



SUNDAY - March 15, 2026

THE GRIND: Ecclesiastes 2:1-20 - Salt Water

SERMON SUMMARY:

Solomon's experiment in Ecclesiastes 2 explores whether meaning can be found in life lived "under the sun," apart from God. He pursues every human avenue of fulfillment: pleasure, wine, massive projects, wealth, sexual relationships, reputation, and legacy. With immense resources he essentially tries to build a secular Eden where nothing is off limits. Yet each pursuit ends the same way. Pleasure fades, achievements lose their shine, possessions multiply without satisfaction, and death ultimately levels every person. The verdict of the experiment is stark: life without God becomes empty and exhausting, a constant chase for something that never delivers lasting meaning.

The deeper issue is misplacing meaning in things that cannot carry its weight. When people look to pleasure, relationships, status, or circumstances to provide identity and purpose, disappointment and resentment follow. Solomon's insight exposes a pattern that still shapes modern culture, where endless consumption and stimulation attempt to numb deeper questions of purpose. The answer is not rejecting enjoyment but rediscovering a joyful God who gives life as a gift, cultivating gratitude, and learning to receive daily blessings from Him rather than striving endlessly for the next thing. True satisfaction comes not from chasing more, but from living in relationship with the God who gives meaning to everything.

SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 2:1-20, 2:24, 3:13, 5:18-19, 9:7-10, Genesis 1, Genesis 3, Ecclesiastes 7:28, Matthew 7:21, 1 Timothy 6:17, John 10:10, 1 Kings 3:10-13

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the six specific pursuits Solomon lists as he searches for meaning "under the sun"?
2. What is the repeated conclusion Solomon comes to after each of his pursuits?
3. According to the text, what is the great equalizer that makes all human achievement and wisdom ultimately meaningless?
4. What was Solomon's final emotional state after his grand experiment in pleasure and achievement?
5. Solomon describes building parks, gardens, and reservoirs, essentially trying to recreate a paradise or "Eden" on his own terms. What does this reveal about the human heart's deepest longing, and why can't a self-made paradise satisfy it?
6. The text says Solomon denied himself no pleasure. If he had the means to fulfill every desire instantly, why did this lead to hatred for life and work rather than fulfillment?
7. How does the reality of death, which comes to both the wise and the foolish, change the way we should view our accomplishments and legacy?
8. Solomon turned to pleasure because he found no meaning through academic study and reason alone. Why does a life lived purely "under the sun" (without God) naturally lead to seeking pleasure as an anesthetic?