

Ecclesiastes Resumed (Part Twenty-Two)

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This sermon is tied to the last sermon I gave, so we are going to begin by going into Ecclesiastes 7:15.

Ecclesiastes 7:15 I have seen all things in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

I think you can recall that we were talking about a paradox in my last sermon. A paradox is a circumstance, a statement, an activity, or conduct that is contrary to expectations. It is an inconsistency, a sharp irregularity that tends to produce a conundrum. A conundrum is a riddle or a puzzle.

In the paradox described in verse 15, the righteous one may ask, why should such a situation exist? Where are the blessings that God has promised and where is God in the picture? Has He not promised prosperity and a good life if we just obey Him? Yes indeed He has.

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 Consider the work of God; for who can make straight what He has made crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider; Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, so that man can find out nothing that will happen after him.

These two verses are like a bridge that provides a conclusion to what precedes them, and at the same time it provides a foundation for what follows, in both cases they are saying essentially the same thing—whatever you choose to do for the best understanding, do not leave God out of the picture. Remember this is addressed to His children—converted children.

Do not leave God out of the picture of your judgment. I will read these verses to you from *The Living Bible*, because it translates them well into modern English, thus adding considerably to our understanding because the translation brings God clearly into the picture even before we get to the paradox.

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Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 [Living Bible] See the way God does things and fall into line, do not fight the facts of nature, enjoy prosperity whenever you can and when the hard times strike realize God gives one as well as the other so that everyone will realize that nothing in life is certain.

This is directed to His children. There are going to be twists and turns in the conduct of our life as we go along. Even though God is part of it, there are going to be things that arise unexpectedly. What He is saying here in verses 13 and 14 directly reflects back to Ecclesiastes 3:1.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.

A time to be denied prosperity, a time to receive prosperity. There is a time for everything. Back to Ecclesiastes 7:13-14. They are essentially saying, God is involved, therefore exercise your faith and learn to roll with the punches life is dealing to you. Even though God is a part of it, sometimes it is going to seem as though you are punched in the stomach. So where is God? When that kind of thing happens in your life what are your thoughts likely to turn to?

This of course includes paradoxical situations. The first element of his paradoxical circumstance that needs to be clarified is that we avoid being led into bringing God into a negative judgment in this situation that on the surface seems unfair to the righteous one. If we believe verses 13-14, we know very well that God is aware, and He is involved.

This is reinforced by the statement in verse 13 that says that God has made crooked. That is pretty clear that God is involved. When you get back in thought to Ecclesiastes 3, all those statements—there is a time for this, there is a time for that—we found there that God was involved in those situations.

This paradox directly impacts on His children's lives. Chapter 3 is rather general, chapter 7 is not so general, it is aimed right at His children. The first thing we have to learn is not to let our minds to think negatively about God and judge Him as being unfair. He knows what is going on. If He has passed on it, He has made a judgment, "I want you to be in this for X amount of time."

Another clue verses 13 and 14 are telling us is that we have to deal with things God has

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made crooked, showing again that He is actively involved in His creation. Do not allow yourself to be moved into an attitude in which you think God is being unfair. He is aware, He does not make mistakes, He is not cruel.

A second element helpful for understanding is that there is clearly a sub-theme in Ecclesiastes suggesting that we will never see the entire picture with absolute clarity. We saw this right at the end of verse 14, "so that man can find out nothing that will come after him." That is pretty clear. God is not hiding Himself from our understanding, He is actually giving us information so that we will be better able to judge even though we are going through an unexpected paradoxical situation that seems on the surface to run counter to what God has generally promised.

God indeed does create circumstances for our benefit to both test us, and at the same time, strengthen our faith. Thus we must understand that as the apostle Paul stated in I Corinthians 12:13, that we look through a glass darkly, we do not see things with sharp-edged clarity all of the time and God intends that. Thus the situation facing us is, do we trust that He is fully aware?

We should know enough about God and His character and watchfulness, that there is absolutely no complacency in God's government. A third element for understanding is one that provides us with a vivid example describing the emotional and spiritual involvement of one who is caught in the web of what Solomon was cautioning us about.

Psalm 73:1-17 Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. [A conundrum is beginning to form here from the paradox.] For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm, they are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men, therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily, they set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore his people return here, and waters of a full cup are drained by them, and they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" Behold these are the ungodly, who are always at ease, they increase in riches. Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence, for all day long I have been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. When I thought how to understand this, it

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was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.

This psalm shows that the righteous man, for a period of time, severely misjudged the reality of his situation, until God revealed the truth. Any of us can get caught in this trap, the wicked appear to prosper only if one considers merely what appears on the surface of his observation. What God revealed to the psalmist is that the people he is envious of may seemingly appear to gain the whole world, but the reality is that they are losing something of far greater value, so the psalmist was able to grasp this through prayer and meditation, and his emotional and spiritual state then began returning to a better level through God's revelation.

At one point the psalmist appears to have been rapidly sliding in a pit of despair and even as we might say today, sliding right out of the church. Through a bad attitude toward God nurtured by his envy, which he admitted to in the psalm, envy of the wicked, who were seemingly being blessed.

It is pretty clear to see, in the first half of that psalm, he judged God as unfair. This presents a grave danger, and the important teaching for us here is how can we recognize this so that we do not fall into the same destructive attitude. Twice Solomon warns us, a few verses after 15, by saying, "Why should you destroy yourself?" Assuming the psalmist was a converted man, what would have happened if he had not done the right thing and appealed to God, or if he had appealed to God which he did, but God did not respond as quickly as the psalmist anticipated? We pray and we think God is going to jump and meet our needs. No, He is not. He may do that on occasion, but then again I would say that in many occasions the problem just goes on and on.

Do we have enough spiritual sense to accept it, if that is what happens to us, because what these people are going through can happen to us. If it happened to them, it can happen to us, and if we run into a paradox we expect to be blessed and we are not, so we pray (and that is exactly what we should do), and nothing happens, "Where are you God?" We would like to do this and we may actually do it.

Do you realize when you are in a situation like this you are being tested to see the limit of your faith? Are you ready to give up, because sometimes that happens. One thing we should be able to see from this psalm, the envious attitude the man had was of absolutely no help. It was feeding the problem, it did not make the trial go away.

How many times have we witnessed converted people go through trials that seemingly

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never ends? Is it possible that you have had to endure such things because of your faith? This is in a way one reason why Hebrews 11 is in the Bible. Because it witnesses to such things, it reports events that ended only in the death of the saint.

What if it was a life and death situation and you prayed to God expecting that your paradox would end, and it does not, but instead the possibility of death became imminent? So we can understand from that, that God included that chapter in the Bible so that we would be prepared as well, that He may not answer in the way, or when we want.

He knows that is natural for us to desire a quick end to the problem, but He also knows that what He is creating requires that we continue right on through the problem. So the issue comes down to this: Do we trust Him? That is what He wants to find out. Do we trust Him or is it just empty words?

As we continue to build this here, I think we will begin to see that it is necessary for this to be done for us. But I will also say that in a sense, for God, it is a dangerous situation for Him and He is judging our endurance, the endurance of our faith. He promises that He will never give us too much. Do we trust that? That feeds into this. We must understand and make it part of our operating procedure, knowing full well we must be tested.

When one is involved in such a scenario, there are only three alternatives: one can continue on faithfully enduring with much prayer and steadfast submission to God's will. Second, one can give up in despair and slide right out of the church. Three, strive harder to impress God by becoming super-righteous so that He will take notice and bless us for our righteousness, thus relieving the stress.

You will see as we go on that third alternative that Solomon is addressing in these verses. There are eight verses contained in this. He is warning us there is a danger, even though we switch to the third alternative. I think you will find this very interesting as we go on.

Grasping this third point helps us to understand why Psalm 73 is so important to our understanding and use. Our subject then is this: super righteousness and the paradox.

We will make the paradox very clear so we have a foundation.

Exodus 20:12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”

That is very clear, if we keep that commandment we are promised long life.

Deuteronomy 5:33 “You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.”

I want to draw your attention to the phrase, “be well” which indicates prosperity. Prosperity is added to long life. Those too are expected to be normal in a relationship with God, in fact it is possible that you are living in such a circumstance. We will read again the complaint of the godly man in Psalm 73. I will read this in several different translations so that we really see the state of mind that this man was in.

Psalm 73:12-14 [New Revised Standard Version] “Such are the wicked always at ease, they increase in riches all in vain, I have kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence for all day long I have been plagued and am punished every morning.”

The psalmist said there that he was living through a paradox.

Psalm 73:12-14 [Revised English Bible] “Such are the wicked unshakably secure, they pile up wealth, indeed it was all for nothing, though I kept my heart pure and washed my hands free from guilt for all day long, I suffer affliction and every morning brings new punishment”

This man was going through hell on earth. You understand what I am talking about here, because his relationship with God was not good.

Psalm 73:12-14 [Paraphrased Living Bible] “Look at these men of arrogance! They never have to lift a finger, theirs is the life of ease and all of the time their riches multiply, have I been wasting my time? Why take the trouble to be pure? All I get out of it is trouble and woe every day and all day long.”

You cannot help but feel for the guy, because we have experienced times in our life where such a thing certainly passed through our mind. Before we leave Psalm 73

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behind, we will look at what he said, "All I get out of it is trouble and woe, every day and all day long" Has he forgotten something? How about the forgiveness of sin, how about him having a relationship with God. You see how focused his mind was on himself, these things were forgotten for a period of time, was it all for nothing? Are the wicked really unshakably secure and living without stress? Is the Christian truly seeing life accurately?

I bring these things up because we are beginning to see part of the danger of a paradox. What does it do? If it is allowed to run wild, it turns ourselves in on ourselves. Bad business. The psalmist had turned his entire focus on himself and he is exaggerating. It really was not as bad as he says, but his mind had reached that place where he was exaggerating his condition.

We will look at this logically from a faith point of view. If you are in the hand of God, is there any safer place to be? You see what was happening to his thinking, he was actually putting a relationship with God, the forgiveness of sin, behind him, they were being forgotten. You cannot live a life of righteousness without that. That is why he said, my foot had almost slipped. He of course wrote this psalm after God answered his prayer, and he began to put things together in the right way again. But we are seeing him here at the beginning of Psalm 73 at his very worst and God did intervene.

We will add a little bit more to this picture so that we can understand this paradox more broadly. That is, a paradoxical situation does not always have to concern money, it can be a health situation, we want to be healed but we are not healed, and life is not very comfortable. It can be a job situation, where we lose our job and somehow or another we cannot seem to find another one.

How about a marital situation, where the relationship in the family is all knotted up and nothing really positive seems to be occurring. How about the single people in the church who are looking for a mate, what if it is a dating situation and God is not bringing Mr. Right into your life, or Miss Right in your life. She has everything, she is converted, she is a lot of fun to be around, you have a great deal in common, it just is not happening.

I am not exaggerating. What I went through is a pretty grave difficulty at this period of time in the church of God because we are so scattered. Finding Mr. Right or Miss Right has been increased tremendously. I really feel for the girls because they are in a position that I think is worse than what the boys are. They just do not have the liberties that a man has, they are missing those things and it is especially hard, so they pray and Mr. Right does not show up.

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God, where are your blessings? You see a paradox is beginning to form. God wants people to be married, there is not doubt about that, and yet it is not happening. Sometimes the young lady will have enough second tithe that she is able to transfer to other places in hopes that she might find Mr. Right at a different Feast, and it still does not happen. The picture I want you to get here is that it does not have to be a money situation. This thing can build in any area of life and become something where we are faced with what the psalmist was faced with there.

All that has to be created is a situation in which the Christian feels that he is being unfairly treated while others at the same time are perceived as being blessed. You add to this the circumstance continues for a good period of time and that allows the Christian to become an impatient martyr in their own mind. And it is real, I am not making fun of it, I am not running anybody down on this. It is just a reality, but that is the way our minds work, and I might add that it is a way that Satan will take advantage of and try to induce us to think in that direction.

This paradox is not a little thing. That is why Solomon twice warns us, there is a danger here. We will add to our story. Christians today are not immune from the same sort of trials as the author of that psalm, we do not always live to a ripe old age, we are not immune from cancer, and sometimes violent injuries occur. Sometimes Christians homes are wiped away by a tornado, or earthquake, and a family member is crushed inside, where was God? Situations like I just named can set the stage for the paradox to be produced.

There is an important element of this that may help us grasp the process that makes a paradox potentially spiritually dangerous and perhaps more personally applicable. The term super-righteousness has been used by me in this section, and also by some modern commentators. I am presenting this because one of the modern commentators that I researched into used the term based on technical reasons involving the word itself and the larger context as well. I have come to the conclusion that they are correct. This is because the term super-righteousness helps clarify the problem for the converted.

In an attempt to convey the sense of the context, as well as the use of the Hebrew terms in this series of verses (I am talking about Ecclesiastes 7:13-22), *The King James Version* translates a term in verse 16 as "righteous overmuch." We are beginning to see a connection between super-righteousness and righteous overmuch. *The New King James* translates that same term as, overly righteous. We can see that there is a connection to that and super righteousness.

I do not believe that either of those terms are adequate. How can one possibly be

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righteous overmuch, or overly righteous? Super-righteousness is a bit more adequate term. It is in the super-righteousness that the danger lies. Make sure we get that.

Among the commentators who use the term super righteousness is Sydney Greidanus. He does this in a commentary titled, "Preaching Christ through Ecclesiastes." He takes a New Testament approach to the book of Ecclesiastes. It is a very helpful commentary. He did so because he believes that term in our modern lingo is clearly conveying the thoughts Solomon is teaching about in the context than overly righteous or righteous overmuch.

Super-righteousness is peculiar and dangerous because it is in reality a deceptive form of evil. How does this super-righteousness arise within a converted person? It actually seems, on the surface, that unless it is controlled to stop it, it is a natural fruit. In other words, it just grows out of it. Super-righteousness is indeed a form of self-righteousness, but it is not the same as the normal self-righteousness we are familiar with. It is a possible fruit of a determined resolve to do better in obedience to God but it is allowed to get out of control, and when it does it produces a dangerous fruit.

Two major abnormalities are parts of it. First is a misguided attitude motivating it. We saw that misguided attitude very clearly in Psalm 73. The psalmist there was misguided in his thinking, he was certainly misguided when he is accusing God and not turning his attention to his own problems. It is a misguided attitude that motivates it.

Second, it is a subtle but spiritually cancerous fruit that it has a tendency to produce. Both of those things is why it is spiritually dangerous.

We are going to examine the misguided motivation first, because these two go together. I think I will reflect here so that we pick up on the story line, that is the psalmist did the right thing. He kept on praying, he kept on studying, he kept on meditating, and he did not give up on the situation, he never entered into that stage even though he was right on the doorstep where the misguided thoughts that he was having were about to trigger him to go in the wrong direction.

In a situation similar to what verse 15 describes, if we are the righteous one involved because of our desire to please God, how would we tend to react? Would we not tend to react as the problems continues on, by assuming as the psalmist did there for a while? He assumed that he was being punished and purposely plagued. This is the wrong motivation for the son of God, having the Spirit of God, being created in the image of Jesus Christ, to assume that he was being punished.

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There is a reason why we tend to think in that direction. It is because we know ourselves fairly well and we know that we have a awful lot of weaknesses that might cut us off from God, but this thinking is wrong. Have we not received the grace of God? I am going to give you scriptures that show that thinking is wrong. It is very rare that we are being punished.

We are tested, but not punished. We will reflect on Psalm 73. The psalmist clearly stated that he was plagued all day long, and punished every morning. A Christian would tend to reason that same way—if he was not sinning he would not be going through this experience. It comes into mind pretty strongly, I am being punished because I am a sinner and therefore God is justified in what He is doing.

In what way would we be most likely to turn? Would we not turn to, “Hey, I want to get out of this situation, and what does God say that I should be doing?” We would begin to think of scriptures like, as Jesus said, “become you perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” How do you become perfect? You resolve to do better, nothing wrong with that, but do not let it get out of control, because it can.

There is one character in this universe who would want to take advantage of our sincerity, our desire to please God, and push us in the wrong direction. He is really good at that, so he undermines our confidence in God's Word, he undermines our confidence that we really do have a relationship, he undermines our confidence that we and our sins are actually covered by the stripes and by the blood of Jesus Christ, and that God is no longer hearing us. God does hear us!

Answer this for yourself, you parents: are not your ears open to the cries of your children? God does not stop up His ears to His children and He does it far less than we do to our children. His patience is awesome, His power to save and create what He is creating is awesome, but our faith breaks down and that is when Satan gives his push on our thinking to make us go in a different direction.

Scriptures like I have mentioned become our guide in order to correct the stressful circumstance. It is right here that all too often a significant mistake is made by assuming that one is being punished, but first we will notice something critical to understanding this a little clearer.

Ecclesiastes 7:15 I have seen all things in my days of vanity. There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

There is a Hebrew word that is translated in this verse as perishes, it helps create a misunderstanding. That Hebrew term, in its strongest sense, can indeed be used to indicate death, but it is much closer in literal meaning and in Biblical usage to merely indicate a slipping away, a wandering, a declining—not death. Solomon is indeed indicating a danger right within the context, a danger is present, but it is not an emergency situation. We will notice what Solomon actually, literally, said, verse 15.

Ecclesiastes 7:15 There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness.

The man is still considered righteous, he was not an evil, wicked person at all. He was a righteous man. Solomon is not saying he is perishing because he was an evil sinner who is ignoring a character flaw. The reality is that he was declining but he was *declining in his righteousness*. God was not holding him as being a wicked, evil sinner.

Remember this book was written by God. Solomon is just the one that God used to write it out there. He was declining *despite* his righteousness. This makes all the difference in the world. He was not perishing because he was not righteous enough, he was simply not handling the trials well, and punishment from God is not the issue here, even as it was not the issue with the psalmist either.

You can go through that psalm and his sins, if I can put it that way, were not the issue. We will add to this. Turn to the book of Job and we will use him as an example here because it is so clear.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

Job was a righteous man. He did indeed go through a very great trial, but he did not go through it because he was a terrible sinner. Job 1:1 clearly states that Job was blameless and upright, which is just another way of saying that he was a righteous man. Job's friends thought that he was a sinner, but Job did not think he was a sinner, and you know very well from your reading of the book of Job, that he defended himself from these attacks on his character and he did it vigorously. Job was right, his friends were wrong.

God did not put him through that because Job was an evil man at all. Job was correct in defending himself. Job did not understand what was going on but he knew from his own life he was not an evil sinner. In fact there are whole chapters where he defended

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himself from the attacks that were made on his character. Basically he was saying, "I didn't do any of those things. I've been all over the village, taking care of people, helping them through their troubles and trials." But he did not understand what was happening to him.

It is important that you get this because this has to be one of the first lines of defense for God's children—that He is not trying to rub their face in the dirt because they are terrible, evil sinners. They might not be going through a trial well at all, but on the other hand God is working to save them.

We will make this more obvious. What about Jesus? Did God put Jesus through that terrible ordeal of the crucifixion and burial because He was a sinner? Not at all! In a sense we are going to see here that Job and Christ were going through the same situation and what we have to understand is that when these kind of situations come into our life, like the paradox, we are not being punished.

We are given a trial, we are given a test, and that test and trial may indeed increase our righteousness, increase our ability to reflect the character and the glory of God in what we do but He is not out there whipping us into shape at all. We are going through something for a very good reason and we will use both Job and Jesus Christ as examples. Why did they go through the things that they did? They did it for us! In Christ's case, so that righteousness can be given to us. In Job's case, so that we would understand the difficulty of our trials and why we are going through them.

I want you to carry this thought through to this: a great number of answers are available to us in the book of I Corinthians. That was a congregation that was filled with problems, but I just want you to reflect upon I Corinthians 10-13.

In I Corinthians 10, where we find Israel going through all kinds of difficulties, the examples of Israel in wilderness, and chapter 13, about us being tried. From that point on the thought of trials should be part of our mind as we read through that epistle, because that is a major reason chapters 10-14, are written. Paul is reflecting on the trials that that congregation was having to go through. Of course the people in the congregation were going through the trials that he was describing.

Chapter 12 is essential, when he goes into this thought, truth, understanding, that each and every one of us has been personally put into the body of Jesus Christ by God where it pleased Him. Each and every one of us has our own trials to face and we do it by faith but we also begin to understand that we are going through trials and difficulties with the entire church, because we are part of the same body.

So we have trials that are coming on us from our own life, we have trials that are coming on us in which is the entire body. We have to learn to understand that when the body suffers, we suffer, when the body is tested, we are tested right along with it. And we find that God puts us into the body where it pleases Him, and that He appoints apostles, evangelists, pastors, teachers, but He has a place for everybody in the body. This becomes more important as we move through this paradoxical situation.

We have to see ourselves as part of it. Is He punishing His entire church when they are going through a trial? No, not at all. A trial maybe difficult but He is aware of what is going on, and He is guiding us through that.

After chapter 12, Paul gives the overall solution to the difficulties that the Bible shows in chapter 12 that the whole church was going through. What is it? It is love. Love is an action, the agape love is an action, it is what we do in our relationships with one another. The theme continues right on through and it goes into chapter 14, and then, what is the subject? It is problems within the body of the church. It seems as though their church meetings were pretty tumultuous, is the best way to put it.

I want to reflect back on one thing. We are talking about Paul writing that particular book, and in II Corinthians, Paul gives a pretty good listing of all of the terribly painful difficulties, what he went through in doing his job for God, and for the church. He was called to be an apostle. Was Paul being punished as the trials he went through in serving God and the church, because he was an evil sinner? Not at all, it was just part of his development, of His creation by God, and so even as Jesus Christ, even as Job, so was the apostle Paul, and so is each and every one of us as a part of the body of Jesus Christ.

We are going to go through trials and difficulties as a body, and as an individual, and we have to take that into consideration as we are going through it. We are not being punished. We may need some correction, and God will do this as we go along, but we are not being punished. He is removing the cause of the difficulties as we continue to grow.

We will go back to the main theme here and that is this: why do people fall into the super-righteousness that brings on this problem? Where is the danger in this? I will summarize it for you in one sentence. The temptation when going through a trial like that is to become super-righteous. It is done in order to produce the promises on the basis of our own works and that is what Solomon is addressing here.

The difficulty in the trial is not punishment, it is simply hard, that is all, but turning our

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attention by becoming super-righteous tends to produce the promises of God on the basis of our own works.

What Solomon is showing us here is that super-righteousness is not the solution. Why? No matter how righteous we are because of our works we can never, never force God to prolong our life, or prosper us because of our own works. The goal of perfect righteousness has been beyond us beginning the first time that we sinned. That goal was forever destroyed when we first sinned.

I want you to notice that Solomon agrees with this right in the context, by stating in verse 20, "For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin." It *cannot* be done. When we want to become super-righteous we have set before ourselves an impossible goal—it cannot be done and it leads, among other things, to extreme frustration, and there is something even worse. I will not get to it today because I can see this sermon is going to have to go on.

Solomon said in verse 20, surely there is no one on earth so righteous as to do good without sinning, then in verse 22, he says, "For many times, also, your own heart has known that even you have cursed others." What Solomon is saying is that straining for absolute virtuous, moral, and spiritual perfection leads to a frustrating impossible-to-obtain dead end.

Romans 7:13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

We are learning to be in the mind what the apostle Paul was.

Romans 7:14-17 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. [This is a converted man, an apostle saying this.] If then I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

Do we understand that we cannot get rid of sin, so to become super-righteous becomes a frustrating life, because we cannot do it.

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Romans 7:18-25 For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

That is quite a testimony, and why super-righteousness actually in the long run, works against us. I will define super-righteousness further, and we have to have more support, but I have given you at least an understanding of why Solomon said there in Ecclesiastes 7 there is danger here in fighting this paradox the wrong way, with the wrong mind, with the wrong judgment. The answer is: let God take of it. That is why he says at the end, those who fear God will escape.