

# ECCLESIASTES WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

*“The Cure for Cruelty”*





# The Great Oppression



# ECCLESIASTES

## 4:1-3

So I again considered all the oppression that continually occurs on earth. This is what I saw:

The oppressed were in tears, but no one was comforting them; no one delivers them from the power of their oppressors. So I considered those who are dead and gone more fortunate than those who are still alive. But better than both is the one who has not been born and has not seen the evil things that are done on earth.

# ECCLESIASTES

## 4:4-6

Then I considered all the skillful work that is done: Surely it is nothing more than competition between one person and another. This also is profitless—like chasing the wind. The fool folds his hands and does no work, so he has nothing to eat but his own flesh. Better is one handful with some rest than two hands full of toil and chasing the wind.





## ***Oppression:***

“They all spring from the abuse of power, which might and should have been used for the protection and comfort of men. The husband and father, the king, the priest, the magistrate, are all invested with rights and authority of a greater or less extent over others, and the abuse of this power leads to hardships and suffering on the part of those subject to them which it is almost impossible to remedy” (Wilcock)

## ***Envy:***

“Emulation is not envy. The envious man desires to take another's possessions from him - desires that the other may be impoverished in order that he may be enriched, or depressed in order that he may be exalted, or rendered miserable in order that he may be happy.” (Thomas)



*To amass handfuls is to cup  
your hands in futility . To  
choose indolence is to fold  
your hands and choose  
nothing. Only in restful  
contentment are your hands  
open to give and to receive.*



**The Only  
Other Option?**



# ECCLESIASTES

## 4:7-8

So I again considered another futile thing on earth: A man who is all alone with no companion—he has no children nor siblings; yet there is no end to all his toil, and he is never satisfied with riches.

He laments, “For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?” This also is futile and a burdensome task!





# If It Weren't for the People

*In the light of oppression  
and envy, the life of a  
hermit can seem  
appealing. This is not a  
solution; it is the very  
definition of loneliness.*



“In the long run the real loser is the person who suffers loneliness, loss of identity, and the fatal flaw of leaving no heir to carry on the family continuity and preserve its name . . .

No amount of wealth could compensate for that loneliness and virtual annihilation.” (Thomas)



# **A Profound Opportunity**

# ECCLESIASTES

## 4:9-12

Two people are better than one because they can reap more benefit from their labor. For if they fall, one will help his companion up, but pity the person who falls down and has no one to help him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together, they can keep each other warm, but how can one person keep warm by himself? Although an assailant may overpower one person, two can withstand him. Moreover, a three-stranded cord is not quickly broken.





**“A man without companions is like the left hand without the right.”  
(Jewish Proverb)**



*“We thank God for human companionship; we rejoice greatly that he has so ‘fashioned our hearts alike,’ and so interwoven our human lives, that we can be much to one another, and do much for one another, as we go on our way.”  
(Clarkson)*



# From Cruelty To Christ



## Philip Hallie “From Cruelty to Goodness”

“In the Bible there is a negative and positive ethic. The negative ethic of basic decency: don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t covet. The positive ethic is one of risk: defend the fatherless, plead for the widow, give shelter to the homeless and the refuge . . .

There are risks and we are to accept them if we are serious about biblical injunctions.”





“Lack of  
Hospitality will be  
our spiritual  
undoing as a  
society”



# ECCLESIASTES 12:13- 14

*Having heard everything, I have reached  
this conclusion:*

*Fear God and keep his commandments,  
because this is the whole duty of man.*

*For God will evaluate every deed,  
including every secret thing, whether  
good or evil.*



**Mark 10**

**Romans 13:8**

**Psalms 133**

**1 John**

**Isaiah 58:7**

**1 Peter 4:8-9**

**Leviticus 19**