



## DAY 18

### **Scriptural Background:** Eccl 1

*"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." Eccl 1:2 (NIV84)*

The book of Ecclesiastes is one of the most confusing, if not depressing, books in the entire Bible. Its Teacher, writing in the Wisdom tradition of the Old Testament Hebrew authors, set out to discover and describe the meaning of life (1:13). He was king (1:12), was exceedingly wise (1:16), and had experienced more prosperity than most people can imagine (2:1–10). Yet, when he endeavored to take a step back from it all and think about life's purpose, his conclusion was essentially the emptiness that is expressed elsewhere as "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" (2:24). This motif continues almost interrupted through the remainder of the book: everything "under the sun" – all life "under the sun" – is vanity (2:11). So, what is Ecclesiastes doing in the Bible? On the surface its message seems to run directly counter to Proverbs and other Wisdom sections of the Bible! The answer may be found by asking another question: "what if there is life that is not from 'under the sun,' but rather from above it?" Then, if that were the case, that Life would be the source of real meaning. This is precisely what is true of Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6). He did not originate within creation, like the rest of us. Instead, He came to us from above, from outside creation. In Him we can find real purpose and joy, because He restores us to right relationship to God (12:13) by redeeming us from the futility and frustration of life in a fallen world (Gal 3:13, Rom 8:20).

### **Prayer:**

*LORD Jesus, once again we pray that You would give us wisdom for navigating life in this fallen world. Keep us from being overly satisfied with what is fading, on the one hand, and from being unduly weighed down by temporary troubles, on the other. Give us the kind of joy and hope that come only from knowing You. Amen.*