

Life Without God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 October 2025

Preacher: David Biggart

- [0 : 00] Thanks Alan for leading us in that worship. Just as the kids go out,!
- My granny stayed in Bellsill, just off North Road. So I have a long affinity there. And also, so many folks that I know.
- Jean Smith has known me since I have been this size. And she was involved in Hamilton Baptist when I went there as a wee boy.
- So we have a lot in common here with you folks at Bellsill. So, I also want to give you thanks because we have been able to fit in our Bible study with today.
- That was always the difficult bit. Could we fit in because we have different speakers coming every week? Cal can maybe push one back and push one forward. But thanks as well for just fitting us in there.
- [1 : 22] And our Bible study that we're about to commence is found in the book of Ecclesiastes. You need to have your teeth in right to say Ecclesiastes.
- There's a lot of issues. So you don't want to say Ecclesiastes too many times. Ecclesiastes. We're going to look at chapter 1. Just for ease, a lot of people have debated who has written Ecclesiastes.
- I'm going to assume Solomon. Some people will debate that. There's 12 chapters. And it was written three centuries before the birth of Christ.
- And then there's a phrase that you'll see very often in Ecclesiastes. And it's this phrase. Under the sun. So before we start to read, you're maybe thinking, what is under the sun? Is that going to do with getting a suntan or whatever?
- Under the sun. It's a phrase that means we live under the sun. That's what we do. We don't live beyond the sun. We live under the sun. Beyond the sun is heaven.
- [2 : 26] Under the sun is earth. And so, just as we read this through, let's get that kind of understanding. The theme of the book? Well, it's quite a sad story, actually.
- If you remember Fraser and Dad's Army? Remember his phrase? We're doomed. We're doomed, he used to say. And in some ways, I'll go through this today and you'll think, well, that wasn't very uplifting, was it?
- But let me hopefully develop that thought as we go through. The other thought here is you'll find the word meaninglessness will come out time and time again.
- Or it might be newer version vanity. Everything is vain. And it is what it means that everything seems meaningless. Everything seems that there's no benefit for what we do.
- The other thing is it can be a noun as well. It can mean a vapor or a mist as well. So, there's the background just before we start in Ecclesiastes chapter 1.
- [3 : 33] So, let's read it through if you have your Bible. The words of the teacher, son of David, king of Jerusalem. Meaningless meaninglessness, says the teacher. Utterly meaninglessness.
- Everything is meaningless. What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun? Generations come and go, but the earth remains forever.

The sun rises, the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south, turns to the north, round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.

All the streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. All things are wearisome, more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear is full of hearing. What has been will be again. What has been done will be done again. There is nothing new under the sun.

[4 : 30] Is there anything of which one can say, look, there is something new. It was here already, long ago. It was here before our time. There is no remembrance of men of old.

And even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow. I, the teacher, was king over Israel and Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven.

What a heavy burden God has laid on men. I have seen all the things that are under the sun. All of them are meaningless. A chasing after the wind. What is twisted cannot be straightened.

What is lacking cannot be counted. I thought to myself, look, I have grown an interest in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me. I have experienced much of the wisdom and knowledge.

Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom and also of madness and folly. But I learned that this too is chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow.

[5 : 38] And with more knowledge, the more grief. The more grief. What is the point? What is the point of it all?

I don't know if I have ever thought that. What is the point of working? Striving? Building? Trying to move forward? What is the point of it all?

What really lasts? Ecclesiastes is a book for the tired, the curious. It's those questioning. It doesn't hide from the dark subjects.

But tries to walk us through it. Sometimes as Christians and preachers, the mistake we make is, if somebody shows any interest at all, we're in there.

We want to tell them, let me tell you about the ABC of the gospel. Let me tell you about this. Let me tell you about that. And the person's like, my head's buzzing. Because my head is buzzing with all the questions I have about life.

[6 : 45] And Ecclesiastes walks us through the questions that people have about life. Sometimes we should step back and let people speak.

That's what Jesus did. Hear their concerns. Hear what's on their minds. Listen to their struggles. Stephen, I don't know if you can just flip on the next passage.

Rest assured, this is the only slide. So try and remember some of the points from this slide. Life is a loop of futility.

That's my first point. Life is a loop of futility. Everything just seems absolutely to have no meaning. Absolutely vanity.

When people look at life, that's what they say. What's the point of it all? Where am I going? If I'm keeping working, where does it lead me to?

[7 : 47] Constant questions. In 1985, Talking Heads had a song. Right? You can join in. We're on the road to nowhere.

Do you remember it? Some of you do. We're on the road to nowhere. Come on inside. Taking that ride to nowhere. We'll take that ride.

And for many people in life, that's what it's like. The author of the song and the lyrics said, he put a cheerful melody to meaninglessness.

He put a cheerful melody to death and the absurdity of life. So on the one hand, he said it's uplifting, yet it's cynical.

He was on the road to nowhere. And this is what really chapter 1 is trying to explore.

[8 : 48] From verse 7, from verse 4 rather, to verse 7, we see things about the monotony of what we do. Verse 4 says, Generations come, generations go, but the earth remains forever.

I was up in Aberfoyle a few weeks back. And I don't know if you've ever had this sensation. When you're sitting by a loch and you see the water and you see the hills, you think to yourself, I wonder how many people have sat where I've sat over the centuries and over the generations.

I will come and go. Other people will sit here. But the earth remains forever. The sun rises. That's a rise, isn't it?

The sun rises. Bicep curl. The sun rises. The sun sets. The next day, the sun rises. The sun sets. It's the same day after day after day.

The wind blows to the south, then to the north. Then it goes round and round again, ever turning on its course. All streams flow into the sea. Yet the sea is never full.

[10 : 02] Why is that? Because the water goes back to where it started with to begin with. Which is an incredible fact. Somebody in Ecclesiastes' son understood how geography works. The sea is never full.

All things are wearisome. They just go round and round and round and round. I was on a journey recently down to Harrogate.

Posh place, Harrogate. I was on my way to Harrogate. And we were going down the M74, M6. And you cut off. And you take the Penrith Road to the A66.

And it takes you over to the A1M1. And we were making good speed. But then suddenly, a notice came up. And it said, road ahead closed.

Road ahead closed. And if you know the A66, there's not many roads round about the A66. Road ahead closed. And it said, follow diversion. So Laura and I, like good boys and girls, we followed the diversion.

[11 : 06] Took us down this tiny wee road. Then another tiny wee road. Then another time. And do you know what? It brought me back out to the same place I had started from. So I was supposed to then just take the same diversion again.

I said, I ain't following the diversion signs again. So I decided to try and use my head and go somewhere else. It was just a monotonous loop. If you stayed in it, you'd just keep working round and round.

And that's what Solomon is saying. Life is like that diversion. You just keep coming round and round and round. I don't know if you've ever seen the movie Groundhog Day.

This is a test of your age, by the way. Groundhog Day. Chap Murray. I'm trying to remember. Bill Murray. Bill Murray's in a movie. Thinks he's a great reporter.

He's set a task to go and report on Groundhog Day. And he thinks he's beneath him. And he goes. There the first day, his alarm goes off.

[12 : 07] 5.59. Click. And then Sonny and Cher come on. And they're singing, I've got you, babe. Turns to six o'clock. He gets up.

And he goes through his day. He goes to bed that night. Then the next day, click. 5.59. 6 o'clock. Sonny and Cher come on the radio. Same day. Same music.

Watch through the day. And so it goes round and round and round. It's got a happy ending. But it goes round the same day, time and time again. It just seems to be monotonous.

You getting the idea? When you were at primary school, do you remember the hamster used to be given out on a Friday? You'd get the hamster home if you were privileged. And you would get the hamster.

Hamster's life is quite monotonous. It eats. It sleeps. What does it then do? It goes in the wheel. And it runs round the wheel.

[13 : 06] For hours. Lots of velocity. But no momentum. Just round and round in the wheel. Monotonous. I heard a sad story the other day about the hamster that died at the wheel.

But that's another story. And maybe you remember COVID. Do you remember COVID when you could get out? You walked round the block. Or you walked round Strathclyde Park.

It was like the walk of the dead. Wasn't it? It was so monotonous. The same route. It's boring. Boring. Boring. That's what it was like.

It was like a song. Stuck. On repeat. On repeat. That's what Solomon's saying. It's just a loop. Same old loop. Same song.

Same commute. Same job. Same old. Same old. Same old. Everything. Just the same. From generation to generation.

[14 : 08] It goes on. Then he said. When I stand back. And I look at these things. Everything. Is futile. Everything. Is meaningless.

Everything. Is monotonous. The sun rises. The wind blows. Rivers flow. Fuel stuck. Radiohead. In 2016.

Just to show. I'm not that old. Had lyrics. In one of their songs. I'm not living. I'm just killing time. I'm not living.

I'm just killing time. It's a picture of someone. Caught in a loop. Empty. Working hard. And like many of our songs. Over the years. It says everything.

Is meaningless. In fact. Life sucks. At times. It just goes round. And round. And round. Second point.

[15 : 05] Nothing new. Truly satisfies. Nothing new. Truly. Satisfies. It says. Verse 8. All things are wearisome.

More than one. Can see. The eye. Has never enough. Of seeing. Or the ear. Of hearing. It's all. Wearing. Scrolling. But never satisfied.

Chasing pleasures. Possession. Popularity. Trying to fill. Our life. With some. Kind of. Fulfillment. And then he says. What has been.

Will be again. What has been done. Will be done again. There is nothing new. Under the sun. Nothing seems fresh. Nothing seems new.

It seems that all. We have in our lives. Is regurgitated. From a previous. Age. I was walking through. A town centre. I don't think it was.

[16 : 03] Motherwell. And I looked up. And there was a model. Not a live model. There was a mannequin. That's where we went. There was a mannequin. There. In the window.

And guess what she was wearing. Flares. Flares. Flares. And kids. Flares. Flares. Were around. In the 60s. And the 70s.

And people must have come home. Thinking. Dad. Guess what the new rage is. Flares. I want a pair of flares. Big. Wide. Bell bottom things.

It was around. When I. Was young. It's no new thing. They're back around again. Mini skirts. Have been. Back. And away again. And they'll be back again.

At some point in time. Just. There is nothing. New. And I bet you all wish. You'd held on to your G plan furniture. I wish I had.

- [17 : 00] On my mum's. G plan furniture. All the rage. In the 70s. Guess what's valuable now. And. All your retro. Interiors.
- G plan furniture. All the rage. Nothing new. Under. Under. The sun. And then he says. No one will be remembered. Who seems important.
- And I will not be important. Can. Can you tell me the name. Of your great great great grandfather. No. Not remembered. No one remembers.
- A prime minister. From 60 years ago. You might have a stab at it. Prime minister. From 100 years ago. Forgotten. Achieved something great.
- Never to be remembered. In 100 years. If we're still here. Somebody will say. Who was David Beckham? Who was Taylor Swift? What is a Swifty?
- [17 : 55] Anyway. People will say that. Because no one. Will be. Remembered. I often speak to my kids.
- I wish I'd brought it along. And. Folks at Liberty. Have seen it. Of a wee violin. And whenever I talk about the old times. The violin. Is pressed.
- And I'm backing to. Whatever I'm going to say. About the old times. And the violin. Gives me great accompaniment. To it. So the kids decide. I tell them so much. About the old times.
- That I should get myself. This violin. We chase thrills. New versions. Of ourselves. All sorts of things. But nothing.
- Truly. Satisfies. And to quote. Some other. Psalm titles. Remember. What you two said. I still. Haven't found. What I'm looking for.
- [18 : 51] Or Mick Jagger. I can't get no. Satisfaction. Chased everything. Tried everything. Yet. There was nothing.
- That satisfied. Then he goes on. In verse 12. To 18. With much. Wisdom. Comes much. Sorrow. And we're told.
- What you need. To get a satisfying life. Is. To learn more. To get qualified. To just. Increase. Everything. In your. In your head. We have the most.
- Educated. Population. That we have. Probably ever had. More folks. Go to university. Than ever went to. To university. Time. And time. Again.
- But it doesn't really. Appear to bring. Any satisfaction. Does it? Because we know more. We have all information. And everything. Available. At our fingertips. Or if you're into.
- [19 : 46] AI. Anybody. Doesn't understand. AI. Just switch off. For a second. If. If you look at AI. It can tell you. Anything. It can save you. So much work.
- Now. But does it make us. Any happier. No. Endless information. Doesn't give us peace. Doesn't. Give. Us.
- Meaning. In fact. Often. The cleverer you are. The deeper. Your questions are. Can I tell you. If you've got a dog.
- Your dog. Is not thinking. About these things. Your dog. Is not thinking. About eternity. Your dog. Isn't thinking. About. How meaningless. His world is. He just wants.
- His sleep. His walk. His food. He's not asking. These questions. That's what makes us. Different. Even. Wisdom. Leads.
- [20 : 40] To grief. I could leave you. Hanging there. You ever. Watch the program. You watch it. To the end. And then it leaves you. And you're like. Well. What happens. What happens next.
- David. If you leave me there. That is the most depressing. Sermon. I've ever heard. In my life. This is the crunch point. C.S. Lewis.

Said this. Creatures. Are born. Sorry. Creatures. Creatures. Are not born. With desires. Unless. Satisfaction. For those. Desires. Exist. Then he said.

If I find. In myself. A desire. Which no experience. In this world. Can satisfy. The most probable. Explanation.

Is. That I was made. For another world. If I have a desire. That's not satisfied. Then.

[21 : 36] It's probably. That I was made. For another. World. And there is another world. The Bible tells us. We don't need to live.

Under the sun. We need to live. Under God's. Son. The rest of the book. Is a journey. And here's a spoiler alert.

For the whole book. Chapter 2. Verse 10. I denied myself. Nothing. My eyes desired. I refused. No pleasure. If he wanted to do something.

He did it. He tried. Work. Money. Achievements. Folly. Or comedy. Music. Ladies. All of it.

He tried. But at the end of it all. No satisfaction. Everything. Was. Meaningless. The new testament.

[22 : 29] Comes with a great message. And it's this. Therefore. If anyone is in Christ. He is a new. Creation. The old. Has gone. And the new. Has come.

It's a message. Of hope. It's not the circle. In the loop. Of life. We are moving forward. The Bible tells us. Through history. To a point. Where history will come.

To an end. And Christ. Came into the world. To make things. New. Through Christ. We can be made new. We can be known. And remembered.

And your name. Is written in heaven. Everybody else. Will forget it. But your name. Will be written in heaven. And you are known. And remembered. By God. You will never.

Be forgotten. So. Ecclesiastes. Is that start. It's pre-faith. Ask the questions. Waiting for the answers.

[23 : 24] To be explored. During. The passage. Solomon. As we were. Explaining earlier. Says that life is a vapor. He isn't wrong.

But you know what? In God's world. Vapor has value. We are only here. For a short time. Think it's Shakespeare. Says. We're like an actor.

Who walks on. Does his thing. Walks back off. And that's your lot. In life. You're like a vapor. You're like a mist. But in God's world.

He says. Even a cup of water. Giving my name. Is value. An act of love. Echoes. In eternity. Even your pain. Is not wasted. It works for our good.

It gives us. An eternal weight. Of glory. John 1 says. In him was life. And that life. Was the light. Of all mankind. I've realized.

[24 : 20] I don't need to know. All the answers. I just need to know. The one who has. The answers. And I know this. The loop. Is not to work harder. But to look. Higher.

To Jesus. Who gives us. That eternal. Value. And that eternal. Significance. To those caught in the loop. Of religious activity. Jesus said these words.

Matthew 11. Come to me. All you are weary. And burdened. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. And learn from me. For I. Am gentle. And humble in heart.

And you. Will find. Rest. For. Your souls. I was given that verse. When I was baptized. Many years ago. You.

Will find rest. For. Your souls. With Jesus. Your life is meaning. Your job is meaning. Your retirement is meaning. Your commute.

[25 : 13] Is meaning. Your going into Greg's. Is meaning. You're going to school. Is meaning. All. Is meaning. With. Jesus.

And when you stand before. The hills. In amber foil again. Running. Being dreary. You think to yourself. Isn't this amazing? Isn't God. A wonderful God. And you think to yourself.

How great thou art. If you can keep the tune. That's what you sing. You don't think. This is meaninglessness. Pascal.

Clever man. Says. God has placed. In us. A vacuum. Heart. Shaped. That only God. Can fill. Only God. Can fill it.

And Jesus said. I have come into this world. To give you life. And to give you. Abundant. Life. And so today. We have Melanie. We have Toby.

[26 : 09] And we have Rebecca. They're recognizing the fact. They don't have all the answers. But they know someone who does. And this is them moving along.

In their spiritual journey. To say. I am recognizing Jesus. That he is my savior. The good news is. The good news. That they believe in.

Is because there's bad news. Because without Jesus. There is the death penalty. Over them. Without Jesus. They face spiritual death. And a lost eternity. But now they are saying.

And pinning their colors. To the mast. They have now said. I have decided. To follow Jesus. Right. They haven't reached some pinnacle.

Of spirituality. That says. I've got it all together. But they say. As I am. Just as I am. With faults. And flaws. I recognize.

[27 : 04] That Jesus. Is the only answer. Charlie Kirk. Unless you've been. Living under a. Stone.

For the last month. You'll know who Charlie Kirk is. A young man. Who was martyred. And shot. And he said. These words. You'll either stand. For something. Or you will fall.

For something. You'll either stand. For something. Or you will fall. For something. And today. Those folks. Being baptized. Are standing. They are standing.

And saying. As for Jesus. I'm standing with him. I believe. He is the only hope. I believe. He is the only one. Who can bring me value. In life. So the challenge.

For us. Is this. What are we going to do? Are we going to stay. In the loop? Are we going to. Live a life. Where nothing satisfies.

[27 : 58] Are we going to just. Try and learn. More wisdom. You probably see. In the words there. It's. I haven't quoted. All the points correctly. It says. Without God. Without God.

That's what life. Is like. And maybe today. You've come to a point. And you're saying. I've chased. Jesus. I've chased after. Everything. In life. I want real life.

I want to know. What you're talking about. I want you. Everything else. Doesn't work. And when I put my head down. On my. Pillow at night. I want to know.

That if something happens to me. That you're in control. That I've trusted you. As my saviour. And as. My lord. For those at liberty. I like an old hymn.

And there's an old hymn. It's probably rattling about. In your head. And the line is. And none but Christ. Can satisfy. In another name for me. There's love.

[28 : 55] And life. And lasting joy. Lord Jesus. Found. In me. Thanks for listening.