

**EVANGEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)**

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**Sunday Worship 10:45 AM**

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## **The Cure for Emptiness**

King Solomon is known to have been the wisest of men. He was also notorious as having great power and authority.

Solomon decided on a project that should interest all of us. He would, through careful experimentation and observation, seek to find that which is satisfying and fulfilling for man.

While we may think that travel, great wealth or unbridled pleasure would bring us a sense of complete satisfaction, few of us have the resources to test these theories. But Solomon made full use of his great resources in his quest for that which fulfills. You and I can find answers through his experiences.

As a young man, Solomon was unusually handsome and had a keen mind. Having given himself to the pursuit of pleasure in hope of finding purpose and satisfaction in life, he first tried wine. He didn't become a befuddled drunk, but skillfully guided himself in the enjoyment of fine wines.

He tried to find meaning in building great buildings and great gardens and parks. He secured vast numbers of servants and increased his livestock holdings far beyond any before him. He collected silver and gold in great abundance and kept the best singers around to entertain him.

He tried to find fulfillment in sex. Solomon took 300 wives and 700 concubines. These included the most beautiful women in his kingdom and neighboring kingdoms. If variety in sex partners is all that is claimed for it, this should have provided Solomon with an answer. But he found that this, too, left him feeling empty and frustrated.

The book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon's account of these attempts to find purpose and meaning in life. This book is the account of a very perceptive man analyzing life on the horizontal plane. He does not speak from God's point of view, but from man's point of reference. And from the midst of his experiences he says, "It's all empty and meaningless and what's the point of living anyway?"

Solomon's disillusionment can be seen in his words from Ecclesiastes 3:19-22: "The fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other. Indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity. All go to the same place. All come from the dust and all return to the dust. Who knows that the spirit of man ascends upward and the spirit of the beast descends downward to the earth? And I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot."

To be sure, this is a cynical view of life. But the thoughtful person thinking about life, apart from God's revelation, must reach a similar conclusion.

It is near the end of a long life that Solomon makes these observations. Before he ends his discourse, however, he shows us the only path to fulfillment. In the very last part of Ecclesiastes he states: "Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

It appears that having been disappointed in all this world has to offer, Solomon remembered the words of his father; "You, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve Him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever." (I Chronicles 28:9)