

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

January 19, 2025

Carpe Diem

Hevel

Ecclesiastes 2:12-16

KEY VERSES

¹² So I turned to consider wisdom and madness and folly, for what can the king's successor do? Only what has already been done. ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.

*¹⁴ The wise have eyes in their head,
but fools walk in darkness.*

Yet I perceived that the same fate befalls all of them. ¹⁵ Then I said to myself, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also; why then have I been so very wise?" And I said to myself that this also is vanity. ¹⁶ For there is no enduring remembrance of the wise or of fools, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How can the wise die just like fools?

Last week in our first sermon in the new Hevel series, we considered these two points: if all is "hevel," or "smoke," then 1) what in your life becomes less important, and 2) what in your life becomes more important? **What did you learn from asking yourself these two questions?**

This week, we consider the words of the Teacher concerning wisdom. While wisdom will always excel folly as worthier for us to pursue, still "the wise die just like fools." Even the pursuit of wisdom will not save us from our ultimate death. To truly be able to live with wisdom, we must 1) accept the truth of our death and learn from it now, and 2) as people of faith, we are given the promise that death is not the end of our story. **How do these two realities help you move toward the idea of your own impermanence with confidence and comfort, rather than try to escape it?**

The promise that heaven awaits us and that the righteousness of Jesus has been credited to us is a sheer gift of grace, and what we place our hope in as Christians. When we look at death not as the end of our story, but as a lens through which to look at our life, we can truly live with wisdom. **As we continue to ponder life as hevel this week, consider how your priorities might change if you knew this was your last year on earth. Pay attention to how you spend your time, journal, talk to friends, and note how you are seizing the moments given to you.** *In living life "backwards" may we gain the wisdom to make life worth living. Amen.*