

Reflection Questions: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

For the message, "When It's All Said & Done...." given by Pastor John Ferguson at Mercy Hill Church in Bryan/College Station, Texas, on June 21, 2020

These reflection questions are designed to help you apply the message from the Scriptures by helping you think through application to your personal life, your church life, and your city's life. You can use these by yourself for reflection, or with your family or small group for discussion. To review the message, go to MercyHillBCS.org/resources/messages.

INTRODUCTION

Pray. Take a moment to pray asking God to guide you in reflecting upon the Scripture text.

Read the Scripture text: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

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| 1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. | 8 All things are full of weariness;
a man cannot utter it;
the eye is not satisfied with seeing,
nor the ear filled with hearing. |
| 2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher,
vanity of vanities! All is vanity. | 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. |
| 3 What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun? | 10 Is there a thing of which it is said,
"See, this is new"?
It has been already
in the ages before us. |
| 4 A generation goes, and a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever. | 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. |
| 5 The sun rises, and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it rises. | |
| 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. | |
| 7 All streams run to the sea,
but the sea is not full;
to the place where the streams flow,
there they flow again. | |

A summary of the message: Our existence, east of Eden under the sun, is about as lasting as a breath or the morning mist or the smoke arising from a fire. Yet the earth has been here long before our arrival, and will be here long after we're gone. So the Sage asks us the honest question: What do we gain by all our toil? We're likely to not even be remembered.

Let's get started...

- What grabs your attention in this text? What questions or thoughts arise as you reflect on what it's saying?

QUESTIONS

1. Let's think about how this text applies to our lives as individuals.

- What do you think this text is designed to do? How do you feel reading it?

- What happens when we live like our lives are not a fleeting breath? How might we be fooling ourselves by all our work, toil, and activity?
- How does this passage set us up to receive the good news of Jesus? In other words, how does the good news of Jesus shine against the dark backdrop that the Sage is painting for us?

2. Let's think about how this text applies to us as a community of Jesus' followers.

- How might we at Mercy Hill remind each other of the fleetingness of life in such a way that causes us to "store up treasures in heaven" as Jesus says in Matthew 6, rather than storing up treasures here on earth where moth and rust destroy?
- In other words, what role should we play in each other's life so that we remind ourselves that the works of our hands and the accumulation of possessions is not the most important thing about us? How can we challenge each other to live for the Kingdom of God more and more, and give away more and more?

3. Let's think about how this text applies to our city.

- What would it look like for us to be a faithful witness of the Gospel of Jesus in a culture that has largely bought into the view that "you only live once"? Or to put it another way, how might the "good news" of Ecclesiastes serve to awaken people from their slumbers that this life is the end all be all?

CONCLUSION QUESTION

What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

PRAYER

What are some ways you can turn what you are learning into prayer? List them as bullet points....

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