



A reflection upon Ecclesiastes 1:1-18
19 February 2017

The vanity of Human Toil

We might ask what good is it of what we do?
What does it mean when all memory is gone?
What purpose do our actions serve if what do is undone by the chaos of time?

The temptation is to believe that all is hopeless, but the reality is, we only see what our senses reveal to us, therefore, what we do not sense is not real to us unless we observe some evidence through our senses. It is for this very reason we do not see as God sees, for He sees all in heaven and on earth, as well as across all the generations from before we were formed within the womb.

We are creatures of habit. Indeed there are many things we must do each day, simply to survive, but our vanity is to think only of our bodies, failing to see what we must do for the nourishment of our soul. While God has placed the seasons in motion, to repeat many times, so we might receive the cleansing rain, so the crops may grow, and the animals may flourish; it is but fuel for our existence. In a moment, it may be cut off and we shall be no more.

What is revealed to us is that what is of dust shall return to dust. What is within our memories shall fade unless it lives on within the soul. All of our existence shall fade unless we pass it on to our children and they to the generations to come. What is the wisdom within a book if it is not read?

We have an urge to advance and progress. We herald new technology, but what is its use if it only enables the sins of old?

And what of the lessons of history? If we do not teach it to our children, where will such lessons reside? What wisdom will it provide? What truth will we know if truth is not shared?

How long will the words we speak live? Only as long as there are ears to hear and souls to remember; but even then, our words and thought will live on only as long as there are tongues to share and eyes to read. The durability of what we do is determined by who

will speak of it and who will share of it. We may record our words on paper, but they shall die the moment the paper is no longer shared, no longer found, and no longer kept in hearts. Our words pass into the abyss when the last etching is destroyed and the last soul ceases to share.

There is nothing physical we may take from this world, so all of our possessions are temporary. All which is ours and all which shall be remembered of us is our love or the absence of it. This is what is seen from heaven. This is what flows with our soul. Heaven rejoices at the blessings of love.

The evil one rejoices at our indifference, for from it spawns the many sources of sin. When we are only concerned for ourselves and we do not care for another, the vanities of the world consume us and pave the way to the abyss.

Let us, then, turn from the temporary concerns of the world and towards the eternal concerns of God. Let us turn away from the emptiness of the selfish soul, the path of vanity, and turn to the fullness of faith, a faith nourished by love and the eternal blessings of His Holy Word.

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