



## Living for Things Under the Sun

*“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun? A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. (Ecclesiastes 1:1-3)*

*“And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind. Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.” (Ecclesiastes 1:17-18)*

*I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” And behold, it too was futility. I said of laughter, “It is madness,” and of pleasure, “What does it accomplish?” (Ecclesiastes 2:1-2)*

*Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:11)*

As we get older, we begin to see many of the people we know reach the end of their lives. Those who have founded their life on Christ come to the end of life well typically. While it is sad to see them go, they typically have a peace and even joy about their past life and their coming departure into eternity. They have spent years, decades, even over half a century in some cases, building their life on Christ and His word, and have pursued the Kingdom of God for much of their time here on earth. It could be said that they lived for God. God was the number one thing in their life. They built their life on Him.

Then there are those who reach the end of their life, and they did not live their life for God. Rather, they lived for the things of this world. Typically theirs is a life lived for work, money, possessions, power, pleasure, wisdom, etc. As Solomon states in the book of Ecclesiastes, they lived for the things that are “under the sun”. And as they get older, slowly these things, and the pleasure and rewards that they bring, are slowly removed from their life, until finally they are all gone. They are left lying in a bed with no reason to live anymore, for all of their reasons to live have departed.

I know someone in this situation right now, and it is very sad. He has lost the will to live because all of the things he lived for are gone now, never to return. Jesus warned us of this, the coming storm that would test every man’s life, a storm that we will all one day face. In Matthew Chapter 7, we read:

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:24-27)*

Jesus is telling us to build our life on Him and on His words. His words are the very words of God.....to us. In His words, He tells us to live our lives for the Kingdom of God, rather than to live for the “things under the sun”. In the Matthew 7 verse above, he warns us that the storms of life will strip us of the “things under the sun”, but that a life built on Him will weather the storm. We survive the storm. Our house is still intact. There are many verses that come to mind on this topic. Mark chapter 8 reads:

*“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:34-38)*

What indeed “will a man give in exchange for his soul”? Typically the answer to this is often that he will trade his soul for some of the “things under the sun”. Solomon warns us, that it is “vanity of vanities”, to chase after and to live for the “things under the sun”. He had them all in excess. Solomon had more of the “things under the sun” than any man ever in the history of the world. Solomon reports to us that they are empty and void, vanity of vanities. They do not fulfill. There is nothing there. They do not satisfy us for long. In the end if we live for the “things under the sun”, the storms of life, and the ultimate storm of death, will do us in.

What are you living for? Is your life characterized as a pursuit of “the things under the sun”? Or is your life more about “seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness”? (Matthew 6:33) What are you living for? What can you not live without? What, if it was gone today, would cause you to not want to live anymore? The answer to that question will reveal what you are truly living for. Is it work? Sex? Money? Possessions? Sports? Something else “under the sun” or a combination of “things under the sun”?

Are you living a life in pursuit of God’s Kingdom and God’s righteousness, or the things of this world? Are you building your life on the Rock (Jesus), or on the sand (things under the sun)? I can tell you from watching a man who lived for the “things under the sun”, that it delivers a pretty sad end of life scenario. Don’t let that be your fate. Don’t get to the end of your life, when all of the “things under the sun” have played out and are gone, and you no longer want to live. Hear Jesus words and act on them, and your house will survive the storms, even the storm of death when it comes. Build your house on the Rock.