



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

9 = Ashes to Ashes

Announcements:

3/20 @7:30 -

Prayer

3/21 @6:30 -

Grace Group

3/24 @8:30 -

Sunday School

3/24 @6:00 -

Family Night

SMALL GROUP

ICE BREAKER: Have you ever heard a song and thought: that is exactly what I am feeling?

READ: Ecclesiastes 3:18-22

Two weeks ago I mentioned that the “Time for Everything” poem was the only portion of Ecclesiastes to be a top 40 hit. And while that is technically true, there is a thought that occurred in the passage we just read that also managed to make its way into the American top 40. The band Kansas took one of the ideas that Solomon wrestled with here (“All are from the dust, and to dust all return.”) and made it a hit with their song “Dust in the Wind.” In both the song by Kansas and what Solomon is saying here we see the same thoughts: that life is short, and that what we try and do, and what we seek in this life, ultimately are fleeting and (in some sense) meaningless. Kansas mourns that “all we are is dust in the wind” and Solomon proclaims “All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to the dust all return.” And it is this thought that we will be diving into today.

The first thought that we have to wrestle with is what I would call the “scary” one. In the direct context of what Solomon is writing about we are to see that the place of humans is among the “beasts”. It is a rather sobering thought, but one that we are forced to come face to face with: What is the difference between us and any other animal? In philosophy you will see people defining a person as a “rational animal”, but that still means we are animals. And just as animals come and go are born and die, so too we as people come and go are born and die. Our “rationality” cannot change that. Nothing can change that! We cannot ever escape the truth that life is short and we, just like the other animals God has made, will one day be just like them: returning to the dust of the earth. In fact, Solomon, said in the verse before this “dust to dust” thought that God is testing us to *show* us that we are “but beasts”. God wants us to understand our place, and that is a lowly, humble place.

DISCUSS: Why is this “scary” thought an important one? In what ways are we “but a beast”? In what ways do we see the need for a higher truth? (hint: think Imago Dei, and the “rational” part of “rational animals”)

With that in mind I would like to direct our thoughts to the “hopeful” part of this same thought. Sure, *this* body that I currently reside in is perishable, and will one day return to the dust. My hope is that the body that I currently reside in is not the one I will inhabit for eternity.

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:42-49

This physical body gives way to the spiritual, the perishable to the imperishable. In other words, the one made from the “stuff of this earth” will be replaced with a glorified one made from the “stuff of heaven”. That is our hope. The temporary nature of this body is, in fact, a gift. Because as this one breaks down, and I feel the weight of the years press it down, this forces me to long for something far better: a glorious resurrection body in which I will glorify God for all time in heaven. And that is a great and mighty hope!

DISCUSS: In what ways does the thought of a resurrection body inspire hope and confidence? How can we live in light of this?