



THE CROSS *and* CROWN

"No Cross, No Crown"

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This past week, I came across another account of the creation in the Bible, hiding in plain sight in one of the most unlikely places. The account was written by Solomon, and it kicks off the book of Ecclesiastes.

Meaningless, meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.

Stick with me on this. I'm not as crazy as I may seem.

Ecclesiastes is probably the first book in the Bible that I fell in love with. As a child, I found a sort of validation in Solomon's assertions that not everything is simple or can be explained simply. I understand that the lesson from Ecclesiastes is that human wisdom doesn't compare with God's. It turns out, though, that there's much more to it than that.

Consider Solomon's words alongside the opening verses of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." Doesn't that match Solomon's description of the human condition perfectly? Apart from God, our lives are formless and empty; – utterly meaningless. But God speaks! God alone brings light! By the end of Ecclesiastes, we find evidence that a flicker of God's light has shone through the darkness of Solomon's mind, as he declares, "Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind."



I may be mistaken, but I believe that we all experience dark times; seasons when things don't make sense, and everything seems meaningless. In those times, we need to immerse ourselves in God's Light. My advice? Lose yourself in God's presence. Take time out to praise him. If you can't come up with words, read Psalms of praise, or hymns and choruses of worship. Fill yourself with the Word of God; let it wash over you and restore your soul.

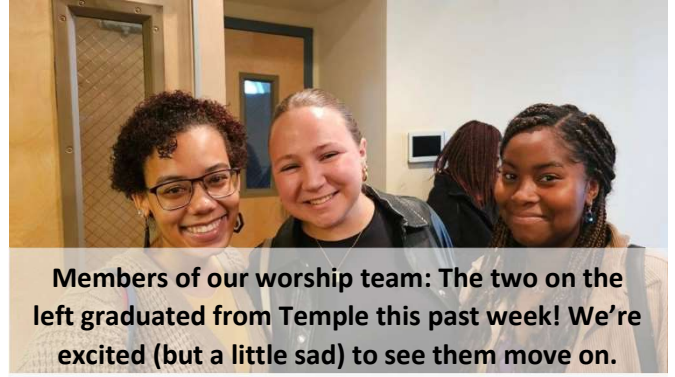
It's not abnormal for us to get into a rut, but let's never forget that we don't have to remain there.

*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4,5)*

Thanks for Praying!

As always, we're so grateful for your prayers, which sustain us! Please continue to lift up:





- our summer camp and other upcoming ministries,
- wisdom for reaching our Tioga-Nicetown neighbors,
- a season of refreshing for our team, and
- fresh laborers to help fill in the gaps.



We're praying with you!

If you're on our mailing list*, you're on our prayer list! If there's anything specific that we can join with you in praying for, please let us know. (We will only publish your requests in this newsletter with your permission.)

We really do love hearing from you! Every message and phone call helps us keep going!

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* **Important:** If you'd rather not be on our mailing list, we won't be offended! Just call or write us, and we'll remove you. (We'll still keep you on our prayer list!)

If you'd rather receive this letter via e-mail, please let us know, or subscribe to it at crossandcrown.online/subscribe !

Did you know?

I'm sure you know that the best-selling book of all time is the Bible, with an estimated five to seven billion copies sold, but do you know the second-best-selling book? It's believed to be *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, with over 500 million copies sold.

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

(Ecclesiastes 12:12)



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