

Hello. /We will begin our 2nd lecture on the book of Ecclesiastes. /Second, the world of vanity. /Verses 2-7. /During our last lecture, we studied up to verse 4. /Today, we will begin with verse 5.

/Verse 5. Let us read. /The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

/The Preacher says all is vanity. / “Vanity” in Hebrew is “hebel.” /A breath. /It is vapor or breath. /Vapor or breath appears for a moment and then disappears. /This is why the Preacher confesses that all is vanity.

/This is because one generation goes and another generation comes. /Times passes by quickly. /Thus verse 5 is making the analogy to the sun.

/Verse 5. Let us read again. / The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

/The concept of a generation passing and a new one coming is like the sun. The sun passes by quickly. /The sun rises and sets, and it returns to the place where it rises. /The concept of the wind is another example.

/Verse 6. / The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

/The wind too passes swiftly—it passes by very quickly. /Like our generation that passes and a new generation coming, the wind passes quickly. /Next, there is the example of the laws of the streams.

/Verse 7. / All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

/The streams run to the sea, but why do they flow so quickly... /It is as if the streams and seas have promised to meet each other. /The stream water rushes down as it cannot be grabbed. /The ocean does not even desire the stream, but the stream runs to the sea.

/This is how God’s creation operates and moves. /Can the stream run to the ocean and fill it up? /No, it cannot fill up the sea. /Even still, the streams run to the sea.

/Each day of our lives also passes by very quickly. /We want to grab a hold of time. /But each day goes by quickly. /But here, the Preacher says that something does remain forever. /Verse 4 tells us this.

/Verse 4. / A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

/The verse says, “But the earth remains forever.” /This means that /the things that God has created will remain the way they are. /The foundations of God’s creation will remain. /The land that Enoch had treaded will remain.

/The land on which Abraham walked will also remain. /The land on which Moses walked will remain. /The land on which David walked will remain. /The land on which Solomon walked will remain.

/Solomon died and will not return, but the future generations walk on the same ground that he walked. /The foundations of God’s creation carry on to the next generations. /Also, the heart that seeks God appears in the next generation. /Abel searched for God.

/Enoch searched for God. /Abraham searched for God. /Noah searched for God. /Isaac searched for God. /The forefathers of faith have gone, but the heart that seeks God is continued throughout generations.

/We know that we are empty when we leave God. /But if we do not abandon God, we are blessed. This faith remains forever. /The book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon’s confession of repentance and regret of living in the world without God.

/The heart that trusts in God will remain. /When it says, “The earth remains forever,” it means that the heart that relies on God will remain forever. /The fact that people will be satisfied when they seek God will remain forever. /When we seek God, there is true satisfaction.

/The Preacher is confessing this. /The human conscience and soul are present in the next generations. /Solomon compares it to the laws of the sun, the wind, and the streams to teach the truth that /one generation passes by quickly.

/However, trusting in God remains forever. /Therefore we all must have a heart that eternally trusts in God. /Why would the Preacher say this?
/The reason is that we may trust in God when time passes by quickly, that we may look to the earth that remains forever.

/Our lives pass quickly like the sun, the wind, and the flowing waters. Therefore we must rely on our God. /Psalm 90:10 is a confession by Moses. / “The years of our life are seventy, /or even by reason of strength eighty; /yet their span is but toil and trouble; /they are soon gone, and we fly away.”

/In this generation, time flies away on its wings. /As God’s creation lasts forever, so will the foundations of the earth. /I hope that in this fast moving world, you all put your trust in God.

/Third: All things are full of weariness.

/Verse 8. Let us read. / All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

/The verse says that all things are full of weariness. /Why is everything weary?
/Everything is weary because it is not used according to the will of God. /God gave Adam and Eve all of creation.

/However, in their greed, they were deceived by the devil and ate from the tree that God had forbidden them to eat. /For the price of humanity's corruption and sin, the world became weary. /The ground produced thorns and thistles. /Now, people have to cultivate the land in order to live.

/Genesis 3:17-18 says, / "And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife /and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' /cursed is the ground because of you; /in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; /thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; /and you shall eat the plants of the field."

/Why did the land bring forth thorns and thistles? /And why did people come to cultivating the land? /Why did everything become weary? /It is because of mankind's corruption. /All things are full of weariness because all things were not used according to God's will.

/Frequently, the things of the earth are used for evil. /Due to humankind's corruption and greed, the things of the earth and the forests are destroyed. /Because this is true, all things are in pain. /This winter, some region experienced heavy snowfall.

/Such heavy snowfall was a rare occurrence. /In another region, the cold ocean water got warmer, and this invited fish that lived in warmer areas to come live in this part of the ocean. In this way, the ocean water has changed. /Trees are also being moved to different places.

/Why are these events happening? /To live comfortably, people do not use the things on this planet according to God's will, /but they are developing things according to their greed. /People have destroyed forests. /Because of people, nature is now weary.

/All things are full of weariness. /The natural world is not operating normally. /As a result, we are experiencing heavy snowfall and rainfall. /We are seeing abnormal temperatures. /Why is everything weary?

/Verse 8 says, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing." /It also says, "Nor the ear filled with hearing." /In order to live comfortable lives, people have been destroying nature.

/Romans 8:19-23 says that all of creation is groaning. /Proverbs 27:20 says, / "Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man." /Because people are trying to satisfy things that cannot be satisfied, the earth has grown weary.

/What must we do to prevent the earth from becoming weary? /If we receive God's guidance, all things will not become weary. /Thus if we use the things of creation according to God's will, it will not be weary. /This will be good for us and for creation.

/We must obey God's will in order for all things to not grow weary. /When creation is used for God's glory, these things are not weary. /That is why youths stumble in Isaiah 40:30. /Young men fall down. /However those who hope in the LORD find new strength.

/They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. /If we use all things according to God's will, he will show us his grace and we will not be weary. /Isaiah 40:30-31 says, /"Even youths shall faint and be weary, /and young men shall fall exhausted; /but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; /they shall mount up with wings like eagles; /they shall run and not be weary; /they shall walk and not faint."

/If all things are used properly according to the will of God, God gives us new strength and we will not be weary. /The Preacher did not live according to the will of God, so he lived a weary life. /1 Corinthians 3:21 says, / "For all things are yours." /God gave us Paul. /He also gave us Apollos. /He gave us life. /Why did he give us these things? He gave them so that we would believe. /We must do our best to believe.

/1 Corinthians 3:21-23 says, / "So let no one boast in men. /For all things are yours, /whether Paul or Apollos /or Cephas or the world /or life or death /or the present or the future— /all are yours, and you are Christ's, /and Christ is God's."

/God gave us everything so that we would do well in believing. /They are given to us to be used for the glory of God. /1 Corinthians 10:31 says /whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

/Then we will not grow weary. /All of creation will flow naturally. /The rain gives us beautiful grains. /We are warm because of the sun. /All of creation will do good things for us.

/But if we in our greed see with our eyes but are not satisfied, /and if our ears are not filled with hearing, /all things will be full of weariness. /Eventually, it will be a boomerang that comes back to strike us with heavy snow and rain.

/Therefore we need to throw away our greed. /We need to be satisfied. /James 1:15 says, /"Then desire when it has conceived /gives birth to sin, /and sin when it is fully grown /brings forth death." /Beloved believers! /I hope you will abandon your greed.

/A puppy once bit into a bone. /And this puppy happened to cross a stream. /It was crossing to the other side on a bridge. /Then, when it was halfway there, the dog looked into the water. /It saw a dog biting the same bone that he was biting.

/This puppy became filled with greed. /He thought, "I must have that dog's bone as well."
/What happened when the puppy barked? /The bone that was in his mouth fell into the stream and was washed away. /We must not be greedy.

/Fourth, "There is nothing new." /This world appears to change, but nothing changes.
/New things appear to come, but they all existed in the past.

/Verse 9. / What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

/The verse says, "What has been is what will be." /The winds blew during the time of Enoch. /There was rain. /There was air. /There were flowers. /Such things existed during Abraham's time as well. /Did new flowers appear during Abraham's lifetime?

/The things that existed with Abraham were there with Moses. /Were the flowers that bloomed during Moses's time new? /No, they were not. / "What has been is what will be." / "And what has been done is what will be done."

/Abraham worshiped God during his time. /At that time, the act of worshiping God existed. /Worshiping God was there during Solomon's time as well. /Then was Solomon doing something new when he worshiped God? /There is nothing new under the sun. /Everything has existed before, and they are simply passed down.

/Verse 10. / Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.

/The verse is saying that nothing is new. /Everything has already been in the ages before us. /Every kind of evil has existed before. /Cain's evil still exists today. /Ishmael tormented young Isaac.

/The evil that Cain had was inside Ishmael. /Ishmael's evil had existed before. /All of creation and all physical civilizations repeat themselves.
/The Preacher wants to say that /the world repeats itself; nothing is new.

/But there is something that is new. /The kingdom that God guides is always new.
/The world of God that Abraham enjoyed /existed during Abraham's time.
/But the world of God that we experience is something new.

/2 Corinthians 5:17 says, / "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." /God's kingdom becomes newer each and every day. /If we continue encountering Jesus, things become new.

/Only the things of God's kingdom will last forever. /Everything in this world has existed before. /There is nothing new. /But serving God will continue on into eternity. /It is something new.

/Let us read 2 Corinthians 5:17. / “Therefore, /if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. /The old has passed away; /behold, the new has come.” /We have become a new creation.

/The Preacher here is confessing that /the world repeats itself. /But the things of God are new. /We become new as we go from holy to holier, from clean to cleaner, /and from darkness into the world of light. /This is the kingdom of God.

/Verse 11. /There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.

/There is no remembrance of former things. /Nor will there be any remembrance of later things /yet to be among those who come after. /But God’s kingdom is always new. /We must not turn to the people of the world and ask them to remember us or expect them to remember us.

/The fifth main point covers verses 12-18. / “The limitations of human wisdom and the vanity of wisdom. /Human wisdom is meaningless.

/Verse 12. /I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

/The Preacher says he has been king in Jerusalem. /These are the things that the Preacher has studied.

/Verse 13. / And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.

/To “seek and to search out” means “to study carefully.” /Solomon observed things very closely. /He came to realize that life is an unhappy business. /Here, it says that after seeking and searching out wisdom, Solomon finds it is an unhappy business.

/Solomon reflected on his life and realized that it was an unhappy business. /People are born, grow old, get sick, and pass. /People start aging from the moment they are born. /Then they get sick and die. /This is our lives.

/Our lives are an unhappy business. /Moses speaks in Psalm 90:10. /He says, “But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble.” /Why is the Preacher teaching this to us? /The Preacher has received God’s wisdom.

/The Preacher is someone who assembles. /What is the reason he assembled people and taught them wisdom? /He doesn’t want them to live meaninglessly in our troubled lives.

/Just as the earth that God created exists as it is, we too must live for God. /We need to devote everything to God. /These are the results of the Preacher’s studies after he became king of Jerusalem. /Second, he says that it is a busy life.

/Verse 13 says, “God has given to the children of man to be busy with.” /People toil as they live in this world. /Who doesn’t live a busy life? /When a baby enters its tenth month, it is busy as it comes out of its mother.

/A baby is not born only because of the efforts of the mother. /A dead baby can never come out of the womb on its own. /Because it is dead, it cannot use its strength. /Living babies do their best to exit their mother’s body. /They work together with their mothers to be born.

/The Preacher has realized that we are born to be busy. /In our busy lives, what can we do to stay truly busy? /The answer is in Matthew 11:28. /Our Jesus came to this world and spoke to us.

/ “Come to me, /all who labor and are heavy laden.” / “I will give you rest.” /Jesus says he will give us rest. /Our lives are busy and full of weariness, but if Jesus is with us, our business will be worthy.

/Matthew 11:28-30 say, “Come to me, /all who labor and are heavy laden, /and I will give you rest. /Take my yoke upon you, /and learn from me, /for I am gentle and lowly in heart, /and you will find rest for your souls. /For my yoke is easy, /and my burden is light.”

/Jesus carries our yoke for us. /He labors for us. /When we are in the Lord, we have no worries. /The Preacher labored on his own without the Lord.

/He became king, and then he realized that he was born to labor. /When he realizes this, he is teaching us a lesson. /The lesson is for all who labor and are burdened to come to Jesus.

/He doesn’t want us to live the meaningless life that he lived. /We need to learn from the Preacher’s lessons /and bring our labor and burdens to Jesus. /Then, Jesus will carry our burdens for us.

/Jesus carries all of our burdens and labor. /Believers! I hope that you find rest in Jesus in your lives. /Third, the Preacher figured out that everything is like striving after wind.

/Verse 14. /I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

/The verse says, “I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.” /Can we grab the wind? /If we blow “Hoo” we cannot grab the wind. /Our lives are no different than striving after wind.

/Psalm 127:1 says, / “Unless the LORD builds the house, /those who build it labor in vain. /Unless the LORD watches over the city, /the watchman stays awake in vain.”

/The next verse says, “It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, /eating the bread of anxious toil; /for he gives to his beloved sheep.” /A person may try his best, but it is as futile as grasping for the wind.

/Building many houses is like striving after wind. /There was a deacon who used to attend my church. /This deacon built a house on her land. /Her husband was not a man of faith. /Her husband put all his efforts into building this house.

/But after he completed constructing it, he was too fatigued and he passed away. /At the time of his sickness, he was part of a cult. /He tried to live a good life, to live happily in a new house, but it was like striving after wind.

/If the LORD does not build our house, we are building in vain. /If the LORD does not watch over the city, the watchman watches in vain as if he is grabbing the wind. /On September 11, 2001, there was an incident.

/America, with its nearly flawless national defense system, fell victim to a terrorist attack. /The World Trade Center that stood at 110 stories was terrorized by a hijacked airplane. /What kind of country is the U.S.A.? /It is a country with a strong national defense system.

/If God does not protect someone, a watchman stays awake in vain. /Solomon, as he pondered in Jerusalem, concluded that everything is like striving after wind. /God must build our houses for us.

/We can only do well when God protects us. /The person awakes in the morning. /Late at night, he lies down to sleep. /He labors and eats bread. /But all of this is like grasping the wind. /It says that God gives us rest.

/Our lives are like striving after wind. /The Preacher who has become king comes to this conclusion in Jerusalem. /All is vanity and like striving after wind.

/Fourth, the result of the Preacher’s reflections, is there is nothing that humans can do.

/Verse 15. /What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

/A person cannot make straight what is crooked. /Here, it says “what is lacking.” /It is saying that we cannot count what does not exist. /There are many stars in the sky. /Can we count all of them?

/Can we count the hairs on our head? /We cannot know the exact number of hairs that we have. /The Preacher has come to a proper realization. /But people try to make straight what is crooked.

/People who shouldn't become president try all that they can to become president.
/Eventually, they will not be elected president. /We can try to count the stars in the sky,
but we cannot. /This is life's conclusion.

/I cannot do it. /Therefore, we need to trust in the Almighty God. /We need to trust in the
Omniscient God. /The Almighty and All-knowing God can do anything and everything.

/He can make straight what is crooked. /God made the stars in the sky, so he knows their
number. /The Preacher realized this. /He realized the truth at the end of his days.

/We need to understand that we cannot do anything, and I hope you all come to trust in
the Almighty God. /What kind of person was the apostle Paul? /No one could follow him
in his hard work. /That is why Paul persecuted the Christian church.

/He met Jesus on the way to Damascus. /After he met Jesus, he came to a realization. /He
said that he is the most lowly of all the believers, /that he is the most lowly of all apostles,
/and that he is the worst of all sinners.

/He confesses this in 1 Corinthians 15:9. / "But by the grace of God I am what I am, /and
his grace toward me was not in vain. /On the contrary, I worked harder than any of
them, /though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me."

/Solomon, at the end of his lifetime when he was king of Jerusalem, studied and
contemplated. /He came to realize that there is nothing man can do. /Man cannot
straighten what is crooked, /nor can he count the stars in the sky.

/He has reached a point of faith. /Therefore, we too need to try hard to come to a place of
good faith. /We need to have a faith that confesses that I am where I am because of God's
grace.

/The fifth point is the limitations of man's wisdom and the meaninglessness of man's
wisdom. /Solomon came to the conclusion that man's wisdom is limited, and it is very
small.

/Verse 16. /I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were
over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and
knowledge."

/The preacher says he has acquired great wisdom. /The truth is, God gave Solomon
unparalleled wisdom. /Solomon was wiser than any king of Jerusalem.

/But he came to understand that everything is meaningless. /Compared to God's wisdom,
his wisdom was like a grain of sand on a beach.
/How humble is he in saying this? /We in our pride try to elevate ourselves.

/Look to the fields on a summer day. /The ears of grain /lift their heads as they think they are better than one another. /When fall comes, the grains of the field turn yellow as they ripen. /The ripened grains bow their heads in humility.

/Can you imagine how prideful Solomon must have been in his youth when he received wisdom? /He probably thought that there was no one like him. /But today, he confesses. /He confesses that all is vanity.

/In verses 17-18, Solomon tells us the result of his thinking. /He realizes that seeking a greater wisdom brings much vexation.

/Verse 17. /And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

/Solomon says that trying to know wisdom again is like knowing madness and folly. /Searching for such wisdom is madness, he says. /It is like striving after wind. /Now, here is the conclusion.

/Verse 18. /For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

/Solomon says that increasing knowledge increases sorrow. /Much wisdom is much vexation. /Therefore, we must not try to grasp meaningless things, but we need to believe and encounter Jesus Christ, who is true wisdom and true knowledge.

/This ends our 2nd lecture on the book of Ecclesiastes. /Thank you.