

Everything  
by Curtis Lowe

"Meaningless! Meaningless!"  
says the Teacher.  
"Utterly meaningless!  
*Everything is meaningless.*"<sup>i</sup>

I have said and even more poignantly felt these words. There are times in life when meaning, purpose, and virtue gag me. They get caught in my throat, freeze my brain, and burden my soul. Yet "meaningless-ness" does not fully express my despair; even "utter" meaningless-ness does not capture the void inside me. But screaming out "*everything:*" *all that was, all there is, and all that ever can be, "ALL-ALL-ALL, is certainly without meaning"* – now that says how I feel and what I think. Apparently, King Solomon, who wrote the words above felt this way and even more, for he declares his feelings of life being meaningless four times!

Oh God! I'm glad that Your Word lets me express my pain and dismay, even like Solomon who reveals that honesty is also a necessary component of wisdom. We can express to You how we feel and seek Your help in our darkest days. How bad and good it feels to be able to think and speak these words and not get struck by lightning or break out in boils. But there is still a boiling in my soul where the badlands of the desert blast siroccos of dusty despair. And yet at the same time, I find a cathartic relief in being honest with myself and You, and others like me. Together, we ask the most difficult questions.

Really God? Is life meaningless, utterly meaningless? Is every single thing meaningless?

There is a time for *everything*,  
and a season for every activity under heaven:  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak.<sup>ii</sup>

"Everything" sure covers a lot Lord. But how can everything be meaningless and at the same time have its own season? Could it be that the first is a feeling and the second is a fact; even a truth?

As an expression of my feelings, when the pain is unbearable, when nothing seems important or worth it, indeed *everything is* meaningless because I find no sense in life.

But then there comes an epiphany of mercy that interrupts my sorrows. The Shadow Whisperer speaks a dialect only the broken can hear; its gentle voice is somehow louder than the wind, more powerful than an earthquake, and brighter than fire.

The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the

earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>iii</sup>

The words silence the chaos, at least long enough for me to hear sounds of hope. The wind, the earthquake, and the fire do not have the final word. To Your Voice, everything bows down.

“Everything” indeed covers an infinitude of time, but it can be divided into discernable segments, like night and day. The dark night of meaninglessness will give way to a twinkle of dawn. Ever so slowly the rising of a new light will extinguish the darkness. A true hope dawns out of the twilight of meaninglessness.

A new meaning is born crying and screaming, but born nonetheless. “Wail, Baby wail” – sing your song with resolute hunger and thirst. Let everything in you that has breath inhale the air of hope and exhale the pent-up, used-up, and fed-up anger and dismay.

Where there are tears, a mending of the soul will be knit together. Tears come in many ways, like rips on our pants, and cuts on our knees, and holes in our hearts...

...But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. <sup>iv</sup>

Yes, there is a mending that comes from a strength within and yet outside ourselves. Jesus came to earth and He was torn asunder, but He was not defeated. He came to not just understand our pain, but to take them on, so that someday He will take them away. He alone has the power to mend a broken life, a suffocating spirit, a wounded soul.

He too was afflicted, yet remained silent for a time. But now He speaks clearly and boldly: “I am making *everything things new!*”<sup>v</sup> “Everything!” Everything that once seemed meaningless. Everything that once battered our souls and sucked life from us. Everything that seemed evil and useless. *Everything will be well* – and all manner of things shall be well. His words are to us and for us. He makes us into new creations even as our flesh is fading. He personally comforts because He understands how we feel. He knows what we need. He gives the comfort that is meant to be received and shared. Then He does through us what He has done in us.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,  
who comforts us in all our troubles,  
so that we can comfort those in any trouble  
with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.<sup>vi</sup>

He brings us to His Father Whom He loved at all times. His Father and ours' is the Father of every compassion. He brings us to His God Whom He trusted and submitted to in all His troubles. His God and ours' is the God of all comfort.

His comfort and compassion is for every day, in everything, for everyone who will receive Him.

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<sup>i</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:2

<sup>ii</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:1,7

<sup>iii</sup> 1 Kings 19:11-13

<sup>iv</sup> Hebrews 2:9-11

<sup>v</sup> Revelation 21:5

<sup>vi</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

All Scriptures New International Version, 1984