

Crystallization-Study of Ecclesiastes

#12: Vanity of Vanities, the Reality in Jesus, and the Revelation of the Sons of God 4/19-25

OL Summary:

I. “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2b): **A.** In Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 we see that the theme of this book is vanity of vanities. /The central thought of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of vanities of human life under the sun in its falling away from God. /The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description of the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, a life in the corrupted world. /The teachings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes show that the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind. /According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity. /No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun. /Only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun”, is not vanity but is reality. **B.** In Psalm 39:4-6 David realized the nothingness and vanity of his life. /In this psalm David was brought by God to realize that he was nothing and vanity; he learned that every man at his best is altogether vanity. /Our realizing that our condition is sinful and that our situation is one of vanity opens the way for Christ to crucify us and enter into us to replace us by living Himself through us and causing us to live together with Him in an organic union, as expressed by Paul in Galatians 2:20. **C.** Man was created by God with the highest and most noble purpose, that is, to express God in His image with His divine life and nature. /God’s enemy, Satan, the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man created by God for His purpose. /Through this fall of man, man and all the created things that had been committed by God to his dominion were made subject to vanity; thus, human life in the corrupted world also became vanity. **D.** Although the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind, we need to realize that God has put eternity in man’s heart. /“Eternity” in Ecclesiastes 3:11 is “a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy”. /God created man in His image and formed in him a spirit so that man may receive and contain Him and have a heart that seeks God Himself so that God can be man’s satisfaction. /Although man fell away from God, and sin through Satan came in to frustrate man from receiving God for his satisfaction, the desire for God, the seeking for God, still remains in man’s heart.]

II. In Ephesians 4:17-21 and 24 Paul presents the reality in Jesus for a walk that is no longer in the vanity of the mind: **A.** In Ephesians 4:17 Paul exhorts the believers to “no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind”. /The basic element in the daily life of fallen mankind is the vanity of the mind. /The Gentiles, the nations, are the fallen people, who have become vain in their reasonings. /They walk without God in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. /In the eyes of God and of the apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, and do is nothing but vanity. /The nations who walk in the vanity of the mind are darkened in their

understanding because of the hardness of their heart. **B.** In Ephesians 4:17 and 21 there is a contrast between the reality in Jesus and the vanity of the fallen human mind: In the godless walk of fallen man there is vanity, but in the godly life of Jesus there is reality. /The reality in Jesus is “the reality” of the new man mentioned in verse 24. /The deceit is the personification of Satan, and the reality is the personification of God; the deceit is the devil, and the reality is God. /God as the reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus. /The reality in Jesus is the actual condition of the life of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. /Everything the Lord did in His human life was God expressed and therefore was reality. /The life of Jesus according to reality is the pattern for the believers’ life. /We need to learn Christ and be taught in Him to live a life of reality. /As members of the Body of Christ, we should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God. **C.** We can live in the reality that is in Jesus because “we are in Him who is true”. /Him who is true refers to God becoming subjective to us, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience. /The true one is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by experiencing, enjoying, and possessing this reality.]

III. Because creation has been made subject to vanity, the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God “in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God”: **A.** As a result of Satan’s injecting himself as sin into man, man and all created things were brought into the slavery of corruption and made subject to vanity. **B.** The anxious watching—watching with full concentration—of the creation “eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God”. /Revelation is an unveiling or an appearing of something previously covered or hidden. /As the Lord’s second coming, when we will be glorified and our bodies will be fully redeemed, the veil will be lifted. **C.** Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will bring in His kingdom to deal with the present condition. /The coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of the revealed sons of God. /God’s glory goes with His kingdom and is expressed in the realm of His kingdom. /The kingdom of God is the sphere for us to worship God and enjoy God under the divine ruling with the view of entering into God’s glory. /The kingdom is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory. /The shining of the kingdom is for the glorification of the Father. /The kingdom of God is God’s manifestation in His glory with His authority for His divine administration; hence, to enter into the kingdom of God and to enter into the expressed glory of God take place as one thing simultaneously. /The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for God’s kingdom to come; at the time of the revelation of the kingdom, the whole creation will be liberated, and the manifested sons of God will be delivered from vanity and “will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father”.

CP1: Loving and pursuing the Lord in the church life is the reality and the everything else is vanity

OL1: According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, as long as it is of the old creation, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun. [Eccl. 1:2](#) Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; vanity of vanities; all is vanity. [9](#) 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. [14](#) I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. **OL2:** The way for us to escape this vanity is to come back to God and take God in Christ as redemption, life, wealth, enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction so that we may still be used by God to fulfill His original purpose in creating man for the fulfillment of His eternal economy. **OL3:** Temporal things can never satisfy man; only the eternal God, who is Christ, can satisfy the deep sense of purpose in man's heart. [Eccl. 3:11](#) He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart... According to our own experience, we know that whenever we have a success in our human life, we also have an empty feeling. This indicates that within man there is an aspiration for eternal things. God has put such an aspiration, such a seeking, in man's heart so that he will seek God. Every person, especially every thoughtful person, has within him this longing and seeking for eternity.

The wise king said that God created everything beautiful in its own time and also put eternity in man's heart. This matches our human experience. Regardless of how rich or successful a person becomes, he still feels empty. Man has a deep desire for permanent things, and the only things that are permanent are the eternal things. The Amplified Bible says that eternity in man's heart is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy."

In God's creation of man there are three striking things: His image, our human spirit to receive Him, and a divinely implanted sense of a purpose in our hearts working through the ages, which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy. The romance depicted in Song of Songs does not start from the Lord but from the seeker. A person becomes such a seeker because within him there is a sense of purpose to seek something eternal. Nothing can fulfill or satisfy this sense of purpose but God Himself, who is Christ. Many people would think that we are wasting our time, but actually, we are redeeming the time. Those who pursue temporary things are wasting their time. They are busy for nothing. Anything they are busy for is temporary, not eternal. Only One in the whole universe is eternal—the eternal God.

Application: Newly saved, Youth and College Students

The Song of Songs came after the book of Ecclesiastes of the Old Testament. The book of Ecclesiastes says, "All is vanity" ([Eccl. 1:2](#)), but the Song of Songs is about loving and

pursuing the Lord and finding satisfaction in Him. This shows that loving and pursuing the Lord in the church life is reality, anything other than that is vanity. You should not think that your school life or business life is your main life and reality, and your church life is ancillary. In fact, just the opposite, the church life is reality and the school life or business life is ancillary.

However, this does not mean that you can treat them in a light way because they are ancillary. School life or business life is an environment for experiencing Christ. Be it studying or working, you need to be diligent in the Lord and experience Christ. And build the church with the Christ you have experienced. If you make the school life or business life your main thing, it will become vanity of vanities. Even if you become a person with a doctoral degree or a president, if you do not love and build with the Lord in your church life, these achievements are vanity of vanities. However, if you make them ancillary to your church life, your school life or business life shall be blessed because of your building of the church.

[2 Cor. 4:18](#) Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. [1 Pet. 1:8](#) Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

Testimony of a sister's graduate school graduation: Seven elementary school teachers were selected to go to the master's program at the University of Education to do research on the newly started English education in elementary schools. I was one of them. I was the only one who wrote the master's thesis in English with a native professor in the graduate school. Thank the Lord. After completing my master's thesis, I worked with a full-time serving sister as the facilitator for the end of March Lord's day Zoom Gospel Meeting. Also, I played saxophone in the praising of hymns. As I enjoyed so much when I, the brothers and sisters were put in coordination for the preparation, the gospel preaching burden came out in me.

I was not active in the gospel before. However, as I enjoyed the Lord, the burden came naturally, and I actively invited nine gospel friends. In the end, my graduate school's associate professor and his two daughters and my mother, the four of them were able to participate. Because it was Zoom, so I think it was easy for them to participate. I think my serving as the facilitator in coordination with the sister was enabled in the Lord. There is a wonderful enjoyment when serving in the Body in combination. I am grateful to the Lord for giving me the opportunity to go on to graduate school and serve in the gospel meeting. From April I started to work in a new elementary school, and I want to experience the Lord and become an elementary school teacher with testimony.

Prayer: Oh, Lord Jesus, when school life or business life is busy, I feel as if that is reality. But the church life is reality. If the church life is viewed as ancillary, the blessings will be missed out. Let me be diligent in the Lord and experience Christ in the studies or work. Love and pursuit the Lord, be filled with the Lord, preach the gospel, and serve to build the church. That way I shall get the true satisfaction.

CP2: Call on the Lord's name, set mind on the spirit, be freed from the vanities of mind like the lust for money, promotion, rivalry

OL1: When the mind of fallen people is filled with vanity, their understanding is darkened in the things of God. The hardness of fallen man's heart is the source of the darkness in his understanding and the vanity of his mind. Eph. 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind. **OL2:** The human living of Jesus was according to the reality, that is, according to God Himself. The essence of the life of Jesus was reality; He always walked in reality. 20 But you did not so learn Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus. Wealth, fame, position, entertainment, and material possessions in today's world are all vanities, but everything in the daily living of the man Jesus is the reality. Whatever He did in His human living is the reality; not one of His words was vain. Christ is not only life to us but also an example. In His life on earth He set up a pattern, as revealed in the Gospels. Then He was crucified and resurrected to become the life-giving Spirit that He might enter into us to be our life. We learn from Him according to His example, not by our natural life but by Him as our life in resurrection.

In His daily walk the man Jesus was not only great but also very fine. For example, when He fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish,... He instructed His disciples to gather the broken pieces left over that nothing may be lost, which amounted to twelve handbaskets full. The four Gospels reveal that in every detail of the Lord's daily living, there is no vanity but only the reality. Moreover, in nearly every page of the four Gospels, we see a striking contrast between the reality in the godly living of Jesus and the vanity in the living of others around Him, such as His opposers as well as His disciples.

Eph. 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear. This indicates that we need grace for the details of our daily life, not merely for what we regard as important matters.

Application to businessperson/graduate students

The businessperson should be careful not to be filled with the vanity of mind, e.g., greed for money, greed for career advancement, or competitiveness. But it is not by the way of escaping reality, being lazy and not fulfilling your responsibilities as a member of society. Those who do not fulfill their responsibilities say that they are not competitive, but that is just being lazy. As members of society, we need to work diligently and desperately to support ourselves, our families, the church, and our society. Whenever you try to fulfill your responsibilities in this way, rivalry, love of money, etc., will come up in your mind. At that time, you can call on the name of the Lord, set your mind to the spirit, and be freed from these vanities.

Eph. 4:17 FN **the vanity of their mind:** The Gentiles are the fallen people, who become vain in their reasonings. They

walk without God in the vanity of their mind, being controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity, void of reality. 18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 18 FN **being darkened in their understanding:** When the mind of fallen people is filled with vanity, their understanding is darkened regarding the things of God. Thus, they are alienated, separated, from the life of God. FN **alienated from the life of God:** Man fell into the vanity of his mind and became darkened in his understanding. Now in such a fallen condition man is unable to touch the life of God until he repents (has his mind turned to God) and believe in the Lord Jesus to receive God's eternal life. FN **the hardness of their heart:** The hardness of fallen man's heart is the source of the darkness in his understanding and the vanity of his mind.

Brother's testimony: While I was working as the No. 2 at the Japanese subsidiary of a large US-based medical device company, I was offered an executive position at the US headquarters in October 2016. At that time, my performance was very blessed by the Lord. Just before the offer, the Lord enlightened me and I felt that He was saying, "Why are you working all the time when the church is beginning to stagnate?". I thought it would be better to quit my job, so I fellowshiped with my wife about it, and she agreed to quit the company. A few days later, I received this offer from the VP of the US headquarters. I had already decided to quit my job, so I immediately declined. He thought I might not have understood the offer very well, so he explained it to me again. I politely and clearly declined. I was able to get the US headquarters to accept my resignation six months later and leave at the end of 2017, about a year later. This outline clearly states that promotion, wealth, and honor are vanities, and that all works done under the sun are vanities, like chasing after wind. There is a human spirit inside of me, and this spirit thirsts for the eternal God and thirsts to serve Him. I paid attention to the craving of this spirit, so I was able to turn down an offer that was outstanding in the eyes of people almost without hesitation.

Around 2015-2016, the growth in the number of people in the church gradually started to stagnate, but after this, the number of people started to grow by more than 10% again in 2017. I started my own business in August 2018, but I try to spend at least 50% of my time on the church. **Prayer:** Lord, as a member of society, I need to work diligently and desperately to support myself, my family, church, and society. When I try to fulfill my responsibility, things like rivalry, love of money etc. may come up in my mind. But I need to call on the name of the Lord, set my mind on my spirit, and free from these vain things. Let me not walk in the vanity of mind as the Gentiles, but work diligently, serve the Lord, and enjoy His grace in all things.

CP3: The growth of God's children brings in the creation's freedom from slavery so the believers should not despise themselves

OL1: Because creation has been made subject to vanity and to the slavery of corruption, everything under the sun is vanity. At present the creation is enslaved under the law of decay and corruption; its only hope is to be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed. Rom. 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, 21 in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now. 23 And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body. OL2: God has called us to enter into His kingdom and glory. Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. 13 ...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

If we tell people on the street that we are sons of God, they will think that we are crazy. They will say, "Look at you and me. What is the difference between us? We are both human beings. You are not different from me. You are just another person. Why do you say that you are a son of God?" However, the day will come when the sons of God will be manifested. In that day there will be no need to make the declaration, "From now on we are the sons of God," because we all shall be glorified. We shall be in glory, designated as sons by the glory of God. Then all other people will have to admit that we are the sons of God. They will say, "Look at these people. Who are these people so full of glory? They must be sons of God."

If you talk with unbelievers, they will admit that they enjoy their entertainments, like dancing and gambling. However, they will also tell you that they are unhappy....They are groaning, but only groaning; there is nothing else. We, on the contrary, as we are groaning, have within us the Spirit as the firstfruits, as the foretaste of God Himself. Even as we are suffering, we have the enjoyment. We have the taste of the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord is simply the Spirit as the firstfruits for our enjoyment. So, we are different from worldly people. They experience groaning without the inward enjoyment. We, however, groan outwardly, but rejoice inwardly....We rejoice because we have the firstfruits of the Spirit. The divine Spirit within us is the foretaste of God which leads us to the full taste of the enjoyment of God. This is a great item in the blessings of sonship.

Application to the serving ones

Zech.12:1 Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and

forms the spirit of man within him,

Zechariah 12:1 shows us that in the eyes of God there are three great things in this universe: the heavens, the earth, and man. In the universe God pays attention to the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. Therefore, do not despise yourself. You have a spirit within you, and your spirit is ranked with the heavens and the earth. ... The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man is for God. (The Lord's Recovery of Eating #1)

On the revelation of the book of Zechariah above, the serving brothers and sisters should realize that all creations of Romans 8:19-23 are waiting for the appearance of the sons of God.

19FN revelation of the sons of God: An unveiling or appearing of something previously covered or hidden. Although we are the sons of God, we are veiled, not yet revealed. At the Lord's second coming, when we will be glorified and our bodies will be fully redeemed, the veil will be lifted. The creation is eagerly awaiting this. This revelation will be the consummation of the process of designation that we are now passing through. In a sense, you are like an Olympic athlete competing in front of a large crowd. The large crowd focuses on you and supports you. Likewise, all creation supports you in your daily growth. Moreover, the entire creation is not only spectator who supports you and is delighted with your success, but also shares your destiny. Your growth begins with regeneration, passes through the transformation of the soul, and finally leads to the redemption of the body. At that time, the entire creation will be freed from the slavery.

When you know this, you will be freed from individualism. Your growth not only affects the church, but it affects the whole creation. Therefore, you should not think that it is okay as long as you are good or it doesn't matter if you are weak if you don't bother anyone. As you grow in the Lord, the whole creation supporting you will rejoice, knowing that the revelation of the son of God is near. But if you do not grow in the Lord, you will fall prey to Satan and his armies and join them.

Now you are in the stage of transformation of the soul. In order to be transformed, you should crucify your soul and live Christ in the spirit. When you say, "I want to do this," or "I don't want to do this," you should think about what the indwelling Lord think, set your mind on the spirit and ask Him to let Christ live in you. Gal.2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; Prayer: Oh Lord Jesus, I have learned that the creation is subjected to vanity and corruption of slavery, and eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. This is no time for individualism, because my growth in life not only affects the church, but also affects the whole creation. I am aware of being the leader of all creation in the Lord, and even if I groan outside, I enjoy the first fruit of the spirit inside and grow.