

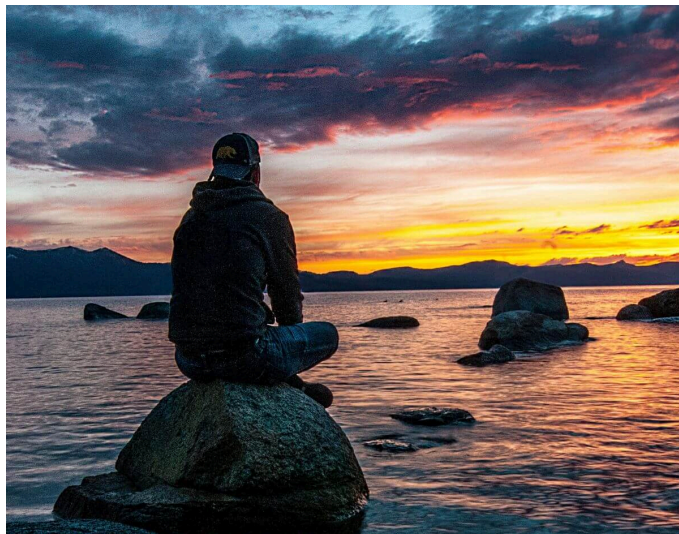
THE BROOKLYN EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH BANNER

Several books have been written recently on the book of Ecclesiastes. Living Life Backward by David Gibson is one of many you may have read. His subtitle is, “How Ecclesiastes teaches us to live in light of the end.” Philip Graham Ryken titled his exposition of Ecclesiastes, Why Everything Matters, subtitled “The Gospel in Ecclesiastes.” Zach Eswine titled his book on Ecclesiastes, Recovering Eden. Douglas Wilson titled his, Joy at the End of the Tether.

With so many different understandings of the book, it is no surprise to discover that the book of Ecclesiastes is a challenge to understand. There is a simple reason for this: Ecclesiastes is an exploration of the meaning of the most difficult thing for us to understand. Ecclesiastes is an investigation of life in this world, “under the sun.” From beginning to end, it asks the question, “What is the meaning of life?”

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

by Pastor John Mochel



Now, if you read the book of Ecclesiastes looking for answers, you won't get them. The book asks questions followed by observations followed by provisional conclusions. It is a bit like a detective trying to discover what really happened, but only being able to determine what did not happen.

Why bother with a book that gives us questions where we might want answers? Well, that is an important question. First, Ecclesiastes helps us to look at life with clear and brutal honesty. It tears away all our illusions about what life is. We discover that there is nothing to gain in life. Life cannot be about getting. Second, the book gives us a picture of wisdom in action, applied to the most significant questions of life. We learn how to think, how to humbly ask questions. We learn to enjoy what God has given. Third, the book shows us how futile our efforts are to make sense of everything, or anything, and shows us how desperately we must need God. Evidently, Ecclesiastes takes courage to read.

Ecclesiastes begins with a word. The word shows up five times in verse 2. The word is most often translated into English as “vanity.” “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2, ESV). To most of us, vanity sounds bad, like it's a waste of time. In the NIV we read, “meaningless!” But those translations fail to capture the central meaning of the word. The word written in the original Hebrew is “hebel.” Gibson does an excellent job presenting the challenge.

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I want to propose that many well-intentioned Bible translators have actually led us astray by translating the Hebrew word *hebel* as “meaningless” in this context. We tend to read this word as if it’s spoken by an undergraduate philosophy student who comes home after his first year of studies and confidently announces that the universe as we know it is pointless and life has no meaning. But that is not the Preacher’s perspective.

Gibson follows this with some clear guidance.

In fact, the Hebrew word *hebel* is also accurately translated as “breath” or “breeze.” The preacher is saying that everything is a mist, a vapor, a puff of wind, a bit of smoke. It’s a common biblical idea:

Behold you have made my days a few
handbreadths,
And my lifetime is as nothing before You.
Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath [*hebel*]
Surely a man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nothing [*hebel*] they are in turmoil;
Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will
gather (Psalm 39:5-6)
When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin,
You consume like a moth what is dear to him;
Surely all mankind is a mere breath [*hebel*]
(Psalm 39:11).
O Lord, what is man that you regard him,
Or the son of man that you think of him?
Man is like a breath [*hebel*];
His days are like a passing shadow (Psalm 144:3-4).

The word *hebel* is used over and over in Ecclesiastes to describe the reality of life that we face.

“Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days
of your fleeting [*hebel*] life which He has given to you
under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your
toil in which you have labored under the sun”
(Ecclesiastes 9:9).

“So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put
away pain from your body, because childhood and
the prime of life are fleeting [*hebel*]”
(Ecclesiastes 11:10).

We tend to approach life as if it is a project to be
accomplished, figured out. Too often our goal is to solve
all the problems and get everything fixed. But
Ecclesiastes tells us that life defies that approach. There
is never a moment when we arrive at “all is just right.”
Life is a journey, and a rapid one at that. It goes by in a
flash. As Elton John sang about Marilyn Monroe,

And it seems to me you lived your life
Like a candle in the wind
Never knowing who to cling to
When the rain set in

Elton John, meet Solomon the Preacher. At least you
recognized this about life: it goes by so fast, in a moment.
You and I are here today, gone tomorrow. We had better
look to God to figure it out.

THE BANQUET

Our Opportunity to Serve Others

- The Banquet is a non-profit organization located in Sioux Falls, S.D.
- Its mission is to provide a welcoming place where people can gather, receive nourishment, and experience love in action.
- This meal ministry was founded in 1985 and started with serving just one meal per week. Currently, sixteen meals per week are served at two locations in Sioux Falls.
(900 E. 8th Street and 710 N. Marion Road)
- The Banquet is a volunteer-based ministry which means the meals are paid for, prepared by, and served by volunteer groups. In 2024, a total of 180,000 meals were served!
- Each year, special events are also offered by The Banquet including Project SOS (donation/distribution of school supplies), Run for The Banquet, and a Chili Fest.
- Financial donations are also appreciated as well as donations of kitchen supplies, office supplies, and personal care items.
- For more information, please visit The Banquet's website: thebanquetsf.org

Brooklyn EFC will be serving lunch
at The Banquet Downtown Location
on **Saturday, August 8.**

A signup sheet is available in the church foyer.
A donation of \$1,000 will be made from the Local
Missions Fund to cover the cost of the food served.

Please contact a Mission Committee member
if you have any questions!

*We hope you will be able
to join us!*

UPCOMING Events

NORTHSTAR KIDS TO HIDDEN ACRES | JULY 5-10

With God's Word as a foundation, HA values these four pillars in their summer camp ministry.

CONNECT: Camp is a great place to make lifelong friends!

GUIDE: Camp is a fun experience, directed by trained and caring leaders.

PROTECT: They work hard to make camp a safe place physically, emotionally and spiritually.

TEACH: Camp is all about growth. They use activities, conversations, nature and everything in between to point others toward Jesus. Pray that God will stir the hearts of each camper, each desiring to make a commitment to follow Him.

COMMUNITY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL | JULY 20-23 | 9:00-12:00

Get ready for Bulow Park to come alive with kids, laughter, and Christ-centered fun! Young adults from the Free Lutheran Bible School will be leading Bible lessons, teaching worship songs, and running high-energy games. On Tuesday, July 21st, we need YOUR help with crafts for all four age groups. If you can lend a hand, sign up at the Welcome Desk. Let's make this an unforgettable week for our community's kids!

CHURCH FAMILY GAME NIGHT | JULY 25

An invitation is extended to each and everyone who enjoys having fun with family and friends! A game night is planned once each month at church to foster fellowship and fun. All ages are welcome! Yard games in the warmer weather and board/card games during the colder months. People can bring their favorite games and a snack to share, but neither are required. So find your way out to church from 6 - 8:30pm July 25th.

BWCA CANOE TRIP | JULY 27-AUGUST 3

Adventure awaits in the Boundary Waters of Northern Minnesota! As the group prepares to paddle into the wilderness, please cover them in prayer. Year after year, God has faithfully protected our crews from serious mishaps and provided strength for the journey, and your prayers have been a huge part of that. Here's the countdown:

- July 19th, 5:00pm: Packing party at church (making sure all the **necessities** are ready!)
- July 26th, 2:00pm: Prayer send-off at church
- July 27th, 4:00am: Departure!
- August 3rd evening: Welcome home!

BRIDAL SHOWER HONORING JULIA BARNARD | JULY 29

Jon DeLay has met the one whom God has chosen for him to walk through life with. As they prepare to be married August 8th at Brooklyn, a shower is being planned to bless Jon & Julia with gifts to help them prepare for their lives together. Your presence would be such an encouragement and blessing to Julia as she gets to know you before they leave for Kansas City. Please join us in the fellowship hall, Tuesday evening, July 29th from 6:30 - 8:00pm. The couple is registered at Amazon.com and Target.

SAVE THE DATE! SEPTEMBER 19

The Mission Committee invites you to attend a conference: **"Go and Make Disciples"** September 19, 2026. Tyler Dykstra will be presenting The Great Commission and how to apply it in our everyday lives! Please invite your family and friends! Watch for more details!



JULY

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

			1 12pm Community Study	2 7:30p Men's Study	3	4 
5 9a SS 10a Fellowship 10:30a Worship 6p Bible Study	6 11a Greek Class 7p Dig Deeper	7 9a DTS Pastor's Group 10a Women's Study	8 12p Community Study	9 7:30p Men's Study	10 9a Elder Board Meeting	11
NorthStar Kids Attending Hidden Acres Camp, 7/5 - 7/10						
12 9a SS 10a Fellowship 10:30a Worship	13 11a Greek Class 7p Dig Deeper	14 10a Women's Study	15 12p Community Study	16	17	18 9a Missions Committee Mtg 1-5p Fellowship Hall Reserved
Pine Ridge Missions Trip, July 12 - 17						
19 9a SS 10a Fellowship 10:30a Worship 5p BWCA Packing Meeting	20 11a Greek Class 7p Dig Deeper Pastor @ HA HS Camp	21 10a Women's Study	22 12p Community Study	23 7:30p Men's Study	24	25 6-8:30p Game Night
9am - 12pm Community VBS, 7/20 - 23						
26 9a SS 10a Fellowship 10:30a Worship 2p Prayer for BWCA Trip	27 11a Greek Class 7p Dig Deeper	28 10a Women's Study	29 6:30-8p Bridal Shower for Julia Barnard	30	31	
Boundary Waters Canoe Trip, July 27 - August 3						

Happy Birthday to:

2 Brittany VanHofwegen
3 Scott Bird
7 Joan Latendresse
9 Dale Swanstrom
13 John Fahlberg
14 Sandy Fahlberg
14 Milo Snook
17 Noah Paulson
18 Janice Abrams

19 BJ Pramann
21 Ted Lewis
21 Mitzi Rozeboom
21 Steve Sims
23 Steve VanHofwegen, Sr.
24 Julyan VanHofwegen
25 Lewie Gordon
26 Connie Schmidt
31 Clint Koth

Happy Anniversary to:

2 Caleb & Heather Wynia
26 Dan & Kate Erickson
28 Ben & Talisha Fahlberg

MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT

Date	Greeters	Nursery	Children's Church	Music/Missions	Scripture Reader
7/5	A Sveeggen	Stacy Sims Bethany Hoffman	Michelle DeLay AG Kelderman	Matilda Lewis	Jeremy Saugstad
7/12	J/C Pierce	Nancy Mochel Sydney DeLay	BJ Pramann Bethany Hoffman	Randy Schmidt	Allen Sveeeggen
7/19	D/M Nelson	Jackie Krebs Izi Monen	Harley Koth Sydney DeLay	Open	Reid Jensen
7/26	R/M Jensen	Karla Bovill Selah Stake	Nancy Mochel Jack DeLay	John Fahlberg	Arlyn Abrams
8/2	D/J Paulson	Michelle DeLay Annalisa Stake	Connie Pierce Payden Hoffman	Rylee Adam	Dan Paulson
8/9	L/L Koth	Jen Gordon Isaac Bovill	Colleen Buss Andrew Bovill	Open	Matthew Wynia
8/16	M/M Wynia	Stacy Sims Lewie Gordon	Michelle DeLay Elsie Bovill	Zech Stake	Rhonda Wynia
8/23	B/B Erickson	Nancy Mochel Clara Sims	BJ Pramann Elijah Stake	Tavin Lewis	Jerrold Wynia
8/30	C/M DeLay	Jackie Krebs Memphis Meier	Nancy Mochel Isaac Bovill	Open	Robin Leikvold

JULY

Worship Leader
Brian Fahlberg

Keyboard
Doreen Fahlberg

Ushers
Eric Adam, Clif Carnes,
Ron Swanson, Andy German

AUGUST

Worship Leader
John Fahlberg

Keyboard
Connie Twedt

Ushers
Karl Leikvold, Dan Paulson,
Ted Lewis, Dave Nelson

July 5

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 All the Works Done Under the Sun

July 12

TBD Jon DeLay Preaching

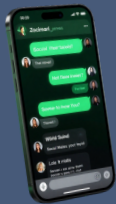
July 19

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 The Pursuit of Pleasure

July 26

Ecclesiastes 2:12-26 The Pursuit of Wisdom





SCROLLING

by Jerrold Wynia



In Philippians 3:3-11 we read “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compare the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

That passage from Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi forms the basis for the formation of the Brooklyn EFC’s statement of belief: Glorifying God by knowing Him and making Him known. How are you doing with your journey to know God? Are you seeing spiritual growth? How is your prayer life? How about your time in God’s Word?

Through a 6 week period in April and May I had the privilege of leading the adult Sunday School class through a deep dive into the impact of smartphones (screens) on our lives. We looked at how this technology that brings some amazing benefits to our lives can also lead us to distraction, boredom and even addiction. When we carry a smartphone with us everywhere we go we find that we are easily distracted by texts, emails, social media, news, and a host of other alerts pushed to us. We get easily bored by short videos of all types, which lead us to become addicted. How long can you go without looking at your screen? What must you do immediately when it dings?

One of the core discoveries we made was that these distractions have negatively impacted our journey of spiritual growth. We fall into the trap of jumping from one short video to another, and another, and before long we have wasted an hour. This all takes us away from personal interaction with others. The way we reach others is by building personal relationships through face-to-face interaction. And then we grow through undivided focus on time with God and His Word.

Smartphones and the internet today have brought challenges to our Pastor, as well as the church. We have instant access to a plethora of teachings. How do we know what is true? Whom do we trust? With the advent of AI, we now find ourselves being pushed whatever our “itching ears” want to hear.

We also looked at the impact on our youth. There has been incredible evidence mounting on how the use of smartphones and teens is harming our kids development, as well as bringing about anxiety and depression. The average age of exposure to pornography is age 12! Real-life in-person interactions are being replaced with social media and AI chatbots. This directly impacts the time our youth spend in courtship and marriage. A third of teens engaged with AI companions find them more satisfying than talking to real-life humans. We are seeing technology brought to us through smartphones mimic real-life relationships, but remove the cost that comes with real-life relationships. This results in a life of affirmation only, when we all, both young and old, need to be challenged and corrected as we are taught in Scripture.

We finished by looking at steps we can take as parents to reduce screen use in our homes, and steps that can be taken to keep our kids safe. By exiting tech we can build healthier families by building personal face-to-face relationships.

We are living in an amazing time of technology. But with it comes a far greater responsibility as Christians. This technology has crept up on us to the point that it is hindering our relationship with Christ, and thereby our relationships with others. I encourage you to do a self-evaluation with the following questions to determine the level of impact technology has on you today:

1. When you wake up in the morning, how long is it before you check your phone?
2. Do you lose track of time when you are on your phone?
3. When you are looking at your phone, how many times does someone need to ask a question before you hear them?
4. Do you check your phone when feeling bored or uncomfortable?
5. Do you spend more than three hours per day on your phone? (On an iPhone, Screen Time in settings shows your daily usage. On an Android, Digital Well-being gives similar information.)
6. Is your phone usually with you at the dinner table?
7. If you forget your phone at home or its battery dies, how do you feel?

(Continued on pag. 7)

As a next step, consider developing the following healthy habits:

1. Consider giving up your own smartphone entirely. If that is not possible due to work requirements or special apps that you require, look into adopting one of the many smartphone alternatives available.
2. Look into ways to dumb down your smartphone to make it less distracting and appealing. Turn off notifications, put apps into folders, and set the phone to grayscale. Delete apps, especially any that are social media, news or messaging.
3. Set up the screen usage monitoring on your phone. (On an iPhone, Screen Time in settings shows your daily usage. On an Android, Digital Well-being gives similar information.) Share your usage with your spouse and kids.
4. Purpose to set aside your phone for regular intervals and engage in physical tasks. Your times of prayer and devotions should be done to the exclusion of all electronics (silence and leave in another room).
5. Stop carrying your phone with you. When home put it in a designated phone box. Do not go to bed with your phone next to you (use an alarm clock). Perhaps invest in a land-line for emergencies.
6. When you are with your children, grandchildren and spouse, put your phone away. Be emotionally present. Do the same when visiting or meeting someone for coffee. Make eye contact.
7. Go more analog. Use a calendar on the wall for appointments. Use a notepad for to-dos or grocery lists. Wear a real watch. Invest in a real camera (remember that all smartphone pictures are stored in the cloud, easy to share via text and email, and can be hacked and used by predators).

If you would like to dig in further, all the notes that I used for the Sunday School classes are available on the church website at brooklynecfc.org. You can find them named 'SS Notes' under the 'About' or under the ellipses (3 lines) in the upper right corner. The books I drew from are listed in my notes, as well as many other websites that are committed to building strong Christian homes. If you have any questions on this topic, or have any suggestions on subjects that you would like to see us dig into further, please bring it to me or any of the elders.

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