



The Vanity of All Life – Ecclesiastes 2:17

17 So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

In John 12:25, we read the words of Jesus saying that “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his

life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” Yet, here in Ecclesiastes, Solomon exclaims in frustration that he hated his life. Continuing with his rant on the futility and vanity of all life, Solomon notes that “what is done under the sun” is “striving after wind.” (Ecclesiastes 2:17)

The note in the Lutheran Study Bible says this, “Solomon soon became weary of his labor and looked upon it with contempt. It burdened and fatigued him as he aged and his sorrow increased.” Advanced in age, Solomon reflects upon all he has accomplished, and rather than gazing back with pride, he despairs. It would seem that all he can see are fleeting successes and missed opportunities.

This is the same Solomon who brought the kingdom of Israel to her national peak. Yet, still, he sees all that he has done as fleeting, amounting to nothing but “striving after wind.” While wind has power that can be captured to the great benefit of many, its power is not our own to control. The wind comes and goes as it pleases. Our desire for the return of wind or its departure is not under our domain. Perhaps, Solomon was able to see not only all that he accomplished, but all that he was unable to accomplish and regretfully found himself dwelling upon the lack rather than the bounty.

The note in the Lutheran Study Bible continues “This world is a vale of tears even for the privileged. Those who are burdened are invited to come to the Lord for rest.” Solomon lived a uniquely privileged life. God blessed him beyond imagination. Still, he came to a point where he was not satisfied with his life.

Throughout our lives, our choices create baggage that many of us carry. Additionally, the choices of others may add to our burdens. In Christ, we are freed from those burdens. We no longer need to carry the regrets of what never was with us. This frees us to celebrate what we have been able to do and rejoice in the blessings that God has showered upon us.

Thoughts for Reflection

What regrets do you have that you need to hand off to God in order to unburden yourself?