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IS THIS IT? Meaningless: What's the Point?

Ecclesiastes 1:2, "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

That's how the book of Ecclesiastes starts, but that's not how it ends!

What makes life feel so meaningless at times?

Ecclesiastes 1:3-5, 3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? 4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. 5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.

- The daily grind of life can cause people to ask, "what's the point of it all?"

We use a variety tactics to deal with a lack of purpose:

1. We try to distract ourselves:
Ecclesiastes 1:8, ...The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.
2. We try to fulfill all our personal desires:
 - 2:2, "...what does pleasure accomplish?"
 - 2:3, "I tried cheering myself with wine..."
 - 2:4, "I built houses for myself..."
 - 2:8, "I acquired...a harem as well..."
 - 2:8, "I amassed silver and gold for myself..."
 - 2:9, "I became greater by far than anyone..."
 - 2:10, "I denied myself nothing my eyes desired..."

Yet none of these efforts will satisfy us:

Ecclesiastes 2:11, Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless...nothing was gained under the sun.

So where does thinking like this lead to?

Ecclesiastes 2:17-18, So I hated life...because I must leave them [my possessions] to the one who comes after me.

- Death makes us feel like life is meaningless because no matter what we accomplish in life, we all meet the same fate.

What's left after exhausting all the options "under the sun"?

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, 13...here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God & keep his commandments for this is the duty of all...14 For God will bring every deed into judgment...

- The teacher finally looked above the sun to God!
- The existence of an afterlife gives purpose to this life.

1,000 years later another teacher came along, not afraid to die: Jesus

Matthew 16:24-27, 24...Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

What does it look like to find our life by losing it for Jesus?

- We stop trying to build our life on our own terms, and start to discover God's plan for us instead.
- We stop trying to make ourselves seem important to others, and start to point others to Jesus instead.

What does this look like for us practically?

Ephesians 2:10, For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Look at your life & your resources and ask: "What good work is God preparing for me to do?"
- It's not just the spiritual stuff: careers, hobbies & interests are made meaningful when we do them for God.
- *1 Corinthians 10:31, ...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
- We can do something today that will last for 1,000+ years.
- One day, we'll be able to see how God included our SMALL part in His BIG plan to build His eternal kingdom.