

Living with Paradox (Ecclesiastes 7:15-29)

I. Introduction: Paradox

II. The paradox of the suffering of the righteous and prosperity of the wicked (7:15-18)

Why do bad things happen to good people?

We become perplexed when our innate sense of justice is upset

Do not be overly righteous or too wise? (v. 16) WHAT?!?

Two responses to the problem of suffering:

1. “God is displeased, so I have to try harder to be more righteous”
2. “Life is not fair, so why even bother to try to be good”

Thank God that He DOESN'T act justly toward us! (Ps 103:10)

The early death of the righteous is proof that all people are sinners

There was one man who did not sin, whose death was truly unjust

The key to living with this paradox is “the fear of the Lord” (v.18)

III. The paradox of “learned ignorance” (7:19-29)

The value of wisdom (v. 19)

Don't worry what others are saying about you (v. 21)

Be careful what you say about others (v. 22)

Solomon still hasn't found what he's looking for (v. 23-25, 27)

What Solomon did discover was more bitter than death:

1. v. 26 - the trap of woman (and other traps can be escaped)
2. v. 28 - the absence of wisdom among women and men
3. v. 29 - the sinful scheming of man

IV. A hopeful postscript: Sin is our fault, but it is not our fate! (7:29)

The hopeful fact that God created man upright

The superiority of the Last Adam