



*Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity!*

I love the book of Ecclesiastes. If you have not read Ecclesiastes recently, you need to go home and sit down with it. It has some of the best one-liners in all of Scriptures. It is, however, a very sobering text that needs to be meditated upon. Its reflections are based on experience in the world and not on what has been revealed through the rest of scripture. There is no promise of Heaven or Hell in the analysis and little to no considerations of a loving and personal God.

Without God as we know him in the picture, Qoheleth is left with only this life – a life which is short, unpredictable, and unstable; where we have little ability to really know what is the best thing to do. There are things in this life that might bring us some comfort and enjoyment: there is a good to wisdom and to friendship – but even all of these things pass – and so all of it is vanity, and as Qoheleth says, *a chasing after wind*.

But *with* Jesus Christ, it all changes. We know that not only is there a God, but a God who loves us, and more than that - that he is indeed Love, and Mercy, and Goodness itself. And we know that he made us to know him, to love him, and to serve him is this life, and to be with him forever in the life to come. And so, there are things in this life that are not in vain. As long as we seek to be *rich in what matters to God*, as long as we order what we do towards our eternal life with God, nothing will ever be in vain. Ecclesiastes brings into relief that reality that all lasting meaning comes not from the world but from ordering our life to God. When we find ourselves with Qoheleth exhausted by the meaninglessness of this world, there truly is a solution in the one who gives meaning to all things.

In Christ, through Mary,

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