

**Speaker:** Pastor Buster Brown

**Today's Message:** "Despair on Overdrive"

**Today's Text:** Ecclesiastes 6

*"There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: <sup>2</sup> a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous evil. <sup>3</sup> If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life's good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. <sup>4</sup> For it comes in vanity and goes in darkness, and in darkness its name is covered. <sup>5</sup> Moreover, it has not seen the sun or known anything, yet it finds rest rather than he. <sup>6</sup> Even though he should live a thousand years twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?*

*<sup>7</sup> All the toil of man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied. <sup>8</sup> For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? And what does the poor man have who knows how to conduct himself before the living? <sup>9</sup> Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the appetite: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.*

*<sup>10</sup> Whatever has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is, and that he is not able to dispute with one stronger than he. <sup>11</sup> The more words, the more vanity, and what is the advantage to man? <sup>12</sup> For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?"*

In this passage, Solomon has reflected a full blown "under the sun only" worldview, which says that everything is nothing more than a vanity of vanities or smoke and mist.

Solomon has been reflecting on living an Epicurean lifestyle which discounts the reality of God while pursuing pleasure in a socially acceptable fashion.

1. There is no power to enjoy the good gifts of God, because Solomon has lost his spiritual equilibrium. (v. 1-2)
  - We either expect too much or settle for too little.
2. There is no satisfaction with the good gifts of life. (v.3-7)

*"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." C.S. Lewis*

3. There is no comfort in a hope of the certainty of Heaven and a preferable future in the presence of God. (v. 6b, 12b)
4. There is a growing cynicism regarding the quote “one stronger.” (v. 10)
5. There is despondency regarding friendship. (v. 11)

### Hope Overcoming Despair

1. Enjoy.

Enjoy the gifts of life because the good gifts of today are a foretaste of the glory to come.

2. Life’s good gifts are a gift from the Lord.

*“Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1:16-18*

3. The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18*

4. The centrality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus conquers despair.

*“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then, those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.” 1 Corinthians 15:17-19*

### QUESTIONS

1. Why does a life of despair, as a result of living life only “under the sun” lead to cynicism or anger?
2. When we live with an “under the sun” perspective, why do we find ourselves placing burdens on friendships, marriages and systems that cannot possibly deliver?
3. How do we determine if we are expecting too much, or settling for too little?
4. How does the resurrection of Jesus conquer despair in the life of a child of God?