

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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

Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness. The book of Ecclesiastes is a part of the wisdom literature in Holy Scripture, situated between Proverbs and Song of Songs. It's actually a unique piece. It's more of a wisdom that comes through antiwisdom. It's a piece of scripture that focuses on the understandings of God and on wisdom as it were, but not from a positive perspective. Not from the perspective that all is going to work out in the end, but rather it's rooted in the ordinary versus the extraordinary. We're at Camp Chickagami on the shores of Lake Esau in Presque County, Michigan. We're here in the pioneer unit which is used for more rustic camping experiences. It's also a place that is surrounded by all sorts of extraordinary pieces of God's creation. But, really are ordinary things to find. Rocks, various creatures crawling on the ground and flying through the air, a huge variety of trees and undergrowth within the forest. There's moss growing on trees and on rocks, there are water features, thimbleberries, you name it, the beauties of God's creation are right here. It's a perfect place for us to be talking about Ecclesiastes because when one studies Ecclesiastes, particularly from a devotional standpoint, it's an opportunity for us to recognize that while God is present in all sorts of miraculous, wondrous, and extraordinary ways, God comes to us in the midst of the everyday. In the midst of the ordinary aspects of our lives. It's not unlike the writings of naturalist and essayist Annie Dillard, who in teaching a stone to talk or a pilgrim at Tinker's creek, observes the mundane, the regular pieces of life, draws from those a revelation of God's presence in her life and in all the world that surrounds her. It's also like Kathleen Norris, that Presbyterian who falls in love with the Benedictine order and discovers how God is present in something as simple as sheets hung out to dry and hanging on the clothesline, whipping in the wind. Ecclesiastes is a reminder to us that our lives are not just all good times, but in fact sometimes, not such good things happen. And even in the midst of that, even in the midst of the humdrum and the ordinary, God is going to be powerfully present in our lives when we are looking, longing for God that we don't always find God in the expected places. And sometimes we even run into the disappointment of experiencing the absence of God in our lives. I commend to you Ecclesiastes to read. Savor the words, ponder the wisdom that is offered there and see how it applies to your life. See if you agree with the teacher who says that "life is really nothing but vanity. Vanity of vanities." And see if you too can find yourself in the story, in the wisdom that is being told by the teacher who in the end discovers that the longing for God is a part of our deepest and most heartfelt desires. That sometimes it just doesn't work out the way we expected, and in the end, discover that God's been there all along, even in the most ordinary parts of our lives. I have some questions for you to consider this week:

WEEK XXX: Proverbs 23-Ecclesiastes 9/  
Psalm 17-21

From Psalm 18. Let us pray.

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan and this is the

- 1 – What are the ordinary things in your life which ground you in your relationship with God?
- 2 – What spiritual disciplines help keep you grounded?

May God bless you, and I will see you next week on the Biblical Wild.