

# THE FAILURE OF EARTHLY SUCCESS

Pastor Lucas Almeida—Central Baptist Church—January 21st, 2024

## ECCLESIASTES 1:12-2:26 (ESV)

### INTRODUCTION

The message of Ecclesiastes: What the world calls success is not truly success.

*“Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn't really matter.” –D.L. Moody*

*“Only One Life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what is done for Christ will Last” –C.T. Studd*

Today's message is a warning for us to not live for earthly success, but instead to discover what eternal success truly is.

### WISDOM

'*qoheleth*' = preacher / someone who assembles others to teach wisdom

Not all pursuits of wisdom are wise.

**James 3:13–15**–[13] *Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. [14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.*

**Jeremiah 9:23–24**–[23] *Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, [24] but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”*

**1 Corinthians 3:19–20**–[19] *For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” [20] and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”*

What makes earthly wisdom vain?

1. Earthly wisdom does not affect real change.
2. Earthly wisdom only further exposes us to the brokenness of the world.
3. Earthly wisdom bears no impact in eternity.

We look for wisdom in the gospel.

**1 Corinthians 1:21–24**–[21] *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. [22] For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, [23] but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

## PLEASURE

hedonism = maximizing pleasure / minimizing pain

The pursuit of pleasure for pleasure sake will not give your life purpose.

The problem is not that the preacher pursued pleasure, but that he pursued pleasure for himself.

**Psalms 1:2**–[2] *but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

**Psalms 16:11**–[11] *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

**Psalms 37:4**–[4] *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

We look for pleasure in the gospel.

**2 Corinthians 5:15**–[15] *and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.*

## WORK

Work was established before sin entered the world.

**Genesis 2:15**–[15] *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*

**John 5:17**–[17] *But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”*

Work was not established in the fall, but it’s very much affected by it.

Not only is work hard, you can’t carry your work into eternity.

For the believer, our labors bear fruit of eternal life.

**1 Corinthians 15:58**–[58] *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*