

“Meaningless to Meaningful” Weekly Recap

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun?

-Ecc. 1:2-3

Jared was pinch-hitting for a sick Chris this morning. He went back to last year's sermon series on Ecclesiastes. Today, he gave an overview of the book as a reminder of the words of the Teacher. How do we have meaningful moments in all the meaningless things in life?

The teacher first speaks of chasing after pleasure. He denied himself nothing. At the end of all, he says he was “chasing after the wind”.

Jared reminded us of how this plays out in our world cultures today. He told of the Cheese Wheel racing in the UK, and the stone stacking in Colorado. Some are to show the way of the trail, and some are at the peak as monuments to accomplishments of small groups. He then talked about their own adventures in TREK with the youth group. The kids would each pick a stone to carry with them. At the end of the week, they would share stories about the people that were important to them that week, and have that stone as a reminder of that person. One year, at the bottom of the trail, the kids from the group home where Jared's dad ministered had stacked stones and erected a cross for him. He was still fighting cancer at the time, and that was a mixed message for Jared to process. It was clearly meaningful, but the meaning was multifaceted.

When Moses came down from Sinai, he stacked stones. Jacob stacked stones at Bethel to commemorate his encounter with God. Joshua stacked stones from the middle of the Jordan river when they crossed on dry land. There is so much meaning in the journeys we take with God and each other. See the end of Ecclesiastes:

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.

-Ecc. 12:13

We can all live a life with meaning, stacking stones in our own way, giving glory to God. I Corinthians 10:31:

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Something Jared didn't talk about last year in his series was a call to relationship. Look back to Ecclesiastes 4:7-12.

Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless— a miserable business! Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Throughout the book, the teacher is worried about what will happen to all his possessions, and his legacy. If it is Solomon, or another reflecting on his life, we should take note of some of his circumstances. Solomon had a lot of wives, a lot of concubines, and a lot of children. In one sense, out of his plenty, he seemed to have nothing and no one. He lost deep relationships. These deep relationships make everything else worth doing. They are a source of meaning. Feasts become communion. Wealth becomes legacy and memories. Work becomes stone stacking.

Jared talked about having a treasure to pass down to Gavin. What are your treasures? How can we be about stacking stones of faith in and through our relationships? What can you do this week?

Start with one stone.