Summary

In this final message of the series on Ecclesiastes, the pastor brings Solomon's 12-chapter journey to a close by unpacking the conclusion that Solomon spent a lifetime searching for. After questioning work, money, success, relationships, and the meaning of life itself, Solomon arrives at a simple but profound answer: fear God and keep His commands. The pastor walks through Solomon's poetic description of aging in Ecclesiastes 12, using it to illustrate that everything created is temporary, and that building your identity or foundation on temporary things will always leave you empty. The real problem, as Solomon discovered, was not enjoying created things but asking those things to do what only the Creator can do. The pastor challenges the group to stop searching for a different answer when God has already spoken clearly. More information does not automatically produce more wisdom, and sometimes we keep searching not because we lack an answer but because we do not like the one we already have. The good life is not a life where everything goes our way. It is a life ordered around God, where He holds His rightful place at the center and everything else falls underneath Him. God's commands are not barriers keeping us from the good life. They are directions leading us toward it.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hands and open hearts. As we gather together, we ask that You would quiet the noise of our busy lives and help us to truly hear what You want to speak to us today. We do not want to simply discuss ideas. We want to encounter You. Holy Spirit, lead this conversation. Reveal anything in our lives that has taken Your rightful place. Give us the courage to be honest with one another and with You. May this time together draw us closer to You and to each other. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

If you could spend one year doing absolutely anything without worrying about money or responsibilities, what would you do and why?

Key Verses

- Ecclesiastes 12:1

- Ecclesiastes 12:13
- Ecclesiastes 12:14
- Deuteronomy 10:12-13
- John 14:15
- Matthew 22:37-39
- 1 John 5:3
- Proverbs 1:7

Questions

- Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 12:1 to 'remember your Creator.' The pastor pointed out that this word 'remember' is directed at believers, not unbelievers. In what ways do you think it is possible to believe in God but still forget Him in how you actually live day to day?
- The pastor said, 'The gifts were never supposed to become God.' Can you think of something in your own life, even something good, that has slowly moved from being a blessing to being something you depend on more than God? How did that shift happen?
- Solomon describes aging and the changing of the body to show that everything created is temporary. How does the reality that nothing created lasts change the way you think about what you are building your life around right now?
- The pastor made a powerful statement: 'Sometimes we are not searching because we do not have an answer. We are searching because we do not like the answer we already have.' Have you ever found yourself doing this spiritually, looking for a different answer than what God had already made clear? What did that look like?
- The pastor said that sometimes the grace of God does not look like 'God brought me out' but rather 'God kept me from going in.' How does that reframe the way you think about obedience and the testimonies we celebrate in the church?
- What does it mean to you personally to 'fear God'? How is that different from simply being afraid of Him, and how is it also bigger than just respecting Him?
- The pastor used the image of a railing on top of the Empire State Building to describe God's commands. He said the boundary did not ruin the view but made it possible to safely enjoy it. Is there a boundary or command from God that you have struggled with, and how does that illustration change your perspective on it?
- Solomon's final conclusion after 12 chapters of searching was simply: fear God and keep His commands. Why do you think such a simple answer can feel unsatisfying or even frustrating to us? What does that reveal about our hearts?

Life Application

This week, identify one area of your life where something other than God has been sitting at the center. It could be a relationship, a career goal, a financial worry, your reputation, or even a good thing that has simply become too important. Write it down, bring it before God in prayer each day this week, and intentionally practice surrendering it to Him. Ask God to help you reorder that area of your life so that He holds His rightful place. At the end of the week, reflect on how that shift in focus changed the way you approached your decisions, your emotions, and your relationships.

Key Takeaways

- Everything created is temporary, and building your identity or security on temporary things will always leave you without a stable foundation. Only the Creator, who does not change, can carry the weight of your life.
- More information does not automatically produce more wisdom. There comes a point when you must stop searching for a different answer and decide what you will do with the truth you already have.
- God's commands are not barriers keeping you from the good life. They are directions leading you toward it. What looks like a restriction is often God protecting you and guiding you toward something far better.
- The fear of God is not terror but awe, reverence, honor, and submission. It means living with the understanding that He is God and you are not, and allowing that reality to shape every decision you make.
- The good life is not a life where everything goes your way. It is a life ordered around God, where He holds His rightful place at the center and everything else is stewarded underneath Him.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that does not change even when everything around us does. We confess that we have sometimes asked created things to carry what only You can carry. We have searched for answers You had already given us. We have looked at Your boundaries as restrictions instead of as the loving guidance of a Father who sees what we cannot see. Today we choose to put You back at the center. We choose to fear You, to trust You, and to obey You, not because we understand everything, but because we know enough about who You are to trust You with

what we do not understand. May the way we live this week reflect that You are God and we belong to You. Order our lives around You, Lord. Everything else belongs underneath You. In Jesus' name, amen.