Ecclesiastes 1:2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

 I can’t begin to tell you just how happy I was to see this text appear. Now I know that to many the book of Ecclesiastes is frustrating and seems quite negative, but really it is not. Let me share some background.

 Ecclesiastes was in all probability written by Solomon, son of David and King of united Israel. Although the author’s name is not specifically mentioned in the book there are numerous verses that clearly point to Solomon as the writer. Just that knowledge alone makes me want to pay attention to what is said. After all, you remember the history of Solomon, right?

 Remember how when Solomon was finally given the kingship that the Lord appeared to him and told him he could ask for whatever he wanted. Solomon, in wonderful humility, asked the Lord for wisdom that he might properly guide the people. The Lord was so pleased that He gave Solomon not only wisdom but pretty much everything else a king could want. About the only hitch to all of this is that many people consider that Solomon, lead astray by his many foreign wives to worship false gods, became an unbeliever. While I do believe that there was a period when Solomon’s faith was weak, if you grasp that Ecclesiastes is Solomon’s last testament of faith, you realize the importance of the book. That’s right, Solomon grasped and knew everything. Solomon experienced the height of everything. But in the end, Solomon realized just one thing, and that one thing is pointed to by the theme of his book and by the theme of this sermon. Our theme: **MEANINGLESS! EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS.**

 Now again, I want you to grasp and remember who Solomon was. Here are a few verse of I Kings to help you grasp Solomon. When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon to test his wisdom she is recorded as saying, **“The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard”** (10:6-7). In the same chapter verse 23 we read these words, **“King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.”** Those are just a few of the testimonies about Solomon.

 Of course, as I said before, Solomon, in his old age, was led astray from the Lord. It was the Lord’s judgment upon Solomon for this weakness of faith that brought about the split kingdom of the Jews. So it is clear that the Lord was not pleased with Solomon in his old age. Again, if we view Ecclesiastes as Solomon’s last testament of faith, then the book is no longer a negative and disheartening thing, but rather becomes a book of comfort and hope. Let’s grasp this comfort and hope and make some modern day applications for ourselves.

 It is clear that the point of this great work found in Scripture is highlighted by the words of our chosen text. **“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”** The Teacher goes on in his work and explains exactly what he means. Work, labor, wisdom, pleasures, advancements, riches, and just about everything else in the world is simply called “meaningless” by this author. And that’s what he means. Okay, actually the Hebrew word here means “vapor or breath.” The author says, “Vapor of vapors!” We understand that to mean he is speaking of something that you can’t hold on to, can’t gasp, can’t see, can’t measure…it is meaningless!

 Please bear in mind that the author intends to proclaim everything IN THIS WORLD “meaningless.” And why not? Don’t we proclaim in our nifty little proverbs of life: “You can’t take it with you!” or “Time flies.” Those ideas are the same as what Solomon wants you to grasp about this world. Name one thing that you have or could have that ultimately and finally won’t rot, rust, decay, fade, spoil or perish! For the past week or so I have been busy trying to revamp my truck. New shocks, new fluids, and cover the rust! Everything we have is subject to the list of those things that will fail. When you think in that way, you realize what Solomon realized, “It is meaningless.”

 Now remember, Solomon had been given the greatest wisdom of God. Yet here is what he said as he contemplated the worldly side of wisdom. **“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 done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”** Those words remind us of the burden of wisdom in our world. We think we know something but we really don’t. We think we have insight and grasp, we think we can’t be swayed or manipulated because we’ve got our feet on the ground, but in reality we are sinking, we have this burden we think is wisdom but it is worldly and foolish. We don’t grasp. We don’t see. We don’t have even half a clue as to the full and awesome knowledge of the Lord. And the worse thing is that sometimes our wisdom, that human view of things, leads us away from the Lord. I believe that’s why the author, Solomon, states that wisdom is such a burden upon men. He knew firsthand how what he thought he knew, lead him away from the Lord. I thank God that Solomon was lead back.

 Why do I say that? Because basically the book of Ecclesiastes tells us that without God and his truth, without God and his guidance, then truly this life and this world is meaningless. Think about it. If the only thing about life is that you live, you then die and that’s it, what is the point? Wealth? When you die it goes to someone else. Fame? Most in this world die and are forgotten within a few generations. Your legacy? Finally and ultimately, once you are dead, who cares? Or maybe you can conclude that if you are an author, then your words are recorded forever! Do you know how many authors have come and gone and nobody knows them anymore. Meaningless! This world and what it offers is Meaningless!

 Unless there is God and his truth. God who promises that there is a life after this one, an eternal life. But beware! God tells us of two eternal destinations and neither one is going to be meaningless. God in Jesus gives us eternal life and salvation, an eternity of heaven living with him in joy and perfection forever. Never a dull moment there and you will never have to worry about leaving something behind because it is a life that never ends. It is called, “the true life.” We can even say something similar when it comes to damnation. An eternity in darkness and horror where there is forever weeping and gnashing of teeth. It will never end. It will never be good. It will never be meaningless there for every second you will be wrapped in the horror of why you are there. It is called, “eternal death.”

 Please note that God in his grace and love has made it possible to get to heaven just because of what His son Jesus has done! Jesus has died for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead and just because you believe Jesus did that for you, you have eternal life. That’s God’s gift to us. That is how God makes our lives relevant and worthwhile. He promises eternal life with Him. He promises to forgive and overlook our faults, to pardon us just for the sake of Jesus. God promises heaven. For all who pass through this life in Jesus, there is heaven’s eternity. And that promise and hope of heaven impacts us now! It is God’s promises that give hope and comfort even now. It is this grasp, this knowledge, this wisdom and truth of God that Solomon tells us is the only thing that is not meaningless but meaningful! Our life in God, our life in Jesus is what gives meaning and purpose, hope and comfort, promise and deliverance for our souls.

 Now, let’s make some applications of this interesting and eternal truth of Solomon.

 We are in an election year. What a time! Most people would agree that our choice seems to be between the lesser of two evils and you and I have to try and figure out which is which. It has been a negative campaign and depending on which side of the media you follow, this election is either going to save or destroy our nation! Dear people, this is meaningless. God is in control and God will see to it that the person He wants in our high office is going to be there. It is not my job to tell you who to vote for, but it is my job to tell you to study the issues, weigh, measure and finally vote your conscience in the Lord. That is our job according to God’s Word. But recognize that in truth, it is all, always, in the hand of the Lord. If the Lord wants this country to be destroyed that is His business. It the Lord wants this country saved, that is His business! What God decides to ultimately do is His call and so it is. Countries come and go. Nations rise and fall! It is all in the hands of the Lord our God and his awesome goodness for the souls that are his. You do your job as His child and He will do his.

 You got news! It is disease! So you got told you are going to die? Well, who isn’t going to die? Your job, even in the midst of difficulty and trial is to trust in the Lord God. If He desires to call you from this world in whatever way He wants to, praise the Lord. You are going to heaven. You are going to inherit eternal life and salvation. Now, you may have to decide how to best handle the meds, treatments, what surgery and so forth, but as a child of God do so with the praise and glory of God on your lips and heart. You can be like the meaningless world or you can be God’s light in the world. One has meaning, eternally and the other does not!

 By the way, I read the other day on FB a little thing where someone explained about grief. It was a pretty interesting ditty. And while some of the elements of it were very true, what was also true is that it was written without Christ! The Christian heart is always tempered and strengthened by Christ. Because in Christ our loved one is still alive! They are with Christ. We will see them again! That hope and promise of Christ changes the whole thing that person wrote and in many cases made what was said meaningless, worldly accurate maybe but meaningless.

 The measure of life is love, someone will say? Really? Whose idea of love? The liberal who says that sex and love are the same? The person who declares that to discipline a child is loveless. The people who say that the most loving thing you can do is abort the child, ignore the law, do your own thing, be yourself (still trying to figure out what that means!) and so forth. Love the way the world promotes, is meaningless. But in Christ, the love of God brings eternal life and salvation. God’s love has meaning.

 Name one problem you have that God can’t handle? Name one difficulty where God is going to desert you or fail in giving you His wisdom and strength? Our biggest problem is often ourselves. We doubt. We fail to put into practice the wonder of God’s truth. We let our lives become worldly, a measure of the world’s wants, hopes, pleasures and ideas! How meaningless! Let your life be of Christ and then what is it you have to fret about or be bent out of shape about? Jesus has given eternal life. Jesus has conquered sin and death. Jesus has given his holy Word to guide and help us along this treacherous path of meaningless life. In Jesus alone there is meaning!

 May our Savior bless us with his wisdom, his love, his life and the truth that brings real meaning to our lives. In Christ, the world becomes meaningless because finally our goal is His life and salvation. God bless you as you contemplate and consider where your life is at. Amen.