



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
 Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
 Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
 Kelly Kendall
 Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale

Hebel

by Morgan Bradley

You wake up. You go to work. You come home. You go to sleep.
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This is the life you and so many millions, even billions, of people live every single day. You wake up. You go to work. You come home. You go to sleep. Life is a constant flow of repetition, interrupted only by the occasional, and exceedingly rare, outing or vacation where you decide to wake up somewhere else, go play, go to your hotel, and go to sleep. Confronted by the monotonous prison of life we sometimes shout at the sky in despair, “What’s the point of all of this?” Solomon had the very same question. In searching for purpose under the sun he comes to the realization that it is *“Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless”* (Eccl. 1:2, NIV). Is life truly meaningless, or is there a point to life? Is there anything valuable in living to a good old age if it is full of nothing but the same business of eating, sleeping, and working?

The Hebrew word that we translate as “meaningless,” *hebel*, is a very interesting word. As a noun it is translated as vapor or breath. Poetically it is used to describe things of an insubstantial or transitory nature. In Psalm 144:4 a man's life is *hebel*, here one moment and gone the next. In Zechariah 10:2, false idols give *hebel* comfort, a comfort that has no substance. In Ecclesiastes it describes that which is unfair or absurd in our eyes, such as the wise and foolish who meet the same end (Eccl. 2:14-15), or how the wicked are rewarded by their evil while the good suffer for their righteousness (Eccl. 8:14).

Solomon looked not only at his life, but all of God’s green earth and saw *hebel*. *“A generation goes, and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again”* (Eccl. 1:5-7, ESV).

We see that not only can our lives be subject to *hebel*, but all the earth is as well. There is a sense of universal indifference here. The universe was and will be here before and after we are. Yet, still the sun will rise, the streams will flow, and the wind will blow, and we will have been forgotten. It is completely indifferent to us but like us, it is trapped in a cycle of monotony. Nothing ever changes. It is in constant, futile motion. Nothing is accomplished. Life under the sun can look quite bleak. Is there any escape from *hebel*? Are we forever consigned to our monotonous prison? Is the point of our life only to drift through life, awaiting death? Life under the sun offers no answers, so we must seek for something higher. Jesus tells us he is not of this world, but from above (John 8:23). Only he can give us an escape from a vain and meaningless life, and he does it through his word: *“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”* (John 8:31-32).

We are made free from the meaninglessness of life by God's word. We are not doomed to live aimless lives. He has given us direction and a purpose. The culmination of our existence is not death, it is the new life that waits for us above.

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:19-21). We too await a for a time when we are set free, but this freedom is only given to the children of God. Will you live your *hebel* life, only to die and quickly be forgotten? Or will you let God set you free?