

26-0301p Transcript

26-0301p - *Nothing New Under the Sun*, Tom Freed

Bible Reader: Tom Freed This transcript transcribed by TurboScribe.ai, (Detailed Summary by Grok, xAI)

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Nothing New Under the Sun

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reader (0:04 - 0:30): Tom Freed Lamentations 3:22-23: (0:04) Good evening. This will be the scripture reading. (0:09) Glad I gave myself a short one. (0:15) Ecclesiastes 1.9, the scripture reading. (0:20) That	Scripture Continued which is done is that which will be. (0:23) And that which has been done is that which will be done. (0:28) So there is nothing new under the sun. (0:30)
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Transcript (0:04 - 21:41), Preacher: Tom Freed

(0:35) That's the title of my sermon, Nothing New Under the Sun. (0:41) So this morning I preached Ecclesiastes specifically on how Solomon called everything vanity, (0:49) but chasing after the wind.

(0:51) Hopefully you remember that. (0:52) It wasn't too long ago. (0:55) I know how quickly I forget sermons.

(0:57) Even when I preach, it's like, what did I preach on? (1:01) Tonight we're picking up where we left off with nothing new under the sun. (1:07) These two truths fit hand in glove. (1:12) Life under the sun is not only empty, it's endlessly repetitive.

(1:18) Ecclesiastes can feel raw and even bleak at times. (1:22) That's exactly why it's so powerful. (1:25) It refuses to sugarcoat reality and points us straight to the only place true meaning is found.

(1:35) It may look bleak, but it does have a good message. (1:39) And it kind of shows us how the world is, you know. (1:45) I'm going to start with reading Ecclesiastes 1, chapter 1, 1 through 11.

(1:52) I don't know if you guys want to follow along or just listen, (1:55) but feel free to open your Bibles if you like a little bit along your reading. (2:10) The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. (2:15) Vanities of vanities, says the preacher.

(2:19) Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. (2:23) What profit has a man from all his labor which he toils under the sun? (2:28) One generation passes away and another generation comes. (2:34) But the earth abides forever.

(2:37) The sun also rises and the sun goes down and hastens to the place where it rose. (2:44) The wind goes toward the south and turns around to the north. (2:49) The wind whirls about continually and comes again on its own circuit.

(2:56) All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. (3:01) The place from which the rivers

come, there they return again. (3:07) All things are full of labor.

(3:09) Man cannot express it. (3:12) The eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing. (3:18) That which has been is what will be.

(3:21) That which is done is what will be done. (3:23) And there is nothing new under the sun. (3:26) Is there anything of which it may be said, see, this is new? (3:32) It has already been an ancient time before us.

(3:35) There is no remembrance of former things. (3:39) Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after. (3:48) Those words were written 3,000 years ago by a man who had everything.

(3:53) Wisdom, wealth, women, power, and palaces. (3:58) And he looked at life under the sun and called it vanity. (4:03) He called it all meaningless, all these great things he had.

(4:09) And right in the middle of that honest lament, he dropped the bombshell that still stings every generation that thinks it has invented something brand new. (4:20) There is no new thing under the sun. (4:25) We live in an age that worships the new.

(4:28) New iPhone, new Netflix series, new political savior, new diet, new therapy, new identity. (4:39) Every advertisement screams, this changes everything. (4:45) You ever notice that? (4:47) Everything is new.

(4:48) Every year they get a new phone, new car. (4:51) I didn't get a new phone for 10 years and it still felt the same to me, even the car. (4:57) We always want something brand new.

(5:02) Every influencer promises, you've never seen anything like this before. (5:08) And we believe it until the next upgrade comes along and the cycle repeats. (5:15) I can't tell you how many new workouts or diets I've done over the years.

(5:20) You know, it's like they promise all these things and you do it. (5:25) It's like, man, I don't have the results, the picture you're showing. (5:29) What's wrong with this? (5:31) You know, they scam us with all these new great, you know, inventions and ideas, but really it's the old thing recycled.

(5:40) The preacher laughs from the grave and says, you think you're original? (5:46) I've seen this movie before. (5:49) Same plot, different costumes. (5:53) Solomon was not a cynic.

(5:55) He was a realist who had chased every thrill and every treasure this world offers. (6:02) At the end of every road he found the same sign. (6:04) Been there, done that, bought the T-shirt, and it faded.

(6:11) So I'm sure we all have many faded T-shirts from, you know, doing things in life. (6:19) A lot of us are older and we've experienced a ton of things and found, you know, just like Solomon says, a lot of it's meaningless. (6:29) He watched the sun rise and set, the wind blow in circles, the rivers run to the sea and never fill it.

(6:38) He watched kings rise and fall, empires bloom and rot, lovers swear eternal devotion and then grow cold. (6:50) And he concluded, the machinery of life under the sun just keeps turning in the same grooves, spinning out of control, not new. (7:03) The temptation to believe that he just got the right job, the right spouse, the right amount of money, the right political outcome, then life will

finally make sense.

(7:16) It's also not new. (7:20) Solomon tried it all on a scale none of us could ever match. (7:24) And he wrote a book about it so we wouldn't have to repeat the same mistakes.

(7:30) We can look and say, this guy did it all, he's seen it all. (7:35) I don't have to go through it, you know, I can just read and skip over the bad parts. (7:42) Somebody once said at an AA meeting that I was going to that you don't have to reach rock bottom, you know, you can skip that, you can learn from other people's mistakes, you don't have to go through it.

(7:56) The mighty men don't learn that way. (7:59) We've got to fail ourselves. (8:05) Now notice the little phrase he repeats, under the sun.

(8:11) This is the key to the whole book. (8:14) Solomon is describing life when God is left out of the equation. (8:19) Life lives on the horizontal plane only.

(8:23) Earthbound, timebound, deathbound. (8:26) When you look at existence from that angle, everything does look meaningless. (8:34) If you're just thinking about this world, the things in it, if you don't have God in the picture, it is, it's completely meaningless.

(8:44) The atheist has no meaning of life. (8:52) The same battles fought over and over, the same sins dressed up in new language, the same heartaches wearing fresh makeup. (9:04) Think about it.

(9:05) The sexual revolution of the 1960s promised freedom and delivered broken homes and fatherless children. (9:14) Exactly what the pagan cultures of Solomon's day experienced. (9:21) The social media outrage machine today is just the old village gossip with better bandwidth.

(9:30) But nothing has changed there. Try working in a steel mill. (9:34) You don't need the internet for gossip.

(9:36) All the people do is gossip about everything that's happened, their people. (9:41) Cancel culture. (9:44) The Athenians did it to Socrates.

(9:48) Economic bubbles and crashes. Rome had them. (9:53) Pandemics and panic.

(9:56) The black death was worse. It was way worse than COVID. (10:02) I think they lost a third of their population.

(10:07) Politicians promising to build back better while lining their own pockets. (10:12) Free the prophets. Israel had a whole parade of them.

(10:16) There is nothing new under the sun. (10:20) Solomon talks about that in Ecclesiastes, how the politicians are corrupt and one ruling over the other. (10:29) Nothing's changed.

(10:32) Even the church is not immune. (10:34) Every generation thinks it's discovered some fresh move of the spirit that previous generations missed. (10:42) This time it's different, we shout.

(10:45) But read church history and you'll find the same patterns. (10:48) Revival, decline, compromise. (10:52) Reform, revival, decline.

(10:54) The wind blows in circles. (10:57) We've talked about that before, how the church fell away

and then we had a revival. (11:04) Tried to bring it back and reformation.

(11:08) And now, you know, many churches fall away again. (11:11) There's many churches of Christ that have started going towards worldly things. (11:15) Luckily, I don't believe that we have here, but it happens.

It's a cycle of life. (11:23) Solomon is not trying to depress us. (11:26) He's trying to deliver us.

(11:28) Deliver us from the exhausting chase after novelty. (11:33) From the lie that the next best thing will finally satisfy. (11:40) Let's get practical.

(11:42) Where do we see this truth playing out in our own lives? (11:46) First, in our pursuit of pleasure. (11:50) Solomon tried laughter, wine, women, gardens, orchestras, and every sensual delight, Ecclesiastes 2. (12:00) He concluded it was like chasing the wind, just like we, I went over this morning. (12:06) Yet many of us still believe the next vacation, the next romance, the next hit of entertainment will finally fill the hole.

(12:15) We binge the new series, scroll the new feed, chase a new thrill, and wake up Monday morning as empty as Friday night. (12:27) Nothing new. (12:30) Second, in our pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, Solomon was the smartest man who ever lived.

(12:35) Yet said, for in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow. (12:46) Ecclesiastes 118. (12:49) Today we have Google, AI, podcasts, and universities pouring out more information than ever before.

(12:58) Are we happier? Are we wiser in the ways that matter? (13:04) Are we just more anxious, more divided, more arrogant in our ignorance? (13:10) Nothing new. (13:12) Think about it, are we that much more brilliant than the generations that come before us? (13:19) A lot of this AI and internet and everything takes away our ability to think and reason for ourselves, and that's what they want. (13:32) Third, in our pursuit of work and legacy, Solomon built the temple.

(13:36) Cities, fleets, and gardens that dazzled the Queen of Sheba. (13:42) And he looked at all his labor and called it vanity and vexation of spirit. (13:47) How many people today pour out their lives into their careers, retire and wonder why it feels so hollow? (13:55) The promotion comes, the house gets bigger, the 401k grows, and still the heart asks, (14:01) is this all there is? (14:06) Again, it's nothing new in life.

(14:09) I feel the same way. (14:12) All this work for what, you know? (14:15) Like somebody said, you work the best years of your life, you know, save up, finally retire, (14:22) and then half the time you're too sick or end up, you know, you have a sickness, (14:27) sometimes you even die before you get to enjoy it. (14:32) Life isn't set up for us to have fun.

(14:38) Fourth, even in our grief and suffering, the pain you feel when a loved one dies, (14:45) when a marriage crumbles, when a child rebels, Solomon felt it too. (14:51) The heart knoweth its own bitterness, Proverbs 14.10. (14:57) Your specific circumstances may have modern details, (15:02) but the ache is as old as Abel's blood crying from the ground. (15:08) So what are we to do with this truth? (15:10) Shall we all become nihilists and give up? (15:14) God forbid.

(15:16) Solomon does not leave us in despair. (15:19) He keeps writing until chapter 12, and there he gives the conclusion of the whole matter. (15:27) We read this earlier this morning.

(15:30) Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. (15:33) Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (15:39) For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, (15:44) whether it be good or whether it be evil.

(15:47) Ecclesiastes 12, 13, and 14. (15:49) The preacher has spent 12 chapters showing us that life under the sun is meaningless. (15:59) But he has been pointing all along to a life lived above the sun, (16:03) life lived in fear of God.

(16:07) When you bring God back into the picture, (16:10) the same repetitive cycles suddenly become the rhythm of a loving father's providence. (16:18) The sun rises and sets because a faithful God keeps his promise (16:22) that seed time and harvest will not cease. (16:27) The generations come and go because God is building an eternal family.

(16:32) The rivers run to the sea and return as rain because a wise creator designed a world that sustains life. (16:41) The very monotony once locked us in despair is transformed into a steady song of grace. (16:50) And here is the one place where something truly new does break in.

(17:01) The New Testament takes Solomon's honest assessment and answers it with the gospel. (17:07) The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, 17, (17:13) Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. (17:17) Old things are passed away.

(17:20) Behold, all things are new. (17:22) That's the best new thing you could ever do and become, is a Christian. (17:30) The cycle of sin and death were broken at the cross.

(17:35) The grave that swallowed every generation itself swallowed up in victory on the third day. (17:44) The new thing under the sun is actually the new thing from above the sun. (17:49) The resurrection life of Jesus Christ poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

(17:59) So what does this mean for your Monday morning? (18:02) It means you can stop frantically searching for the next thing to make your life meaningful. (18:09) The meaning was never going to be found in the new anyway. (18:13) It was always found in the eternal one who never changes.

(18:18) It means you can love your spouse with fresh grace when the marriage feels like the same arguments on repeat. (18:26) Because God's mercies are new every morning. (18:30) It means you can do your ordinary job with extraordinary faithfulness.

(18:35) Knowing that God sees every secret thing and will bring it into judgment. (18:40) Your labor under the sun is not vanity. (18:43) What is offered is unto the Lord.

(18:45) It means you can face the headlines without despair. (18:51) Wars and rumors of wars, not new. (18:56) Just like today.

(18:58) I think we have bombed Iran or have been bombing Iran. (19:03) We've had how many years of endless wars? (19:07) Nothing new. (19:09) Moral chaos, not new.

(19:13) Technological pride, also not new. (19:16) The same God who judged Babel, who toppled Babylon, who raised up and put down empires, is still on the throne. (19:26) We have to keep that in mind.

(19:29) No matter who's president, no matter how many wars, what's going on, Jesus is ultimately in control. (19:38) The times seem chaotic, and that's also nothing new. (19:43) But ultimately, God

makes the final decisions.

(19:49) He raises up kingdoms and nations and brings them down. (19:56) This means you can invest in the next generation without expecting them to finally get it. (20:02) To finally get it right.

(20:05) Teach them to fear God. (20:07) That is a whole duty. (20:09) The rest is just win.

(20:12) Solomon's message is not ultimately pessimistic. (20:16) It's profoundly liberating. (20:18) It frees you from the tyranny of the new.

(20:22) It calls you back to the ancient paths. (20:25) It invites you to stop chasing the wind and start walking with the wind of the Spirit. (20:32) You have been living as though this life under the sun is all there is.

(20:37) If you haven't been exhausted by the pursuit of the next thing, (20:41) I invite you today to come to the only one who can make all things new. (20:47) Come to Jesus Christ. (20:49) He stepped into our repetitive broken world and lived the perfect life we could never live.

(20:57) He died the death we deserve. (20:59) He rose to give us a life that death cannot touch. (21:05) In Him, the old cycle of sin is broken.

(21:08) In Him, every morning is truly new. (21:12) We repent of your chase after vanity and place your trust in the Savior today. (21:18) If you are not a believer, the greatest new thing awaits.

(21:24) Put on Christ and become a new creation. (21:29) If you are a Christian and struggling under the sun, (21:32) come forward and we will pray for you. (21:36) Go in peace.

(21:37) There is nothing new under the sun. (21:39) Everything is new in Christ.