

VOTC 3 - Ecclesiastes 2:1-26 – “**Searching for Satisfaction in Pleasure**”

We live in world that tells us that the most important thing in life is our own *personal happiness*. If your marriage is stale, or your job is boring, or your body doesn't look a certain way, do what makes you happy and find another partner, get another job, or go alter your body by whatever ever means necessary to make you happy. Here we see how the Preacher did everything to make himself happy.

He lived the celebrity life here on earth – he ate the best of food, had the most money, enjoyed the most sex, & satisfied his every bodily craving, but in the end he echoed those words from the famous Rolling Stones' song, “*I can't get no satisfaction.*” Last time, we considered the vanity of trying to find wisdom apart from God.

Now in ch.2, the Preacher leaves the University classroom & heads out **to downtown Toronto**. to find the best places to eat, drink, & enjoy some dancing. He says in **2:1**, “*I will test you w/ pleasure*”

Perhaps satisfaction will be found in long nights on the town just having fun. No doubt there is fun in this for a season. But the preacher says it was madness in the end. & I said to pleasure, “what use is it.” Wine. Food. Laughter are all good gifts of God, but when used in the wrong way, we are left feeling empty...

Later in v.8 he acquires many *slaves & sex partners* to please his every impulse (v.7). Next to God, sexual intimacy is one of the greatest pleasures & forms of intimacy you can have under the sun. We may not have hundreds of concubines in our house, but there are thousands of images/videos on the internet to gratify our flesh. But it is a grasping after the wind.

But after living the High Life, the preacher puts on his work gloves & tries something different. He takes on some *building projects* (v.4-ff). He learns discipline, builds wealth, & becomes the kind of successful man that you would want to speak at your company dinner.

The Preacher has incredible resources, so much so that he is able to create his own kind of **Garden of Eden** here on earth! Houses. Gardens. Parks. Trees. Pools. Sounds good, right?

Sometimes we think satisfaction will be found in the next house we buy. Or in the next season of life when the kids grow up, or when we are retired.

The preacher here fully embodied what some call the American Dream, He has the dream house, the vacation home, the private Jet, and all the best toys. But inwardly he is a broken wreck.

He looks at his own personal paradise and concludes in v.11: all vanity, and there is no profit under the sun.! He has all he could ever want under the sun, but it's not enough.

NFL quarterback **Tom Brady** was once interviewed on 60 minutes about his success, and this was when he had just 3 Superbowl rings. He was asked if he was satisfied w/ his career. Brady said, “*Why do I have three Superbowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me?there's got to be more than this.*” When interviewer asked, “what's the answer?” Brady could only say, “*I wish I knew. I wish I knew.*”

Material blessing and great achievements are not bad in themselves, but when they are what we live for, that that sense of deep satisfaction will always escape us. *What is the problem with this pursuit of pleasure?" **The problem is death. V.18-19.** When it comes having great possessions, we can't take them with us at death. Moreover, we can be workaholics all our life, but the preacher says the businesses we've established, or the houses we built might end up in the hands of a fool who can mess it all up (v.23).

The preacher reminds us that in light of death, even good things like knowledge, work, & material blessing cannot bring us lasting joy. But the truth is, they were never meant to! There is a **God shaped hole** in all of us that only he can fill. **The Place of True Satisfaction (2:24-26)**

Although Jesus is the Son of God, equal in glory w/ the Father, he stooped down so low to save us, & to give us the riches of God's salvation. Paul writes in **2 Cor. 8:9** "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, that through his poverty you might be rich.*" In other word, abundant life is not something we earn, but something we receive at the hands Jesus.

The Apostle Paul writes in **1 Tim. 6:18-19** that *we are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share so that we might take hold of that which is try life!*

If we want a meaningful life, we must give lives away to Jesus. Jesus said in **Matt. 16:25**, *whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

This is the paradox of life, the more we try to strive after meaning in this life by our own efforts, the more it will escape us, but if we give our lives away to Christ, we find it. If we say, "Lord, here is all of me – my wisdom, my gifts, my resources, my time, use me for your glory!" Then we will find out what it means to live. This is what we see at the end of chapter 2.

In **2:24-26** we see a **sacred shift**. God's name *reappears*. At the end he reminds us of "God's hand," & 3x's we are told God gives to us – wisdom, knowledge, and joy. Those who please God are *those who acknowledge he is the Sovereign giver of every good thing*, and those called sinners are forever *stuck in the rat race* b/c their eyes are only focused on life under the sun. We learn here that ***happiness is found not by our striving, but by receiving life as a gift of God.***

May we consider today our own quest for satisfaction and remember this important message. If we burden the things of this life with demands to fulfill us in a certain way, we will always be disappointed. But if we look beyond the horizon of this world to Christ alone who can satisfy our hearts, then we can receive the good things of life as gifts from his Fatherly hand.

So, may we give our lives over to Christ each day, so that we might learn what it means to truly live.

Thank you again for joining us here at VOTC, join us next time for our final mediation in Ecclesiastes as we think about how God is Sovereign over the seasons of our lives. Until then, may God bless you and keep you.