



ECCLYASTES 5:8-12

Facing challenges from injustice and greed

EXPLOITATION AT ALL LEVELS IS NOT SURPRISING (5:8-9)

“If you see in a province”

- A province is an official structure of governance for a land or people
- Provinces have governance for administering law and order

“the oppression of the poor”

- The consequence of their station in life means they are easily overlooked
- These are folks who can be taken advantage of because their poverty renders them powerless

“and the violation of justice and righteousness”

- Justice and righteousness are what the God of Scripture defines by His law
- The poor and powerless may be taken advantage of by crooks, criminals, power brokers, or even corrupt government

EXPLOITATION AT ALL LEVELS IS NOT SURPRISING (5:8-9)

“do not be amazed at the matter”

- The idea is that corruption and tyranny are going to occur in the fallen world, and that reality should not be shocking or devastating
- *“amazed”* – we are not be astounded or shocked by tyranny
 - This does not mean it should be approved
 - This does not mean God’s people should function as pietist
- Government never changes evil hearts and evil people; its purpose is to restrain them
- God’s people, regardless their station in life, should influence people, society and government

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- Romans 13:1–5
- 1 Peter 2:13–17
 - God and Scripture define what is “good,” “bad,” “right,” and “evil”
 - It is not the machinations of “*governing authorities*”
 - We are to walk in truth and righteousness
 - We are not to live by lies
- Romans 2:14–15
 - Common grace writes the law of God on the hearts of all people, establishing the foundation for just laws by governing authorities
 - Some governing officials rule as directed by the truth of Scripture

EXPLOITATION AT ALL LEVELS IS NOT SURPRISING (5:8-9)

- Solomon says we are not to be astounded, shocked, or embittered by the appearance of injustice and tyranny
 - People are not basically good by nature
 - People are by nature evil and self-serving
- But we should seek, by the power of God and gospel grace, to transform lives, families, churches, provinces, and nations

for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them.

- Solomon explains how far-reaching and deep corruption can be
 - The implication is that corruption at the lowest levels is frequently superintended by corruption at higher levels
 - What exists in provinces is usually related to the highest authorities
- If we are wise, we will not abandon the fight or become shocked and enraged with bitterness

EXPLOITATION AT ALL LEVELS IS NOT SURPRISING (5:8-9)

⁹ But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.

- What is helpful for the land is when its leaders seek to help make it productive and strong
- This may also be a means of employment for the poor
- Most leaders involved in governance want to see the land productive and strong
- When they don't, you know corruption and evil reigns in their hearts

APPETITES FOR PROSPERITY ARE INSATIABLE AND UNNERVING (5:10-12)

¹⁰ He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

- Those in love with money, and the material comfort and security it promises, find themselves in a never-ending pursuit of just a bit more comfort and security
 - Attempting to find in money what only God can provide is a spiritually fatal endeavor
 - Jesus made it clear that we are commanded that God must be loved above all things
 - Matthew 22:36–40
 - Those with a passion for money do not share a passion for God
 - Matthew 6:24
- Stockpiling wealth will never bring contentment and security
 - This is “vanity” (unsubstantial breath or vapor) – no solid footing here
 - Jesus and His truth are stability and solid footing for our lives
 - Matthew 7:24–25

APPETITES FOR PROSPERITY ARE INSATIABLE AND UNNERVING (5:10-12)

¹¹ When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?

- The more money and possessions you have the more it takes to maintain them
- It is not uncommon for people to add to the pile of possessions they're too busy to enjoy
- When our focus is on God, we can enjoy what He has given to us for His glory
 - 1 Timothy 6:17

¹² Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

- Those who work hard will sleep well at night, whether their dinner is little or large
- Rich people constantly eat well and the demands of maintaining wealth occupy the mind of the rich and give them indigestion
 - Work hard to the glory of God
 - Rest well to the glory of God
 - Philippians 4:11-12

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How do you react to governmental oppression?
- How are you fighting shock and bitterness?
- What are ways you believe God would have you engage with gospel life to transform our society?
- How does money and security battle with your dependence on God?
- In what ways can you better enjoy what God has blessed you with for His glory?
- Are there ways you can work harder and sleep better for God's glory?



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