

Sunday the 10th of January 2021

We read from the Bible: Ecclesiastes 1 (Djomee)

Theme: Would-be happiness of meaningful life (1): Time for reflection

### **Introduction**

Last week a shopkeeper was interviewed. He was very sad. One year ago he and his wife had bought a shop for selling clothes. But because of the coronacrisis they could not sell their winter collection. They were desperate. Why did we buy this shop? It is worthless now.

We can have the same feelings. What is the profit of all our efforts? Why do we work or study?

During this second lockdown we can also have these thoughts.

The Preacher of this book in the bible tells about this in vers 2. He mentions it: vanity. And he repeats it. His conclusion is: all is vanity!

This book in the bible is a special book. Maybe we see it as a negative dejected book. But it has a special meaning. It wants us to think about life. Why do we do our work? What is the profit of all our efforts? You can have a better job, but maybe you have less time for your family or hobby's.

Or you had more luxury, but maybe you have more sorrows to look after it. So what is the use of it? Ecclesiastes is gospel, good news for busy people. Think about the meaning of life!

We do not know anything about the author. But that is not important. His message is important!

### **Nothing new under the sun**

The theme of this chapter is: vanity. And the author is like someone who makes a movie. He films all the different aspects. What is the meaning of life? Is there any change? All those technical changes, do they really help us? The fabrics make our environments dirty, there are plastics all over the place. Our journeys are great, but we have queues daily and accidents.

During many years Simon Wiesenthal caught German criminals who slaughtered people during the Second World War. But when there were 1100 caught he said: there is no change in this world. There are still wars going on.

In the verses 6 en 7 the Preacher says: everything is still the same. We are always busy, but what helps us this?

### **Striving after wind**

So ... everything is in vain? You get this impression.

But ... he exaggerates. On purpose. Like we do a lot of time. He wants to make us clear that we have to think about life. What is really worth while living? Do you see what is the purpose of life?

Please see that we as human beings can not arrange life. We are not able to create life and to manage life in all its aspects.

That is our sin. We think that we are like God. That we have life in our hands. But without God we are nobodies. We need His help, His grace, His love, His guiding. Do you realise this?

In verse 15 the Preacher comes to a conclusion. When we see a tree like a pollard-willow we see that it is bent. You can not get it straight. Or a flower that is broken, you can not get it straight.

And what is lacking cannot be numbered. When you lost a loved one, there is an empty place. It is very sad; it cannot be filled.

Now you understand the last sentence in verse 18: he who increases knowledge increases sorrows. The sins and brokenness of this life and this world damaged our lives. What can we do about it?

### **Seek and find**

Why does the Preacher tells us this? He wants you to think about life! We are always busy. Why? We think that we manage life. What helps this you?

You see the meaning of this against the background of this whole book and the whole bible. Read chapter 12,13. Fear God and keep his commandments. This is the best you can do! Focus on God. Focus on what He did in Jesus Christ. He came to rescue us from our sins. He makes that life is not always the same and without meaning. He came to bring the biggest change ever. Because of Him there is a new start possible, forgiveness, a new life. He gave His life for you! And His Kingdom will come. You can see the changes when He came into this world. Sins were forgiven, the sick were healed and the dead were risen from the grave. What we can't do, He can! So live with Him!

### **Conclusion**

There is a saying: a standstill for reflection can give you speed. Do not be without courage, but focus on God. Expect great things from Him, do great things for Him. Life is not meaningless. If you seek Him, you will find Him (Isaiah 55,6). Live with Him, the One Who loves you!!

God bless you!

Pastor/minister Jan Bosch.