

Pastor Nathan Schultz
Upper Thames Missionary Church
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Going “Out There” With God

the biggest questions we ask in life:

Why am I here?

Do I matter?

What is my Purpose?

Why is the world so messed up?

Am I the only one who sees how crazy this all is?

How can people live this way - pursuing money and fame?

Why am I so drawn to living that way - wanting money and fame, too?

Some people accuse Christianity of only offer simple answers and cliches. Not true!

Ecclesiastes is complex

- God has given us a lot to chew on in the Bible, and most of the time we're reluctant to put the work into understanding what God is saying in books like Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 5:8-20

Good News Translation

8 Don't be surprised when you see that the government oppresses the poor and denies them justice and their rights. Every official is protected by someone higher, and both are protected by still higher officials.

9 Even a king depends on the harvest. [\[a\]](#)

10 If you love money, you will never be satisfied; if you long to be rich, you will never get all you want. It is useless. **11** The richer you are, the more mouths you have to feed. All you gain is the knowledge that you are rich. **12** Workers may or may not have enough to eat, but at least they can get a good night's sleep. The rich, however, have so much that they stay awake worrying.

13 Here is a terrible thing that I have seen in this world: people save up their money for a time when they may need it, [\[b\]](#) **14** and then lose it all in some bad deal and end up with nothing left to pass on to their children. **15** We leave this world just as we entered it—with nothing. In spite of all our work there is nothing we can take with us. **16** It isn't right! We go just as we came. We labor, trying to catch the wind, and what do we get? **17** We get to live our lives in darkness and grief, [\[c\]](#) worried, angry, and sick.

18 Here is what I have found out: the best thing we can do is eat and drink and enjoy what we have worked for during the short life that God has given us; this is our fate. **19** If God gives us wealth and property and lets us enjoy them, we should be grateful and enjoy what we have worked for. It is a gift from God. **20** Since God has allowed us to be happy, we will not worry too much about how short life is.

G.K. Chesterton, one of my top 5 favourite authors, said this once:

"Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and left untried."

The problem everyone has with Christianity is that it gives relatively clear and **extremely difficult** answers to life's big questions.

Difficult, because to take the answers seriously we have to go against the grain of a society that seeks ultimate meaning in things like money, sex, and power.

These things have their place, but *the meaning of your life* does not exist in any one of them. None of these things are our *ultimate purpose*, and none of these things define *our identity*.

Money is not a ticket to happiness.

Sex is not a pleasure to seek.

Power is not a tool to achieve total freedom and independence.

-**Money** is a tool, a wonderful tool, and a dangerous one. It is there to be used wisely, every day. Using it wisely means putting it toward real goals - like food, shelter, and helping others, and only sparingly toward self-serving uses.

-I just came across someone sharing a quote that a mark of maturity is the ability to have money in your pocket and not spend it.

-Christianity teaches radical generosity – money is for the benefit of the family, and the community.

Sex is greatest act of giving (*not getting*) giving yourself to someone else - a sign and seal of a deep spiritual and physical union that we know as marriage. It's a reminder from God that self-giving, unity, trust and relationship are at the core of what it means to be human. And giving yourself to only one person for life is a living symbol of faithfulness, trust, and security that comes from knowing and being known by someone else completely.

-Christianity teaches about sex as the ultimate seal of a relationship, as the two halves of humanity, male and female, are rejoined, *not as a moment of receiving pleasure*, but a moment of giving yourself completely and permanently to the person who has become your husband or wife.

Power

-we believe that if we gain power and position we will be able to do what we want.

-Real power, as defined by Jesus, is the ability to live totally free from self-serving needs. You will be able to serve others freely because you have freely received the greatest gift, the power and authority of God's family.

- if you live to accumulate power, wealth, and pleasure, you'll find it will always let you down – underneath the fleeting pleasure you'll find, like v. 17 says, "*darkness and grief, [c] worry, anger, and sickness.*"

- v. 13 - 17 I want you to notice. Living in order to store up wealth and pleasure and power for yourself is like hoarding a pile of fruit - before long it rots on the inside.

- "darkness and grief, [c] worry, anger, and sickness." Are the rot that forms inside a life of selfish pursuits.

V18 and following is the author's "wisdom"

- use what you have been given, be thankful for it, share it, don't hoard it, don't use it for self-serving ends. Money that you use to bless others will not go to waste.

-We'll still be bothered by things that we see and things that happen to us . V. 20 acknowledges the mix of grief and joy that we will all inevitably have, but with God, Joy will form the bedrock of our lives

- We'll experience joy when we bless others and live our lives in the light of the wisdom God is revealing to us in his Word today.