

Ecclesiastes 7:15-29 — Be Gracious

¹⁵ I have seen everything in my days of vanity:
There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness,
and there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness.

¹⁶ Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise:

Why should you destroy yourself?

¹⁷ Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish:

Why should you die before your time?

¹⁸ It is good that you grasp this,
and also not remove your hand from the other;
for he who fears God will escape them all.

¹⁹ Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten rulers of the city.

²⁰ For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.

²¹ Also do not take to heart everything people say, lest you hear your servant cursing you.

²² For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others.

²³ All this I have proved by wisdom.

I said, "I will be wise"; but it *was* far from me.

²⁴ As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?

²⁵ I applied my heart to know, to search and seek out wisdom and the reason of *things*,
to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness.

²⁶ And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart *is* snares and nets,
whose hands *are* fetters.

He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her.

²⁷ Here is what I have found," says the Preacher, "Adding one thing to the other,
to find out the reason, ²⁸ which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:

One man among a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found."

²⁹ Truly, this only I have found:

That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."

UNFAIR

LIMITS

REWARD

PUNISH

INSTRUCT

Ecclesiastes 8 – Be Cautious

Who *is* like a wise *man*? And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face is changed.

² I say, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God.

³ Do not be hasty to go from his presence.

Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."

⁴ Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power; and who may say to him, "What are you doing?"

⁵ He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful;

and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment,

⁶ Because for every matter there is a time and judgment,

though the misery of man increases greatly.

⁷ For he does not know what will happen; so who can tell him when it will occur?

⁸ No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death.

There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.

⁹ All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun:

There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

¹⁰ Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also *is* vanity.

¹¹ Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him.

¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his days*, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

¹⁴ There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity.

¹⁵ So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor *all* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

¹⁶ When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night, ¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun.

For though a man labors to discover *it*, yet he will not find it;

moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it*, he will not be able to find it.