



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
8:10-17

Pastor's Notes

V. 10 There is a tough fact that goes with life under the sun. What is that tough fact? Wickedness seems to be rewarded. What is even more difficult to see? Well, wicked people often times claim privilege in the church before God. These wicked people do not come to the church to receive the Lord's best—the forgiveness of sin. But rather, these wicked people come to show everyone (including God) their best—how awesome they are. They show off in the church. Lord have mercy!

V. 11 To make things worse, when those doing evil are caught, there often is not a quick retribution for wrong. And why? Because those in authority are either evil themselves or too busy praising wrongful things.

V. 12-13 The wicked seem to get away with it—don't they? That is the theme of verse 12. To make things worse, they often deny their wrong with extreme pride. And to make everything worse, everybody knows they are guilty, and they do nothing. And those who try to confront them, end up being set in their spot, or worse, end up in the grave.

Why does this happen though? Solomon does not give a quick answer. The only answer that we can give is that life under the sun is corrupted by sin. The world loves darkness, not the light.

This is why we, as Christians, need to cling tightly to the great eschaton where Jesus will come back to judge everything and set all things right. Vengeance belongs to the Lord.

V. 14 This verse really exposes what we call a "Theology of Glory." In other words, we can't always believe that faithfulness will result in prosperity and evil will result in chaos. It is, in fact, the opposite, generally speaking. Believing in

Jesus is not a recipe for acquiring health, wealth, and happiness, as those fraudulent prosperity pastors preach on low-end cable channels. Believing in Christ may make things worse in this life, not better. And people many times get ahead in life by being crooked. To the point; a person's outcome is not evidence of their character or standing before God. Prosperity is not always a sign of faithfulness and wickedness does not always equal jail time. (Case and point, see the book of Job).

V. 15 If we think this life under the sun is grand, great, and the best there is, then we will be extremely discouraged and quite negative when things don't go our way. We will look at the mundane as curses. The morning sunrise—boring! The smile of a little girl—annoying. The laughter of an older lady—sounds like a screeching bird. The wildflower in the field—might be a weed. Communion and Sermons at the church—boring ritualistic things that make me feel guilty. However, if we understand that life under this sun is fallen and corrupted by sin and that we deserve nothing? Well, then things become little gifts of God! The morning sunrise—a glorious painting from God! The smile of a little girl—the gift of life. The laughter of an older lady—joy in old age in spite of the pain of life. The wild flower in a field—beauty in the midst of the prairie. Communion and Sermons at the church—God's love and grace delivered into my ears and mouth freely!

V. 16-17 Wisdom is given to the simplest believers. So, do not stay up late or get worried trying to read horoscopes, fortune cookies, and other empty things. Those that are solid in the Gospel still have questions about life under the sun. And guess what, that is o.k., for we all have the promises of the Gospel. We have the simple knowledge that God is working through all things for believers. We know that our sins are forgiven. We know that the Lord is coming back and will make all things right someday.