

Searching for meaning

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: 11 August 2024

Preacher: John Lowrie

[0 : 0 0] quite as fast as I moved this morning, but we'll move fairly fast as we work our way through this. Ecclesiastes can play on the one note quite a lot, so I'm anxious that we go through this fairly quickly. So, we're going to read from verse 12. We've read the first 11 verses.

We're going to read quickly Ecclesiastes 1, verses 12, right through to the end of chapter 2. So, we're going to go fairly, take a big chunk. I, the teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind.

I have seen all the things that are done under the sun. All of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. What is crooked cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted? I said to myself, look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me. I've experienced much of wisdom and knowledge. Then I applied myself to understand, to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly. But I learned that this too is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow, and the more knowledge, the more grief. I said to myself, come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.

But that also proved to be meaningless. Laughter, I said, is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish? I tried cheering myself with wine and embracing folly, my mind still guiding me with wisdom.

I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their life. I undertook great, great projects. I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.

[2 : 0 5] I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself and the treasures of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers and a harem as well, the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

In all this, my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labors, and there was reward for all my toil.

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the sun. Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom and also madness and folly. What more can there's already done? I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than dark eyes in their heads, while the fool walks in the darkness. But I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. Then I said to myself, the fate of the fool will overtake me also.

What then do I gain by being wise? I said to myself, this too is meaningless. For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered. The days have already come when both have been forgotten. Like the fool, the wise too must die. So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they have control over all the fruit of my toil, into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What do people get for all the toil and anguish striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain. Even at night their minds do not rest.

[4 : 44] This too is meaningless. A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God. For without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness. But to the sinner, he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God.

This too is meaningless. A chasing after the wind. That's the passage we will consider in a few minutes. But let's stand and we'll go. To glory and so forth. Jesus does this. The Christian faith is not meant to be that the wee merry-go-round. Remember, the wee horses got them down. You know where you're going. You don't mind the occasional wee bobbin weave. The Christian life is supposed to be exciting. It's a roller coaster, and it's supposed to be a white knuckle ride. And if you're not on the white knuckle ride, maybe we're not living the Christian life as we should. It's also slogging. Getting what does a man gain from all his labor and toils. Jesus tells us, always, or Paul says, always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. When you have a Christian, when you're a Christian, your work and toil for the Lord counts. It means something. Then we looked at significance. Verse 11 of chapter 1, there's no remembrance of men of old, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow. Jesus tells us, your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. Your family might not put flowers. Twenty years after you died, your grave might just rot away, but your name is written in heaven. You have significance. And lastly, satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 1.8, all things are weary, so more than one can say that I never has enough of seeing, ear never has enough of hearing. Jesus says, I have come that you may have life and have it to the full.

So everything that this world offers and the way it's wired is futile. It's a waste. But in Christ, things now make sense. They come. Labor makes sense. Significance is found only in him. Now, if everything is meaningless without Jesus, the preacher now tells us how he began to try to find meaning in life. And that's what this sermon I've called this evening.

That's life is the name of the series. That's life. But this is called Search for Meaning. The preacher tried to find what is life all about. He's asking the big questions. He's basically trying to answer the question he asked in verse 3 of chapter 1. What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? That's his question. What is the point of working hard, of running after this and running after that? He tries to find that out. So verse 13 of chapter 1, I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the sun. He wants to leave no stone unturned to find out the meaning of life, what it's all about. He tries to examine everything and tries to understand. Now, we have two points, just two points, various sub-points, but I'll only mention the two points on here. Two tests that he applies to try and figure out life. First of all, it's the wisdom test. He applies wisdom. If the preacher is Solomon, we don't know for certain, but there's a strong leaning perhaps. There are various things that would suggest it's not Solomon writing this, but gathering some of his thoughts together through somebody else. But Solomon was certainly wise. He was wise, one of the, or the wisest man of his days. And many people today try to make sense of life. They look at how people behave, what they do, why they do it, and they try and make sense. Philosophers, sociologists, they look at things and think, why do we do this? What do we really need? And this is what the preacher's trying to do. Look at verse 13. I applied my mind to study and explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. Verse 16. I said to myself, look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who's ruled over Jerusalem before me. I've experienced much of wisdom and knowledge. Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom and also to madness and folly. Solomon tried to figure out. He wanted to figure out what life was all about. And he comes to the conclusion when he just applies wisdom in verse 15. What is twisted cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted. Verse 17. I applied myself to understanding of wisdom and to madness. I learned that this too is a chasing after the wind, for with much wisdom comes much sorrow. The more knowledge, the more grief. Never say that to somebody that's studying for their GCSEs.

[10 : 09] The more knowledge comes more grief. But one of the commentators says that there are loads of twists and gaps and gaps in thinking. When you try and do this, it doesn't quite make sense. Everything appears to be twisted. When we try to figure out life without God, it doesn't really make sense. Everything's twisted. It's distorted. Things are left empty. And that's what he says in verse 15. What is lacking cannot be counted. Now, that's certainly the case when you look at life

and you try and make sense of disasters. How does it happen? What's the point? Famine, flood, cancer, death, injustice. How does all this make sense? None of it makes sense unless we include God and we include Him in the equation.

Wisdom alone is not enough. We can't figure out God. There's a well-known book by Leslie Weatherhead. I think I had this for many years and I threw it out. It's called *The Christian Agnostic*. An agnostic is basically somebody who says we cannot really know or cannot really understand Christian truth and so forth. And in his chapter under God, he begins it by saying, imagine an ant, I think it is, or a mouse, right, sitting with God at the top of the paper, or man, he says, at the top of the paper, and then presuming to write something. Imagine an ant, man, I'm going to write about mankind. You think you're an ant. What do you know? It's the same when we try and put God. Imagine that. God, you started to write, where do you begin? As a human being, we are limited. We, our knowledge is very finite, and God is infinite. So, wisdom must involve humility. David said this in 131 Psalm, he said, my heart is not proud. I do not concern myself with great matters too wonderful for me. But man tries to figure out life and the purpose of life, but they do not use or include God in the equation. Wisdom has a place, but when we exclude God, we are left in darkness.

He says this in verse 13, I saw that wisdom is better than folly. That is true, just as light is better than darkness. But God wants us to think. That's Acts 17, one of my favorite chapters in the book of Acts. Paul dealing with a culture like our own, a Gentile culture. From one man he made all the nations, Paul said, that they should inhabit the whole earth. He marked out their appointed times in history, the boundaries of the land. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. So, philosophy, sociology, psychology is able to understand so much, but unless we encounter God, nothing really makes sense. And we, even if we did, we don't have the power to change things. We cannot change people. Only the Lord can do this. And wisdom alone is not enough for discovering meaningful life. We need God. But God can be known. Christ is the wisdom of God.

[13 : 36] That is something that we need to take away from this first point. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1, where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world. For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him. God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

Jews look for demand, or they demand miraculous signs. Greeks look for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to the people of Scotland. But those whom God has called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom. So, human wisdom alone is not enough to sit down and sit under a tree, twirling a dandelion, trying to make sense of life. It is not enough. The only way is we need to consider Christ, because Christ is the wisdom of God. He is the one who makes sense of life. So, we can listen to folk with all their ideas, but unless Christ is in the equation, nothing will make sense. The second test is this, the pleasure test. Unlike the preacher today, many people don't take time to try and figure out the meaning of life. But they do try to find meaning in this test. They might not think about wisdom, what it's all about. You might not meet somebody, I was thinking about life and what it's all about. They're not really bothered. But pleasure is what drives most people today. And that is what happens next. He says in verse 1 of chapter 2, come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good. And the language that he employs here is that he's not launching himself into debauchery. He says a few times, my wisdom remained with me. In other words, it's like almost like a controlled experiment.

He's not just letting himself go, getting drunk, doing whatever. There is restraints, there is moderation. He's doing this to find out what life is like. The head in his school of philosophy, Epicureanism, is basically taught that if you want to get on in life, avoid pain, pursue pleasure. That is very current still today. That's how most people live their life. Avoid pain like the plague, pursue pleasure. Just go to the fringe and you'll see thousands of people, nearly 4,000 plays or whatever on acts on pursuing pleasure. Whether it's comedy, the performing arts, music, theatre, whatever, the spoken word. You can get the category. You can go wade through hundreds of things because you'll pay money and for that time you want to pleasure. Get rid of the pain, forget it for an instant, go up to Edinburgh and enjoy the fringe. Modern life is based on that aim.

So, the preacher looks at a few things. He wants to try and find out what is good. The first thing is laughter, he mentions. Laughter, I said. Verse 2 is madness. He gives up his pursuit of meaning and purpose. Can't make sense of it. So, his first port of call is the senses, the sea of the senses. I think I'll have a good laugh. Let's just laugh because we all like a good laugh. We like to laugh. The world laughs and there's something in that. Why do we like laughing? Well, they say laughter reduces stress by lowering levels of cortisol and adrenaline, the body's stress hormones. So, when you're laughing, these stress hormones go down. It increases serotonin, the happy hormone. We laugh. We just feel good.

[17 : 49] And we think, isn't that great? We're paid for £12 or £18 at the fringe. And we come out and think, that was a good laugh. I just feel better. There's something about laughter that does this.

It maybe diffuses difficult situations. You're in a dire predicament. It's a long time since you've laughed. You just feel good if something just makes you laugh. You've just been walking about with a hangdog expression for ages. And suddenly, you forgot whatever it is for a moment. Because you very seldom laugh and cry at the same time. It's either one or other. And I'm sure we would all say, given a choice, I think I'll go for laughter. Thanks. I don't mind a good laugh. And you look at the Edinburgh Fringe. If you look at the book, you'll get a couple of pages on this topic, that topic. Comedy is massive. It's what drives people today. Laughter is they just, they're up there tonight. They'll be there next week. Nothing wrong in these things. But it's like, almost like a drug. They want more. Make me feel good. Life is hard. Monday's coming. It might rain on Monday. September, October is not far away. October. Halloween. Dear, dear, it's just around the corner. We want to laugh. Just, we want to feel better. And laughter is only a temporary fix. That is the problem. The life and soul of the party is often the loneliest person. It's amazing. I've read a wee article called Tears of a Clown. Most, a lot of comedians are the most miserable people outside of the stage. Stephen Fry, David Walliams, Miranda Hart, Spike Milligan, Kenneth Williams, Robin Williams, Jack D, John Cleese. All these people, what were their life and soul funny, made everybody laugh. But in their own wee world, they hid their demons. And so we laugh in order to cope. It says an awful lot. That is why people, they don't laugh enough so they're going just to make them feel better. He says, laughter is madness. What does pleasure accomplish?

Next, he turns to projects. I must confess, I like living in England in the sense that I just felt they were more into projects. Most folk, they had their wee allotment. They hid their shed, their man shed at the bottom of the garden. Hobbies, train spotters. I never met a single train spotter in Scotland.

They're coming out of the woodwork in England. Train spotters, watching the train, getting the numbers down. Blows my mind. I kind of cope with that. But train spotting, whatever. Hobbies, things that we can, a sense of achievement. I did this. I made that. And he undertook, verse 4, great projects. He built houses for himself, planted vineyards, made gardens and parts. Solomon was brilliant at projects when it came to making things. His business mind. He imported horses from Egypt and so forth. He was trading and things. He built a big business for himself. He was very businesslike.

[21 : 02] And as a result, silver, we are told, was as common as stones in Jerusalem. He made a fortune in his projects and his planning and scheming. He adopted a luxurious lifestyle. He built a massive palace for himself. And people like this because it's our own creation. There's nothing wrong in that. There's nothing wrong in a lot of these things. It's when you use them to find meaning to life. In and of themselves, they are not enough. And his greatest work was building the temple. It was in David's heart to do. His projects, many of them were good. And when he loved the Lord, of course, he went off the rails when he was drawn towards other women, trying to unite religions and so forth and turned his back on the true God and women were his ruin. So he tried to find things and projects. It's never enough. It's not enough. They only satisfy for a brief time. Possessions as well was the third thing. He wanted a name for himself, status. Look at verse 7. He bought male and female slaves. He owned more herds and flocks than anyone. He amassed silver and gold for himself, the treasure of kings. Compared to people today, Elon Musk would probably have been a pauper compared to Solomon and all that. Nobody could compare to the things that he had. People think that if they have just, they're working nine to five because they want this particular house in this particular street, this particular car, certain amount of, if they get all these things in place, they will be happy or they'll be happier.

It doesn't work. They never satisfy. I mean, I remember for the first four months doing up the flat and thinking, this is good. Look at the work surfaces. It's all great. The paint, the edges are all looking good. And after a while, you don't even notice they're there. You don't come in and go, that's nice, that's nice. You just come in and it's there. You take it all for granted. There's pleasure in doing it. But when it's done, you're still left empty. Possessions are never enough. And yet, you want to bang people's heads together. They are driven by possessions, their car, their house, their garden, more and more and more. Jesus even spoke of Solomon, didn't he, in his glory. But yet, compared to the flowers, they were far more impressive than Solomon and the Lord loves us. Money alone cannot bring happiness. The love of money is the root of all evil. We never have enough. So after realizing that projects and possessions don't bring true fulfillment, he turns to something else. He turns to the senses, the sensual senses, alcohol, drugs, music, and sex. That trinity, wine, women, and song, he turned to them. If there's big business in anything, it is those three things. Massive business nowadays. He tried each of them. First of all, he tried wine. Look at verse 3, I tried cheering myself with wine and embracing folly. But his mind was still guiding him. He didn't get a bottle of wine and go to the park and just see what it was like to be guttered. He's drinking. Maybe I think, oh, I'm beginning to feel a bit better. Cheering myself up. Is it enough? No. It's as simple as that. That's why he did this.

I tried cheering myself with wine, my mind still guiding me. That's why people do drugs and alcohol. Why it's such a big business, a big part of our lives. We do it for various reasons. Alcohol to relax us. Helps us forget. Helps us have fun. You lose your restraints, your inhibitions. Remember, as a young man, before I became a Christian, after about six pints, you're jumping on the table, you're just acting like I need you. Young folk just do this. They think, I can't do it. I'm too sober.

So you go out and get drunk or whatever. You go out and you have a glass of wine, another glass bottle of wine, because it's making you feel better. You're liking yourself. I remember where we lived, the very first time, I don't know what your bins are like. We have these, you have to put the bottles in one in the plastic and something else. And the first time they brought this out, I just thought everybody in my street was an alcoholic. I couldn't believe the amount of bottles of wine and whiskey and stuff that were in these things. I thought, wow, where's all this stuff come from? It's almost a bottle of wine a night. Why would you do that? You do that because it just makes you feel relaxed. You've had a hard day. Folk are bending your ear. I'll just have a half bottle of wine or whatever. And he turns to this. He turns to alcohol to cheer him up, to help him cope.

The problem is, like experience new things, they become addictive. You become reliant on them. It's more the same fix or whatever. It ends up sucking the life out of us rather than us. And that is why he says it doesn't work. It doesn't cheer you up. You might feel better or it helps you forget them, and the problems are still there. It doesn't solve any problems. Very addictive. So he acquired a harem as well, the delight of a man's heart. Women were Solomon's downfall. To be the wisest man and not realize this. One king's a living. King Solomon, whoever loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughters. Nehemiah 13. Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon's heart, Solomon's king of Israel, sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over Israel. But even he was led into sin by foreign women.

[27 : 02] Like drugs and alcohol, sex is big business. Society's driven by these things. These are not just wee things. These are massive things that drive our society today, the sex industry. Why do sex?

Basically, it's for sexual gratification, sexual pleasure, looking at something, experiencing something. Nothing wrong in sex. It's a gift from God, but only within marriage. That physical, full physical expression of a love between a man and a woman. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife. The two will become one flesh. There's nothing wrong in it.

Outside of marriage, it is harmful. It is damaging. It involves guilt. It is selfish. Pornography is degrading to the person who does this and to the other person. I remember as a young Christian, I'd only been saved for a fortnight, and I ended up in a conversation in pornography with one of my engineered friends. I suppose you're against pornography, he said. I said, yeah, I'm a Christian, of course. And he said, what's wrong with it? You're not hurting anyone. I said, well, first of all, you're hurting yourself. You're degrading. You're acting like an animal. You have no restraints.

And you're looking at this person as a sex object. And then I said to him, and it was the first time anybody had said anything like this to him. I said, you said nobody's getting hurt. Well, how would you feel if your daughter come in and said, oh, by the way, I've become a porn star? Would you say, isn't that great, sweetheart? You'd do anything to cause her not to do it. In other words, you don't mean looking at other women. You don't mean folk looking at your daughter. You're inconsistent.

There's nothing there. It's just selfish. Selfish through and through. Sex addiction makes people created in the image of God no more different than animals. Lack of self-control. It degrades us. [29 : 01] Like drugs and alcohol, sex is the same. It's big business. It's very addictive. And it controls us and ultimately doesn't satisfy. So having tried wine and women, he now turns to song. Verse 8, I acquired male and female singers. Music's such a powerful thing. It's more powerful than the day when I was growing up. Glastonbury transmit all these concerts, all these things that you go.

Well, you can't help but these three, these things, they are running after the three, the wine, the women, and so forth, as well as the music. But music's very powerful. Like alcohol and sex, music and song are not bad within themselves. They stir up the senses. They excite us, lift our spirits, express our thoughts and hearts. Very impressive. Music, women, men, singing instruments. King David expressed his heart in singing and songwriting. National anthems. The Olympics, they're standing up, tears blinding them as God save our gracious King comes on. Must be the worst national anthem ever. What a dirge.

Anyway, France, Italy, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, here we go. But they stand up and it makes them pretty, just music, just hearing the national anthem. Soldiers march into battle with songs on there. Music is such a powerful thing. But they may be powerful, but they never last. They can influence people, but once again, the effects are short-lived and so forth. And ultimately, they do not satisfy. So in these three things, he looked at them, he kept things in moderation, and he realized, no, they don't satisfy. They're not the meaning of life. So he comes to the conclusion, verse 2, what does pleasure accomplish? But he didn't just stop at drugs and alcohol and music. He sought out fame. [31 : 06] I became greater than anyone before me, verse 9. Fame is also something that drives people today, young people today. We were on the harbor at Musselboro, and normally you get about 6 or 10 young folk.

There must have been about 70 or 80, and I thought, these folk don't even know each other. How do they know all together? It must be Facebook going to the harbor. Tide was coming in at that point.

Tonight, as we speak, they'll be swimming away. Facebook, X, fame, wanting to be liked and get wee thumbs up and photograph your dinner in the hope that folk, God, that looks amazing. Loads of likes, followers, loads of followers. I don't have any followers.

My wife and my two daughters and my, I think my son-in-law's almost following me. I've got three. But folk go, look at all the followers. I've got Elon Musk, millions of followers.

That's what they do. This is how I am. Here are my followers. I'm famous. They're driven by this. All of these things are just a world. Sex, drugs, whatever, wine, music, fame doesn't satisfy.

[32 : 23] People are fickle. You're easily dumped. You cannot keep up your popularity. You've got the body of some Greek god. But when you're 64, it's not quite the same. It only lasts for a short time. Work is the next thing he looks at. Talking about, I hated all things, verse 18, I toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to somebody else. He's work. He's working hard 24-7. That's a massive aspect of life today. Work, especially in London. They go to work. They're there at silly o'clock in the morning. They've been on their laptop on the tube. They come off. They're in the bus. Laptop, in the work, laptop, back out again, working lunch, back home, laptop out, working. 24-7. Just working, working, working. And you have to ask yourself, why? Just stop. Why are you doing this? Why are you climbing the greasy pole for status? What is the point? And that's what he's saying. I tried all of these things. Work is our identity, isn't it? But I'm always amazed at quiz shows. It doesn't matter what quiz show is. It doesn't matter what you're going for. What's your name? Joe Bloggs. Next question, what do you do? Every time. What you do is what you are. Not, are you a good guy? Yeah, that's not a good family man. What do you do? Oh, I'm a nuclear physicist. Wolf, you go in the smart, impressive pigeonhole. You're a window cleaner. Oh, well, nice to see you nevertheless. Whatever.

We pigeonhole by what they do, and people are, I want status. I want people to know, and the preacher here says, what's the point of this? What is the point? You're going to leave it to somebody else. So here is the wisdom test. Exclude God, nothing makes sense. Pleasure test, you will fail.

We are not wired to be satisfied by the senses. They suck the life out of us, they make demands on us, and it doesn't work. The conclusion test, or not the conclusion test, the conclusion is this. In verses 24 to 26, he comes to this conclusion. He's tried all these things, and nothing really works. A chasing after the wind. But now he concludes in verse 24, where he begins to say that what he found meaningless, now he begins to have some sort of meaning. And the difference is this. When you recognize that all these things, not bad in themselves, come from the hand of God. James mentioned this. You remember, every good and perfect gift comes from above. In other words, the blessings of life, though they may be fragile. But look at verse, a person can do nothing better to eat, drink, and find satisfaction in their toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God. There's nothing wrong in that. For without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? That's his conclusion. I tried it all. Without God. Without God, it's meaningless. But with God in the equation, it makes different. [35 : 32] For the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge, and happiness. You can enjoy your whatever it is, thing that others enjoy. It might be a glass of wine. It might be whatever that is.

But when you accept things from the hand of God, and you recognize God's goodness in your life. I remember saying this to Lucille, when we came up from London, we thought, what's life going to be like for us? I'm leaving a ministry. And this has been a blessing, ministering to you guys, getting to know you guys. It really has. It really has been a blessing. And then we're flats looking not bad, and then we're walking by, and the birds are out, and the harbour's looking great. And quite a few times, we do pinch for ourselves. My daughter was not married. Now she's married. She's expecting a kid in December. The two of them have just went separately. My other daughter, the two of them have been in Australia and Singapore. And we've never been there. Never been there. And I thought, it's great that our daughters now have this chance to go. And I'm so pleased that they're going to see something of the world. And I thought, the Lord has been good to us. The joy that you get from the Lord being good to you is more than the stuff that you will ever achieve yourself. When we were at Bible College, when the Lord miraculously gave you a fiver, that meant more than the 500 pound I earned when I was an engineer, when my Yves Saint Laurent suit, and this, that, and the other. And I thought, that fiver thrilled me more. When you accept things from God's hand, it makes all the difference. Life has meaning and purpose. When he provides, he'll give you the joy. There's no guilt with these things when the Lord, when you recognize these things come from the Lord. And that's basically what Solomon comes to his conclusion. These things, the pleasures that people run after, will only frustrate the life out of you. They cannot succeed. You will never find happiness and fulfillment. But whenever the Lord, whenever you have a real relationship with God through Jesus Christ, through coming in repentance and faith, having your sins forgiven, being adopted into his family, life has meaning and purpose and hope.

And that is really what this is about, this second chapter. May the Lord help us to realize this, that if you try to keep your life, Jesus said, you will lose it. But if you lose your life, you will keep it. That is the principle that people need to live by nowadays. Let's stand and we'll sing an old hymn. Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways. Let's stand.

Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways. Let's stand and we'll sing. Let's stand and we'll sing. Let's stand and we'll sing.

[38 : 36] Amen.