



“False Appearances”

Ecc1. 8:10-17

July 19, 2020

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11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

13 But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

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16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),

17 and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, “I know,” he cannot discover.

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I. Funerals can be a lot of phony baloney.

- Here is a guy who pretends he is real religious – goes to church, shows up regularly, looks like he is an upright kind of guy.
- ‘Under the sun’ he was admired and propped up by an adoring public.
- But down deep he is wicked, sinful, evil. He has a filthy mouth, he rips people off in his business, he is crooked, corrupt oppressive to his employees.
- He dies. What do you say at his funeral?
- Do you say things that make the family feel good and that will take the edge off of the sorrow that some feel over his death.
- In fact, the minister might preach him right into heaven.
- After the funeral is all over, everyone goes their separate ways and soon all of his evil is a distant memory.
- “I have seen wicked men buried and as their friends returned from the cemetery, having forgotten all the dead man’s evil deeds, these men were praised in the very city where they had committed their crimes!” (Living Bible)
- “I have seen wicked people buried with honor. How strange that they were the very ones who frequented the Temple and are praised in the very city where they committed their crimes!” (NLT)
- The whole thing is a sham. Solomon says it is worthless to try to understand.
- And it happens over and over again.

False appearance: You can be wicked and still be praised and honored for the life you lived. You got by with it.

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II. Delayed justice can be a license to do evil.

- Here is a man who is warned that if he commits an evil act, he will suffer the consequences for it. But he commits it anyway. Time passes. And then more time passes. And nothing happens. It appears that he has gotten away with it. The natural reaction is for other men to emulate such evil acts.

- Swift justice does provide a deterrent to crime.

- When justice is delayed or circumvented in any way, when judges turn loose criminals for technicalities when it is clear that they are guilty of outrageous crimes, this only encourages more crime.

False appearance: Crime pays. “I’ll take my chances. Even if caught, no big deal.”

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III. Living a long life of sin can be deceptive.

- If you see enough of this equation: commit sin = long life, you might start believing it.

Ecc1 7:15

15 I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

- Living a long life does not prove anything –righteousness, holiness, saved, kind, truthful, loving, etc.

• Is it better to live a long life and go to Hell or live a short life and go to heaven? It may be the opposite.

- Everything is moving at God’s pace and God’s plan.

False appearance: “I can sin in it up, there is no affect on my life.”

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IV. Notoriety for the sinner is short lived.

- A long life for the sinner is not good – the more sin, the greater the judgment. If he does not repent he would be better with a short life.

“like a shadow” – We say today: “That man casts a long shadow over a city, or a country, or a business’. Here it refers to a man’s influence after his death. Beyond this life, the evil man will have no eternal affect. When this life ends, it’s done. He was not connected to the eternal where his life could make a difference. So now for the sinner - its judgment and then eternal punishment.

- Tables are turned even in this life - In the first century, Paul was the “scum of the earth”, and Nero ruled Rome as the emperor. But in our day, we are proud to name our sons ‘Paul’ and our dogs ‘Nero’.

- Think about these heavy hitters: Tiberius Caesar/Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea/Herod tetrarch of Galilee/his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis/during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas. Who does God bring “out of the woodwork?” John the Baptist. Who is remembered and honored for his ministry and impact on the world?

False appearance: Evil men can have great influence in the world forever.

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V. The reality exists that many good people suffer and many evil people thrive.

- Generally speaking, it is true that what you sow, that you also will reap in this life.

- How can it be that the Mafia prospers while the missionary is in pain? Why is it that the gangs, hoodlums and thugs run rampant while the godly are oppressed?

- Life isn’t always fair.

- We write books for consolation but nothing for explanation.

The world is full of inequities and injustices which no one had power to change.

- One woman who served God faithfully all her adult life was afflicted with crippling pain, while her neighbor drank heavily, took God's name in vain, and lied as a regular habit but never had even one painful joint or headache.
- A man who was faithful in giving to God and generous in sharing with those in need but suffered a great financial loss and lived in poverty while his dishonest neighbor succeeded in every business venture he attempted and lived in luxury.
- A young couple who loved people and set a good example in every area of their lives were not able to have children, while another couple a block away had five children and introduced them to every known addiction.

False appearance: No advantage to be righteous.

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VI. Wisdom “under the sun” doesn’t solve all of the mysteries of life.

- However above the sun are found an abundance of answers.
 - This is not telling us to live in a world of make-believe.
 - The believer can live and enjoy life in the midst of the tensions and stress of inequities, injustices, unfairness because he has confidence and is satisfied in the One who will someday make all things right.
 - Even though life doesn’t always make sense, even though we don’t always understand what God is doing, we can trust in His sovereignty and let Him bear our burdens about all that is going on around us. So enjoy your favorite meal! Enjoy the fruit of your labor.
 - This is the 4th time Solomon has told us to enjoy life.
- False appearance: Man can solve the mysteries of life.**

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VII. Staying up day and night searching for answers will not solve the mysteries of life.

Rom 11:33

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!

- Life is too complicated, too vast, too filled with conflicting elements for any one of us to figure out all the answers.
- The pursuit of knowledge in Scripture is important. The mind does matter. Reason does matter.
- Go as far as Scripture will take you, then eat a pizza, and get a good night’s rest.

False appearance: Searching 24/7 will provide me with answers to the mysteries of life.

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VIII. Conclusion: There are things man will never understand about the sovereign plan of God.

- Solomon, as wise as he was, tells us he does not have all of the answers.
- Even when men claim to know the answers behind what happens to us, they are really only deceiving themselves. They are delusional.

False appearance: Man knows all of the answers.