

Olen Holderby, 1515 Walnut, Alameda, Ca. 94501

3 - MINUTE SERMONS

"GRASPING FOR THE WIND"

In the New King James Translation, this expression is found 9 times in the book of Ecclesiastes (1:14, 17; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4,6,16; 6:9). The Authorized Version simply says "vexation of spirit". The NIV has "a chasing after the wind"; while the NAS gives it, "striving after wind". The KJ, NAS, and NKJ all use the word "vanity" in connection therewith; while the NIV uses "meaningless".

W.E.Vine defines "vanity" (MATAIOT) as "emptiness as to results". He defines "meaning" as "power, force ... of what is spoken." Therefore the word "meaningless" would be just the opposite, would have no worthwhile meaning. In one of the three times the New Testament uses the word vanity, the Apostle Peter applies it to the "great swelling words" of the false teacher (2 Pet.2:18).

With these bits of statistics before us, may we ask - What application may we make of these facts? I would imagine that most readers can think of at least a few worthwhile applications.

I offer the following for your thoughtful consideration. First, have you ever tried blowing in the face or on the head of a baby (when he is in good humor)? You get his attention, he looks, but all he can see is your puckered lips. He sometimes tries to slap the air away, but he hits nothing. Well, it at least entertains him for a while. I recall that Paul spoke of running, "not as one that beateth the air" (1 Cor.9:26); nor did he fight that way. Paul's use of the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph.6:17), was not meaningless, nor was it in vanity. He spoke the Word plainly, forcefully, and consistently -where ever he was and to whom ever he was speaking. He used no deception, and was always set for a defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17).

Have you ever listened to a false teacher try to tell what Jesus meant in Matt.19:9? Have you ever heard such teacher try to reason away the force of Rom.16:17 or Eph.5:11? Or, perhaps you have heard some one try to explain away the force of 1 Cor.5:4-5. Maybe you have heard some one make an effort to show that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. If you have experienced any of these, you have heard a case of "grasping for the wind". We sometimes may parallel this with "grasping for straws." In any case it is something with no worthwhile meaning.

The best scenario for witnessing someone "grasping for the wind", "striving for the wind", or "beating the air" is found, no doubt, in listening to one trying to justify himself for not doing as he knows God has said for him to do. What a scene heaven is witnessing! And, what a shame we may bring upon ourselves!