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*Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This is also vanity. (Ecclesiastes 8:10)*

**I. Why Do the Wicked Prosper?**

- a. If we believe in a good and loving God, we must face the difficult question, "Why is there so much suffering in the world? Does God know about it? Does He lack the power to change it?"
- b. Some people debate these questions and end up becoming atheists or agnostics, but they create a whole new problem. You have to answer the question, "Where does good come from?"
- c. Let's be clear, God created man, but man created evil through his free will. (Psalm 81:11-13)
- d. In this chapter Solomon explored the problem of evil in the world by examining three key areas.

**II. Wickedness and Authority (vv.2-10)**

- a. The Jews often suffered at the hands of foreign oppressors, and Solomon was guilty of putting his own people under a heavy tax burden. (1 King 4:7-28)
- b. Ancient rulers were not elected, therefore, they had absolute power. There was no law that could find the king guilty.
- c. However, we believe that God places rulers, mayor and even presidents in positions of authority over us. If the king command is evil, what should the servant do? (Rom 13:1-5; 1 Peter 3:13-15)
  1. Disobedience has consequences and comes with a penalty. Solomon recommends to obey the king's directive. We you can have peace knowing that God will be the final judge of kings. (v.8)
  2. Desertion is an option if the servant cannot obey the master, just leave. Many people have resigned their position for honor/integrity reasons. (v.3a) Better to lose income than to compromise your character.
  3. Defiance – (v.3b) Is there a place for civil disobedience in the life of a believer? Thomas Jefferson wrote, *Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.* (Read Acts 5:29) How we express our disagreement with authority demands wisdom and grace.
  4. Discernment – (vv.5-6) Know that there is a time for everything. Wisdom helps us understand people and situations. (e.g. Nehemiah, Daniel and the apostles)

**III. The World is not Fair (Inequity) (vv.10-14)**

- a. Inequities do exist in every society. (v.14) *Laws, like the spider's web, they catch the fly and let the hawks go free.* – Spanish Proverb
- b. The evil person may live longer and better than the godly person, but the day of judgement will come and no one will escape. (Col 3:25)
- c. Until Jesus Christ establishes His righteous kingdom, there will always be injustices in our world.

**IV. God's Plan is a Mystery (vv.15-17)**

- a. Solomon applied himself to the mysteries of life. Why are things the way they are? (Deut 29:29)
- b. God does not expect us to know the unknowable, but He does expect us to learn all that we can and obey what He teaches us.
- c. A confession of ignorance is the first step toward wisdom. (1 Cor 8:2)

**V. Thoughts and Considerations for Action**

- a. We have options of disobeying, running away, defying orders or even fighting back. But before we act, we must first exercise wisdom and seek to discern the right "time and procedure."
- b. Beloved we live in difficult times and many lives weigh in the balance. What are we to do?
- c. You cannot legalize righteousness nor can it be enforced. All that has been attempted.
- d. In a civil society, Christians are called to pray and witness above anything else.