



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

January 5, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

THE SON ALSO RISES

The sun also rises, and the sun goes down.

Ecclesiastes 1:5 NKJV

READ Ecclesiastes 1:1-11

Ernest Hemingway's first full-length novel features hard-drinking friends who've recently endured World War I. They bear the literal and figurative scars of the war's devastation and try to cope with it via parties, grand adventures, and sleeping around. Always, there is alcohol to numb the pain. No one is happy.

Hemingway's title for his book *The Sun Also Rises* comes straight from the pages of Ecclesiastes (1:5). In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon refers to himself as "the Teacher" (v. 1). He observes, "Everything is meaningless" (v. 2) and asks, "What do people gain from all their labors?" (v. 3). Solomon saw how the sun rises and sets, the wind blows to and fro, the rivers flow endlessly into a never satisfied sea (vv. 5–7). Ultimately, all is forgotten (v. 11).

Both Hemingway and Ecclesiastes confront us with the stark futility of living for this life only. Solomon, however, weaves bright hints of the divine into his book. There is permanence—and real hope. Ecclesiastes shows us as we truly are, but it also shows God as He is. "Everything God does will endure forever," said Solomon (3:14), and therein lies our great hope. For God has given us the gift of us His Son, Jesus.

Apart from God, we're adrift in an endless, never satisfied sea. Through His risen Son, Jesus, we're reconciled to Him, and we discover our meaning, value, and purpose.

By Tim Gustafson

PRAY & REFLECT

Loving Father, help me find my fulfillment in You. Amen

What occupies your time and what meaning does it hold? How might you change your priorities to follow Jesus?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The author of the book of Ecclesiastes is unknown, but many Bible scholars believe it's Solomon. The writer refers to himself as Qoheleth, a Hebrew word commonly translated as "the Teacher," or "the Preacher" (1:1). As a "son of David, king in Jerusalem" (v. 1), he certainly qualifies. And as a king with the reputation as the wisest and wealthiest, he would've lived the themes of the book; hence, he becomes the plausible choice. Regardless of authorship, along with Job, Proverbs, and the poetry books of Psalms and Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes makes an invaluable contribution to the Bible's Wisdom Literature. – **By Tim Gustafson**

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