

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Session 1: Chapter 1 – The Search Begins

Opening: When was the last time you had a good belly laugh? What was it that made you laugh so hard?

Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

What poetic form did JP say Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 uses?

Is this passage descriptive or prescriptive?

What phrase does JP use to summarize this passage of Scripture?

How are you feeling after the first two chapters of Ecclesiastes?

What have you found most difficult about the book thus far?

What have you found most encouraging or even hopeful?

How is the book of Ecclesiastes affecting your faith in God?

Do you think that is true—there is a season for everything?

Does Solomon’s statement bring you peace? Why, or why not?

In what ways does it help your reading of the text to know that each pairing in these verses is a merismus?

What errors might emerge in our reading if we fail to recognize the poetic form Solomon utilizes?

Which do you find hardest to accept?

Which do you have the most questions about?

Which are the most meaningful to you? Explain your answers.

To what extent have you already experienced life’s highs and lows?

How have your highs and lows influenced your outlook on life?

Do you find yourself agreeing or disagreeing with Solomon’s assessment that life is meaningless? For what reasons?

How have you seen God’s redemption play out in your own life?

In what ways are you waiting for God to make “everything beautiful” in your own life?

In what ways can it be difficult to believe that God makes everything beautiful?

What questions do you wish you had an answer to?

Would you be okay with never knowing the answer? Why, or why not?

How do you react to Solomon's conclusion?

How would you rate your happiness level?

To what extent are you doing the things Solomon suggests, like doing good or finding satisfaction in your work?

To what degree do you view life as a gift of God?

In what ways does it encourage you to know that "everything God does will endure forever" (v. 14)?

To what degree does that give you hope for today?

How often do you find yourself wrestling with life's apparent futility?

What are the prompts that cause you to consider these thoughts?

How do you react when these thoughts arise?

In what ways are we similar to animals?

What are the major differences?

Why is it important to keep these things in mind?

How can we cultivate more trust in God and his timing?

What might change about your life if you believed that God is constantly working to make things beautiful?

LAST WORD

There is a time for everything—birth and death, weeping and laughing, keeping and throwing away. And as much as we fight against it, the passage of time is outside our control. There's nothing we can do to stop it. And that can be a hard reality to grasp. It can make life feel meaningless.

But there is one who exists outside of time, who has authority over time, and who is constantly working to make all the hard things we experience as time-bound creatures beautiful. Day in and day out, God is at work. Life is not meaningless. It is a gift from the one who gives everything purpose and meaning. And we can trust him.