

Stephen Curry is the greatest shooter in the history of the NBA.

4,058 regular season three points made, 25,000-plus points, one Olympic gold medal, four NBA rings, two-time NBA MVP, one-time finals MVP.

Stephen Curry is the greatest shooter in the history of the NBA.

I, on the other hand, am the worst under pressure shooter at Norman Hurst Basketball Courts.

You ask my brother, look, I'm, like, honestly, I'm pretty good under the basket, like, under the post, getting layups, but as soon as I'm in three-on-three pick-up basketball under pressure, I cannot shoot to save my life.

You know what the difference is between Steph Curry and me?

Stephen Curry has trained for years and years and years under the most brutal, extreme competition conditions in order for him to be able to shoot well.

He has trained the most insane shots.

He has trained 105 three-pointers made, one after the other, in order that when it comes to game time, he might be able to swish those hoops.

I, on the other hand, train only by myself.

No defenders, blue sky above me, air pods in, no worries.

I take my time, get my footing set, a couple of dribbles, shake the shoulders, and I shoot, and I make it, because I'm a blue sky shooter.

But as soon as the pressure comes, I can't shoot.

That's why I'm not the greatest shooter in the NBA.

But Stephen Curry is.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes is a bit like Steph Curry's training.

The author of Ecclesiastes, the teacher, has gone to the absolute extremes of human experience.

The highest highs.

He has searched for the good life in pleasure and money and achievement and all that, and he has gone to the lowest lows, concluding famously, meaningless, meaningless.

Everything is meaningless.

And now, having gone to those extreme places, the teacher returns to everyday life to offer wisdom for us.

And just like Steph Curry, who trains under the most intense circumstances, he shows up with wisdom for everyday life.

The Book of Proverbs, on the other hand, is a bit like my basketball training.

When we think of the phrase, wisdom for everyday life, I think most of us think of Proverbs, right?

When we think of the Bible Book of Wisdom, probably in the contemporary Christian imagination, Proverbs has a monopoly on wisdom.

The fact is, Proverbs is only one of three books of biblical wisdom literature.

The wisdom of Proverbs is like the way I train to shoot the basketball.

Blue sky, no one around, no defense, just like if you train up a child in the way they should go, when they're old, they won't depart from it.

Like generally true most of the time, but it's not the cloudy gray wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

It's true, but it's a different sort of wisdom.

And so today, as we come to the fourth message in the Book of Ecclesiastes, we are surveying wisdom for everyday life from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

And it's a wisdom that can only come from going to those dark places in life and returning to offer wisdom.

So you're ready for the wisdom?

Wisdom for everyday life, here it is, from Ecclesiastes.

Carpe diem.

Carpe diem.

Seize the day.

That's a line popularized by Robin Williams' film Dead Poets Society.

It means live in the present.

Seize the day.

Carpe diem.

It's a Latin phrase.

That's the wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life.

Six times over the course of the Book of Ecclesiastes, the teacher kind of pauses and he says something like, this is what I have observed to be good during the meaningless days of life on earth.

Eat food and be happy.

Enjoy life with your wife because you're all going to die in the end.

Scholars have come to call these six passages the carpe diem passages because the wisdom of Ecclesiastes is seize the day.

Now, I've just spoiled the punchline of the whole sermon, but we're going to unpack that carpe diem passage, those six passages in six points.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life.

Eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, accept limits, and do good.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life.

Number one, eat gladly.

Chapter two, verse 24.

The teacher concludes, a person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil.

This, too, I see is from the hand of God.

For without him, who could eat or find enjoyment?

That's the first of the six Carpe Diem passages that we're going to look at in Ecclesiastes.

Eat gladly.

Did you know that food is on page one of the Bible?

In Genesis chapter one, God makes the heavens and the earth, and it says in Genesis one, page one of the Bible, that God made plants with seeds in it and trees with fruit for food.

I think that's a profound observation.

Human beings were never meant to live without food, and all the people said, Amen.

We were never meant to eat once and never eat again.

God created food.

It's on page one of the Bible.

And then when you flick to the very end of the Bible, in the book of Revelation, there's food again.

Do you remember in the new city, the city of Zion, the new Jerusalem, there's a tree in the river that yields fruit every month for the healing and the food of the nations.

The tree of life bears food for God's people.

And so from page one to page...

What is it?

Something like 1,369 of the Bible, food is everywhere.

If we were to trace this theme, we would construct a biblical theology of food.

And just briefly, it's quite interesting to do this.

You remember the Exodus, the book of Exodus, the climactic salvation event in Israel's history.

In the Passover, God commanded His people to put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and to commemorate the Passover, the great salvation with a meal.

Lamb, bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

It was a meal.

God provided Israel with manna in the wilderness.

That's like bread.

Israel's prophets spoke of the great feast to come at the end of the age.

In the New Testament, Jesus said He is the what of life?

The bread of life.

That if we eat of Him, we will have life.

The lasting symbol that Jesus gave us to remember what He did on the cross was a meal.

Bread and wine.

Broken, His body broken for us and His blood poured out.

In John 21, this is insane, Jesus in a resurrected kind of body, ate fish.

He ate food.

God never intended that we should not live with food.

He never intended for us to not eat food.

So eat gladly.

That's the wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

We see this in Acts chapter 2.

This is a picture of the early church.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

All the believers were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

Every day, they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

It has always been core to the people of God, to the way of Jesus, to eat together.

To eat together, and so five ways to eat gladly.

Way number one, to eat gladly, eat together.

Jesus invites his followers to gather around food, to eat together.

Remember Jesus, our Lord, was constantly eating with tax collectors and sinners.

Courtney and my Life Hub, we have dinner every week.

We get to share a meal around our small table, and lately we don't really fit at the table, so we're squeezing in.

We eat together and we eat gladly.

Number two, to eat gladly, eat well.

Now, there's a place for a quick meal on a random Tuesday night, but God made food and he made this tongue and taste and sense and spice in order that we might eat gladly, in order that

we might feast on the riches of God's grace in food.

So light the candles for once.

Sit at the table if you don't normally sit at the table.

Prepare a good question and eat well.

To eat gladly, number three, say grace.

The grace when I was a kid that was just the standard one, unless somebody went rogue and extemporaneous was, Lord, for what we are about to receive, we are truly thankful.

Amen.

Ancient, the Jewish people have for a long time said this prayer over food.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

How cool is that?

To eat gladly, say grace.

Forthly, to eat gladly, fast often.

You know, Jesus is Lord, we know that.

And because he's Lord, he gets to challenge us.

Jesus gets to ask us challenging questions.

But what's funny about the New Testament is, sometimes we feel extremely challenged in a time when maybe Jesus wasn't intentionally challenging.

And the example I give is Matthew 6, verse 16.

Three words that are very challenging to us in the modern church.

Jesus says, when you fast, when you fast.

I won't do a survey, but I mean, in my life, fasting is not a core part of my rhythms of discipleship.

And yet Jesus was constantly fasting.

His disciples, certainly before he came and after he ascended to heaven, they fasted.

To fast is to eat gladly and finally to eat gladly, feed others.

Jesus said, it's more blessed to give than to receive.

If you were to cook a meal, if you were to provide food in our food collection, you are providing food to those who can't eat unless the Lord provides for them.

To eat gladly, feed others.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life is to eat gladly.

Number 2, to drink joyfully.

Chapter 3, verse 12.

I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil.

This is the gift of God.

This is the second of the six Carpe Diem passages in Ecclesiastes, and it's talking about drinking joyfully.

Now, probably primarily water, but with wisdom in moderation, other things as well.

And in one sense, obviously, to drink joyfully is just the liquid counterpart to eating gladly.

But drinking is different to eating.

We all know this because while you can go, the human body can go for quite a while without food, we cannot last without water.

We are constantly dependent on water.

And while food could be a rich feast for the senses, drinking water is one of the most, I mean, I



find it one of the most boring parts of my day.

Tasteless.

It's like, I just have to do this to keep me alive.

But I think there's actually an invitation in the act of drinking water to receive that joyfully.

Jesus said in John 4 verse 13, everyone who drinks this water, meaning literal water from the Samaritan's well, everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again.

And that's human life.

We drink cups and cups and cups and cups of water every day or maybe every week.

We're constantly drinking.

But Jesus says, whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Did you know the last words of the Holy Spirit and the Church in the Bible are these?

The Spirit and the Bride, that's the Church, say, come.

And let the one who hears say, come.

Let the one who is thirsty come.

And let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

The wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life is to drink joyfully when you drink water, to remember that I'm going to be thirsty again in about half an hour.

But I thirst ultimately for God and for the living water that he gives me.

The wisdom for Ecclesiastes for everyday life is eat gladly, drink joyfully, and number three, enjoy work.

Ecclesiastes 3 verse 22.

So, I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work.

Because that is their lot.

For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?

That's the third of the six Carpe Diem passages.

The context of Ecclesiastes 3 is the teacher is lamenting the fact that you could work your entire life tirelessly 12-hour days to achieve something, and ultimately, you will die and your projects will probably become nothing.

All the money that you worked for will go to your children who might not be grateful for it, who might not use it well.

And so, the teacher says, what's the lasting impact of work?

What's the point of doing work?

And then, going from that edge of human experience, he comes back and says, you know what, it's wise to enjoy your work right now, in the present, to enjoy the gift of God that is work.

Different cultures around the world and even in the Bible have very different perspectives on work.

The Babylonians, in their famous creation epic, the Enuma Elish, told the story that the gods living in heaven were constantly fighting and constantly needing things.

And in the midst of the battle, some blood spilled and it formed human beings, and they went, oh, good, let's get the humans to do the work for us.

Now, that's led the Babylonian culture to think of work as the curse of the gods, cursed to constantly feed the gods through sacrifice.

In Greek and Roman thought, work was undignified for proper citizens.

Work was for the slaves and philosophy and speaking and rhetoric was for the educated class.

In the Bible, the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, we find the astonishing claim in its world that work is good.

Actually, that God created work.

In Genesis 1, God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

In other words, that's work.

There's work to do.

So, God created mankind in his own image.

In the image of God, he created them male and female, he created them.

In Genesis 2, God places the humans in the Garden of Eden to do two things, work it and keep it.

Work is from God.

God wants us to work.

Now, of course, we need two caveats.

Number one, rest is also from God.

God himself showed us to work and to rest, and to work and to rest in the rhythms of grace.

And number two, the fact that you and I know well that work has been frustrated by the fall.

We don't experience work as this joyful laboring to produce good in the world.

Ever since Genesis 3, when human beings turned their back on God, our work has been frustrated.

But what's interesting to note about Genesis 3 is, God never cursed work.

He never cursed the human beings.

He cursed the serpent.

He said, you will crawl on the ground and eat dust.

And he cursed the ground that the man was to till the earth and grow things from.

He didn't curse work and he didn't curse the human beings.

And so, while our work is in this room, I'm sure it's filled with frustration of many different kinds.

Work itself is good and is of God.

And yet we experience frustration.

But maybe that's the place that God is inviting us to transform this world by his power in.

Paul says in Ephesians 6 verse 7, Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not people.

That's a good principle for work.

God is sending us into work.

And so, the teacher offers wisdom for everyday life.

Enjoy work.

I was talking to someone a couple of weeks ago who's just started a new job.

And it's the same kind of work as he was doing before, but paid much more money.

And he was probably two weeks into the job.

And I said, how's it going?

Like, how's the new job?

Are you loving it?

And his shoulders dropped and he said, no, it's terrible.

I'm not doing anything all day.

I just waste time.

I get paid good money, but I'm not fulfilled in work.

And I was thinking based on this story that we want to work hard at work worth working hard at.

None of us want to win the lottery and never work a day for the rest of our lives.

Maybe we say we want that, but God created us to do meaningful things in this world.

And our work is one of the most meaningful things that we can do.

So the wisdom of Ecclesiastes for everyday life is eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, and number four, be happy.

Ecclesiastes 5.18.

This is the passage Cal read for us.

This is what I have observed to be good, says the teacher, that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink, and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor.

That's the three things that we've looked at so far.

Their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them, for this is their lot.

Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot, and be happy in their toil, this is a gift of God.

They seldom reflect on the days of their life because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.

Be happy.

What a weird thing to come from the Bible.

Be happy.

As though it were a choice.

As though we could just decide to forget our troubles and be happy.

I think it would be fair for us to sit here and say to the teacher, yeah, but what about this that I'm

going through?

What about this and this and this?

Easy for you to say be happy, but just think about who's saying these words for a second.

This is Ecclesiastes we're talking about.

This is the guy who has gone to the pit of depression and nihilism and realized that there is no meaning in life and now he returns to everyday life to offer wisdom and he says be happy because happiness is better than the other thing.

He's tried living that life, he's tried living this life and he says if you can find happiness in the present, that is a gift of God to be happy.

So he's not saying that it's easy for him to say.

He knows it's the gift of God.

Paul says in Philippians 4, rejoice in the Lord always.

I'll say it again, rejoice.

Let your gentleness be evident to all.

The Lord is near.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your request to God.

And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Great passage, but there are two seemingly equally impossible absolutes.

Rejoice always and be anxious for nothing.

Rejoice always and be anxious for nothing.

And we might say, yeah, great, impossible.

Impossible to rejoice always and be anxious for nothing.

I can't do that on my own, but I would say that is precisely Paul's point.

He knows that.

And he gives us the clue in the middle of the passage, the Lord is near.

Because the Lord is near, we can rejoice in Him always, and we can be anxious for nothing in Him always.

It's been said that joy is happiness despite circumstance.

We might say that peace is contentment despite circumstance.

No one can manufacture that.

Joy doesn't make sense in circumstances.

Peace doesn't make sense.

That's the whole point.

Paul says you will find a peace that transcends understanding, that doesn't make sense based on what you're going through.

It's the gift of God, to be happy.

Now, that's a lovely gift to receive.

How would you receive that gift?

I think Paul tells us in every situation, that's a third absolute, rejoice always, be anxious for nothing.

Always, in every situation, no matter what you're going through, rejoicing or anxiety, present by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your request to God, and then the peace of God will guard our hearts.

So, be happy.

The teacher of Ecclesiastes offers wisdom for everyday life.

Eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, and number five, accept limits.

Chapter 8 verse 15.

So, I commend the enjoyment of life, because there's nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad.

Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

How many days has God given you under the sun?

I tried to, I was going to say, hey Siri, how many days has it been since July 6, 2000, my birthday?

And it said, I can't find the answer.

Would you like to ask ChatGPT?

And so I said, I'm not going to do that in the sermon.

And I forgot to calculate, but I don't know how many days under the sun God has given me.

The average life expectancy in 2023 in Australia is 83.05 years.

That's 30,334 days.

You could expect reasonably to live in this country, in this part of the world.

You could expect that you will live 30,334 days.

And each day, it's one less, one less, one less.

Two months ago, my wife and I were in Colmar, which is this little town in the east of France, close to the German border.

And we happened to be in Colmar on Pentecost Sunday, which is the birthday of the church, right?

The moment in Acts chapter 2 or chapter 1, when the Holy Spirit is breathed on the disciples,



Peter preaches, 3,000 are saved, the church is born.

We were in Colmar on Pentecost Sunday, and it was 11 a.m.

And the church bells are ringing around town.

And out of the woodwork, out of all the houses in the town, all the Christians, there was a Catholic church in the middle, actually, all the Christians come and start gathering and walking into the church for Pentecost Sunday to worship God.

And we were sort of standing back and watching the procession of the people of God go into the church to worship.

And as we looked at the doors and all the people streaming in, there was this massive clock above the doors, a massive clock, and it was 11 a.m.

The bells are ringing.

And beneath the clock was this line engraved in Latin on the wall, Memento Mori, remember you will die.

On the wall of the church underneath the clock, Memento Mori, remember you will die.

And it was this profound picture.

It was a gray, overcast, raining day.

The people of God streaming in on another Sunday to worship and encounter him walking underneath the sign that says, Remember you will die.

We will die.

Now, that could be depressing, and the teacher of Ecclesiastes has let it depress him.

But now he's come back and he said, Accept limits.

You will die.

You don't have that many days left in the scheme of eternity.

Well, remember you will die.

Memento Mori, accept the limits and try and find God in the present.

That's the wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

The psalmist in Psalm 139 says, Your eyes saw my unformed body.

All the days ordained for me, 30,000, however many there are, they were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Our days are limited.

And that's good because it was God's grace that we are not cursed to live forever in this broken world, but that we should die and we should rise again when Christ makes all things new.

Your days are limited.

Pete Gazzaro talks about the gift of limits in his book Emotionally Healthy Spirituality.

So much of life is spent trying to transcend limits.

You know, Thor, Chris Hemsworth, he has a new show called Limitless.

He's trying to transcend the natural human limits of the body.

I think someone should break it to him, I haven't seen the show.

Someone should break it to him that you cannot transcend limits.

You will die.

You have to eat every day.

You have to drink water every day.

And so, Piz Cazero follows the teacher of Ecclesiastes in saying, rather than spending your life, all your energy, trying to break free of limits, turn around and accept that God made you to be a human being.

He didn't make you to be God.

And when you accept limits, you realize that your physical body, your family of origin, your marital status, your intellectual capacity, your talents and gifts, your material wealth, your raw material, your time, your work, your relationship realities, your spiritual understanding, all of these are limiting you.

That's Piz Cazero's list.

Embrace the gift of limits.

We're not supposed to be God.

We're not supposed to live forever in this broken world.

And so, the teacher offers this wisdom, accept limits.

He says, eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, accept limits, and number six, do good.

Ecclesiastes 9 verse 7.

Go eat your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.

Always be clothed in white and always anoint your head with oil.

Enjoy life with your wife whom you love all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun, all your meaningless days.

For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

How good is Ecclesiastes?

This is not blue sky proverbs wisdom.

This is cloudy gray Ecclesiastes wisdom.

This is gritty and honest and real and helpful.

He says, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.

Whatever work is in front of you, whatever opportunity is right there, do it with all your might.

Because one day you won't be able to do anything.

You'll be dead in the grave, sleeping and awaiting the resurrection.

The teacher laments throughout Ecclesiastes that everything ends.

So do good.

Good is better than bad.

Wisdom is better than folly.

Happiness is better than sadness.

So do good.

That's the teacher's wisdom for everyday life.

Now, we have covered this idea extensively in our TIDUS series in July.

This was what I think is rather a famous image.

Bankers, kids, dentists, students, managers, musicians, do what is good.

Life is a journey from grace to glory to do what is good.

It's nice to have some blue sky.

Back to the clouds.

Proverbs says this in Proverbs chapter 3, Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to act.

If there's good in front of you to be done, do it.

And when you do it, enjoy the feeling that it gives you.

We had a conversation in Life Hub on Wednesday, less of a conversation, more of a monologue

on my part.

I was talking about the 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who was an ethicist, which means he's thinking about right and wrong and good and bad.

And his big thing is altruism.

Altruism means you do the right thing in a way that it doesn't benefit you at all.

Because if you do something and you personally get some good out of it, you didn't do it because it was the right thing, you did it because you're selfish.

So, Immanuel Kant said that altruism is the basis of ethics.

And now 200 years later, I think that idea of altruism has seeped so deeply into the modern Western secular mind, even into the church, that we feel weird about the notion of getting something from doing good.

We feel weird about the notion of reward.

But I would tell you, Immanuel Kant is not as smart as Jesus.

All throughout the Sermon on the Mount.

That's my one Sermon on the Mount reference.

Jesus says, it is good to seek reward.

Jesus says, store up treasures in heaven.

He also says, be careful not to practise your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.

You won't have any reward.

But Jesus says, it is good to get a reward from doing good.

It is good to want to hear God say to you, well done good and faithful servant.

So, do good in a way that makes you feel good because God, do good because it's good for God, it's good for the world and it's good for you.

Do good, and we've talked about this for a long time, so we won't talk about it anymore.

Do good.

That's the teacher's wisdom for everyday life, the conclusion he comes to.

He has been to the extremes of life and now he returns and he says, Carpe vedium, eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, accept limits and do good.

And even though some of that stuff sounds like blue sky proverbs wisdom, we know we've been four weeks now in Ecclesiastes, this is cloudy gray Ecclesiastes type wisdom.

This is not naive stuff that's like doesn't really work.

This is gritty, gray, tough, hard-won wisdom that the teacher offers us.

Carpe vedium, eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, accept limits and do good.

The teacher knows that under the surface of this wisdom, beneath the surface of this is this essential counterbalance.

Everything is meaningless.

Do good, but everything is meaningless.

Everything is meaningless.

And only because the teacher has descended to that dark place, can he resurface back to everyday life and say, carpe vedium, seize the day, enjoy food, eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, be happy, accept limits, and do good because everything is meaningless anyway.

So, you might as well seize the day.

That's the cloudy gray wisdom of Ecclesiastes.

And hundreds of years later, in the New Testament, Paul says the same thing.

Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

Let's eat and drink, eat gladly, drink joyfully, enjoy work, because we're gonna die tomorrow.

God entered this world in Jesus.

The one who made the sun was born under the sun, and Jesus ate gladly.

Jesus drank joyfully, he enjoyed work, he was happy, he accepted limits, he did good, and he died.

Just like all of us will, Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

So Paul says, let's eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

Except that's not how Jesus' story ended, is it?

And that's actually not how Paul's passage began.

Paul says, if the dead are not raised, then let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

But we know the dead are raised in Christ.

Jesus did rise again.

That is the heart of the gospel that, as Jaz said, Jesus went in, she said it because I said it, and I say it because John Markoma once said it.

Jesus went into the cave of death, like every human being before him and every human being after him, went into the cave of death and kicked out the back wall to bring eternal life into the present.

The good news of the gospel is that we can be loved, forgiven and freed in Jesus' name.

That he can take our shame, our guilt and our fear.

That is a beautiful exchange.

And that is the heart of the gospel.

If the dead are not raised, then let's eat and drink for tomorrow we die.

But the dead are raised in Christ.

Amen?

The dead are raised.

And so 38 times, the teacher in Ecclesiastes says meaningless.

29 times he says under the sun, meaningless under the sun.

But in the gospel, in the New Testament, when the son of God, Jesus was born under the sun, he lived a truly fully human life and died our death on the cross, it was not meaningless.

It was God reconciling the world to himself in Christ, reconciling you to himself, transforming you.

And so now, because of the gospel, the final word of creation is no longer meaningless, meaningless, but glorious, glorious.

Amen.

Paul says in Romans 8, I consider our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us, but not only in us, all creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed, but for creation was subjected to frustration.

That is the Greek word which translates heville, meaningless.

Three times this word frustrated means metiotes in Greek.

Frustration, three times it appears in the New Testament.

Creation was subjected to meaninglessness is the word Paul is going for.

Not by its own choice, that by the will of the one who subjected it in the hope that creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

In Christ, the final word is no longer meaningless, meaningless, but glorious, glorious, because he is making all things new.

Because he died and rose again.

Because the teacher of Ecclesiastes, who was only a shadow under the sun, was succeeded by the teacher from eternity who made the sun, and that is Jesus.



And he is the one that you can know today.

The one who defeated death and came back for us to offer us eternal life.

He is the one that stands now offering you that gift.

That you might be loved, forgiven and freed.

In the midst of suffering and tragedy and loss and monotony and routine, in the midst of the cloudy gray skies of life, you can know God in Christ.

You can know Him.

And when you know God, when you know Christ, one day the gray clouds will become blue sky.

I could not thank God more for what He has done in the weather in the past two weeks in Sydney for the sake of this message.

In Sydney, we have been living under cloudy gray skies until yesterday and today when the blue sky came back out.

That's what God does in our life.

Meaningless, meaningless becomes glorious, glorious.

The final word of creation is not meaningless, meaningless.

It's glorious, glorious.

The final word of your life will not be meaningless, meaningless, but glorious, glorious.

The final word of this day that the Lord has made is not meaningless, meaningless, but glorious, glorious.

So, if God were to be so gracious as to give us one more day under the sun, then let us eat gladly, enjoying the riches of the food that He has provided us.

Let us drink joyfully, remembering that He is the one who gives the water of eternal life.

Let us enjoy work, partnering with God in renewing this world, one day at a time.

Let us be happy, not anxious about anything, rejoicing always because the Lord is here.

Let us accept limits, knowing that we're not meant to be limitless.

We're meant to be human-sized.

That's the way God made us.

And let us do good.

Life is a journey from grace to glory to do what is good.

And ultimately, let us rise again.

I mean that in two ways, obviously.

As in wake up the next morning and find the gift of God again.

That we might eat gladly again.

We might drink joyfully again.

But ultimately, our hope is not that we wake up tomorrow morning, but that we wake up at the end of the age when Christ returns to resurrect all those who have fallen asleep in Him.

So we will rise again one day.

And the final word of this creation will not be meaningless, meaningless.

It will be glorious, glorious.

So can we go to this final image?

That's a shot of Sydney in the past three days.

I pray that that might be your reality this morning.

That the cloudy gray skies of life, of suffering and futility and meaninglessness might in Christ pass into the blue skies of glory.

One day He will come and the blue sky will be fully here.

But for now, that's life, the tension of both.

But we can know God in the midst of that.

So let me pray for us.

Our Father, we acknowledge our limits before you now.

We acknowledge our sin.

We acknowledge that we fall so far short of the life that you call us to.

We're weak and fragile and so dependent, Lord, but you are so gracious and so kind.

You've reconciled us to yourself through Christ.

Who died our death on the cross and who rose again.

And so we thank you, God.

All we can say is thank you, that because of what our Lord Jesus has done, meaningless, meaningless has become glorious, glorious.

And so I pray for my brothers and sisters in the room now and those joining online or listening in the future.

I pray that that glorious reality might become our reality today.

That we would know you in the midst of suffering and tragedy and pain and loss.

In the midst of a seemingly meaningless life, we would know the power of the resurrection.

We would know your nearness, Lord.

And so it's our joy now to give you thanks and praise and honor.

In Jesus' name, Amen.