

## Sorrow

Ecclesiastes 1:1-18

#1 in our series from Ecclesiastes

September 11, 2016

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## Prayer

Father, we ask that you would cause *us* to preach. I pray that this wouldn't just be me rambling on but Lord, that our hearts would be engaged with your Word. Maybe a better way to ask that would be for your Word to engage our hearts and do things that we can't comprehend or control. Holy Spirit, would you move in us this morning? In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discovery Channel Promo Clip

Newscaster: *Two weeks ago, the world fell in love with Snuffy the seal who washed up on shore injured and dehydrated. Let's now go live to Snuffy's triumphant return to the sea.*

Reporter: *We're just moments away from releasing Snuffy, the rescued seal, back into the ocean. And now you see it, Snuffy's triumphant return.* [The seal is lowered towards the ocean from a large dock. A crowd of people watches. Suddenly, a shark jumps out of the water and rips the seal out of the sling that was lowering her towards the ocean.]

Newscaster: *Holy .....!!!*

*"Vanity of vanities! (says the preacher) All is vanity."* That video clip was an advertisement for Shark Week on the Discovery Channel and it was staged. But you can find videos on the Internet just like it that weren't staged, like the one of a little girl releasing a baby rabbit that she found and nurtured. The bunny is so good and cute and represents that little girl's efforts, hopes, and dreams. The bunny runs across the yard and a hawk swoops down and takes it away.

I won't show that video because it's too sad. But you've already seen this video. Fifteen years ago, this day, this morning, right about now, you were watching this video:

[Slow motion footage of an airport hitting the second twin tower and the explosions and damage that followed is shown. Horror and shock from surrounding crowds is heard.]

The World Trade Center represented America's efforts, hopes, and dreams. It represents our "business" and something swoops down out of the sky and, in a moment, takes all of our toil away. *"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity,"* wrote Solomon.

2,996 Americans died in the terrorist attacks. Yet, 151,600 people die every day and most of them for more painfully and even tragically than in an explosion in a terrorist attack. 9/11 deaths were only 1.97% of global deaths for that day or .00054% of global deaths that year. Someone said, "Good health is merely the slowest rate at which one can die."

So, do you get the picture? We're all going to die! Actually, we're dying already. Paul even writes that he's constantly being "*given up to death*," and yet it seems, we're all in denial of death. Every sorrow you feel is an awareness of death in some form... But we deny death and hide from our own sorrows.

*The Mahabharata*, an ancient Indian text says it this way, "Of all the world's wonders, which is most wonderful? That no man, though he see others dying all around him believes that he himself will die." I read about a financial planner that remarked that it's so weird, when people plan their estates they never say, "*When I die*." They always say, "*If I die*," as if it's in question.

Sometimes it feels like the most denial happens at church: "God wants you to be happy, so ignore the sorrow," says the preacher. And: "Always look on the bright side of life." Which, in the context of Christianity leads to a very confusing message, best illustrated by *Monte Python*.

Clip from *Monte Python*

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| <p><u>Character playing Jesus</u>: (Sung to a cheerful tune) <i>Always look on the bright side of life.</i><br/>(Whistling of a happy tune)<br/><u>Multiple men being crucified join in unison singing</u>: <i>Always look on the bright side of life.</i><br/>(Whistling in unison the same happy tune).</p> |
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Is that the gospel?

"Ignore the sorrow and whistle?"

"Ignore the cross on your back—deny it."

Well, Solomon doesn't ignore the dark side of life. He is a "*man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*." And strangely enough . . . that somehow makes me happy.

Ecclesiastes 1:1 "*The words of the preacher*." "Preacher is the Hebrew word *qohleth*. It means "One who addresses a congregation that's *ecclesia*" in Greek, and that's where we get the title "Ecclesiastes." "The one who addresses the *ecclesia*" But the real title in the Hebrew mind is the first line of the book.

Ecclesiastes 1:1 "*The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem*."

For a few thousand years, rabbis and pastors have taken that to mean "Solomon—son of David," and throughout the book there are references to numerous things that would make one think, "This must be Solomon."

Recently, many scholars have argued that, because of language and style, it isn't Solomon, while others say it must be Solomon.

I believe it *is* Solomon in one form or another. Perhaps someone collected and rephrased Solomon's words just like someone rephrased the King James Version and made the New King James Version of the Bible. Whatever the case, I believe that Solomon means "Prince of Peace," and so there is a first Solomon that is a picture or type of the last Solomon.

See? I believe that Solomon, that is, the Word of God, somehow wrote all of Scripture. It was written different places, at different times, and in different languages, and yet it all manifests one Word, one Logos, one Wisdom if you will.

So, if Ecclesiastes seems to contradict the rest of Scripture, I bet it's only contradicting our simplistic understanding of the rest of Scripture. See? I believe Ecclesiastes is inspired. That means it reveals more than the preacher knows, more than Old King Solomon knows. It reveals truths that won't be understood for another thousand years or even until the end of the age. It reveals Wisdom that we can't comprehend. Yet Wisdom that comprehends us.

And that's why, because we can't comprehend it, many religious types have questioned whether or not it should be in the Bible. And because it does comprehend us, many agnostics and hopeless sinners have found themselves reading it.

Herman Melville, who was a famous pessimist and agnostic wrote in his best seller, *Moby Dick*: "Ecclesiastes is the truest of all books."

I find it fascinating that three books in our canon of Scripture are attributed to Solomon and that they appear together in this order:

First, Proverbs, which seems to say, "Do this, and then this will happen." That's law.

And then secondly, after Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. And it doesn't say the law is wrong but that we can't seem to make it work, and so all our toil is in vain and ends in death.

And then third, The Song of Solomon, a love poem, which says, "*Love is strong as death.*" Love is the *shal-he-beth-yah*—"the very flame of the Lord."

All three books are the words of Solomon, the Prince of Peace.

But now, Ecclesiastes 1:1 "*The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*" "*Vanity of vanities,*" says the Preacher, *Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.*" "Vanity" is the Hebrew word *hebel*.

The NIV translates *hebel* as "meaningless," but it can't simply mean "meaningless" for then Solomon is saying, "all is meaningless," which would mean that the statement "All is meaningless" is "meaningless," which is a way to say absolutely nothing.

Quite literally *hebel* means "vapor" or "breath." In the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, *hebel* gets translated a *mataiotes*, which in English is usually translated futility. So, in Romans 8, Paul writes that "*all creation has been subjected to futility (hebel) in hope.*"

Futility.

Nothing lasts; it all changes. And nothing we do can change that unchangeable fact. All human effort produces nothing and cannot change that sad fact. We can't change wisdom, but Wisdom changes us.

*Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath (hebel)! Selah*

*Surely a man goes about as a shadow! (Like a shadow self...)*  
*Surely for nothing (hebel) they are in turmoil; ...*  
—Psalm 39:5b-7

Verse 11:  
*...surely all mankind is a mere breath (hebel)! Selah*

. . .Is that true?

**In Isaiah 57:13** God says, through Isaiah:

*"When you cry out, let your collection of idols..."*  
(Sometimes idols were referred to as *hebel*—that is the "*vanity of vanities*".)  
God says,  
*"When you cry out, let your collection of idols deliver you! The wind (ruwach) will carry them all off, a breath (hebel) will take them away."*

So, Wind is equated with *hebel* AND Wind is *ruwach* in Hebrew—the Spirit or the breath of God. So Isaiah is saying, "God's breath is judgment on our every breath—all we idolize."

So, do you idolize your self? Which would make you the breath of breath?  
Are you your own breath, your own creation?

OR

Are you God's Breath, God's creation?  
See? "*Vanity of vanities*" is a fascinating phrase.

Solomon repeats it again at the end of the book, "*Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.*"  
Hopefully, by then we'll have a better understanding of what he means.

*Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.*

Peter begins to sing: "And you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking. Racing around to come up behind you again..."  
Like Pink Floyd and Solomon say, "You can't catch the sun, but the sun will catch you."

*The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after. I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.*

—Ecclesiastes 1:2-8

The translators are obviously afraid to translate that verse literally. Solomon literally just wrote, *"It is an evil business..."* Not just unhappy, but evil. The Hebrew is *rah*—the very same word that's used in the phrase *"the knowledge of good and evil (rah)." Solomon writes, "It is an evil business that God has given to the children of Adam (man) to be busy with."*

Evil is that which God does not will. Yet, according to Solomon, God seems to will that we would will what he does not will. It's like God set us up to do an evil business, since the day He breathed His breath into dust and planted the tree in the middle of the garden.

And isn't that exactly what Paul writes in Gal. 3:22 *"Scripture (specifically the law, the knowledge of good and evil) imprisoned everything under sin, so that... the promise... might be given."*

In Romans 11:32 he says it this way:

*"God consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all. Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and inscrutable his ways?"*

It's like, God willed, that we would will what He does not will, in order that we would trust what He does will—His Way, His Judgment, His Wisdom.

That's a lot to ponder, but Solomon continues:

*It is an unhappy [literally evil] business that God has given to the children of man [Adam] to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.*  
—Ecclesiastes 1:13b-14

"Wind" that's that Hebrew word *ruwach*, translated Wind or Spirit, that is, God's Breath.

Have you ever tried to strive after the wind?

Have you ever tried to capture the wind in a jar?

You know you can capture the wind in a jar, but then it's no longer the wind...

It's like dead wind—air that no longer moves.

Job tried to capture the wind. Remember?

He tried to understand the Spirit of God—that is the reason for all the futility, suffering, and sorrow that He experienced.

He tried to capture the wind and at the end of the book the wind captures him—God shows up in a tornado and captures Job's heart.

*It is an unhappy [evil] business that God has given to the children of [Adam] to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after [ruwach]. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted. I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." And I applied my heart to know*

*wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.*

—Ecclesiastes 1:13b-17

So catching the Wind in a jar is a bit like catching Wisdom in a book.

It's a bit of wind, dead wind, which you've got in the jar.

And it's a bit of wisdom, dead wisdom, which you've got in your book.

But you really don't *know* Wind or Wisdom, until that Wisdom captures you, until Wisdom comes along and literally blows you away like a mighty rushing wind.

Catching Wisdom in a book must be like nailing Wisdom to a tree,

It dies... and you really don't know Wisdom, until Wisdom rises from the dead and sweeps you away like a mighty rushing Wind. *Until* wisdom on a page, like law, becomes Wisdom in your heart, like Love.

Well Anyway, Solomon concludes chapter 1 by writing this:

*And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.*

—Ecclesiastes 1:17-18

*"...in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases SORROW."* WOW! You can philosophize about that all day, but I'm afraid my heart has already found it to be true... and if your just a little bit old, I bet you've discovered that too.

The more wisdom you get, the more vexed and confused you become.

The more you know, the more you know that you don't know, as you should know.

The more you know the good, the more you know the evil and the more you lie awake vexed confused and wrestling with an unseen wrestler.

That's why you drink so much, smoke so much, eat so much, shop so much, leer at porn so much, and gossip about your neighbors so much...You're trying to shut it off and forget, because all the wisdom and knowledge produce this profound sorrow—a sorrow so great . . . you think you'll die.

Now that I'm fifty-five I finally understand Sargent Shultz. Of course he doesn't want

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| <p><u>Sargent Shultz</u>: <i>I see nothing; I was not here. I did not even get up this morning. I see nothing. I know nothing.</i></p> |
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wisdom and knowledge it only increases sorrow. Do you remember Schultz?

"I know nothing!" That makes sense to me. They say, "Ignorance is bliss." But if ignorance is bliss, wouldn't you be ignorant of the bliss? That would be like standing in paradise next to Jesus, but not knowing that He is the Word of Love, that He is Good, that He is your Helper, and that you are not alone.

So if wisdom produces vexation and knowledge increases sorrow,  
Perhaps it's worth it... wisdom is worth the sorrow.

Solomon did also write, "*Blessed is the one who finds Wisdom.*" (Prov. 3:13)  
...as if it wrestles you, and blesses you...

Well, Solomon seeks Wisdom. He gets Wisdom, and now he is reaping sorrow.

2 Chronicles and 1 Kings record how Solomon got Wisdom. God appeared to him in a dream saying, "*Ask what I shall give you.*" And Solomon answers, "*Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can govern this people of yours, which is so great?*" (2 Chron. 1:10)

In 1 Kings 3:9 Solomon says, "*Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil...*"

Solomon is asking for Wisdom and "*the knowledge of good and evil*" isn't he?

Next verse, 1 Kings 3:10 "*It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.*" (You know Eve didn't ask this of God; she took this from God.)

*It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you.*  
—1 Kings 3:10-12

Then God basically says, "Because you asked for wisdom, I give you wisdom and all things *with* wisdom..."

Then Solomon worships (1 Kings 3:15), Judges between two prostitutes fighting over a baby (3:16), rules Israel reigning from Jerusalem (4:1), basically invents science (4:33) and builds the temple of God (6:1).

Scripture calls Solomon the wisest man that ever lived...

But Solomon writes: "*...in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.*"

In Ecclesiastes 7:17, He writes: "*And do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?*"

He acts as if knowing Wisdom is the death of your self.

But maybe it's worth it... to lose yourself for the sake of wisdom.

Like Solomon wrote in Proverbs, "*Blessed is He who gets wisdom.*"

So, *What the heck is wisdom?*

And this is where I need you to pay attention, cause this is where things really get really wild and wooly and wonderful.

Listen to these Scriptures and ask what is wisdom? Where do I find wisdom? Or better yet, where does wisdom find me?

In Proverbs 1:20 Solomon writes, *“Wisdom cries (or sings) aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice...”*

So, Wisdom is like a person, (even female), who calls to us, even Romances us.

In Proverbs 3:13,18-19 we read:

*“Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding... She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed. The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens.*

So, Wisdom is a person and a tree of life, through whom God created all things.

In Proverbs 8:27, 30-36 Wisdom starts talking. She says,

*When he (Yahweh) established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep... then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of [Adam]... “Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor [Grace] from the Lord, but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death.”*

Proverbs 9:1

*Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table... “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed...” [She calls.] The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...*

Isn't that Incredible?

We already learned Wisdom is somehow knowledge of Good and evil.

And we just learned Wisdom is Life.

But more than life, it's a tree of Life.

Wisdom builds her house and calls to us with bread and wine.

The *beginning* of wisdom is the fear of the Lord... but not the end.

God creates all things with Wisdom... including you

Now listen to John 1

*In the beginning was the Word (that's Logos. It means Logic, Reason, Meaning, or to me that sounds like Wisdom), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men...The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of favor—that is Grace.*

—John 1:1-4

Now listen to 1 Cor. 1:24 *“Christ...the Wisdom of God.”*

Verse 30 *“God is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom...”*



Jesus is the Wisdom of God in flesh.

Jesus is the Life in Flesh.

Jesus is the Good in Flesh—which somehow leads to “*The knowledge of good and evil.*”

Jesus is Wisdom.

So where do we find wisdom or should I say where does Wisdom find us?

Well... how about, on a tree in a garden.

In both Hebrew and Greek, there is a word that basically means timber or wood and it's used to refer to a tree, a gallows, or a cross.

- The Jews believe the Garden of Eden was the temple mount,
- Christ was crucified in a garden called Calvary, just outside Jerusalem on the Temple mount.
- The New Jerusalem is also a temple and a garden and in the middle is the tree of life.
- In the Garden of Eden there are two trees that look like one tree, for they are both in the middle of the garden.
- I suspect that Jesus is crucified on that tree.
- And that tree bears fruit for the healing of the nations as revealed in the Revelation, where there is one tree in the middle of the garden, city, the New Jerusalem.

So where do we find Wisdom? Well...how about:

- On a tree in a garden in Genesis chapter two...
- And on a tree in a Garden around 33AD as recorded in the Gospels...
- And at the end of time on the tree in the garden which dispenses Wisdom for the healing of the nations, as revealed in The Revelation, Chapter 22.
- *And* whenever and wherever along this timeline that Wisdom calls.  
Whenever and wherever a person knows “good and evil,” “receives life,” or does the Word of God, Will of God and Judgment of God... *there* is Wisdom.

I don't know exactly how to put it all together, but I think we modern Christians have made the cross far too small and far too localized, and thus, far too impotent.

This is a print from the 15<sup>th</sup> century

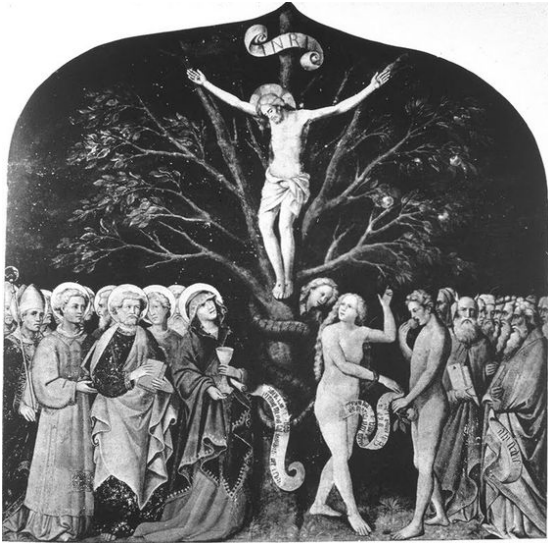


Figure 1 "The Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena

This is a painting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century titled the fall and redemption of man. See? At the tree mankind falls—we take the life of God  
And at the tree mankind is redeemed—for what we took, God gave.  
And the tree bears the fruit of an entire new creation.

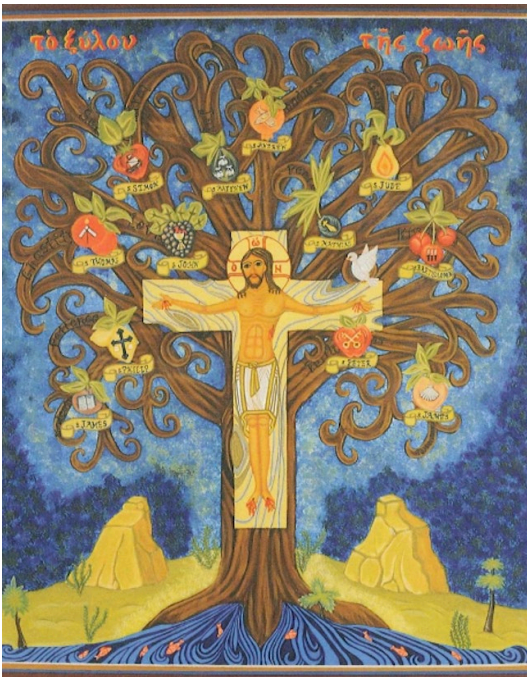


Figure 2 "The Tree of Life" by Karen Bruskewicz

Here's a picture of the tree of life, bearing the twelve apostles and twelve fruits for the healing of the nations. (From the Revelation)



Figure 3 "Ecclesia and the Crucified Christ" by Hendrick Goltzius

This is a picture, by Hendrick Goltzius, from 1610.  
Christ is on the tree of life crucified for His Bride. And look humanity is now his bride sitting at the base of the tree.

[Clip art version of Jesus hanging on a tree with branches and leaves pointing up and the roots visible below (There is also a swirly whirlpool type water mark in the middle)]

I like this print.

I'm showing you the version with the company logo—that swirling thing in the middle, because I like it. I think of it as a timeline.

Robert Jensen wrote: *"Time as we see it framing the biblical narrative is neither linear nor cyclical but perhaps more like a helix and what it spirals around is the risen Christ."*

That's the slaughtered lamb on the throne—Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Well, I think space and time are like a helix that spirals through Christ and Him crucified, like water through a drain and on the other side is the new creation.

*"This is the plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him..."* writes Paul

*"To reconcile to himself all things... making peace by the blood of his cross."*

That's the tree of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the cosmos.

But now, this is my point:

Wisdom does not change, but we do.

The Word of God does not change, but we do. It seems to change because our relationship changes, but *"Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever."*

Everything under the sun changes,

But the Word of God changes everything under the sun.

Jesus Christ and Him Crucified does not change,  
but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, does change all things.

Jesus Christ and Him Crucified is the boundary *between* time and eternity,  
*Between* everything that changes and everything that never changes,  
*Between* our world and the world where all is reconciled, all is one.

From space and time we see two trees: Judgment and Grace  
But in the New Jerusalem, we see only one... and it is Life.

You know in all of our relationships with created things and created people, we change things in order to change other things.

- For instance, I'm nice to you, in the hope that you'd be nice to me.
- You do things for me, in the hope that I'd do things for you.
- I work for you in the hope that you would work for me.

But all my efforts to change God, God's Word or God's Judgment of me... are futile.  
All my toil is in vain

In other words,  
God's judgment is absolute Grace, revealed on a tree in a garden.  
God's Judgment is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.  
God's Judgment is God's Wisdom, the *logic* of unconditional Love, Jesus.

*"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity. And what do I gain from all my toil under the sun?"*

I gain Knowledge, that all my toil is futile.  
And knowledge, that God's Word is not futile.  
Knowledge that God's Word is Good.  
Knowledge that even if I try to change the Love of God (with good deeds or bad)—even if I crucify the Love of God—the Love of God does not change, but rises from the dead and changes me.

So you see, the beginning of Wisdom *is* the fear of God, for we must realize that we cannot change Him, His judgment is eternal. It begins as the fear of God and it feels like sorrow, for we must realize that all our efforts are in vain... actually all our efforts to change God are evil—they are the "evil business." And Jesus is God's Good business.

[Cartoon of a priest holding a hammer, looking at a mini figure of Jesus, a cross, and nails all sitting before him with the caption "Suddenly, Father Schober was not sure whether he really should have bought the new crucifix at Ikea."]

I love this cartoon.

"Suddenly, Father Schober was not sure whether he really should have bought the new crucifix at Ikea."

Or it could read,

"Suddenly, Father Schober finds Wisdom." Or "Wisdom finds him."

He realizes that he is responsible for nailing Christ to the cross.

Whenever we take knowledge of good and evil, whenever we take wisdom, in faithlessness and fear to justify ourselves and make ourselves in the image of God, we

crucify Christ and make a “false self,” a “shadow self,” the product of our toil under the sun: *“the vanity of vanities.”*

That realization that all our toil is vanity comes as a profound sorrow.

*But* whenever we see that what we take in fear, God gives in love

Whenever we receive wisdom as grace through faith, Christ rises from the dead and reveals His true self and our “true self”—the product of God’s toil from the foundation of the world, before there even was a sun, a sun in the sky: God’s Breath.

That realization comes as the greatest Joy.

You know a word is wisdom encoded in a breath.

Jesus is God’s Word and we are created with that Word.

Our true self is not the vanities of a vanity, that is, our own creation.

Our true self is the work of God, the very Breath of God and Wisdom of God: Jesus.

So, Father Schober realizes that he is responsible for nailing Christ to the cross

And that knowledge comes as a profound *sorrow*.

But then Father Schober can realize that Christ let him nail Him to the cross, because He so loved Father Shober

And that knowledge comes as a profound *Joy*.

And then Father Schober will love as he’s been loved, and Love is the Wisdom of God.

Love casts out fear and Love is Life—eternal Life.

But you see it all begins as *fear . . . and sorrow*.

In Ecc. 6:3 Solomon writes, *“Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.”*

Jesus, Son of David, Prince of Peace, said, *“Blessed, happy, are those who mourn.”*  
*“Those acquainted with grief.”*

And on the night he was betrayed He said to the disciples, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy... and no one will take your joy from you.”*

Why will they be sorrowful?

Because they will give up, that is betray, the Way, the Truth and the Life— Jesus.

And why will their sorrow turn into Joy?

Because the Way, the Truth and the Life will not betray them.

*“For where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,”* and that’s wisdom.

By Wisdom God makes all things new.

*“Nothing is new under the sun,”* wrote Solomon.

But God’s “mercies are new every morning.”

For mercy, grace and love are not from under the sun.

And through the Wisdom of Love, God makes all things new.

*“God gives to man an evil business,”* wrote Solomon,

But that's to reveal *God's* business, which is the *Good*.

*"All our toil is striving after the wind,"* wrote Solomon.  
But God *is* the Wind, and He toils after us and for us.

Solomon sought to save his life with Wisdom  
But Wisdom sought to save Solomon:  
    Wisdom condemns the old Solomon  
    And sets the New Solomon free.

*"He who increases knowledge, increases sorrow,"* wrote Solomon.  
*"But that sorrow turns in to joy,"* said the Prince of Peace.

Do you see?  
Sorrow is how God, in (or through) His wisdom, makes Joy.  
The sorrow is temporal. The Joy is eternal.  
The sorrow is like an empty space, prepared in you, to be filled with a river of joy.  
The sorrow is like breathing out—expiring,  
So you can forever be inspired with the Breath of God—like a river from the throne.

Don't hide from your sorrow or your neighbor's sorrow.  
Don't always "look on the bright side of life." The light shines in the darkness.  
Don't deny your sorrow and don't idolize your sorrow, but *learn* from your sorrow.  
Wisdom is calling to you from your sorrow . . .  
    And wisdom will meet you *in* your sorrow.

That's where He reveals Himself and makes everything true, and everything new.  
In a garden on a tree that we sometimes call the cross.

In the Song of Solomon, Solomon reveals that your soul is a garden. And in that garden,  
it is revealed that *"Love is strong as death, the very flame of the Lord"*—the *shal-he-beth-yah*. In that garden, Solomon reveals Himself to His Beloved.

Sorrow is how God makes Joy.  
Sorrow is how God makes you.  
Sorrow is how God makes Wisdom in you.  
Sorrow is how God makes Solomon in you.

Solomon is more than a king who lived 3,000 years ago and reigned in Jerusalem.  
That Prince of Peace was like a shadow of the *true* Prince of Peace that builds the temple of God and lives and reigns in the New Jerusalem which is you.  
Solomon is the Son of David and Prince of Peace, who lives and reigns in your heart.

But you may remember that Solomon was born out of sin and great sorrow.  
Solomon's Father was King David and his mother was named Bathsheba.

When David confessed his sin, the son of David, in Bathsheba—from Bathsheba died.  
Then David comforted Bathsheba and went into her and she bore a son and this son of David lived. One son of David bore David's sin and died. And one son of David lived and reigned in Jerusalem. That's Solomon.

Jesus suffered and died for your sins. And Jesus lives and reigns in your heart. He is the Wisdom of God, born of your sin and sorrow. And He's worth it.

### **Communion**

On the night He was betrayed He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is for you." And in the same way He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it all of you, and do it in remembrance of me." So, come to the table and give Him your sin and sorrow. Take a moment, close your eyes and say, "God what's my sorrow? There are probably a bunch of them right? For some the answer comes quickly for others you'll have to search a bit. Now pray, "Prince of Peace, would you reveal yourself to me in my sorrow and reign over all things from that place? You are the King who reigns in my heart and from my heart. You are my Lord." And let Him reign in your heart. That's Wisdom, and He turns all things into everlasting Joy.

### **Closing prayer**

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are our future and our past—the beginning and the end the meaning to every story and that's wisdom. Lord we thank you. Even though we don't really want wisdom, and we'd kind of rather just eat ice cream and watch sitcoms I thank you that you are bound and determined to give us wisdom. And wisdom is not a small thing. It's not knowledge about a few rules in a book or how to put a microwave oven together. It's you. Jesus, you are bound and determined to know us so that we would know you. That's huge. So, God, maybe you create a huge space in our heart called sorrow to fill it with yourself. And you are joy, and joy is eternal. Lord God I thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*