- 2. God also created us to produce as good stewards (Genesis 1:27-28, Matthew 25:14-30).**

So, the solutions to this problem is not to do nothing or accomplish nothing, but there is a balance. It is an issue of identity and satisfaction.

Main Idea: Accomplishments are empty if they do not honor Jesus and flow out of a relationship with Him (v. 11 and 1 Corinthians 15:58).

How can accomplishment be empty?

1. Accomplishment is empty when it is self-focused (v. 1-9).

Tim Keller reminds followers to remember the gospel in all of your efforts. "Without the gospel of Jesus, we will have to toil not for the joy of serving others, nor the satisfaction of a job well done, but to make a name for ourselves."

2. Accomplishment is empty when it is sinful or leads to sin (v. 10).

Keller asked people to work to succeed in something greater than one's self. "Without something bigger than yourself to work for, then all of your work energy is actually fueled by one of the other six deadly sins."

3. Accomplishment is empty when it is fleeting and not lasting (v.11-23).

"Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn't really matter" (author unknown).

4. Accomplishment is empty when our heart is not in a place to enjoy it (v. 24-26).

A. Thank God for what we get to do and have and enjoy it to the glory of God (v. 24).

B. Realize that lasting satisfaction is found only in a relationship with Jesus (v. 25).

What is the antidote to empty accomplishments? It is Jesus. (1 Corinthians 3:5-17).

1. Define our identity by Jesus instead of our accomplishments (v.5-10, 16, 17).

-“Who before do” (Craig Groeschel).

What we do flows out of who we are.

-1 Corinthians 15:8-10, Colossians 2:9-10

-Only in the gospel is our identity received instead of achieved

-Tim Keller writes, “Your Christian faith gives you a new spiritual power, an inner gyroscope, that keeps you from being overthrown by either success, failure, or boredom. Regarding success and failure, the gospel helps Christians find their deepest identity not in our accomplishments but who we are in Christ. This keeps our egos from inflating too much during seasons of prosperity, and it prevents bitterness and despondency during times of adversity. But while some jobs seduce us into over-work and anxiety, others tempt us to surrender to drudgery, only “working for the weekend,” doing just what is necessary to get by when someone is watching. Paul calls that “eye-service” (Colossians 3:22–24) and charges us to think of every job as working for God, who sees everything and loves us. That makes high-pressure jobs bearable and even the most modest work meaningful.”

2. Have Jesus as the foundation of our lives (v. 11).

3. Build a life that lasts on that foundation by doing godly works (v.12-15).

-Live everyday to be ready for the final day.

-Reverse engineer our lives to live according to the will of God.

-Use our time wisely by living with discipline and godly habits.

-Use our gifts, talents, and opportunities to serve God by serving others.

-Do all that we do for the glory of God.