

THANK YOU FOR  
JOINING US TODAY!


## UPCOMING EVENTS:


### Baptism



Do you have a desire to be baptized but large crowds intimidate you? Or maybe just have more questions? Stop by the Welcome Center for more details and/or attend one of our *Baptism Informational Meetings on Sunday March 30, or April 14 following each of our Sunday Services.*

We will hold two baptisms this year: May 5th (smaller setting) and September 1st (large party).

### Follow Us Online

 [www.ourelement.org](http://www.ourelement.org)

 [info@ourelement.org](mailto:info@ourelement.org)

  @ourelement

### Gospel Community (GC)

GC's are our primary organizing structure here at Element. It's where we see Disciple Making take place when we orient our lives together, on and around the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is where we commit to grow as a disciple, disciple others, and make disciples; to share our lives so they are visible and accessible.

**DISCIPLE:** A disciple is one who increasingly submits their life to the all-empowering Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**JOIN:** Connect with a Group by emailing [connect@ourelement.org](mailto:connect@ourelement.org) or visiting the Welcome Center.

### Join Our Weekly Email Update

Sign up using a Connect Card located under the seat in front of you or by going to [ourelement.org](http://ourelement.org).



## Week 11: Envyng Vapor Ecclesiastes 4:4-8

### TODAY'S VERSES:

Ecclesiastes 4:4-8  
1 Samuel 15:22  
Proverbs 15:17

Ecclesiastes 2:21-23  
Luke 12:6-7  
Hebrews 4:9-10

Ecclesiastes 2:26  
Zeph 3:14, 15, 17  
Matthew 11:28-29

# Week 11: Envyng Vapor

## *Ecclesiastes 4:4-8*

Today we are in Ecclesiastes Chapter 4 where Solomon will talk about work and rest in the context of life “under the sun.” The book of Ecclesiastes keeps coming back to center on the idea of what happens when you get everything you ever thought you wanted, when you attain whatever goal you set for yourself, and then you wake up the next morning and you are still you...what do you do then? It shows how life and our work seems to fall apart on a constant basis which makes the writer call it all “meaningless” or “vapor” or “vanity.”

**What was/is the best job you have ever had?**

**What is the worst job you have ever had?**

**What did you learn from both of those jobs?**

Many people today say there is no meaning in life other than the meaning we ascribe to it. Harvard professor and atheist, Stephen Gould, says, *“We cannot read the meaning of life [from nature.] We must construct these answers ourselves...There is no other way.”* He says life is an accident, and you can’t read meaning in life from anything because life really has no meaning. Gould speaks of life under the sun like Solomon, trying to put a veneer of happiness over a very depressing life outlook.

**Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-8.**

**What things in life give you meaning?**

**How would you respond if those things were taken away?**

**Could you (would you) still be you?**

Solomon says we work to try to gain three things:

- Satisfaction – this is the psychological payoff we are looking for in order to feel fulfilled.
- Recognition – this is the social payoff we are looking for in order to feel fulfilled.
- Contribution – This is what lives on after us that we feel will bring us fulfillment.

Work is a good thing, we were created to work, but many times we work not because of design, but because we want our work to give us meaning.

***How can work give satisfaction?***

***How can work bring recognition?***

***How can work make a contribution and leave a legacy?***

Solomon says that if this life is all there is then there is no ultimate meaning in life or our work. He points out that in the end both the wise and the foolish will be forgotten; there is no difference. This is why work and life are not solely about being remembered, it is about WHO REMEMBERS US! We are remembered by God Himself...and that makes everything different.

**How can knowing we are remembered by God change our perspective of life and work?**

Solomon says that all labor and all achievement comes from envy of our neighbor. This means we want others around us to recognize us and our achievements; we want what they have, we want our achievements to give us meaning. The reason we give others so much power is that there is something wrong in our hearts and all that we do ends up feeling unfulfilling. The writer isn’t saying you can never do a good job or your work can never help people, he is pointing out that the primary motivation behind our work is not the manufacturing of a product; we are trying to manufacture a self (an identity and value). This is why Solomon says, *“Better is a handful of quietness.”* What we need is real rest for our lives even while we work.

**Have you ever experienced rest in your work?**

**Ask others if they have experienced this and what it does for their understanding of work.**

Jesus calls us to Himself and offers us rest. He shows that when we rest in Him; even in the midst of work God delights over us and takes pleasure in us. God doesn’t make us work for His grace. He gives us His grace and delights in us...we are called to rest in Him.

**What does it mean to rest in Him?**