

WHY SOCIETIES CANNOT SELF-RESTORE

Ecclesiastes 4

“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....

“True hope is a biblically-based expectation of good. In other words, it is biblical hope, an expectation based on the promises of God. 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.*’”

(Dr. Wayne Mack, emphasis added)

Four major problems in life; four evils which all people experience.

These four evils foster false hope and complicate everyday life.

HOPE STEALERS

I. **Hope-Stealing Unrelieved Oppression** (Ecc. 4:1-3)

For these first three verses, the point is repeated for us in verse 1:

“...they had no one to comfort them... but they had no one to comfort them.”

Oppression is the issue, but a lack of comfort is the point.

I. **Hope-Stealing Unrelieved Oppression** (Ecc. 4:1-3)

‘What causes the evil we do to each other?’

We abuse each other in evil activities because there is evil in our hearts.

II. Hope-Stealing Unsatisfied Jealousy (Ecc. 4:4-6)

“Rivalry” (NASB) = jealousy, envy, greed

A greedy, prideful longing for something that belongs to another — even something intangible like a skill, conviction, belief, or even a sense of peace and forgiveness.

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 that we want to be rid of them.

Truth dispels lies, and light reveals darkness.

III. Hope-Stealing Unmitigated Loneliness (Ecc. 4:7-12)

IV. Hope-Stealing Unreliable Politics (Ecc. 4:13-16)

“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.

IV. Hope-Stealing Unreliable Politics (Ecc. 4:13-16)

“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, or another natural disaster.

“Derek Kidner’s keen observation about Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 provides a potential association between the oppression in verses 1-3 and the political inconsistencies of verses 13-16.

IV. Hope-Stealing Unreliable Politics (Ecc. 4:13-16)

“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.’

“[My explanatory comment: Power in the hands of fallen man tends toward 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.]

IV. Hope-Stealing Unreliable Politics (Ecc. 4:13-16)

“The all-inclusive fallen condition of humanity defies self-restoration. As Michael Kelly observes, ‘The masses willingly support revolution because they cannot believe that the fault lies in them.’” (*Dr. William Barrick, emphasis added*)

“For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, 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, not 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 poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:3-7, NASB)

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