

Outline “Holding On To Smoke”

1: Life is confusing, short, and the rules seem broken

- Time moves on without us (Ecc 1:2-11)
- There's no formula for life (Ecc 1:12-18)

Outline “Holding On To Smoke” (continued)

2: That’s not an easy problem to solve for ourselves

- All the wealth, wisdom, and power in the world can’t fix that (Ecc 2)
 - Wealth can be spent on pleasure, legacy, parties, people, anything, but that doesn’t give life meaning
 - Wisdom: it’s good but it doesn’t guarantee results (8:16-17)
 - How many proverbs don’t pan out exactly when you hoped they would? (8:14)
 - Power: couldn’t keep a kingdom together, couldn’t keep the kingdom rich and prosperous. (4:14-16)

Outline “Holding On To Smoke” (continued)

3: We are surrounded by injustice (Ecc 3:15-21)(4:1-3)

- People seem to have a surplus of the wrong thing. (Ecc 4)
- A man works his whole life but has no one to enjoy it with (4:8)
- A young wise man is poor and without the means to use his wisdom to the fullest (4:13)
- An old king is foolish and can't take advice (4:13)
- Fools have peace and quiet but never accomplish anything (4:5-6)
- Good men die and their legacy is lost (4:14-16)
- The righteous suffer while the wicked prosper (8:14)

Outline “Holding On To Smoke” (continued)

4: Our response

Natural responses

- Control (1 Sam 15)
- Understanding (Job 29-31)

Advice from Ecclesiastes

- Embrace the good things God gives
 - Enjoy food (9:7)(3:13)(2:24)
 - Company is good (4:9-12)
 - Enjoy work (3:22)(5:19)(2:24)
 - Enjoy the fruits of your toil (5:19)(6:1-2)(2:24)
 - Enjoy your wife (9:9)

Outline “Holding On To Smoke” (continued)

- Enjoy living (8:15)
- Enjoy your youth/health as defined in (Ecc 11,12)(11:9)
- All these aren't the focus GOD IS (12:1,6), that'll destroy them, but they all can point us toward God (2:24b)(3:13b)(5:19b)(7b). This world is not ultimate happiness, how could it be. (12:13-14)
- Trust his judgment
 - God is the one who judges, he will provide the meaning (12:13-14).
 - Trust his complete knowledge, he is not “under the sun” he has the full picture and he knows what the puzzle is supposed to be and he has been orchestrating its perfect completion since the dawn of time. (Job 38-40)

Message Slides:

The text is framed by two L-shaped lines. One line starts at the top left and extends to the right, then turns down. The other line starts at the bottom right and extends to the left, then turns up.

Holding On To SMOKE

“Meaningless! Meaningless!”

says the Teacher.

“Utterly meaningless!

Everything is meaningless.”

I have seen all the things that are done **under the sun**; all of them are **meaningless**, a chasing after the wind.

Hevel/smoke

- Fleeting
- Hard to control

Life under the sun

Life just on earth, where we live daily, unaware of God's exact plans.

“SMOKE! SMOKE!”
says the Teacher.
“Utterly SMOKE!
Everything is **SMOKE.**”

I have seen all the things that we do **DAY TO DAY**, all of them
are **SMOKE**, a chasing after the wind.

Life is confusing, short, and the rules seem broken

- **Time** moves on without us
- There is no **formula**

The Hevel is hard to navigate for oneself

All the **wealth**, **wisdom**, and **power** in the world can't fix that.

- **Wealth**: can be spent on pleasure, legacy, parties, people, anything, but that doesn't give life meaning
- **Wisdom**: it's good but it can't *guarantee* results
- **Power**: It's never complete, and it doesn't last

The problems of others are Hevel too

We are surrounded by **injustice**

- People seem to have **a lot of what they don't need**
- Good men die and their **legacy is lost**
- The **righteous suffer** while the **wicked prosper**



SOLOMONS POINT:

A “SUCCESSFUL LIFE” UNDER THE SUN DOESN’T HAVE A
RELIABLE FORMULA



Our natural response

- Control
- Understand

Solomon's advice

- Embrace God's good gifts
- Remember his judgement

Embrace his gifts

- Enjoy **food**
- Enjoy **companionship**
- Enjoy **work**
- Enjoy the **fruits** of your toil
- Enjoy your **spouse**
- Enjoy **living**
- Enjoy your **youth**

Remember his judgement

- He builds and sees the big picture
- Your actions are given meaning by him





Remember his judgement

- He builds and sees the big picture
- Your actions are given meaning by him

Application

- Live presently: noticing what good **God** is giving now
- Do right: knowing that **God** will provide the meaning we can't see