

2023-24 Aim Check-in

- Becoming disciples who make disciples, who make disciples.
 - Creating a community of faith that meaningfully engages our community of residence.
1. Since you last met as a H2H group, have you made any movement towards the aims we've set?
 2. How might we as a H2H group help support or encourage you towards these aims?

Discussion Questions Set #1

WORLDLY PLEASURE: "I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless ... I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:1, 10-11)

WISDOM: "Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly ... I said to myself, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said to myself, "This too is meaningless." For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered; the days have already come when both have been forgotten." (Ecclesiastes 2:12, 15-16)

WORK: "So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. (Ecclesiastes 2:20-21)

In sermon, we encountered three areas of exploration that the Teacher undertook to determine meaning and purpose in life – worldly pleasures, wisdom and work.

1. Discuss why each of these areas of exploration ultimately end, not just in a lack of meaning and purpose, but in despair.
2. Think of the world around us – those outside of the Christian faith. How do you see the idea of the pursuit of worldly pleasures, wisdom and work as avenues for meaning in life at work in the world?
3. Though most of us would be quick to admit that, as followers of Jesus, we do not pursue worldly pleasures, wisdom and work for ultimate meaning in life, there still often exists an allure to the pursuit of such things. Why does this allure exist? How does one combat the temptation to turn to such things to lend meaning and purpose to one's life?
4. Thinking of worldly pleasures, wisdom and work as avenues for meaning in life, which is of the greatest allure to you? Why?

Discussion Questions Set #2

We can declare with the prophet Jeremiah that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9), but we can rejoice in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel that, by faith in Jesus, God would "give [us] a new heart and put a new spirit in [us]; [He would] remove from [us our] heart of stone and give [us] a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). Rather than vainly being enslaved to the desires of our eyes and the pleasure of our hearts, we can, as the Apostle Paul proclaims to the Corinthian church, "make it our goal to please [God]" (2 Corinthians 5:9).

In sermon, it was suggested that the material we find presented in Ecclesiastes comes from an "under the sun" viewpoint, while as followers of Jesus, we ought to have an "under the Son" worldview, one informed by the incredible events of Christ's death and resurrection.

1. What specifically do you think it means to have an "under the Son" worldview?
2. How might an "under the Son" viewpoint differ from a "under the sun" viewpoint?
3. Discuss the following quote – *it is a short jaunt to despair when our focus falls "under the sun", rather than "under the Son".* What do you think this means and do you believe it to be true?
4. If you were speaking to someone with an "under the sun" viewpoint, how might you present an "under the Son" viewpoint to them? Recall our mandate to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).



5.

**Ecclesiastes Sermon Series:
Week of April 21, 2024**