

# Why Societies Cannot Self-Restore

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Beloved, we are in the book of Ecclesiastes once again today to answer an important question! I'm going to ask you to direct your attention to Ecclesiastes chapter 9 in the title of the message, Why Societies Cannot Self-Restore. I think it's very appropriate for the week that we've just had, particularly for us as believers with what Ben mentioned about Charlie Kirk and his assassination.

We'll eventually be in Ecclesiastes 4, but let's start in 9. I'm going to read in verses 1 through 3, and I'm reading from the New American Standard Version. Solomon says, For I have taken all this that he's been referring to to this point to my heart and explain it that righteous men, that is, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred. Anything awaits him. Now, pause right there with me and think about the events of this past week with Charlie Kirk. How many of you knew Charlie Kirk before this week?

How many of you were familiar? So all of us have some familiarization with his ministry and all that he meant to evangelicalism. Think about this verse in that light.

Men don't know, but God does. For all man knows, he doesn't know if he's going to get love or hatred.

Anything awaits him. And that's exactly what happened in Charlie's life, isn't it? Anything awaits him. Verse 2, It is the same for all.

[ 2 : 0 9 ] There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked, for the good, for the clean, and for the unclean, for the man who offers a sacrifice, and for the one who does not sacrifice.

As the good man is, so is the sinner. As the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear.

This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. And that fate, of course, is death.

Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

Let me read that again, beloved. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.

[ 3 : 1 6 ] What a sobering truth from the Word of God, given the week that we've just experienced in the news. In fact, friends, in recent months, mainstream media outlets have broadcast a series of violent, high-profile expressions of the depravity, or the evil, or the depth of the wickedness of the human heart.

And the list unsettles the soul. I'm going to give you several here, and I'm leaving out 10 to 15 high-profile cases.

The first that I'll mention are the murders in Louisiana when a man drove his truck into a crowd, killing a number of people. Just random. Multiple school shootings, where recently two little boys were murdered in their school, just because they went to school.

We all are familiar with Luigi Mangione murdering Brian Thompson in the middle of New York City on a public street. The knife murder of the young woman from Ukraine as she sat on a commuter train.

A governor's home torched while he and his family were sleeping inside, and by a miracle of God's grace, they escaped the fire unharmed. But somebody intended to burn that man to death along with his wife and kids because they didn't agree with his politics.

[ 4 : 52 ] The planned ambush and murder of firemen as they responded to a fire, the shooter set as a trap to kill them. Two assassination attempts on our president, Donald Trump, as he was running for office.

And this week, the public assassination of Charlie Kirk. And the list goes on and on. Of course, each of these media outlets and their sources, their specialists and their analysts, give their views of why these things happened and of what it all portends for our nation and even in some cases for the world.

Some of these commentators are helpful, but many of them are harmful. Charlie Kirk was a Christian who courageously lived and defended his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He did this with grace. He did it with humility. And he did it for love for other people, people who disagreed with him and even for people that hated him.

Charlie loved them enough to speak the truth in love with much grace, humility, and kindness. He showed them patience and respect and dignity even in the face of the hatred that they had for him.

[ 6 : 17 ] That's on record. You can go online and see video after video after video of that being the truth about this man's life. He was deeply loved and respected by his wife and he left behind two little toddlers.

And the question that the world's asking is why? And the answers they're coming up with range from bizarre to ludicrous to outright demonic. It's amazing.

Or is it? Ironically, Charlie Kirk's life and message come together to offer the explanation for his death by murder.

Charlie Kirk died because of who he was and he died because of what his life meant. In other words, he died for something outside of him as well as something living inside of him.

He was a truthful man living a truthful life by the grace of God. Now what our world needs from us here in our little church family and in our little town is the truth which brings true hope to the world's senselessness and to its lies about why evil like this happens and why it seems to be increasing and why it seems that there are many people in our country who would applaud this kind of thing in the name of what they believe.

[ 7 : 56 ] How do we explain all of that? Does God's Word have anything to tell us? And where can we draw hope when we hear about this and see this happening in our world?

As God's people, we are hopeful and we are not helpless. We are more than conquerors in Christ and we are not victims of bad karma in a world spinning violently out of control.

What did Solomon say to us? The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts always.

The world will not rightly understand the spiritual root of these worldly wicked actions nor will the world rightly offer biblical hope to souls in need of God's comfort for a better and brighter future.

The world suppresses the truth about where to find this better and brighter future. It's very confused about that. The answer to a better and brighter future is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His promise of eternal life.

- [ 9 : 15 ] This planet will never afford you a better and brighter future. We are decaying. We are demoralized. We are moving down the path of it getting worse and worse.
- I quoted to you last week not to bum you out or discourage you. I will preach a message of hope today but to sober you with the reality of what the Scripture says.
- 2 Timothy, we are told by the Apostle Paul, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Promise. Put it down.
- The closer you walk with Jesus, the more faithful you are in living for Christ, the more likely it is that the promise of persecution will visit your life.
- So you need to ask yourself, friends, and let it sober you. If you're not experiencing persecution right now, you need to ask yourself, why not? If you haven't experienced persecution from those around you and from the world you live in lately, you need to ask yourself, why not?
- [ 10 : 21 ] Because God guarantees you, the closer you walk with Jesus and the more faithfully you obey Him, you will be persecuted. Charlie Kirk is an example of the ultimate price we pay in that persecution for being faithful to Jesus Christ.
- Is that not true? It's sobering, isn't it? We want people to respond to the message of hope and salvation that we offer them in Jesus.
- We don't want to be anybody's enemy. What we need to understand is the world hating you is the world hating Jesus in you. The world hates our Lord and Savior.
- The world hates Jesus Christ. There are plenty enemies around the world to the truth.
- There are many religious faiths that are founded on lies that directly counter biblical wisdom and truth. And in many cases, they take up arms to kill the people who disagree with them and believe differently from them.
- [ 11 : 36 ] You say, what did I ever do to them? You don't have to do anything to them. You just have to stand for something that they hate, that they don't like, or that they don't stand for.
- That's where we are today. Why? Former pastor and author, now deceased, Dr. Wayne Mack, insightfully contrasted false hope with true hope.
- And I want to offer you this quote as part of an explanation for what I'll bring to you this morning in terms of where it is that we look for answers when we see things like the Charlie Kirk assassination happen in our world.
- Here's what Dr. Mack said about hope. False hope is based on human ideas of what is pleasurable and desirable.
- Many people think that their problems will disappear if they can just get what they want. And he added, true hope is biblically based expectation of good.
- [ 12 : 39 ] In other words, it is biblical hope an expectation based on the promises of God. A biblical hope is an expectation based on the promises of God.
- He continues, we are never helpless when we are living in and on the truth of God's Word. And we never have more reason for genuine hope than when we are looking to the Lord Jesus to honor what He has promised us.
- And lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age. End quote. That is biblical hope. An expectation based on the promises of God.
- And so it's not the kind of hope that we look at when we say, I hope it doesn't rain today. It's the kind of hope that we look to that says God is promised and He will do it. And so all of my expectation, all of my desire, all of my goal is placed in what God says and who God is.

We are never helpless when we are living on the truth of the Lord. Amen. Now, in Ecclesiastes 4, where we will be today, I want you to see in one place in Scripture, because there are many we could have turned to, what one of the wisest men who ever lived outside of the Lord Jesus said about all of this.

[ 14 : 08 ] You might be surprised to see that what is written here directly addresses where we are today. Ecclesiastes 4, Solomon says, Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun.

You see? That's going on in Solomon's time. It's going on in our time today. And behold, I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them.

And on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them. So I congratulated the dead who were already dead more than the living who are still living.

But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun. I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor.

This too is vanity and striving after wind. The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh. One handful of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.

[ 15 : 26 ] Then I looked again at vanity under the sun. There was a certain man without a dependent without any heir, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor.

Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked and for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure? This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion, but woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

Furthermore, if two lie down together, they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him.

A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.

[ 16 : 32 ] For he has come out of prison to become king even though he was born poor in his kingdom. Now I have seen all the living under the sun thronged to the side of the second lad who replaces him.

There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him. For this too is vanity and striving after wind.

So a series of Proverbs, a series of truth sayings about the issue that we'll talk about this morning. In Ecclesiastes 4, Solomon is identifying human evils expressed as destructive forces tearing away at hope and leaving relationships, families, societies lying ruined in its wake.

Now, I want to borrow from a particular commentator for my outline, Dr. Barak. Dr. Barak is a professor, is a teacher out at the Master's Seminary, was there when I was there.

Brilliant man. I'm going to borrow on his outline and I'm going to tweak it a little bit to fit the nature of what we're doing this morning. And I want to share with you four major problems in life or four evils which all people experience this.

[ 17 : 59 ] These four evils foster false hope. They complicate everyday life for all of us, both believer and unbeliever.

And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to label these four things as hope stealers. Now folks, this is what we saw this past week.

We saw many examples of tears. People crying. Some of them weeping because they recognized the loss. But many of them weeping and coming away shocked and asking the question, where is God?

Where is hope? If someone like this godly man can be killed and God could allow something like this, what hope is there for me? And what hope is there for the future? I told Suzanne when she told me what had happened I was studying and she came into the room from her office and told me what had just happened and I looked up at her and I can't help but the first thing that came into my mind I'm going to tell you what I said I'm not a prophet I pray I'm wrong I looked right at her and the first thing that came out of my mouth in my own grief was and there's probably going to be some more I pray to God I'm wrong these are hope stealers these are the kinds of things that go on in our world that leave people stumbling around as in the dark asking hard questions Charlie Kirk was a man who confronted those questions full on with the love and hope and truth of

Christ so it's no wonder to me that demonic forces schemed to take him out and I want you to understand beloved that is exactly who is behind this man's death demonic forces spiritual forces of evil are behind this man's death I'm not suggesting to you in the slightest that those forces are more powerful than God but God is not the author of evil and this will serve the purposes of almighty God now let me share with you this first hope stealer that we're going to see Solomon speak to us about it's the hope stealer of unrelieved oppression in verses 1 through 3 and so for these first three verses the point is repeated for us in verse 1 notice in verse 1 they had no one to comfort them and then again but they had no one to comfort them and so while oppression is the issue that's being brought out a lack of comfort in that oppression is the point he says then

[ 20 : 54 ] I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done in the earth or in this time under the sun and behold I saw the tears of those who were being oppressed that they had no one to comfort them and on the side of their oppressors was power in other words their oppressors had unlimited power to continue to do this evil but they to them to comfort them no one at all Solomon here is an eyewitness to all four of these evils that I'll point out to you this morning as he says under the sun or on the earth here he sees injustice as people are abused so severely that he then goes on to argue in verse two I am congratulating those who are dead more than those who are living I'll tell you what he means by that in just a moment the evil activity he mentions in verse three is just that it is incredible unbelievable cruelty it is the inhumanity of man against his fellow man it is so cruel it is so callous it is so cold blooded and so ruthless that

Solomon could bring himself to say that these people who are now experienced this kind of cruelty would have been better off if they had never been born to experience it they wouldn't have to endure the terrible tyranny of their oppressors now folks we have vivid examples of this in our recent time you think about October 11th in Israel and the heinous heinous things we have a couple of guys in my congregation here with us that have shared with me that they can't even talk about what they know about the atrocities that happened I think they're telling me we only know a tip of the iceberg of the depravity that these people endured and we know some pretty bad stuff I mean it's horrendous I can't even repeat it from the pulpit and there was worse than that it's hard for me to conceive that it could be worse than what I already know ruthless cold blooded callous and cruel we step back shocked tears running down our face and we ask how could a human being do that to another human being we wouldn't do that kind of stuff to animals much less human beings and little babies there's only one answer and I'll give it to you ongoing oppressive suffering from the hands of cruel despotic people will always be a part of this life always it's not going away folks nothing in mankind can eradicate this issue it is endemic to us as human beings it is here to stay and it is part of life and so we need to learn to deal with it and the only way we can do that is in the truth and in the compassion and in the purposes!

of God otherwise folks you're going to spin out of control with this world and you're going to be very despondent and discouraged in your life governments groups gatherings can all be like this because all people have this black hearted oppression within them people oppress other people the symptoms are never the real issue they only serve to express the true nature of the problem the cause is the true concern folks and so we need to step back and ask what causes the evil that we do to each other isn't that the question what causes the evil that we do to each other that is the issue Solomon is addressing it's the wickedness we do to each other at any level and in any way all all are issues and expressions of sinful hearts they express the sinful core of every human being and please don't exclude yourself we needed

Jesus to save us from ourselves we needed you needed I needed Jesus to save us from the sin of our own heart the blackness of our own heart folks please understand when you stand before the Lord to give an account of your life there isn't going to be any of this finger pointing!

George we're talking about you and what you chose to do that's how God is going to deal with you this victim mentality nonsense that our world seems to embrace isn't going to fly in heaven I promise you we abuse each other in evil activities because there's evil in our hearts that's the foundation that we're operating from because this is exactly what Solomon tells us throughout the book of Ecclesiastes that's just where he takes us in this argument he takes us into what he's going to label personal rivalry we abuse each other in evil activities because there is evil in our hearts again I want to impress on you why biblically that is so foundational for you to understand as you face an evil world right now that evil is on the television screen and we mourn the loss of this man we grieve for his widow and his children all of that is real for us intangible but what happens when that evil comes home to your doorstep what happens when that evil is spoken against you when that evil shows up to be against you personally and people you love and care about now that's off the television screen that's in your living room it's very important that you understand what's going on and the foundation of what that evil is where it comes from why it's present what it's wanting to do it helps you understand your enemy and combat it on a greater level more effective level and so you need to know what it's not alright let's talk in more depth about this issue of what

[ 27 : 34 ] Solomon then tells us about this personal rivalry he's bringing this evil into the realm of personhood people and he's characterizing that evil in terms of a personal rivalry that human beings enter into against each other it's absolutely brilliant it comes from the Lord what we expect and so this second hope stealer that I want to put up here hope stealer as an unsatisfied jealousy an unsatisfied jealousy he says I have seen that every labor every work of man every effort every skill that people would bring to the mix which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor this too is vanity and striving after wind the fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh one handful of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind what's he talking about well in the new

American standard translation that I'm using we use the term rivalry in the translation it's how this problem is being expressed but if you look at jealousy or envy or greed they all become Hebrew synonyms of this particular concern this rivalry so it means that a person has a greedy prideful longing for something that belongs to another something another possesses and it can go beyond material things it could be something intangible or immaterial like a skill it could be a conviction a belief or even a sense of peace and forgiveness it can be something that someone looks at and envies in another or is jealous in another for example a particular lifestyle or family life they envy the relationship the person has with their spouse with their children or the kind of lifestyle that they're able to lead nevertheless it's a rivalry and it's based in this issue of jealousy so friends listen because of the wickedness of our hearts seeing those things in others and then knowing that we don't have those things is enough to incite a hard attitude of jealous envy and so concerning the hatred behind

Charlie Kirk's murder much of the dialogue that you have listened to this past week concern the unwillingness of some to allow for disagreement among differing views regarding politics or world views or answers to the issues of our time okay and there's truth in that there's truth but we need to go further because God's word takes us further we can't!

stop there now please hear me carefully there's truth in the reality that people struggle with people with differing views and I've seen an uptick in that in my adult lifetime in the generation that we're seeing come into power now people just don't have seeming any capacity at all to sit down and have a conversation with each other that allows for differing views on a level that doesn't escalate it to emotionalism and irrationality this is what Charlie Kirk encountered time and time and time and time again in these college campuses they didn't have the ability to intellectually engage him in a conversation that didn't escalate immediately into emotionalism you see this so there's truth in this but while there's truth in what we're talking about in that we need to go further we miss the mark of the root of this problem if we stop at the issue of not being able to disagree with each other an unwillingness to allow for disagreement is a symptom

Charlie Kirk wasn't murdered over disagreements with his politics and positions as a Christian now that may surprise you to hear me say that that's not why he was murdered the selfish oppressive violence we do against each other is not rooted in disagreement I can disagree with a Muslim I can disagree with a Buddhist or a Mormon or even a Catholic we can we can disagree I don't have to kill them and they don't have to kill me I'm not the judge and the jury that's going to bring the argument against them for what they think say and do particularly in relation to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior I say it again he wasn't murdered over disagreements the selfish oppressive violence we do to each other isn't rooted in disagreement disagreement may be the trigger for our violence but it's not the root of our growing anger bitterness and hatred toward those who disagree with us so you say well Jeff what is well he's telling us right here he's describing the bitter jealousy and envy and hatred of this rivalry look bitter jealousy tells us that the issue fueling the motive for this violence is that the heart can't allow for what the other person's life shows us about ourselves so we want to be rid of them truth dispels lies and light reveals darkness and darkness hates that and so do the lies and so when we personify darkness and when we personify lies in the evil that we are and that we do what happens when that rivalry gets to boiling point

[ 34 : 03 ] I want to take out the person who is reminding me of the shallowness of my life the emptiness of my life the lack in my life you're an obstacle and I don't want you reminding me of that darkness I don't want you reminding me of that lie that lives within me and that I am in my life now you watch you watch not much has been said about this young man yet but you watch and see as it unfolds what you're going to find behind this young man's behavior is a demonic hatred of Charlie himself go beyond that of the truth that lived in Charlie listen to me carefully of Jesus Christ living in Charlie Kirk the man who shot him hated Jesus whether he knows it or admits it or not because he hates the truth we already know that his quote unquote partner was this transgender person

I'm going to say it again as clearly and as loud as I can because I want all of the young people in our congregation to have us teaching them and reminding them because the world is literally screaming in their faces veins bulging spit flying telling them that transgenderism is real it is a lie it is not real it is impossible for you to transition your gender it's impossible it is a demonic devil's lie there is no such thing as transgenderism it is a false concept it is a demonic lie you cannot in any shape way or form change your gender your sex a man cannot become a woman and a woman cannot become a man that is the work of the miracle of almighty God who determined your sex when you were in the womb God knew what you were going to be male female before you were ever conceived because he knew you would be conceived because he made your soul you are the product of

God it is a blessing that God has made you either male or female that is his special blessing on your life it's up to the Lord not to you transgenderism is a way the demons try to convince human beings that they can play God and what's it of people the medical community on the whole is buying into it but thank God we do have some people that are standing up and being willing to be counted as people who say that's ridiculous that's nonsense that's demonic but this is where we are truth dispels lies and light reveals darkness and Charlie Kirk's murder violence was a way to try to kill virtue and it didn't work while that virtue lived inside of

Charlie it also lived outside of him it was brought from outside of Charlie and put in him and so for Charlie to die for you to die for me to die that doesn't kill the truth it doesn't kill the virtue of Christ does it Jesus goes right on living and now Charlie lives with Jesus in heaven murder was the means to try and silence the truth so how does a person get to the point of this level of violence well friends this is the root of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition!

like the book of James characterizes it from these sinful heart attitudes bitter jealousy and selfish ambition come all kinds of personal efforts aimed!

[ 38 : 06 ] at being on top of other people rivalry in the new American standard rivalry captures this spirit of selfish competition and destructiveness I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor Joseph is a good example of the kind of good human jealousy did you realize you could be jealous and not sin just like you could be angry and not sin now most of us fail 99% of the time to be angry and not sin so don't hear your pastor giving you an e-jack handle on anger sinful anger is a bad deal but there is a good kind of human jealousy here's what I mean human jealousy that's good is based on pursuing God's honor and fleeing evil you're jealous you're so jealous for God's honor you're so jealous to please

Jesus and to please not quench the Holy Spirit not grieve the Holy you're so jealous for that righteousness evil so that you can honor him you're so jealous for that you don't want anything to get in the way of it that's a good jealousy isn't it you want to have that kind of zeal and jealousy for the Lord you don't want anything or anyone stealing it away from you but but the bad kind of jealousy human jealousy when it's not about God's honor can also be illustrated from Joseph's life if you remember the story Joseph's brothers acted wickedly towards Joseph out of bitter jealousy of him and sold him into slavery and he ended up in Egypt a slave to someone you can also see it in the story when Potiphar's wife reached out to take Joseph to bring her into intimate encounter with herself and he continued to refuse and he was so adamant about not what was he jealous for the honor of the

Lord how could I do this against your husband my master but more than that how could I do this against the Lord guys right he didn't want to sin with that woman because he didn't want to sin against God he was jealous for God's honor and then look what happened to him he ended up in prison for something he didn't do that woman was selfishly ambitious and bitterly jealous Joseph's stand for God hey woman you know what you ain't enough of all that to make me say no to my God you think you are you think all that is something that I'm going to abandon I'm not and she didn't like that I ought to be able to seduce this dude look at me and so what did she want to do she did exactly what the guy did who shot Charlie Kirk she took him out she got rid of him because what he stood for stood against what she knew she was and she hated him for it that's all it!

love Jesus walk with Jesus and the world will hate you for it because loving Jesus and walking with Jesus shows them for what they are and who they are and if they don't turn to the Lord they will hate you for that contrast that's all it takes they'll shoot you they'll kill you they'll rape you they'll tear you to pieces we have a book full of it in!



in the Bible this is how we need to think about what's going on in our world it's selfish ambition over godly submission but it can be the other way around and we have examples in the Bible entitlements personal rights personal happiness are more valued than the basic welfare of the lives of other people my own welfare is what's fair that's the mantra my own welfare is what's fair the way forward is the way over people make a way through make a way around make a way over those people even even if we have to eliminate them just don't let them stand in your way every fight every argument every conflict every war have had jealousy envy selfish ambition and pride and greed as the foundations of these issues every single one of them but that's not

[ 43 : 03 ] Solomon's primary concern here he's talking about these things as motivations for the competitive kind of get ahead nature which drives so many of the efforts people make in their careers and in their lives he's actually speaking to this he's saying that apart from God these are the primary motivations behind people doing what they do to improve their own skills to get what they want out of life that's all he's saying this rivalry and all this competitive!

thing going on between people it's all rooted in this idea that I deserve to be ahead of you or at least on par with you it isn't fair that you have more it isn't fair that you're more happy it isn't fair you have more peace you see I'm a victim I'm entitled!

verses 5 and 6 once again the fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh and one handful of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after win verses 5 and 6 provide us with a picture it's a picture of one person who takes advantage of the blessings of life by being excessively laid back lazy slothful then we have another person who doesn't know how to pull back they don't know how to rest they don't know how to enjoy the blessings of life both of them are taking the wrong approach to life because neither one of them are acknowledging that all of this comes from the hand of God one of them thinks he can just sit back and it'll just come to him because he deserves it he's entitled oh you meet these people all the time then you have somebody over here and they work themselves to death because they think it's all about them and it's all up to them so I'm bound to determine to have my slice of the pie and I'm willing to pay any price to get it

I'll get divorced I'll lose my kids whatever it takes but I'm married to my work because of what my work brings me in the end because that's what I want out of life stuff or I want maybe in my job I get a lot of praise or I get a lot of affirmation or acknowledgement or power or whatever but in the end it's not about the Lord in the end both approaches are self destructive and here's what he says consumes his own flesh right there in the text all of this in the end is about consuming your own flesh it consumes you it consumes you the next one that I'll deal with then as he continues to offer these to you is the hope stealer of unmitigated loneliness and that's seven through twelve I looked again at vanity under the sun there was a certain man without a dependent he didn't have a son he didn't have a brother he didn't have anybody to leave it to yet there wasn't any end to his labor he's working like dude what are you doing indeed his eyes were not satisfied with riches he wasn't even satisfied the fact that he was wealthy he's rich he never asked he never asked and for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure who am I doing this for this too is vanity two are better than one because they have a good return on their labor if either of them falls the one lifts up his companion that's that's good wisdom that's good but woe to the one who falls when there's nobody there to lift him up furthermore if two lie down together they keep warm he's just continuing in the same point but how can one be warm if he's alone he can't and if one can overpower him who is alone two can resist him a cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart these are the wisdom sayings that he's trying to bring out for us to prove his point a poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction that's a problem he's grown so old in his own power and in his own wisdom he thinks he doesn't need anybody to counsel him anymore

I know I got this and off he goes then he finishes out the chapter saying yeah well here's what's going to happen to you happens over and over and over again what's he talking about you know you and I might be shocked to discover how many Christians feel lonely and isolated in life and how often we deal with this here is a person in our text who's working themselves to death they live to work to accomplish and accumulate for what they work like there's no God in heaven to provide for them we should work we should work hard we should work diligently that's a good testimony but we don't live to work we live for the Lord he isn't at peace with himself he's not at peace with his life he's never satisfied very sad the end of verse 8 we're told of his own view of his life after all of his efforts and in spite of his abundant!

[ 48 : 07 ] material wealth his life is empty and what's he put his hope in? his work his material goods that's all become grievous to him now why?

because it doesn't warm him there's no companionship there's no sense of togetherness there's no sense of fulfillment he's got a bunch of stuff and nobody to leave it to and he's got nobody to share it with man that is so sad well it happens a lot he's wealthy and lacks for nothing but even surrounded by everything he has he is alone in his own heart verses 9 through 12 those speak to the blessings of friendship friendships that help us focus and balance our lives through a sense of companionship true true companionship look look Christians experience this in godly friendship relationships and especially in marriage where love for Jesus is central to the relationship I say this all the time in counseling when I'm doing marital counseling I tell the husband and the wife at some point in the counseling pretty early on I say do you know what the primary point of you being married to this person and you being married to this person is do you know what your primary role and responsibility and privilege is in that role as a spouse to this person and the answer comes to this as a

Christian as a Christian your primary role in life and being married to this other person is for Jesus Christ to work through you to encourage them to be conformed to his image it's not to be happy it's not to have a lot of stuff it's not to be successful it's for you to be used by God to encourage your spouse to be more like Jesus Christ that's the main reason that's your main goal and responsibility in being married am I encouraging my spouse to be more like Jesus am I being used of the Lord I should be the most influential person in my spouse's life for being conformed to Christ why how can I say that Greg how can I say that because that person is my soul mate there is nobody else on the earth that's my soul mate right nobody knows me like

Suzanne and I'm not giving it all away I'm telling you that right now I've told you you keep your secrets girl and I'll keep mine nobody knows you like your spouse this is what Satan wants to work against folks he wants to steal your hope in matters like this he doesn't want you to get down to the nitty gritty of life and the truth of God's word there are a lot of lonely Christians in the world they're surrounded by church people they're busy in spiritual stuff they read their Bibles and they're lonely as all get out because they don't know how to make it about Jesus I met a whole bunch of them in Poland recently but they're not just in Poland finally I'll give you this one hope stealing unreliable look at this politics what yes it's right here in the text politics join me in verse 13 a poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king that's the that's the politics of their day who no longer knows how to receive instruction for he's come out of prison to become king he's come from a lowly place he forgot his place even though he was born poor in his kingdom now he's all puffed up full of himself

I've seen it I've seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces the king there's no end to all the people to all who were before them and even the ones who will come later after the king after the lad will not be happy with them for this too is vanity and striving after win boy I wish our politicians would read that you think you're all that this is your moment better make the most of the moment for the Lord but just know you're going to fade off the scene somebody's going to take your place then they're going to fade off the scene somebody's going to take their place it's going to go right on until Jesus comes back Solomon is again speaking from personal experience as the king so he's at the pinnacle of the political life in his era the Bible speaks in potent ways to the issues of power politics did you know that I'm so grateful for this these verses are just such an example of this the Bible speaking to the issues of power politics life is in constant contrast life is in constant change so many people seem to just let that go right by them political power is no exception those who hold office today are in favor right now are soon out of favor and gone tomorrow somebody else steps in apart from

[ 53 : 18 ] God and his wisdom listen now apart from God and his wisdom the old king grows senile the old king grows overconfident and isolated in his own sense of self importance you can see this he becomes a cynical loner who trusts only in his own counsel man this is the history is full of this it's like the more power they get and the longer they hold on to that power the more it corrupts them and they pull inside themselves and distrust everybody because the power has become so important that has become their God as it were and they think they have to pull it all in and watch everybody who wants to take it away and they just get so cynical so driven into themselves you see this in people this is what he's talking about apart from the Lord that's that's the way it goes now an impressive an impressive younger candidate soon replaces the old king the popular vote!

swings! way as people throng to support the new person in his platform and then notice what Solomon says the ones who will come later will not be happy with him for this too is vanity and striving after wind there he said there's no substance here apart from the Lord there's no substance here the truth is no one and nothing mankind puts forward as a promise of a stabilizing or equalizing or optimizing aspect of life will succeed none of that and there's one single sobering significant reason why that's true let me say it again because I'm going to offer you an extensive quote here and I want you to understand what it's answering here's the issue here's the truth no one in our era in our time in any other time no one and nothing mankind mankind in his wisdom puts forward as a promise of stabilizing equalizing optimizing life will succeed those are empty promises when

I listen to politicians on the TV promise us all this stuff I pray that the details of what they're planning will help bring down inflation and all that kind of thing yeah that's great do that be wise about that but I also step back and I know behind everything you're saying the only one that can give us what we need as a society in the way of fulfillment and protection is almighty God you can't promise anything at the end of the day it's up to the Lord not you now you hold on to that hold on to that because people will let you down for those of us who are married that statement shouldn't shock you if you've been married longer than six months and there's no more honeymoon you get it people will let you down I let Suzanne down she lets me down it's one of the things you learn when you get married you got two sinners coming together and as the honeymoon wears off you kind!

doing that now what do we I did sign up for life right you signed up for life we're in this for life right yep there's one reason why society can't fix itself I mean there are many aspects I want to offer you a lengthy but incredibly insightful quote from Dr.

Barak himself as he concluded his comments from chapter four I'll give it to you in sections but I hope to the Lord it will be meaningful to you so listen up as I read this for us humankind constantly dreams of some sort of utopia on earth over and over again generation after generation political regime after political regime people seek solutions to the problems of humanity in both the social and moral realms they expend great wealth and power on attempting to right society's wrongs frustratingly however every attempt meets failure all solutions prove temporary at best now look at this every great society comes to a time when it all collapses and the advances of decades disappear in the dust of another depression another war another natural disaster Derek Kidner who is another commentator on this section Derek

[ 58 : 03 ] Kidner's keen observation about chapter 4 verses 1 through 3 provides a potential association between the oppression in verses 1 through 3 and the political inconsistencies of verses 13 through 16 so he's taken both parts of chapter 4 the oppression that it started with and then the political issues that it ended with and Derek Kidner's insights brought those together he notes he says he notes the paradox that a transfer of power to promote change actually limits the possibility of reform itself because the more control the reformer wields the more it tends to tyranny it gets better that's true this is why we have a series of checks and balances and then Dr.

Barak offers an explanatory comment on what Kidner just said here it is my explanatory note or comment power in the hands of fallen man tends towards oppression our constitutional reformers knew this truth and respected it just one of the reasons for the second amendment is to give the people a way to defend themselves from abuses of power in seasons of tyranny and oppression now here it is the all inclusive fallen condition of humanity defies self restoration you got that as Michael Kelly observes the masses willingly support revolution because they cannot believe that the fault lies in them and that's our dilemma we cannot believe that the fault for society lies in society with us with the depravity of the human heart we are the problem

Jesus didn't come to save societies he came to save sinners who make up societies and so the problem becomes personal it becomes individualistic and every single person needs to answer that evil in their heart by coming to Jesus Christ and facing down that evil in him and allow Jesus to tell you the truth about yourself and then to show you!

what he's done to rescue you from you not from society friend from you not from the people who kill the Charlie Kirks of our world but to rescue you from you from your sin that will end up bringing you to a devil's hell if you don't embrace the Lord Jesus Christ because the fault does reside within the hearts of each of us God sent Christ to!

to! He rescues us from our sinfully oppressive jealous lonely selfishly ambitious hearts He rescues us from our hopeless selves so I'll say this before I put my final quote up here for you God's answer to humanity's sinful problems is the Lord Jesus Christ it's him crucified it's him buried it's him raised again to new life by the power of the Holy!

[ 61 : 19 ] Spirit for the forgiveness of sin new life of Jesus is new life to all who call upon him to all to each person who asks for the forgiveness of Jesus they will receive that forgiveness from the Lord they will get hope for eternal life in him and I want to put this final quote from the scriptures up here to encourage your heart in what Christ has told us for we too were once foolish!

disobedient deceived enslaved to various lusts and pleasures we were spending our life in malice and envy hateful hating one another but when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared he saved us he didn't save us on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness but in accordance with his mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit whom he richly!

grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life there's your hope it's in a person and the promise that he made to give us life in his name amen that's the hope now go preach that hope go tell the people at your jobs go tell the people that you encounter and hear conversations going on about all the stuff that's been happening go tell them the truth do it in love and do it with grace and patience but tell them the truth let's pray