

Vanity

Ecclesiastes - Matthew Henry Commentary

The name of this book signifies “**The Preacher.**” *The wisdom of God here preaches to us, speaking by Solomon, who it is evident was the author. At the close of his life, being made sensible of his sin and folly, he recorded here his experience for the benefit of others, as the book of his repentance; and he pronounced all earthly good to be “vanity and vexation of spirit.” It convinces us of the vanity of the world, and that it cannot make us happy; of the vileness of sin, and its certain tendency to make us miserable. It shows that no created good can satisfy the soul, and that happiness is to be found in God alone; and this doctrine must, under the blessed Spirit’s teaching, lead the heart to Christ Jesus.*

I was talking to a friend of mine a couple of weeks ago about different things and how some people do one thing and believe one thing and others see those matters totally different. I turned and asked another friend of mine what they thought, before we knew it we were talking about **Ecclesiastes** and how Solomon even though he was the world’s greatest ever seen or known person of wisdom, he still made this statement “**Ecc 1:2-3** *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? What does vanity mean?* Websters Dictionary says this:

Emptiness; want of substance to satisfy desire; uncertainty; inanity Fruitless desire or endeavor. Trifling labor that produces no good. Emptiness; untruth Empty pleasure; vain pursuit; idle show; unsubstantial enjoyment Ostentation; arrogance. Inflation of mind upon slight grounds; empty pride, inspired by an overweening conceit of one’s personal attainments or decorations. Fools cannot be cured of their vanity.

Vanity is the food of fools.

Solomon in all his wisdom, wealth, earthly possessions, wives, travels, his governing, his ideals, everything about him and his life he considered it all vanity or if you would like me to put it in today’s language a waste of time! The Bible is the word of God and infallible, I didn’t say it, The Bible did! Read in particular and take note of **Ecc 2v11**. Solomon goes on in **chapter 2** to mention only one thing that is good read **verse 24 and also Ch3v11-13**. I especially like **Chapter 7v1**, I have always thought this way in my Christian walk, to have a good name is better than “to be right”.

My friend that I was talking with at the time quoted a few things from Ecc that I had not heard and it caught my attention so it caused me to read and study it. **Chapter 8** starts to be a little bit positive but in the end stops with vanity again, **verse 2** caught my attention, the only thing that Solomon says all the way through Ecclesiastes is to seek God and Obey Him! This is the only thing he says without stating it is vanity. **Chapter 9** starts to look up as well, with enjoy all things, food, drink, be merry and enjoy the wife of your youth, but then it finishes with, “This too is vanity”! Solomon even goes to the extent of stating that wherever a tree falls there it will be **Ecc 11v3** now that was really deep and spiritual wasn’t it? I have heard some say that Solomon was “Mad” at the time of writing Ecclesiastes and he had lost his mind. I doubt that very much, because he finishes the book with a very profound and only thing that he does not say is vanity and that can be found in **chapter 12v13**.

Every month I get good reports how people have been touched by what was written, and yet who can remember what was written in the July Newsletter 2006? I may criticise what was written, but that too is vanity, a waste of time because I have faults, we all have faults, maybe this is why Jesus says judge not, because we see things from a different perspective! I read the newsletter every month at least 6 times - every month! Why do I write what I do, what is my total intention and the end result I have in mind? Some may take things personally or with a grain of salt, but when I reread what I wrote and when I see the positive and the uplifting I take no notice of it really, it is the stuff I don’t like that gets me asking God, “why did I write that, what was I trying to say, what was I thinking at the time”. Guess what; God always answers me, he shows me where I may have a dirty attitude, or I may need an adjustment in my life, how many other people are like this? My intention is to get you thee reader seeking God on stuff you do like and stuff you don’t and find out more about yourself and God.

Solomon said, the only thing that is not vanity is to seek God and Obey him! What is he really saying here? I could be all super spiritual and say many things, I could quote scripture, I could quote preachers, I could give you my ideal thought and you may not agree with it. God has shown me in September last year, that proverbs tells us a fool is known by his many words or they bring him unstuck, **Prov 14v6; Prov 18v7; Prov 29v20 Prov 29v11** and also there is much sin in someone who speaks much and does not refrain his lips as in **Prov 10v19**.

After talking to my friend we watched a teaching DVD by John Bevere titled "*knowing God intimately*". John on the very first dvd quoted **Phillipians 2v3** and **1Thess 5v13**. I like to think that other people are worth more than me. Someone stated recently I had some issues, don't we all? Yeah we can see each others faults, but rarely do we see our own, unfortunately I see many of mine, I try and adjust my thinking, but it gets me down at times. I think this is why Jesus said Judge not least you be judged. I have been judged a lot lately, do I care? No! we all have faults and sin and the Bible tells us that we are to hate sin in **Romans 12v9**.

I want to change, but like Paul in **Rom Chap 7** I struggle! Who doesn't struggle with Sin? Jesus talks about how we should feel about sin and I doubt many of us do, think seriously, what is sin? Simple, it is disobedience to God, in whatever area, too many people look at sin as Adultery, Murder, Hatred, when even if God asks us to pray for someone and we don't, that too is sin read **James 4v17**. It is only by grace that we are saved! Something I realise is that a person who gets saved does not change overnight! But come a few years down the track there must be a change visually seen if they have been walking with God, if they have not changed, I doubt they are even saved.