

**October 31st, At A Crossroads**  
**Part 4 in the series 'The Gift of Life'**

What were some things from last Sunday's message that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

**Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 (CEV)**

**Nothing Makes Sense**

**1** When the son of David was king in Jerusalem, he was known to be very wise, and he said:

**2**

Nothing makes sense!  
Everything is nonsense.  
I have seen it all—  
nothing makes sense!

**3**

What is there to show  
for all of our hard work  
here on this earth?

**4**

People come, and people go,  
but still the world  
never changes.

**5**

The sun comes up,  
the sun goes down;  
it hurries right back  
to where it started from.

**6**

The wind blows south,  
the wind blows north;  
round and round it blows  
over and over again.

**7**

All rivers empty into the sea,  
but it never spills over;  
one by one the rivers return  
to their source.

**8**

All of life is far more boring  
than words could ever say.  
Our eyes and our ears  
are never satisfied  
with what we see and hear.

**9**

Everything that happens  
has happened before;  
nothing is new,  
nothing under the sun.

**10**

Someone might say,  
“Here is something new!”  
But it happened before,  
long before we were born.

**11**

No one who lived in the past  
is remembered anymore,  
and everyone yet to be born  
will be forgotten too.

What does the speaker in this passage mean when he says that everything is nonsense?

Do you think that many people would agree with what the speaker is saying here?

**READ Ecclesiastes 2:10-11 (NIV)**

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;  
I refused my heart no pleasure.  
My heart took delight in all my labor,  
and this was the reward for all my toil.

**11**

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done  
and what I had toiled to achieve,  
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;  
nothing was gained under the sun.

Why do you think humans are often convinced that ‘chasing after the wind’ will be meaningful?

Why do you think the more the speaker seems to achieve or have, the more he sees things as meaningless?

**READ Ecclesiastes 12:6-8, 13-14**

Remember him [your Creator]—before the silver cord is severed,  
and the golden bowl is broken;  
before the pitcher is shattered at the spring,  
and the wheel broken at the well,

**7**

and the dust returns to the ground it came from,  
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

**8**

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.  
“Everything is meaningless!”

**READ Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (its ending)**

**13**

Now all has been heard;  
here is the conclusion of the matter:  
Fear God and keep his commandments,  
for this is the duty of all mankind.

**14**

For God will bring every deed into judgment,  
including every hidden thing,  
whether it is good or evil.

Where do both the speaker and author of Ecclesiastes want the reader to find meaning?

Do you think God wants us to live as though everything is meaningless?

**READ Matthew 7:7-14**

**Ask, Seek, Knock**

**7** “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

**9** “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **11** If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! **12** So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

How does this passage help us understand what we can find true meaning in?

## **The Narrow and Wide Gates**

**13** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. **14** But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

What image did Pastor Jim use to describe the narrow and wide gates?

A: a funnel

What does Jesus mean by “narrow and wide gates”?

Why do we find true meaning by going through the narrow gate?