

# Life Under the Sun: The Message of Ecclesiastes

Lakewood Presbyterian Church

## Lesson 3 Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 (5-25-25)

**Key Idea:** *The anxiety, frustration and emptiness which everyone experiences in a sin-wrecked world underscores that God is very much in control and He intends to use the emptiness of life lived without Him to drive you to Himself.*

### I. BACKGROUND: THE STRUCTURE AND ARGUMENT OF ECCLESIASTES

- A. The Book of Ecclesiastes has \_\_\_\_\_ major sections (1:2-2:26; 3:1-5:20; 6:1-8:15; 8:16-12:14)
- B. The conclusions of each section build on one another and give the answer to the p\_\_\_\_\_ of life “u\_\_\_\_\_ the s\_\_\_\_\_.”
- C. Two key recurring phrases or terms are:
1. Vanity / *hebel* which refers to v\_\_\_\_\_ or s\_\_\_\_\_ not absolute meaninglessness.
  2. This *hebel* is done u\_\_\_\_\_ the s\_\_\_\_\_ which references life lived in a f\_\_\_\_\_ w\_\_\_\_\_ by f\_\_\_\_\_ people.
- D. Section I (1:2-26) deals with
1. How nature r\_\_\_\_\_ itself, again and again for no particular r\_\_\_\_\_ we can perceive (1:3-11).
  2. Solomon put his great intellect to work to see if he could get any m\_\_\_\_\_ out of the whole gamut of human e\_\_\_\_\_ and concluded that s\_\_\_\_\_ is empty (1:12-2:11).  
*Application:* What do laugh tracks, sit-coms and Bonnaroo, and booze hounds have in common?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  3. What is the value of wisdom when wisdom leads one to only demoralizing conclusions such as:
    - a. The wise man and the fool are both f\_\_\_\_\_ for w\_\_\_\_\_.
    - b. One’s heir(s) are i\_\_\_\_\_ and will s\_\_\_\_\_ whatever you worked for.
    - c. How does Solomon answer the cliché “better a pig satisfied than Socrates dissatisfied?”  
“Wisdom is better, but o\_\_\_\_\_ God k\_\_\_\_\_ w\_\_\_\_\_”  
--Douglas Wilson, *Joy at the End of the Tether*, p38
  4. Solomon’s first provisional answer is found in Ecclesiastes 2:24-26:
    - a. It is God’s g\_\_\_\_\_ to be able to enjoy life in a f\_\_\_\_\_ w\_\_\_\_\_.
    - b. Consider how Ecclesiastes is also a contemporary evangelistic tract:
      - (1) W\_\_\_\_\_ and w\_\_\_\_\_ in and of themselves are both d\_\_\_\_\_ e\_\_\_\_\_.
      - (2) Making a n\_\_\_\_\_ for ones self is also a d\_\_\_\_\_ e\_\_\_\_\_.
      - (3) Piling up resources for your d\_\_\_\_\_ is also a d\_\_\_\_\_ e\_\_\_\_\_.

c. God has shut f\_\_\_\_\_ humanity up in a box of frustration. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

d. Solomon is a\_\_\_\_\_ the existentialist problem in a way they never c\_\_\_\_\_.

E. Section II (3:1-5:20) has \_\_\_\_\_ sub-divisions which advance Solomon's \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Subdivision #1 (3:1-15):** God has a p\_\_\_\_\_ that e\_\_\_\_\_ every man and woman and all their a\_\_\_\_\_ at all t\_\_\_\_\_. The more familiar term for this is \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Subdivision #2 (3:16-4:16):** Solomon reflects on apparent a\_\_\_\_\_ and c\_\_\_\_\_ to the idea of God's s\_\_\_\_\_.

3. **Subdivision #3 (5:1-20):** Beware of p\_\_\_\_\_ atheism, acting as if God is not in c\_\_\_\_\_.

## II. THE GRAND PLAN (3:1-15)

A. Consider how *The Byrds* got it wrong: These 14 famous couplets underscore how \_\_\_\_\_ rather than \_\_\_\_\_ is in c\_\_\_\_\_ (vv.1-8):

Born / die \_\_\_\_\_

Plant / pluck \_\_\_\_\_

Kill/ heal \_\_\_\_\_

Break down / build up \_\_\_\_\_

Weep / laugh \_\_\_\_\_

Mourn / dance \_\_\_\_\_

Cast away / gather \_\_\_\_\_

Embrace / Refrain \_\_\_\_\_

Keep / Throw away \_\_\_\_\_

Tear / Sew \_\_\_\_\_

Silence / speak \_\_\_\_\_

Love / hate \_\_\_\_\_

War / peace \_\_\_\_\_

*Sum:* All for life, from the m\_\_\_\_\_ to the m\_\_\_\_\_ unfolds under the appointment of Providence.

B. The sense of the transcendent has been frustratingly placed in every human mind (3:9-12)

1. Knowing the God who is there \_\_\_\_\_

2. But God's plan and purpose are in \_\_\_\_\_ without s\_\_\_\_\_ r\_\_\_\_\_

C. God cannot be o\_\_\_\_\_ or out-\_\_\_\_\_ (3:14-15)

1. God knows the f\_\_\_\_\_ because God c\_\_\_\_\_ the future.

2. Human disobedience or demonic forces cannot d\_\_\_\_\_ The Plan.

Implications: \_\_\_\_\_